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VOLKOGONOV'S POLITICAL PORTRAIT OF STALIN

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Moscow OKTYABR in Russian No 10, Oct 88; No 11, Nov 88; No 12, Dec 88

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VOLKOGONOV'S POLITICAL PORTRAIT OF STALIN

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[Series of articles by Dmitriy Volkogonov: "Triumph and Tragedy: A Political Portrait of I.V. Stalin"]

[No 10, Oct 88 pp 3-55]

[Text]

The Pharisees of the bourgeoisie love the saying: de mortuis aut bene aut nihil (speak none ill of the dead). The proletariat needs the truth both about living politicians and about the dead for those who truly merit the name of politician do not die for politics when their physical demise comes.

V.I. Lenin

Chapter I. The October Glow

Stalin was dying. Lying on the floor of the dining room in the dacha at Kuntsevo, he no longer attempted to stand but merely raised his left arm from time to time, as if requesting people's assistance. The leader's half-open eyelids could not conceal the desperation of the expression squinting toward the entrance way. The lips of the silent mouth stirred soundlessly and feebly. Several hours had already elapsed since the stroke. But there had been no one close by Stalin. Finally, disturbed by the long absence of signs of life behind the windows of the private residence, his bodyguards timorously entered the premises. However, even they did not have the right to immediately summon the doctors. One of the most powerful people in human history could not even count on this. A personal order from Beriya was needed. He was sought for a long time through the night. But the latter believed that Stalin was simply sleeping soundly after a heavy evening meal. Only 10-12 hours later were the frightened medical people brought to the dying leader.

The mere fact of such a death is profoundly symbolic. The irony of fate was cruel. In his death agony for several dozen hours more, the leader had been unable at the proper moment to get help in time. And this was he who, virtually a god on earth, could with a few words move millions of people from one part of the country to another! The bureaucratic "order" which he had created in the society made the leader himself his own hostage. Expiring slowly, Stalin still had an opportunity to evaluate the degree of sluggishness of the system of relationships which he had created over so long a period.

The invisible line separating existence from nonexistence may be crossed only in one direction. Even leaders are incapable of coming back. Stalin could hardly have known that, as distinct from others, he faced not only physical death but political demise also. His end seemed for contemporaries a profound tragedy. They did not think at that time that it was this man who had treated the death of millions of people merely as an official sphere of secret statistics. After his death Stalin bequeathed posterity not simply the lengthy occupation of investigating what he had created but also bitter arguments concerning the "enigma" of his fate. Many people consider applicable to Stalin even part of Lenin's phrase adduced as an epigraph: "...who truly merit the name of politician." His death was not his vindication. All Stalin's accomplishments, deeds and crimes have been given over to the verdict of history. The myths are collapsing. But they may be dispelled conclusively only by the truth.

By the start of 1917 Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin (Dzhugashvili) was 37 years old. Cold Kureyka, which was right on the Arctic circle, had been his abode for several years. There was plenty of time and food for thought. To the endless howling of the blizzard he would return incessantly in his thoughts to the most memorable events. December 1905: the first meeting with V.I. Lenin at the party conference in Tammerfors. The noisy arguments at the meetings, and the friendly conversations in the intervals—this always amazed Stalin. The party congresses in Stockholm and London, where he was for the first time essentially introduced to the political art of struggle, the search for compromise, obstinacy in matters of principle....

All his few trips outside of Russia left in his heart some uneasy aftertaste which it was hard to explain. He often felt strange and superfluous among the quick-witted companions. Stalin could not fence with words as quickly and adroitly as Plekhanov, Akselrod and Martov. A perception of inward irritation and intellectual frustration remained with the man of the Caucasus while he was next to these people. Since that time there was secretly born in him somewhere a firm dislike of emigres, foreign parts and the intelligentsia: endless disputes in cheap cafes, smoke-filled rooms of run-down hotels, arguments about philosophical schools and economic teachings....

Stalin's pre-October life story is accommodated entirely between seven arrests and five escapes from tsarist prisons and deportation. But the future leader did not like to publicly recall this period. Nor did he ever subsequently recount his participation in armed expropriations for the party coffers, the fact that, in Baku, he at one time adhered to the position of "unification with the Mensheviks at all costs" and his first ineffectual literary experiments. Once, when a snowstorm was shaking his little hut, Stalin would recall one of his early poems, which he liked and which was even favored with publication in the newspaper IVERIYA. At that time the seminarist was 16 or 17 years old. The lines about his mountain country increased his yearning and evoked some vague hope. Stalin had a magnificent memory and,

in an undertone, almost in a whisper, he would recreate the image of his native parts:

When the moon with its radiance
Suddenly illumines the terrestrial world
And its light above the distant brink
Plays in a pallid blue,
When above the grove the nightingale's
Warbling murmurs in the azure
And the tender voice of a reed-pipe
Sounds freely, frankly,
When, having subsided for a moment,
The springs ring forth
Once more in the mountains
And the winds with gentle breathing
Arouse the dark wood in the night,
When the fugitive, pursued by the foe,
Once more reaches his doleful parts,
When, wearied by the outer darkness,
He unexpectedly sees the sun,
Then the dreary cover Of soul-oppressing cloud is scattered,
And hope with a mighty voice
Awakes my heart anew,
The poet's soul soars high into the air;
And the heart beats with definite purpose:
I know that this hope is blessed and pure!

While to his own surprise he would whisper, as if in prayer, the verses of his youth, the mistress of the squalid little house would once or twice glance in astonishment through the aperture at the somber lodger. And he would be sitting with open book near the flickering candle and looking through the little opaque, ice-covered window. Stalin left behind forever in his distant youth not only his naive verses but also much of what intellectuals call sentimentality. Stalin wrote even to his mother extremely rarely. The austere childhood and the life of a clandestine political worker—an eternal fugitive—made the exile cold, hard and suspicious.

Stalin knew how to drive away worrying thoughts and recollections. However, although almost 10 years had already elapsed since the death of his wife Kato, the woman's image, distorted by typhus, hovered somewhere alongside. And now, in exile, he would recall how they had been secretly married by Khristofor Gkhinvoleli, a seminary classmate, in the Church of St David in June 1906. Kato (Yekaterina) Svanidze had been a very good-looking young woman who would look lovingly and devotedly with her big eyes at her husband when the latter would infrequently show up at home before once again disappearing for a long time. Family life had been brief. The pitiless typhus took away from Stalin the sole being whom, possibly, he had really loved. In the photograph which captured the funeral Stalin, with a shock of unkempt hair, short and spare, is standing at the bedside of his deceased wife with an expression of unfeigned grief.

The seeds of hardness and cruelty sown back in childhood grew increasingly deep. The underground hardened him: from the age of 19 he did only what was concealed, carried assignments of party committees, was arrested, changed his name, procured false ID's and moved from place to place. He did not linger in the prisons long but would escape and go into hiding once again.

Life had taught Stalin much, and not least, guile and resourcefulness. The imprint of reserve and inner coldness, which had been noticeable in his young years even, became in time cold insensitivity and ruthlessness. But later Stalin would learn to wear the mask of a composed individual, affable among people even, with penetrating eyes.

Why did Soso Dzhugashvili become a revolutionary? Perhaps because he had been introduced early to the grains of intellectual food in the Gori church school and Tiflis religious seminary in which he had been taught? Who knows whether he came across small volumes of Rousseau, Nietzsche, and Locke or whether the seminarist would ponder why his shoemaker father would repair shoes for the poor peasants? Or perhaps dissatisfaction with the theological seclusion led him to people with a rebellious nature? Perhaps his eyes were opened wider to the world by the slim brochure "Fundamentals of Marxism" which he had come across and begun to read? No one can answer this with certainty. Had not, however, there been in him at that time, at the turn of the century, a confused, but decisive change of secular, heretical reference points for religious ones, a Georgian village would have acquired a young Orthodox priest. His monotonous life would have been fenced off from the whole world not only by the ridge of majestic mountains but also petty worries concerning his destitute parish and his heap of children and dreams about bustling Tiflis. Could the son of a poor peasant have known that by the will of fate and the play of circumstances he would at a stage of history signify for a great people immeasurably more than a church pastor?

Prior to the revolution, this person had been well known to various stations of the police department. At the time of each new contact of the police authorities with Dzhugashvili he was thoroughly photographed in full face and in profile. Thus the form of the Baku Provincial Police Authority captured in these two poses a puny unshaven young man. The police were not distinguished by an ability to guard prisoners but the description of "state criminals" was meticulous. It is reported beneath the photograph, in the summary, that Dzhugashvili was "thin," his hair "black and thick," "no beard and thin moustache," face "pitted and pock-marked," head shape "oval," forehead "straight and rather low, eyebrows, "arched," eyes "sunken brown with spots of yellow," nose "straight," height "average, 2 arshin, 4.5 vershok" [about 5 feet 3 and three-fourths inches], build "satisfactory," chin "pointed," voice "soft," "birthmark on left ear," arms, "one of them, the left, withered," on the left leg "second and third toes interlocked" and a further couple of dozen other characteristics. When Dzhugashvili-Stalin became a mighty man, his guardians of state security would not engage in such trifling matters with their political prisoners. Indeed, not one of them in

Stalin's "era" would succeed, like him, in making five escapes. On which ear there was a birthmark and how many arshin and vershok tall an "enemy of the people" was would be of no significance in determining in the future the fate of many, many thousands of his, Stalin's potential adversaries.

The reader will be more interested, I believe, not in the physical and outward data of the future leader which may be seen in full face and in profile but in the political and moral parameters which he brought to the year of 1917. Let us say right away that Stalin was no "villain" since childhood, as is now hinted from time to time. But his childhood needs to be recalled for a better understanding of the character of the mature Stalin.

Little is known about Dzhugashvili's childhood years—Stalin himself did not like to reminisce about this time. Childhood was unrelievedly joyless. Yekaterina and Vissarion Dzhugashvili, poor peasants, and subsequently Gori plebeians, lived in dire need. Of the three sons, Mikhail and Georgiy, not having survived a year even, died, and there remained only Soso (Iosif). But he also, taking ill at the age of 5 with smallpox, barely survived, giving the police grounds for regularly writing in the "distinguishing marks" section: "face, pitted and pockmarked". As I. Iremashvili, a Georgian Menshevik who knew the young I. Dzhugashvili, wrote, Stalin's father, a craftsman-shoemaker, was a heavy drinker. His mother and Soso often came in for brutal beatings. Before going to sleep, the drunken father would strive to give his wilful boy, who clearly did not love his father, a box on the ear. At that time even Soso learned to dissemble, avoiding meetings with his drunken father. The father's unwarranted beatings embittered the son. And the mother devoted herself entirely to Soso. It was at her insistence and at a price of enormous efforts that the son was found a place in the church school and then the seminary.

The family discord continued. Shortly after, mother and father finally separated, and the latter moved to Tiflis, where he died in obscurity in a doss-house and was buried at public expense. After I. Dzhugashvili had embarked on the path of professional revolutionary, he left the ancestral home for good. As far as can be determined, he saw his mother only four or five times after 1903. Yekaterina Georgiyevna visited her son in Moscow only once, the year when Stalin became general secretary. The last time he saw his mother was in 1935 on one of his rare flying visits to Tbilisi. Was the son thinking about the fact that it was precisely the indomitable desire of an illiterate woman to "push" him from his indigence upward which afforded him that first opportunity, which he took? Two years after this meeting, Stalin's mother, having survived to the July of the tragic 1937, quietly passed away in advanced old age.

In December 1931 the German writer E. Luedwig, in conversation with Stalin, asked him:

"What prompted you to take up the opposition cause? Bad treatment on your parents' part, perhaps?"

"No. My parents were uneducated people, but they treated me quite well."

All that we know of I. Dzhugashvili's early years is reason to suppose that what the leader said to the German writer concerning his parents applied merely to his mother. Luedwig, who had written essay-portraits of Mussolini, Kaiser Wilhelm and Masaryk, attempted with one hour's conversation to penetrate also the inner world of the "enigmatic Soviet dictator". He hardly succeeded. Specifically, Stalin had no wish to expatiate on his early formative years.

Viewing Stalin through the prism of the moral "full face and profile," it has to be said that, being taught in religious educational institutions, the boy revealed pretty good capabilities and a phenomenal memory. Soso assimilated religious texts quicker than others. The books of the Old and New Testaments initially aroused genuine interest in the seminarist. He tried to comprehend the idea of one god as the exponent of absolute good, absolute might and absolute knowledge. However, the long study of theology as the synthesis of doctrines and moral principles soon bored Dzhugashvili. Pecularities of thought and action important for his further destiny were taking shape meanwhile, imperceptibly for himself (after all, Soso had spent 10 years altogether studying in religious institutions), in the mind of the capable student. We should add to the 10 years of religious training as many years of imprisonment and exile which fell to Koba's lot. The position of an outcast ostracized by society strengthened in the young revolutionary an obscure, but firm bitternesss and dissatisfaction with fate. The odd synthesis of assimilated, but rejected religious postulates, the role of social odd man out and, as a result, a vague attraction to "rebellious" activity undoubtedly made their mark on the character of the young Stalin. The first 20 years of his development, which were spent in seminary cells and prison cells, could not ultimately have failed to have been reflected in the intellect, feelings and will of the professional revolutionary. This was manifested in his thinking, in particular, in a number of singularities.

One such was the aspiration to systematize and classify any knowledge and arrange it on intellectual "shelves," and this characterizes, if you will, "catechismic thinking". As a rule, this thinking gives those around the impression of this person as the bearer of an "organized," consistent mind. Another particular feature of Stalin's thinking is connected with the absence of a serious critical view of his own ideas and actions. All his life Dzhugashvili believed in postulates, at first Christian, and subsequently Marxist. All that did not fit within the Procrustean bed of assimilated concepts and patterns Soso considered heretical and, subsequently, opportunist. But inasmuch as he himself rarely questioned the veracity of this fundamental proposition of

theory or the other in which he believed, nor did he deem it necessary to adopt a critical attitude toward his own views and intentions. After all, he never deviated, in his opinion, from the classical principles of Marxism. He gave preference to faith, perhaps, and not truth, although he would very likely not have admitted this to himself. It is good when there is a belief in ideals and values. But it is hardly good if it, belief, pushes truth into the background. The religious diet and his social position contributed to the cultivation in Dzhugashvili of a concealed, but profound egocentrism and exaggeration of the role of his "self" in the fabric of surrounding existence.

Stalin understood early on that there was no counting on anyone in this life other than himself. Comrades in Baku and Tiflis told Koba repeatedly: "You have strong willpower." The praise made an impression, and he resolved to consolidate this particular feature of his character in a revolutionary pseudonym, expressing it with an "iron" name. Dzhugashvili was signing his articles "Stalin" as of 1912. It was not he alone, incidentally, who wished to stamp his firmness in his name. The revolutionary L.B. Rozenfeld, for example, who was far from possessing the willpower of Dzhugashvili, resolved to content himself with the pseudonym "Kamenev". But a "rock" in time, as history shows, yields to "steel". Stalin wished to believe in his willpower, his invulnerability, his place as regional leader. Stalin had belief—this cement of dogmatism—always.

The religious education contributed to the molding in Dzhugashvili-Stalin firm dogmatic thinking, although the future leader himself would frequently criticize dogmatism, understanding it, however, in vulgar and simplistic fashion. Stalin was inclined always to strictly canonize this proposition of Marxist theory or the other, frequently reaching profoundly mistaken conclusions.

Of course, while a dogmatist, Stalin was, nonetheless, an atheist. But the abundant religious food which he had accepted in childhood and in his youth shaped in the future party general secretary a unique thinking which came to be characterized by an intolerance of views distinct from his own and a propensity for justifying his own ideological "stiffness" with revolutionary leftwing phrases. On his "approach" to revolution Stalin was capable of assimilating the basic propositions of Marxism, but without a clearly expressed capacity for their creative application. The influence of religious education (and Dzhugashvili had had no other) was reflected, we emphasize once again, not primarily in the content of his views but his methodology of thinking. Stalin was unable to rid himself of the shackles of dogmatism, not always clearly expressed, it is true, to the end of his days.

Stalin had virtually no people who were close to him, particularly such as toward whom he preserved warm feelings throughout his life. Political calculations, emotional aridity and moral deafness prevented him from making and keeping friends. All the more surprising is it that toward the end of his life Stalin unexpectedly recalled his church school and seminary "schoolfellows". The following instance, for example, testifies to this.

Once during the war Stalin saw by chance that there was a large sum of money in the safe of his aide Poskrebyshev.

"What money is that?" Stalin asked, puzzled and at the same time suspicious, looking not at the bundle of money but at his aide.

"It is your deputy's money. It has built up over many years. I take from it merely to pay your party dues for you," Poskrebyshev replied.

Stalin said nothing, but several days later ordered Petr Kopanadze, Grigoriy Glurdzhidze and Mikhail Dzeradze to be sent very large money remittances. Stalin wrote on a sheet of paper in his own hand:

"1) To my friend Petya, 40,000,

"2) R30,000 to Grisha,

"3) R30,000 to Dzeradze.

"9 May 1944. Soso."

This same day he jotted down one further very brief note in Georgian:

"Grisha!

"Accept from me a small gift.

"9.05.44. Your Soso."

Stalin's personal archives contained several similar notes. In his 70th year, at the height of the war, Stalin surprisingly displayed charitable propensities, but it is significant that he remembered friends from his distant, "seminary" youth. This is all the more surprising in that Stalin was never distinguished by an inclination toward sentimentality, spirituality, cordiality and moral goodness. True, we know of one further instance of philanthropic effusion, which Stalin displayed after the war. The leader sent a letter of the following content to the Pchelka community of Tomsk Oblast's Porbichskiy Rayon:

"Comrade V.G. Solomin,

"I received your letter of 16 January 1947 sent via Academician Tsitsin. I have not forgotten you and friends from Turukhanskiy and perhaps never will. I am sending you from my deputy's salary R6,000. This sum is not that great, but will nonetheless come in handy for you.

"I wish you good health. I. Stalin."

In the locale of his last period of exile, as the Old Bolshevik I.D. Perfilyev, who had been sent to those parts in Soviet times even, recounted to me, Stalin had relations with a local inhabitant, which produced a child. The leader himself, of course, never once mentioned this fact. I have been unable to determine whether Stalin displayed concern for this woman whose path intersected with the transportation road of the exiled revolutionary or whether things were confined to an acknowledgment that he would "probably" "not forget" his friends from Turukhanskiy.

Stalin's aridity, coldness, calculating nature and cautiousness were possibly intensified by his life as a professional revolutionary forced to live from 1901 through 1917 clandestinely, frequently ending up in prison and exile. Even then all who knew Stalin mentioned his rare capacity for self-possession, endurance and imperturbability. He could sleep amid noise and take his sentence with sang-froid and would not become ruffled by the police practices during transportation. The sole occasion, perhaps, on which he was seen to be morally shaken was in November 1907, when his wife died, leaving her wandering husband with the 2-month-old son Yakov. The boy was raised by the soft-hearted woman Monaselidze. This death embittered him even more.

Serving his last term of deportation before the revolution in the Turukhanskiy region together with Ya.M. Sverdlov and other revolutionaries, Stalin showed himself to be an unsociable and morose individual. In a number of letters from exile Sverdlov calls Stalin "a great individualist in everyday life." Already a member of the party Central Committee when he arrived to serve his term of exile (a further three members of the Central Committee were there at that time—Sverdlov, Spandaryan and Goloshchekin), Stalin comported himself with reserve and restraint. He was interested, seemingly, only in hunting and fishing, for which he had conceived a liking. True, at one time he wished to undertake the study of Esperanto (one deportee had brought with him a textbook of this artificial language), but cooled toward it rapidly. He would break his seclusion only by episodic trips to see Suren Spandaryan, who was living in the village of Monastyrskoye. At the meetings arranged by the exiles Stalin usually remained silent, getting by only with retorts. The impression was that he was simply tired of escaping. In any event, his social passiveness in the last 4 years prior to the revolution was striking.

Encouraged by the writing of the successful work "Marxism and the Nationality Issue," which he completed in January 1913 in Vienna, Stalin was seemingly taking advantage of so lengthy a period in exile, when he was not burdened with any duties, for literary work. He evidently knew of V.I. Lenin's high appraisal of his article on the nationality issue. However, this did not inspire Stalin to further in-depth study of the problem. The creative and social barrenness of these years, which occupy quite a lengthy period in Stalin's life, testify to the spiritual depression of the exile. In 4 years, with a library to hand, Stalin did not even attempt to write anything serious. Incidentally, deported twice prior to this to Solvychegodsk, in 1908 and 1910, Dzhugashvili had behaved in the same way. Not only complete but also partial isolation from the revolutionary centers, seemingly, plunged Stalin (if he did not escape) into a state of passive waiting. When he became powerful, this ability to wait would no longer be passive but subtly calculated.

Exiled and arrested revolutionaries would usually, as their recollections testify, read a great deal. Prison was for them a kind of university. As Ordzhonikidze recalled, he read in the Shlisselburg Fortress Adam Smith and Ricardo, Plekhanov, Bogdanov, James, Taylor, Bekker, Klyuchevskiy, Kostomarov, Dostoyevskiy, Ibsen and Bunin. Stalin read a considerable amount, but was always amazed how spinelessly the tsarist regime would fight against its "gravediggers"—it was possible to read to one's heart's content, not work and to escape. To escape from exile what was basically needed was merely the desire. It was at that time, perhaps, that he came to a conclusion which he subsequently divulged repeatedly: "A strong authority must have strong 'punitive organs'." Having become leader and having instituted a bloodbath in the state, he agreed with Yezhov's proposal concerning a change in the conditions of the detention of political prisoners. It was at Stalin's insistence that a special clause was inserted in the resolution on Yezhov's report at the Central Committee February-March 1937 Plenum to the effect that "the prison conditions for the enemies of Soviet power (Trotskiyites, Zinovyevites, SR's and others) are intolerable. They resemble more compulsory recreation centers than prisons. Intercourse, relations with the outside by letter, receipt of parcels and so forth are permitted." "Measures," it goes without saying, were adopted. There could be no question of any "universities" for the unfortunates. The people who ended up in remote camps at that time of Stalin's absolute rule conducted a desperate struggle for survival. Far from all succeeded.

Reading the newspapers, which reached the Turukhanskiy region and the Kureyka settlement very late, the future leader could not have failed to have sensed that big events were ripening. However, when the world carnage erupted, the recent manifestations of some social assertiveness on the part of the deportee ceased. The involuntary impression was that Stalin no longer wished to tear himself away from exile, although had thought about this initially, for two reasons: owing to the difficulties which awaited him, given his illegal position, in wartime and also on account of a reluctance to end up in the army in the course of mobilization. He need have had no apprehension on this score, however: when, in February 1917, the draft commission in Krasnoyarsk intended putting Stalin "in the ranks," he was deemed totally unfit for military service on account of physical shortcomings (withered arm and foot deformity).

These 4 years of exile, when the invisible streams of social tension in society were gradually filling and when

the people's discontent with the imperialist war was growing, it was as if Stalin was waiting for something. Perhaps disenchantment with the fruitlessness of two decades of revolutionary activity had come home to him, now a man who was getting on? Or did Stalin have a presentiment that he would shortly have to be embarking on an entirely different stage of life and struggle? Perhaps he had been affected by a lack of faith in the possibility of overthrowing the autocracy? No one will ever know. Stalin never wrote and spoke very little about this period of his life.

All 4 years Stalin was passive, wrote practically nothing and gave absolutely no appearance of being a member of the party Central Committee. The actual leaders in exile were Spandaryan and Sverdlov, around whom all the deportees grouped. Stalin kept himself apart, although he did not conceal his guarded liking for Spandaryan. The furious revolutionary Suren Spandaryan was not destined to see the glow of the revolution: he took ill and died in exile.

I believe that the period of Stalin's long inner depression was a time of his personal spiritual choice. Of thoughts about past and future. He was already nearing 40, and his personal future prospects were nebulous. Stalin had no everyday specialty, did not know how to do anything and had practically never worked. For 30 years, incidentally, our party and country were led by a person who had no occupation, if we do not count that of semi-educated priest. Whereas, let us assume, Skryabin (Molotov) had graduated from an actual school, the semi-educated student Malenkov had proved himself in his youth to be an assiduous junior secretary of the apparat and Kaganovich had been a pretty good shoemaker, Stalin was not even a shoemaker, like his father. The police would draw a line through the section "Trade (Occupation)" of the question form or write: "clerk". Filling out question forms on the eve of party congresses and conferences, Stalin himself had difficulty when it came to answering questions concerning the nature of his occupation and social origins. For example, to the question: "To which social group (worker, peasant, office worker) do you attribute yourself?" on the question form of the delegate to the 11th Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Congress, in which he participated with a voice, but no vote, Stalin did not venture to answer anything, leaving the section blank.

The future general secretary, as a professional revolutionary, knew the life of the worker, peasant and office worker far less well than, let us assume, that of the exile or prisoner. This was, possibly, inevitable under those conditions of activity, but was at the same time a firm trait of his personality: Stalin seemingly knew much about the life of the working people, but... from the side, superficially. True, there would come a time when he would "know and be capable" of everything. The long Turukhanskiy silence was, perhaps, a kind of "audit" of what was already a considerable life in respect of prison terms. Everything indicated that it was too late for Stalin to leave the revolutionary path. Reports concerning the growth of antiwar sentiments and a new upsurge of the revolutionary movement in St Petersburg gradually restored Stalin's confidence in himself and put the deportee in his past "militant" form.

True, there is also other testimony concerning this period of Stalin's life. For example, a brochure of Spandaryan's wife, V. Shveytser, "Stalin in Turukhanskiy Exile. Recollections of an Underground Political Worker," written in 1939, maintains that Stalin had been active since the start of the imperialist war and had written a special letter here condemning "defensism". He allegedly expressed his international position, as the author of the book maintained, quickly. However, this letter not only was not preserved but none of those who at that time bore their cross in the remote Turukhanskiy region ever recalled or had heard of it. While having honestly described the life and everyday existence of the exiles, the Old Bolshevik Vera Shveytser was hardly at liberty to write about Stalin in the same way at the height of the bloody purges. She writes, for example, that "Lenin's propositions *confirmed* his (Stalin's—D.V.) principles on the question of the war," that even at that time Stalin was warning in conversation with his comrades that Kamenev was not to be trusted—he was "capable of betraying the revolution"—that "Stalin had in exile translated Roza Luxemburg's book into Russian," that the whole time "Comrade Stalin was strenuously at work" and living "the same thoughts and the same aspirations as Vladimir Ilich" and so forth. The apologetic nature of such testimony is obvious. But objective works about Stalin could not have appeared in those years—let there be no doubt about this.

Rummaging in the archives and analyzing the reminiscences and testimony of those in Turukhanskiy exile (and an "impressive company" had ultimately built up there: Goloshchekin, Kamenev, Sverdlov, Spandaryan, Stalin, Petrovskiy), one concludes that the 4 years on the eve of the revolution were the most inactive in Stalin's life. The supposition that a person with a tumble-down hairstyle who had lain for many years on a wretched trestle-bed thinking about something personal to the howling of the Arctic blizzard would in a few years be the head of the powerful party of a vast state would have seemed simply improbable and wild. Who knows what was passing before his eyes in the kaleidoscope of recollections: Tammerfors, Batumi prison, Vologda, Alliluyev's apartment, the "tangential" meeting with Trotskiy?

Viewing Stalin in full face and in profile on the eve of the revolution through the prism of current knowledge, mention has to be made of the firm reputation of "expropriator" which stuck to him for a long time.

At the start of the century views concerning the "permissibility" of expropriations for the "interests of the revolutionary movement" were prevalent among certain radicals in the workers movement. Written testimony of

Dan, Martov, Suvarin and a number of other of Stalin's contemporaries maintains that the "Caucasian fighter Dzhugashvili" was involved in certain expropriations, if not directly, then as an organizer. Specifically, Martov maintained that the 1907 attack in Tiflis on a Cossack escort accompanying a money carriage, which was celebrated for its daring, "was not organized without Stalin." Approximately R300,000 were "expropriated". Martov wrote in his Moscow newspaper in this connection: "The Caucasus Bolsheviks have latched on to a variety of daring ventures of an expropriatory nature; well known if only to that same Mr Stalin who was once expelled from the party organization for involvement in expropriation."

It is known that Stalin persistently attempted to have revolutionary proceedings instituted against Martov for slander. Speaking, however, in connection with Martov's statement, Stalin put the emphasis on the fact that he had never been expelled from the party organization, avoiding the question of his direct participation in the acts of the expropriators. Stalin also indirectly confirmed his complicity in the expropriations in the conversation with E. Luedwig. The latter, in particular, asked him:

"There are moments in your life of 'robbery' actions, so to speak. Were you interested in the personality of Stepan Razin? What do you think of him as an 'ideological robber'?"

"We Bolsheviks have always been interested in such historical personalities as Bolotnikov, Razin, Pugachev and others."

Going on to discourse on these peasant leaders, Stalin did not say a word about his own "robbery" actions, deliberately avoiding any answer to this question. The years of participation in revolutionary activity, albeit at a regional level, and the romantic aura of an "expropriator" who had undergone transportation, imprisonment and Siberian exile had by degrees created for Stalin the reputation of a "fighter," practical man and man of action. Such a description is most likely close to reality, with regard, however, for the passive periods of his last terms of deportation.

Of course, Stalin's formation as a Marxist was greatly influenced by V.I. Lenin. His first letter, which he wrote in December 1903 to Stalin in the village of Novaya Uda in Irkutsk Province, where the latter was in exile, is well known. Vladimir Ilich, who would take a very close look at revolutionaries from the national outlying regions, had noticed I. Dzhugashvili from a number of short publications in the party press and from comrades' accounts. In his letter he oriented him toward certain urgent problems of party work. I.V. Stalin recalled this letter publicly on the first occasion at a party for Kremlin students at the end of January 1924 in remembrance of V.I. Lenin. In an indistinct,inexpressive voice Stalin described his meetings with Lenin.

"I made Lenin's acquaintance for the first time in 1903. True, this acquaintanceship was not personal but external, by way of correspondence.... Lenin's note was comparatively short, but it made a bold, fearless criticism of our party's practice and provided a remarkably clear and concise exposition of the party's entire plan of work for the coming period.... This simple and bold note strengthened me even further in the knowledge that we have in Lenin the mountain eagle of our party. I cannot forgive myself that, in accordance with an old underground political worker's custom, I committed this letter of Lenin's, like many others, to the flames...."

Stalin could not complain about Lenin's lack of attention to him. When he was in exile in Siberia on the eve of the revolution, the special question of organization of the escape from exile of Ya.M. Sverdlov and I.V. Stalin was discussed at a meeting of the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party Central Committee. Somewhat earlier Vladimir Ilich had sent to the Turukhanskiy region 120 francs for Stalin. Lenin adopted an attentive attitude toward Stalin's letter from exile, in which he had raised the question of the possibility of publication of an article on "cultural-national autonomy" and the brochure "Marxism and the Nationality Issue" in the form of a separate collection.

Stalin met Lenin several times prior to 1917. The most prolonged of these was a meeting in Cracow. Stalin also had contacts with Lenin during the fourth party congress in Stockholm and the fifth congress in London. However, subsequently Stalin came to see these meetings differently. In 1931 even he was declaring: "Always when I went to see him abroad—in 1906, 1907, 1912 and 1913...." Stalin left, it transpires, not for congresses and conferences but "went to see Lenin". This confusion of biographical emphases subsequently "worked" in favor of the "two leaders" concept and the creation of the myth concerning Stalin's special relationship with Lenin before the revolution even. True, Stalin displayed his customary caution in his assertions concerning his close relationship with Vladimir Ilich. Here is an example.

Not long before the war a letter of the following content arrived addressed to A.N. Poskrebyshev:

"Comrade Poskrebyshev,

"I request approval on the question of the possibility of publication in the press of the information: 'A Museum of the Revolution for the Lenin Festival'.

"Executive head of TASS, Ya. Khavinson.
"5 January 1940."

Appended to the letter was a document for "approval".

"V.I. Lenin, via Krupskaya, Cracow, 7 March 1912.

"Approximately two poods [approximately 32.5 kg] of literature have been brought in. We do not have a single kopeck. Let us know where it goes,and let a change of people or money be sent....

"Comradely greetings, Chizhikov."

Below, on the document, Stalin had recapitulated:

"The letter of Chizhikov is not mine, although I once went under the name Chizhikov.

"I. Stalin."

The general secretary might have added that he went not only under the name of Chizhikov but also Ivanovich, Chopur and Gilashvili. In this case either the name of Chizhikov had either been "transferred" to someone or Stalin believed that such a letter would not "enhance" him, in any event, the leader had no desire if only temporarily, if only in his thoughts, to return to the past. Even in connection with Lenin.

Stalin derived from the art of prerevolution secrecy a considerable ability to transform himself. He was one person in the Politburo, another when addressing a congress and yet another when chatting with Stakhanovites. Not everyone was able to immediately spot these changes, but they occurred. In a small group Stalin could be stricter than when "presenting himself to the people". Persons who worked for a long time alongside the general secretary testify to this. And a person's power over other people always depends not only on his strength of mind but also on the impression and "seemingness" of the image and attractiveness or unattractiveness of the leader. Stalin was not thinking of this while in Kureyka. He would understand everything later. The more so in that prior to the revolution there was hardly anyone, other than the police, who looked closely at Stalin. No one could have discerned in his unprepossessing figure, quiet speech and insinuating manners a future dictator.

Work in Baku, Kutaisi and Tiflis had shown in Koba pretty good organizer's capabilities. But even at that time perspicacious underground political workers noted that Stalin looked on the party organizations as a staff, mechanism and machine for realization of this decision or the other. The Bolsheviks Yenukidze, Dzhaparidze and Shaumyan, for example, were better known to the proletariat than Dzhugashvili. While not inferior to them in Marxist training and experience of clandestine activity, Dzhugashvili markedly lagged behind these acknowledged leaders of the Transcaucasus in personal popularity. He as yet lacked the machinery, which would appear later, to persistently create this popularity.

The February Prologue

The scant news reaching Kureyka excited the imagination, caused heated arguments and reverberated as buoyant beats of the heart and a stabbing at the temples. Stalin somehow immediately sensed the approach from over the horizon of the future, which appeared to him in contours of vague *hope*. After all, only revolution could change the position of an exile condemned in normal life to vegetate—neither a profession nor a home. And it is the most terrible thing for a man when no one awaits him anywhere. Revolutionary impulses aroused Stalin. This hope grew, pushing disbelief, doubts and hesitation somewhere deep into the heart of the cold snow-covered plains. Life itself is eternal hope, perhaps. As soon as it dies, there is nothing left for man to do in this world.

On the eve of the new year of 1917 Stalin possibly felt that he would soon once again be in the city on the Neva, where he had so absurdly been taken by the secret police 4 years earlier at a party given by the St Petersburg Bolshevik Committee in the hall of the Kalashnikov Stock Exchange. The exiles were dying to be outside, where turbulent events were brewing. Although he had been a member of the party Central Committee since 1912, co-opted by the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party Prague Conference, even so the sullen Georgian had not become, as we have already said, a popular personality amongg the exiles. True, Stalin became quite close friends with Kamenev. In a photograph taken in Monastyrskoye Stalin is standing next to him—his future ally and subsequently his adversary.

Stalin had by nature always been reserved and inaccessible. A conspirator, a person who had other spiritual sources of his formation, was not attracted by the motley exile community with its expectations, discussions of letters and news from outside, family concerns and numerous projects. An "aristocratism of mind" was alien to him, as was said at that time; it was not fortuitous that after October he once called himself an "unskilled laborer of the revolution". In the eyes of those who knew him then Stalin appeared a "fighter" and practical man of the underground, but lacking great flights of thought and imagination. But at that time the revolutionaries knew how to dream expansively: about the classless society, complete justice, sacred equality....

Books on the 18th century great French bourgeois revolution and the Paris Commune were, perhaps, the favorite literature of the Bolsheviks of that time. Fourteen July, Bastille Day, Versailles, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, the Jacobins, the Cordeliers, the Convention, the guillotined Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, the dictatorship, Robespierre, Danton, 9 Thermidor.... On long winter evenings in faint candlelight Stalin would absorb page by page A. Olar's "Political History of the French Revolution," which had been given him by Sverdlov and which he read to the utmost. Getting a feel for the characters, atmosphere and intensity of the passions of the far-off time, Stalin

comprehended for the first time the secret of "that" revolution. Prior to this he had read virtually nothing about it. The revolution appeared to him sometimes as a pitiless fury, sometimes as a menacing social squall sweeping aside all on its path. Stalin sensed almost physically the tragic consequences of Robespierre's indecisiveness when the conspiracy was revealed. No, he would not have tarried and hesitated....

While Kureyka detained the exiles firmly, as if having frozen them in, unprecedented events were maturing in Russia. The Moloch of WWI had for 30 months now been gathering in his bloody harvest. The mud- and blood-flooded trenches, the gas attacks, the stiffened drab blots of the soldiers' figures on the barbed wire.... Industrial production had declined sharply, famine had arrived and the discontent of the people's masses was growing rapidly in the country. The war had exacerbated to the utmost the crisis of the Russian Empire. A revolutionary explosion was ripening.

The bourgeoisie hoped to find a way out in monarchical castling and attempts to establish Western-style democracy. The ministerial leap-frogging merely exacerbated the position of the regime. Four chairmen of the Council of Ministers and dozens of other heads of departments of state had been replaced in 3 years of the war. And things at the front were getting worse and worse. The standard of leadership of the troops may be judged by, for instance, the following example. General Polivanov, minister of war, cabled the tsar's palace from the front: "I am putting my trust in unpassable ground, a veritable quagmire and the grace of St Nicholas, patron of Holy Russia."

Despite all his mediocrity, Nicholas II maneuvered long and quite shrewdly, sought compromises and was prepared to consent to partial concessions to the bourgeoisie, provided the monarchy was preserved. But the fatal hour for it had already struck. Three weeks before the collapse of the autocracy M.V. Rodzyanko, leader of the Octobrists and chairman of the last Duma, told the tsar: "Around us, sire, remains not a single dependable and honest man: all the best have been removed or have departed, only those who are of ill repute remain." The chairman of the Duma urged and beseeched the tsar to "grant the people a constitution" to save the throne. But it was past saving.

The revolution is growing, V.I. Lenin said, analyzing the political situation in the country and listening sensitively in far-off Switzerland to the growing rumble, as if at the time of an earthquake, of the coming revolution. The first and central act of the February prologue was the fall of the autocracy. The exiles, who included Stalin also, who believed in the possibility of this downfall did not think that it would happen so quickly. Turning to the lessons of the 1905 revolution and recalling details of the book on the great French Revolution which he had just read, Stalin understood: that which vindicated their very existence as professional revolutionaries was to happen very soon.

One of the most important counterrevolutionary figures of that time, V.V. Shulgin, who lived to be almost 100, recalled in his well-known memoirs "Days" how he and A.I. Guchkov arrived in Pskov on 2 March 1917 at the behest of the Provisional Committee of the State Duma to accept the tsar's abdication. At that time they still hoped to save the monarchy. The emperor, Shulgin writes, was, as always, composed. After Guchkov's incoherent speech, Nicholas uttered in a dry monotone, concealing his emotions:

"I have taken the decision to renounce the throne. Up to 3 o'clock today I thought that I would be able to abdicate in favor of my son Aleksey.... But by this time I had changed my decision in favor of my brother Mikhail...."

Let us, however, make one digression.

At this time groups of exiles from Monastyrskoye and Kureyka were already in Krasnoyarsk, Kansk and Achinsk. Stalin and Kamenev were in Achinsk. The news of Nicholas' abdication in favor of Mikhail and of the latter's refusal to accept the crown were greeted rapturously. A telegram congratulating Mikhail "for his magnanimity and civicism" was signed, surprisingly for Stalin, by Kamenev also. Nine years later this fact surfaced at a meeting of the Comintern Executive Committee. Stalin tried to make the maximum use for himself of Kamenev's "monarchical weakness". His speech throws light on and brings closer, as it were, that far-off time of February-March 1917.

"It was in the town of Achinsk in 1917," Stalin began, unusually excitedly, "after the February revolution, where I had been an exile together with Comrade Kamenev. There was a banquet or meeting, I do not remember well, and at this meeting several citizens together with Comrade Kamenev addressed to Mikhail Romanov (Kamenev shouted out from the floor: "Admit that you are lying, admit that you are lying!"). Hold your tongue, Kamenev (Kamenev again shouted out: "Do you admit you are lying?") Kamenev, be quiet, or you will make things worse (Thaelmann, who was presiding, called Kamenev to order). The telegram addressed to Romanov, as the first citizen of Russia, was sent by several merchants and Comrade Kamenev. I learned about this the other day from Comrade Kamenev himself, who came to me and said that he had done a foolish thing (Kamenev from the floor once again: "You are lying, I never told you anything of the sort"). The telegram was carried in all the papers, except for the Bolshevik ones. This is fact No 1.

"Fact No 2. We had a party conference in April, and delegates raised the question of such a person as Kamenev not in any event being elected to the Central

Committee on account of this telegram. Closed sessions of Bolsheviks were organized twice with Lenin defending Comrade Kamenev and with difficulty defending him as Central Committee candidate. Only Lenin could have saved Kamenev. I also defended Kamenev at that time.

"And fact No 3. It was perfectly right for PRAVDA to subscribe at that time to the wording of the refutation which Comrade Kamenev had issued since this was the sole means of saving Kamenev and sparing the party attacks on the part of its enemies. Therefore you can see that Kamenev is capable of lying and deceiving the Comintern.

"Two words more. Since Comrade Kamenev is attempting here to more feebly refute what is a fact, you will permit me to collect the signatures of the participants in the April conference, those who insisted on Comrade Kamenev's expulsion from the Central Committee on account of this telegram (Trotskiy from the floor: "Only Lenin's signature will be missing"). Comrade Trotskiy, hold your mouth! (Trotskiy again: "No threats, no threats...") You are going against the truth, and you should fear the truth (Trotskiy from the floor: "This is Stalin's truth, it is crudity and disloyalty"). I will collect the signatures since the telegram was signed by Kamenev."

We have jumped forward in time. But an argument concerning events of the start of 1917 is adduced here. Even Kamenev, who considered himself an orthodox Marxist, saw at that time a sign of revolutionary achievement in "Mikhail's magnanimity". Today "all is clear" to us concerning those far-off times, but at that time the maneuvers of the tsar and the bourgeoisie were capable of nonplussing certain members of the party Central Committee even....

The last 2 days of February 1917 erased all the "ci-devants'" hopes of halting the revolution. General Khabalov finally lost control of his units, which had been propagandized by the Bolsheviks. In the night of 28 February the ministers of the last tsarist government found themselves in the Fortress of Peter and Paul in the role of detainees. The February bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia had triumphed.

In the distant outlying regions thousands of political exiles were preparing, even before they had obtained official papers, to leave for Petrograd, Moscow, Kiev, Odessa, Tiflis, Baku and other revolutionary centers. Having obtained tickets for a third-class compartment, Stalin and a group of these former exiles were avidly looking through the window at the vast snow-covered expanses of Western Siberia flying by. He could not have known that a little more than 10 years later he would be paying a visit here, but not as an unknown "unskilled laborer of the revolution" but as leader of the party rapidly gaining power. Jumping out at the stations for boiling water, Stalin could not have supposed that in 12-18 months even bloody revolts would be erupting on this land, as they had in the past in Brittany, Toulon and Vendee. Stalin did not know what awaited him in Petrograd, what specifically he would be doing and which party leader would greet him. The depression and melancholy were left behind on the banks of the Yenisey, which was in the grip of an icy suit of armor. The maelstrom of social and political events would shortly capture Stalin entirely, initially hide him beneath the waves and foam of revolution and then suddenly discharge him at its very epicenter.

At the approaches to the Urals and further the exiles were clamorously greeted at the stations. The "Marseillais" was heard, speeches poured forth, everything seemed radiant. Speeches were delivered by the eloquent Kamenev, the self-confident Sverdlov and other of their companions. Stalin looked on this unexpected euphoria in silence.

Meanwhile the petty bourgeoisie, linking up now with the capitalists who had "moved to the left," now with the proletariat, was increasingly rocking the ship of statehood. Reformist sentiments were growing. The main thing, seemingly, had been accomplished: the autocracy had collapsed. "A giant petty bourgeois wave deluged everything," V.I. Lenin wrote, "and suppressed the thinking proletariat not only in terms of its numbers but also with its ideas...." The giant social pendulum of fluctuation right to left and left to right reflected the exceptional distinctiveness of the moment, which did not fit within the Procrustean bed of classical patterns of bourgeois-democratic revolutions. The political expression of this unique situation was *diarchy*. Two organs of authority met in turbulent session in one and the same Tavricheskiy Palace. In one wing of the palace was, in Milyukov's expression, "the plaything of power"—the Provisional Committee of the State Duma. Here the tune was called by the "left" bourgeoisie—the Cadets. The other wing of the palace accommodated the Petrograd Soviet as the organ of revolutionary authority. At the head of the soviet were the Mensheviks Chkheidze, Skobelev and the Labor Group member Kerenskiy. On the ispolkom of the soviets the Bolsheviks were in a minority. And this was no accident since the Mensheviks, which prior to February had been in a legal position, made active use of their opportunities, and there were in their ranks many prominent intellectuals, propagandists and theoreticians of scientific socialism. At the same time, however, V.I. Lenin, who was the acknowledged leader of the Bolshevik Party, was still an emigre and Bubnov, Dzerzhinskiy, Muranov, Rudzutak, Ordzhonikidze, Sverdlov, Stalin, Stasova and other members of the party leadership were in exile, prison and penal servitude and their return was only expected.

The Menshevik composition of the soviet in agreement with the members of the Duma approved the transfer of executive state authority to the bourgeoisie in the shape of the Provisional Government. Tsereteli and Kerenskiy kept on singing the proposition that "the new revolutionary government would work under the supervision of the

soviet" and that such was the "will of history". The demagogy, the spirit of the times and revolutionary phrases turned the social consciousness toward support for the Provisional Government.

Doing everything for the victory of the bourgeoisie, Kerenskiy wished "in any event" to preserve also the representatives of the dynasty. In one of his articles written while on the run, "Departure of Nicholas II to Tobolsk," the historical timeserver, raised up in an instant by events to the apex of the bourgeois trajectory, wrote: "Contrary to the gossip and insinuations, the Provisional Government not only could have but resolved right at the start of March to dispatch the tsar's family abroad. I myself on 7 (20) March at a session of the Moscow Soviet, responding to the ferocious cries of 'Death to the tsar, execute the tsar,' said:

"This will never happen while we are in power. The Provisional Government has assumed responsibility for the personal safety of the tsar and his family. We will fulfill this obligation in full. The tsar and his family will be sent abroad to England. I myself will take him to Murmansk.

"My statement evoked," Kerenskiy wrote, "in the Soviet circles of both capitals an explosion of indignation... however, in the summer, when the tsar's family's remaining at Tsarskoye Selo had become absolutely impossible, we—the Provisional Government—received a categorical official statement (from Britain—D.V.) that the entry of the former monarch and his family into the British Empire before the war had ended was impossible." It was then that the tsar and his family were sent toTobolsk. Tackling such "assignments" in passing, the Provisional Government was attempting at any price to hamstring the revolution. While endeavoring to retain power for the bourgeoisie, as the same Kerenskiy wrote, they intended giving the people a chance to "talk themselves out".

The revolution was at this time swamped, as it were, by revolutionary phrases. The diarchy dulled vigilance. Officially, all power belonged,seemingly, to the Provisional Government, which had control of the old machinery of state, while alongside the Petrograd Soviet of worker and soldier deputies hummed in a kaleidoscope of revolutionary workaday life. Two dictatorships cohabited alongside one another; neither possessed total power as yet, neither could as yet deprive the other of its attributes.

But the diarchy, like the social ambiguity, could not impede the revolutionary creativity of the masses. For example, the celebrated Order No 1 was published on the Bolsheviks' initiative on 2 March in IZVESTIYA. It proclaimed the introduction of democratic principles in the army: the electivity of committees in the units, abolition of military ranks and titles, support for the orders of the authorities only in the event of approval by the soviets, the need for observance of revolutionary discipline and the equality of civil rights of soldiers and officers. Prince S.P. Mansyrev, former member of the State Duma, writes in his memoirs that Chkheidze categorically maintained that "the order comes not from the Soviet but merely from a certain part therof, and for this reason it should be annulled." However, the efforts of Minister of War Guchkov, Kerenskiy and Chkheidze to disavow the revolutionary document came to nothing. The revolution would abide by its logic, and not the directives and orders of its timeservers.

All this was taking place, I repeat, prior to the arrival of many Bolsheviks in Petrograd. Lenin was as yet only preparing to break through into rebellious Russia, Trotskiy would arrive in the city on the Neva at the start of May, still not knowing conclusively whose side he would be on—the Mensheviks or the Bolsheviks. The Mensheviks and SR's were preponderant in the Petrograd Soviet, and it was with their help that the government, which would later be called a coalition, began ingloriously to function. The Kerenskiy's, Tsereteli's, Chernov's and Skobelev's were concerned for only one thing: how to prevent "the revolutionary energy getting out of control".

All these nuances of the political situation were still unfamiliar toStalin, who was "heading for the revolution". There was no question of where he would put up—at the Alliluyev's. If over the long years of exile he had indeed received letters regularly from anyone, it had evidently been only from Sergey Yakovlevich Alliluyev, his future father in law and a Bolshevik who has gone down in our history primarily for the fact that in the dramatic days of July 1917 he hid at his place V.I. Lenin from the pursuit of the Provisional Government.

Revolutions are not made by parties. "It was not the State Duma—a Duma of landowners and the rich—but *insurgent workers and soldiers who overthrew the tsar,*" V.I. Lenin wrote in March. But at the head of these *insurgents* there had to be *their party.* All Lenin's thoughts were in Russia, where, as he understood, it was not enough to organize a funeral feast on the site of the remnants of the autocracy. It was necessary to go further. Unfailingly further!

A particular part prior to V.I. Lenin's arrival was played by the Central Committee's Russian Bureau, onto which new persons, including I.V. Stalin, had been coopted. The bureau confirmed the composition of the PRAVDA editorial board, of which he became a part also. The resumption of publication of the proletarian paper (legally!) was of tremendous mobilizing significance.

What account did Stalin give of himself in the February and, subsequently, in the October revolutions? What was his real role? Who was he in the revolution: a leader, an outsider, an extra? An analysis of documents, party material and the testimony of participants permits an answer to this question.

For a long time illustration of Stalin's role in the revolution was invented and false. The "Concise Biography" maintained that "in this crucial period Stalin rallied the party to the struggle for the growth of the bourgeois-democratic into a socialist revolution. Together with Molotov Stalin directed the activity of the Bolshevik Central Committee and the St Petersburg Committee. In Stalin's articles the Bolsheviks acquired fundamental guiding directives for their work." He is spoken of as the chief and leader of the revolution who was seemingly *substituting* for Lenin for this period. As historical news items testify, there are absolutely no grounds for such a conclusion, it was exceedingly far from the truth. Stalin issued no guiding "directives". Upon arrival in Petrograd, he became one of many party functionaries of the revolution. Very rarely in documents of this period may one encounter the name of Stalin in the list of the particular group of persons which performed a party Central Committee assignment. Yes, Stalin was a part of high political bodies, but in no sphere of activity in these months did he make his presence strongly felt. Virtually no one, except for a small circle of party members, knew him. He had absolutely no popularity. Such is the truth.

But nor is L.D. Trotskiy accurate in his description of this period of Stalin's activity in his book "The February Revolution". "The position in the party," he pointed out, "had become even more complicated by mid-March, following the arrival from exile of Kamenev and Stalin, who abruptly turned the rudder of official party policy to the right." Trotskiy argues that whereas Kamenev, having remained for a number of years in exile with Lenin, where the main center of the party's theoretical work was located, had matured as an advocacy journalist and orator, Stalin, as a so-called "man of practice" lacking the due theoretical imagination, without broad political interests and without a knowledge of foreign languages, was inseparable from Russian soil. The Kamenev-Stalin faction was increasingly becoming the left flank of so-called "revolutionary democracy" and was becoming familiar with the mechanics of parliamentary-backstage "pressure" on the bourgeoisie. Trotskiy accuses Stalin in his book of defensism, which did not always correspond to the truth. But we cannot fail to discern in his arguments also correct notes concerning the lack of scale of Stalin's pre-October thinking, which at times led to narrow practicalness confined to a framework merely of the immediate future. Stalin also lacked revolutionary passion.

But February did not catch Stalin totally unawares. Despite the long period of depression, he believed that revolution was inevitable. The truth was for him inseparable from belief in it. If truth was not shrouded in the garb of belief, it was for Stalin defective. There is, perhaps, nothing negative in this, but the danger of a manifestation of dogmatic thinking always lurks here. For Stalin belief in programs, courses, decisions, "lines" always helped him preserve firmness and confidence in the soundness of his actions. Whether there would be a revolution or not was not up to him. But that there would be such he never doubted. He simply believed in this. And had always believed that this historic act would occur in his lifetime. But he suddenly had the feeling that the cause to which he had devoted his whole life, as also his personal destiny, had not simply a historic opportunity but something more.

In Secondary Roles

On 12 March Stalin was in Petrograd. Neither he, Kamenev nor Muranov, who had arrived by the same train, were greeted by a crowd. Petrograd was preoccupied with its own revolutionary concerns, the more so in that Stalin was little known even in party circles. Picking up his plywood case, Stalin set off for the Alliluyev's. The same day he met with several Central Committee members. In the evening he was brought into the Central Committee's Russian Bureau and the PRAVDA editorial board.

In fact as of mid-March the leadership of PRAVDA was entrusted to Kamenev, Muranov and Stalin. And in the very first days of their work the newspaper permitted a whole number of noticeable political and theoretical shortcomings, which were not, of course, accidental. Stalin lacked strong independent thinking capacity, a refined position and a clear understanding of the most intricate dialectics of the pre-October danger. He was accustomed to carrying out instructions and could pursue the "line," but here he needed to make the decisions himself. Initially this shortcoming was expressed in Stalin's approval for publication of Kamenev's article "The Provisional Government and Revolutionary Social Democracy," in which Kamenev maintained directly that the party had to support the Provisional Government since it "is truly struggling against the remnants of the old regime." This was manifestly contrary to Lenin's principles.

Literally the following day Kamenev, who was distinguished by "speedwriting," published a further article—"Without Secret Diplomacy"—which in fact took the side of "revolutionary defensism". Inasmuch as the German Army was waging war, the revolutionary people would, Kamenev wrote, "steadfastly remain at their post, answering bullet for bullet and shell for shell. This is indisputable." Such defensist views of Kamenev were not at that time rebuffed on the part of Stalin, who as yet had an inadequate grasp of the intricacies of big politics. This was also manifested, specifically, in the fact that the very next day following Kamenev's material Stalin himself made a political mistake in the article "On the War". While written from antiwar standpoints on the whole, the article nonetheless drew a conclusion which ran counter to Lenin's principles. Stalin saw as a way out of the imperialist war "pressure on the Provisional Government with the demand that it declare its consent to immediately open peace negotiations."

It should be said for fairness' sake that subsequently, in 1924, in his speech at a plenum of the communist faction of the AUCCTU Stalin publicly acknowledged the mistake. Describing his position in respect of the Provisional Government on the question of peace, he said that "this was a profoundly mistaken position for it engendered pacifist illusions, was grist to the mill of defensism and made more difficult the revolutionary education of the masses." Jumping ahead, we would say that whereas in the 1920's there were still individual public acknowledgments by Stalin of his blunders and mistakes, later, as he became "infallible," there would be no question of such.

Not without Stalin's influence, a week after the publication of the article "On the War" the Central Committee Bureau adopted the resolution "On War and Peace," which preserved the idea of "pressure" on the Provisional Government for the purpose of a start on peace negotiations. In Lenin's absence Kamenev's influence in the party organ was strong, and he proved a real "hero" of the interregnum. Defensist, Menshevik tendencies strengthened noticeably in March. Stalin was unable to confront them owing to his limited influence and authority. Even in the absence of Lenin and other prominent party leaders, when the vigorous cohesion of a party which had emerged from clandestine conditions was needed, Stalin was unable to prove his worth. Sverdlov, Kamenev and Shlyapnikov were more noticeable and prominent in that difficult atmosphere of specification of political reference points and determination of tactical routes of the party's movement. Stalin was at the mercy of the wind of events.

I believe that Stalin could not at that time have contemplated what Lenin would be proclaiming in less than a month—the policy of socialist revolution. Stalin saw the revolutionary maneuvers in which he was caught up in March as a goal which had already been achieved. In the 3 weeks from the time of the arrival of Kamenev and Stalin and, subsequently, other leaders also Lenin's absence was felt particularly keenly. Superassignments cannot be accomplished at an average level of intellect and revolutionary passion, and Stalin, who had just arrived from Kureyka, was unable to rise above this level. At this time, the not-unknown Menshevik Sukhanov wrote in his memoirs, "Stalin was no more than a faint, colorless blot on the political scene." The other members of the Bureau—P.A. Zalutskiy, V.M. Molotov (Skryabin), A.G. Shlyapnikov, M.I. Kalinin and M.S. Olminskiy—were also unable on a number of questions to consistently implement the guidelines set forth by Lenin in his "Letters From Afar". It was felt that Stalin, Kamenev and certain other leaders had not rid themselves entirely of the illusions of defensism and faith in the Provisional Government and considered the bourgeois-democratic gains virtually the crown of achievements.

These pre-October episodes of Stalin's vacillation were not without their reasons. Stalin lacked a particular concept of realization of the great idea. The February revolution and the days of the October assault manifested graphically his weak points: "shallow" theoretical training, low capacity for revolutionary creativity and inability (still) to transpose political slogans into specific program principles. No one ever reproached Stalin for having shunned the struggle, sought the easy ways and feared a confrontation with political adversaries, but the attentive investigator would have noticed that he, a professional revolutionary, had even then one, among others, highly vulnerable spot. And he knew it.

When the need to visit a shop, plant, military unit or street meeting arose, Stalin experienced a feeling of inner uncertainty and alarm, which he in time learned to conceal, it is true. He did not like and, perhaps, did not know how to address people well. Testimony of the start of the 1920's adduces the opinion of the worker Kobzev, who heard Stalin during a meeting on Vasilyevskiy Island in April 1917: "Everything that he said was correct, understandable and simple; but his speech somehow did not stick in my mind." It was no accident that Stalin addressed people at gatherings, meetings and demonstrations less than anyone else from among those close to Lenin.

Addressing a crowd and the masses was particularly difficult when Lenin and Trotskiy arrived and when Lunacharskiy, Volodarskiy, Kamenev, Zinovyev and other brilliant orators entered the squares. Trotskiy, for example, "selected" as the permanent venue of his speeches the "Modern" Circus, which was always packed with crowds of people. Trotskiy was frequently borne to the platform by hands over the heads of the crowd. One had the impression that Trotskiy relegated the content of the speech to the background, paying special attention to the emotional aspect of the influence on the audience's consciousness. "In his first weeks in Petrograd," Sukhanov wrote in his notes, "Trotskiy, having finished a speech at the 'Modern,' would rush to the Obukhovskiy plant, from there, to the Trubochnyy, then, to the Putilovskiy, thence, to the Baltiyskiy, from Manezh, to the barracks; it seemed that he was speaking everywhere simultaneously." It was difficult, simply impossible, for Stalin to "compete" with this Cicero of the revolution. Trotskiy became intoxicated with the growth of his popularity and did not shun demagogy, but knew how to ignite people also. Listening to Trotskiy speak at some session or meeting or the other, Stalin always felt a firm dislike for this individual. Trotskiy, on the other hand, particularly prior to the October events, literally "did not notice" Stalin. Once, when Trotskiy was still a Politburo member, Stalin threw out at Tovstukha about him: "Menshevik hypocrite!"

Stalin preferred to write articles and comments and provide newspaper responses in connection with this political event or the other. In the period following his arrival from exile in mid-March through October 1917 Stalin published, for example, in PRAVDA, PROLETARIY, SOLDATSKAYA PRAVDA, PROLETARSKOYE DELO, RABOCHIY I SOLDAT, RABOCHIY,

RABOCHIY PUT and other publications approximately 60 articles and notes. While a mediocre advocacy journalist from the viewpoint of literary style and artistic composition, he was consistent and invariably categorical in his conclusions. He liked religious dogmas, which he rejected in terms of content, for their strict form and clarity. It is not fortuitous, evidently, that everything in his works was fundamentally simple—they contained no abstruse terms, complex definitions and logical contrivances. The majority of his ingenuous articles contained clearly expounded simple truths, which decades later would never have attracted people's attention had their author not been Stalin.

More to his liking was work in "headquarters," in a controlling body, the Bureau, Committee or Soviet. In March even the Central Committee Bureau added to his existing assignments one more: it delegated Stalin to the Petrograd Soviet of worker and soldier deputies. The Bureau met almost daily, discussing the most diverse questions of revolutionary practice, entrusting now to one, now to another of its members increasingly new assignments. Thus Stalin participated in the establishment of regular ties to the party's organizations in the Caucasus and with other regions of the country. Joint organizations of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks had come to be formed in many provinces by this time.

Objectively, our traditional view of the impermissibility of such associations is at times questionable. When this strengthened the revolution in the struggle against the autocracy, and subsequently, against the bourgeoisie, this could evidently be regarded as the practice of political compromise to achieve particular ends. Stalin displayed, in particular, great energy in the breakup and elimination of such joint organizations. But perhaps attempts should have been made to intensify Bolshevik influence on the dissidents? Undoubtedly, when collaboration threatened ideals, program principles and specific gains, this severance was justified. But the concentration of efforts against the Mensheviks and, particularly, against the SR's sometimes did more harm than good. In time this was to become a doubtful tradition. Fascism, for example, had us in the crosshairs of its sights in the 1930's even, but we still saw the social democrats virtually as the "main enemy".

Lenin was dying to be in Russia, but this was very difficult. After having carefully thought through all the possible complications, V.I. Lenin with a group of Russian emigres, among whom was G.Ye. Zinovyev (Radomyslskiy), went from Switzerland through Germany and Sweden into Russia. On 3 April at Beloostrov Station (the first Russian stop) Lenin was being greeted at 9 in the evening by representatives of the Russian Democratic Workers Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee and the St Petersburg Committee and worker delegations. Among those welcoming him were L.B. Kamenev, A.M. Kollontay, I.V. Stalin, M.I. Ulyanova, F.F. Raskolnikov and A.G. Shlyapnikov. Having hardly entered the compartment and having exchanged cordial greetings with Lenin, Raskolnikov recalled, he was thereupon flabbergasted by Ilich's question:

"What are you writing in PRAVDA? I have seen several issues, on account of which we gave you a thorough lashing...." On the journey from Beloostrov to Petrograd Lenin discussed with the comrades who had come to greet him the situation in the party; he expressed to L.B. Kamenev here serious critical remarks about his articles in PRAVDA, with which he had in fact supported the Provisional Government and had in his assessment of the war lapsed repeatedly into defense of the fatherland positions.

The emotion of the greeting of Lenin has been described very extensively in our literature; it was a truly great event. The revolution, the people and the party were greeting their acknowledged leader. Not a god, not a priest, not a political apostle but a genuine leader who possessed colossal intellectual power and unimpeachable moral authority among the revolutionary masses. It is not without interest quoting the description of the greeting of V.I. Lenin by his ideological adversary N.N. Sukhanov (Gimmer), a Menshevik leader and theoretician. In his "Notes on the Revolution" published in 1922-1923, which are, on the whole, of little interest, Sukhanov, who was at the meeting, describes it thus:

"At the Finland Station, into the so-called 'tsar's room' entered or, perhaps, ran Lenin, in a flat cap, with frozen face and carrying a luxuriant bouquet of flowers. Running up to the middle of the room, he stopped in front of Chkheidze, as if coming across an entirely unexpected obstacle. And hereupon Chkheidze, retaining his former morose expression, uttered the following speech of 'welcome,' sustaining well not only the spirit and not only the wording but also the tone of moral admonition: 'Comrade Lenin, on behalf of the St Petersburg Soviet and the entire revolution we welcome you to Russia.... But we believe that the main task of revolutionary democracy (and this was the whole point and main idea of Chkheidze's speech—D.V.) is now the defense of our revolution against all encroachments thereon, from both within and from without.... We hope that you will pursue these goals together with us.' Chkheidze fell silent. I was in a state of surprised bewilderment.

"But Lenin evidently knew full well how to deal with all this. He stood there giving the appearance that none of what was happening concerned him in the least: he looked things over this side and that, glanced at the surrounding faces and even at the ceiling of the 'tsar's room,' straightening his bouquet (which harmonized poorly with his whole figure), and then, having turned his back completely on the Executive Committee delegation, replied thus: 'Dear comrades, soldiers, sailors and workers. I am happy to greet through you the victorious Russian revolution and to greet you as the advanced detachment of the world proletarian army.... The hour is not far off when, in accordance with the call

of our Comrade Karl Liebknecht, the peoples will turn their weapons against their capitalist exploiters.... The Russian revolution which you have accomplished has begun a new era. Long live the world socialist revolution!"

We have quoted this lengthy extract from Sukhanov because even a person who was ideologically profoundly at odds with Lenin could not fail to admiringly note the political wisdom and intellectual elegance of the leader of the Russian revolution.

Following the celebrated speech from the armored car, Lenin and the thousands-strong columns of workers, soldiers and sailors set off for the Bolshevik Central Committee building. This was a majestic nighttime procession of a revolutionary force inspired by the return of the political leader. With this escort Lenin, accompanied by a large group of Central Committee members, arrived at the Kshesinskiy Palace—the "satin nest of a court ballerina" who subsequently lived abroad until the age of 99. Speeches of welcome began once again. This was already too much for Lenin. "Lenin endured the streams of laudatory speeches," Trotskiy writes about this, "like an impatient pedestrian waits beneath a chance doorway for the rain to end. He sensed the sincere joyfulness at his arrival, but was annoyed that this joy was so wordy. The very tone of the official greetings seemed to him imitative, affected, borrowed from petty bourgeois democracy, declamatory, sentimental and feigned. He saw that the revolution, which had not yet defined its tasks and paths, had already created a wearisome etiquette." Lenin finally managed to interrupt this stream of revolutionary expressions and divert the meeting into a worker channel.

Stalin later recalled that "much became considerably clearer" to him in the evening of 3 April. Lenin, who had come "from far away," nonetheless saw and understood better than the others the historic uniqueness of the moment of the Russian revolution. The next day Stalin, listening to Lenin's speech in the Tavricheskiy Palace, proclaiming and commenting upon his celebrated 10 propositions, which have gone down in history as the "April" Theses, was struck time and again by the titanic power of his mind. The theses demolished completely the "wait-and-see" policy and showed the danger of a temporizing, passive course.

However, the acknowledged leader was not for Lenin's associates "untouchable". Not everyone was prepared to accept Lenin's program. Some people said: Lenin has become divorced from Russian reality overseas and has descended to extreme radicalism. Following his cautious report at the March meeting of Bolsheviks, Lenin's conclusions seemed to Stalin a direct reproach. Sukhanov later wrote that "many people were in a spin" following Lenin's speech. Many people, and not only Zinovyev, Kamenev and Trotskiy, as it was subsequently customary for us to think, did not agree with Lenin and criticized and questioned his conclusions. So it was after the revolution also—Lenin himself insisted on this. Expressing one's views plainly was the rule. For example, in May 1919 Antonov-Ovseyenko sent the Central Committee a terse letter disagreeing with Lenin's assessment of the military situation in a sector of the Southern Front. Lenin instructed specialists from the Revolutionary Military Council to draw a competent conclusion.

Lenin was never deified primarily because he himself did not allow this and valued an original, paradoxical, out-of-the-ordinary idea, decision, thought and approach. For this reason Stalin's secret admiration for Lenin's intellectual power was not a tribute of respect to the leader but to a considerable extent a capacity for understanding the novelty of the Leninist idea. Far from everyone, incidentally, was always capable of this. The same brilliant "April Theses" (prior to the party conference) were not supported by a majority of the Petrograd Committee. Lenin repeatedly remained in the minority, but did not make a tragedy out of this, just as he did not emphasize his triumph when a majority was on his side.

A mechanical, automatic majority may be less valuable than a situation wherein various positions, viewpoints and original new approaches are ascertained and disclosed. If I consider myself right, being in a minority is not so terrible. In this case, Lenin said, "it is better to remain alone, like Liebknecht: 1 against 110."

Lenin's theses at the Seventh All-Russian Social Democratic Workers Party Conference (24-29 April 1917) formed the basis of its decisions. It was made public for the first time that 151 conference delegates were representing 80,000 party members. And this handful—compared with Russia's multimillion-strong population—was in the coming months to "shake the world". At the conference Lenin answered with dialectical profundity the questions posed by the Russian revolution—transition from its democratic to socialist stage, the attitude of the proletariat and its party to the war and the Provisional Government, the role of the soviets and the winning of a majority therein and many others.

A heated argument developed at the conference. Kamenev criticized Lenin for allegedly underestimating the opportunities which had taken shape, and for this reason it was necessary to work in a bloc with the Provisional Government. Disagreement withe Lenin was expressed by Smidovich, Rykov, Pyatakov, Milyutin and Bagdatyev. The time would come when all these speeches would be classified by Stalin as "treacherous," "hostile" and "counterrevolutionary". They would necessarily be entered in the list of "crimes". Following A.S. Bubnov's speech on forms of control of the Provisional Government "from above" and "from below," Stalin spoke in support of Lenin's propositions. However, his speech was insipid and unconvincing owing to the feeble line of argument. It is well known that arguments are the muscles of ideas. But Stalin was unable to adduce convincing reasons for the rejection of Bubnov's amendment. More telling was his report on the nationality

issue, which propounded the idea that "organization of the proletariat of this state by nationality will lead to the collapse of the idea of class solidarity." For the proletariat of a multinational state the most correct path was the creation of a single party. For this reason the Bund's proposals concerning so-called "cultural autonomy," the speaker said, were noninternational. Stalin performed his role of "solid man of practice" in conscientious, but lackluster fashion.

Acquainting oneself with the documents of that time, Central Committee decisions, the stenographic accounts of party forums, telegrams of revolutionary authorities, one quickly notices (I am not speaking, of course, of Lenin, who was the whole time at the epicenter of the revolution, wherever it was) that, unlike Zinovyev, Kamenev, Trotskiy (who had arrived in Russia from exile only in May 1917), Bukharin, Sverdlov, Dzerzhinskiy and other active figures, Stalin is mentioned in this material extremely rarely, although the collection of the works of I.V. Stalin and his "Concise Biography" importunately propound the arterial idea that Stalin was always by Lenin's side. For example, volume III of the works asserts directly that "V.I. Lenin and I.V. Stalin directed the work of the Seventh (April) All-Russian Bolshevik Party Conference," "On 10 October the Central Committee formed for leadership of the uprising a seven-man Central Committee Political Bureau headed by V.I. Lenin and I.V. Stalin". "On 24-25 October V.I. Lenin and I.V. Stalin led the October armed uprising". Such assertions, and millions of people were "taught" on the basis thereof for several decades, were incredibly far from the truth.

Returning once again to the minutes, shorthand accounts, diaries and memoirs in which Stalin is mentioned, one concludes that Stalin entered the revolution not as an outstanding personality, dominant influence, fiery tribune and organizer but as an obscure functionary of the party machinery. For example, in a news item prepared by the Commission for the History of the October Revolution in 1924 Stalin is mentioned in 4 months (June-September 1917) only nine times, but, Savinkov, say, more than 40 times, Skobelev, more than 50, and Trotskiy, more than 80 times. It may be argued that such a "statistical" method of evaluating political assertiveness is imperfect. Of course, but it catches some facet of the role of the personality refracted via the prism of public opinion. Yes, Stalin was a member of the Central Committee, worked in PRAVDA and was part of a number of other bodies, councils and commissions, but apart from listing "membership" of various committees, little can be said about the actual content of his activity. The main reason for this situation is, in our view, Stalin's insufficient capacity for *revolutionary creativity.*

He was a good executant, but lacked a rich imagination. It is not fortuitous that at the March Bolshevik meeting Stalin was unable in his report to propose anything constructive other than the warning: "Do not force events." Stalin was unable to advance a single important idea, original solution or new approach. In the 3 weeks prior to Lenin's arrival Stalin, as a member of the Central Committee, had been unable to prove himself a leader of Russian scale. The reason for Vladimir Ilich's popularity and the obscurity of the former exile from Kureyka became graphically clear following Lenin's arrival. Lenin always expressed the *interests of the people,* tackling tasks of the moment, and had a vision of the future. Stalin, on the other hand, was a spokesman for the interests of the apparat and the functionaries. Lenin sought every opportunity for contacts and dialogue with the people's representatives, Stalin confined his contacts to those with repesentatives of organizations and committees.

Of course, the fact that in 1917 Stalin was in the background came not only from his social passiveness but also from the nature of the role of executant which had been prepared for him and for which he had undoubted qualities. Stalin was incapable in the pivotal, turbulent months of 1917 to rise above the ordinary and the commonplace. Many of those alongside him at that time were more prepossessing individuals. It is unlikely that at that time Stalin was consumed with ambitious aspirations. His constant presence in secondary roles slowly, but by degrees, imperceptibly created for him, however, steady political authority among the Bolshevik leaders. At the seventh (April) conference Stalin was reelected to the party Central Committee.

PRAVDA also changed following Lenin's arrival. Vladimir Ilich became editor of the party's central organ. The conciliationist, defense of the fatherland notes which were clearly heard in the paper when it had been led by Kamenev and Stalin disappeared. Lenin attached exceptional significance to the work of PRAVDA. Lenin would spend several hours a day in the building on the embankment of the Moyka (House 32/2), often sitting up until late into the night. Workers, soldiers, sailors and provincial officials of the party came to see him at PRAVDA. A.Ye. Badayev, M.I. Kalinin, M.K. Muranov, M.S. Olminskiy, G.I. Petrovskiy, M.I. Ulyanova and P.F. Kudelli were active contributers to the paper. Stalin also continued to work on the paper, although, it is true, he appeared, as a rule, with short notes, rejoinders and reports on questions of current political events. At that time Stalin met Lenin frequently, now fully sharing his policy of socialist revolution. The March shortcomings of class collaboration and the unstructured nature of Stalin's position on a number of key issues imperceptibly receded into the past, but he remained "the man for commissions".

Armed Uprising

With Lenin's arrival Stalin's role became more defined: he regularly performed assignments of the party leadership. Remaining in the background and infrequently coming within the field of vision of the revolutionary masses, Stalin was a man needed by the leadership when

it came to clandestine matters, the establishment of relations with the committees and the organization of current business at different stages of the preparation for the armed uprising.

The Central Executive Committee of Soviets of Worker and Soldier Deputies elected at the first all-Russian congress (3-24 June) was not Bolshevik, the vast majority of delegates representing SR's and Mensheviks. Together with Lenin, Dzerzhinskiy, Kamenev, Podvoyskiy, Shaumyan and other well-known leaders of the Bolsheviks, Stalin was on the Central Executive Committee also. The decisions of the congress, as of the Central Executive Committee, were compromise decisions. This was manifested particularly following the Provisional Government's breakup of the July peaceful demonstration. It had become clear that the socialist revolution would not be accomplished peacefully. Lenin wrote later that "our party had performed its undoubted duty, marching together with the justly angry masses on 4 July and trying to lend their movement and their protest as peaceful and organized a nature as possible. For on 4 July the peaceful transfer of power to the soviets was still possible." But the SR-Menshevik leaders had already "descended to the very bottom of the repugnant counterrevolutionary pit," consenting to a pact with the Provisional Government, which had thrown troops against the peaceful demonstration. The diarchy was over. A new stage of preparation of the socialist revolution had begun.

As commissioned by the Central Committee, Stalin organized together with other comrades Lenin's move underground. V.I. Lenin had for some time been at S.Ya. Alliluyev's apartment. A meeting was held here on 7 July of party Central Committee members attended, together with Lenin, Nogin, Ordzhonikidze, Stasova and others, by Stalin also. There was an argument over how to respond to the authorities' demand that he give himself up to "justice". It is known that prior to this meeting Lenin had declared: "In the event of a government order for my arrest and confirmation of this order by the Central Executive Committee, I will present myself for arrest at the place appointed for me by the Central Executive Committee." Opinions were divided. Initially many advocated an appearance for trial, given certain assurances on the part of the Central Executive Committee. But Liber and Anisimov (members of the Central Executive Committee, Mensheviks) declared that "they could give no assurances". Under the conditions of the unbridled persecution in the press of Lenin and other leaders of the Bolshevik Party it was becoming clear that reaction was expecting reprisals against the leader. After lengthy discussion, Vladimir Ilich was persuaded to decline to put in a court appearance and go into hiding for a time outside of Petrograd. Stalin, to give him his due, had had no hesitation from the very outset. With a peremptoriness typical of his nature Stalin unequivocally said:

"The cadets would not take him to prison. They would kill him on the way. We must safely hide Comrade Lenin...."

There were more than sufficient grounds for such a statement. In his memoirs Polovtsev, specifically, writes that the officer sent to Terioki to arrest Lenin asked him:

" 'How is this gentleman to be delivered—whole or in pieces?'

"I replied with a smile that people who are arrested often make an attempt to escape...."

Stalin was entrusted with the job of ensuring the dispatch of Lenin to a safe place. Stalin's experience as a conspirator was undoubtedly taken into consideration here. With the help of trusted people the plan for Lenin's departure from Petrograd was carefully formulated and thought through.

At this timme, full of drama and social tension, there occurred in Stalin's personal life an important event: he made the acquaintance of S.Ya. Alliluyev's daughter Nadezhda, his future second wife, who was 22 years younger than him. Stalin had known the Alliluyev family since the end of the 1890's, since his time in Baku. Incidentally, Stalin's daughter, Svetlana Alliluyeva, maintains in "Twenty Letters to a Friend" that in 1903 Stalin had saved his future wife when she, a 2-year-old child, had fallen down the embankment into the sea, and he had pulled her out. For Nadezhda Alliluyeva this legend seemed romantic and not without a touch of mysticism, possibly.

On that memorable evening Nadya, upon returning home, found in her apartment many unfamiliar people. They started to question her carefully about the situation on the streets. The young girl excitedly said that people were saying that those behind the July uprising were none other than "Wilhelm's secret agents," who had already escaped by submarine to Germany and that the principal among them was Lenin. Learning that the hero of her street news was there in the apartment, the young Alliluyeva became terribly embarrassed....

Those present once more concluded that the proposal of Ordzhonikidze and Nogin concerning the nonappearance in court was correct—harsh treatment was being prepared for Lenin. It was decided that V.I. Lenin, after having being made up and given a different outfit, should be sent first to Sestroretsk and then to Finland.

S.Ya. Alliluyev later recalled:

"In the evening we all set off for Primorskiy Station. Yemelyanov went on ahead. He was followed at a short distance by Vladimir Ilich and Zinovyev, and I and Stalin made up the rear. The train was already in the

station... the three who were leaving sat in the rear compartment. Stalin and I waited for the train to depart all right and then went back."

Sergey Yakovlevich Alliluyev allowed some inaccuracies in his reminiscences. Zinovyev was not among the send-off party—he himself had at this time gone underground. The disguised Lenin was accompanied by, in addition to S.Ya. Alliluyev, the worker V.I. Zof and I.V. Stalin. One of Lenin's connecting links with the Central Committee henceforward would be Stalin.

There is every reason to suppose that Lenin had every confidence in him and gave him instructions and advice. Thus Stalin met with Lenin on the eve of the sixth party congress. Naturally, there are no shorthand accounts of these meetings, but the imprint of Lenin's thought and will is on all the most important documents of the congress. Lenin was pleased that the delegates present represented approximately 240,000 party members—a threefold growth of the party in 4 months! The leader of the revolution saw this fact as important evidence and confirmation of the soundness of the adopted course. Lenin's works "The Political Situation," "Slogans," "A Reply" and others formed the basis of the resolutions adopted by the congress. The congress confirmed by a special resolution the soundess of the decision concerning Lenin's nonappearance in court. The line of armed uprising advanced by Lenin was confirmed by the congress.

As of that time Stalin, despite being busy, began to visit the Alliluyev's frequently: he, the hard, cold man, was attracted to the pure and naive half-child, his future wife. On the political scene he was once again barely noticeable. Half of the party had gone underground. In accordance with Lenin's instructions, Sverdlov and Stalin carried out the necessary work. Among the masses Stalin was, as before, unknown, but his role in the Central Committee machinery was enhanced.

Meanwhile events, borne like the barren leaves by the autumnal wind, were stuffing the fabric of pre-October existence. There were routine and cosmic, tragic and truly historic events. We shall neither evaluate them nor comment upon them but merely adduce a few to get a feel for the political coloration of the times. This is how the times were reported by the Petrograd newspapers and how they have been sealed in the archives.

The Sixth Russian Social Democratic Workers Party (Bolshevik) Congress opened on 26 July. Forms had been filled in by 171 persons, and 110 of them here had served prison sentences totaling 245 years, 10 persons had spent 41 years in penal servitude, 150 persons had been arrested a total of 549 times and 27 persons had been in exile for a total of 89 years. At the behest of the Organization Bureau the congress was opened by Olminskiy. Sverdlov, Olminskiy, Lomov, Yurenev and Stalin were elected the presidium, Lenin, Zinovyev, Kamenev, Trotskiy, Kollontay and Lunacharskiy, honorary chairmen.

Eight August 1917. Grand Duke Kirill hoisted above his home the red flag, and Nicholas II, former emperor now, recorded in his diary that he was starting to read "Tartarena from Taraskon".

On 24 August Kerenskiy visited the former tsar in order in conversation to prepare him and his nearest and dearest for "departure for a safe haven". Nicholas (composedly, once again!): "I am not worried. I trust you...."

On 28 August General Kornilov sent to the supreme commander of the Moscow Military District a cable: "At this menacing time, in order to avoid fratricidal war and prevent bloodshed in the streets of the firstcapital I order you to submit to me and henceforward carry out my commands." The supreme commander replied: "I read with horror your order not to submit to the legitimate government. The start of fratricidal war has been determined by you, and this means, as I have told you, the death of Russia. We could and should have changed our policy, but not undermined the people's last forces at the time of breach of the front. I will not change my oath like a glove...."

On 10 October, after a long interval, Lenin attended a session of the Central Committee. The session was held in the apartment of the Menshevik Sukhanov, whose wife was a Bolshevik. Sverdlov presided. Lenin affirmed: "The majority is now with us. Politically, things are absolutely ripe for the transfer of power.... We need to discuss the technical aspect. This is all it amounts to."

On 12 October a report that Sukhomlinov's trial was over appeared in RECH. He had been given indefinite penal servitude, but his wife had been acquitted.

A meeting of the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee with representatives of two party organizations was held on 16 October in Petrograd. Several pages from the Central Party Archives tell us about this meeting. Present were Lenin, Zinovyev, Kamenev, Stalin, Trotskiy, Sverdlov, Uritskiy, Dzerzhinskiy, Sokolnikov and Lomov. Bokiy from the Petrograd Committee reported on the readiness and mood in the districts: "There is no militant mood as yet, but preparations for action are under way. In the event of action, the masses will support it."

Krylenko from the Military Bureau reported that they had a sharp difference in assessment of the mood. People in the regiments were on our side to a man.

Bokiy spoke once again, then Volodarskiy, Rovich, Shmidt, Shlyapnikov, Skrypnik, Sverdlov and other members of the Central Committee. Stalin remained silent....

The question of an armed uprising was discussed. The following resolution, proposed by Lenin, was adopted: "The meeting calls on all organizations and all workers and soldiers for comprehensive and the most earnest preparations for an armed uprising...." There were 19 votes for the resolution, 2 against. A practical center for the organizational preparation of the uprising was elected composed of Bubnov, Dzerzhinskiy, Uritskiy, Sverdlov and Stalin.

RABOCHIY PUT reported that "the Russian revolution has brought low many authorities. Its power is expressed, incidentally, in the fact that it has not bowed down to 'big names' and has put them to use or cast them into nonexistence, if they have been unwilling to learn from it. There is a whole string of them, these 'big names,' subsequently rejected by the revolution: Plekhanov, Kropotkin, Breshkovskaya, Zasulich and all the old revolutionaries in general who are notable merely for the fact that they are 'old'. We fear that the laurels of these 'pillars' are giving Gorkiy no peace. We fear that Gorkiy has been 'fatally' attracted to them, as a lost cause. Well, he's entitled! The revolution can neither pity nor bury its dead...."

In the evening of 24 October V.I. Lenin went from the Vyborg District to the Smolnyy, to the Military-Revolutionary Committee. The same night a detachment of cadets showed up at House No 6 on Finlyandskiy Boulevard for the purpose of arresting the editors of the RABOCHIY PUT newspaper and V.I. Lenin, but it was disarmed by a Red Guard detachment and escorted to the Fortress of Peter and Paul. A meeting of the Central Committee was held the same day. The following items were examined: a report of the Military-Revolutionary Committee; a congress of soviets; a Central Committee plenum. Kamenev proposed that today not a single member of the Central Committee leave the Smolnyy without a special decision. Trotskiy considered it necessary to organize a western headquarters in the Fortress of Peter and Paul and to send a Central Committee member there to this end. Kamenev submitted a proposal that, in the event of the Smolnyy being crushed, it was necessary to have a defensive position point on the "Avrora". Stalin was not at the meeting....

In the night of the 25th the Military-Revolutionary Committee switched to an assault of the Winter Palace, where the Provisional Government was holed up....

Twentyfive October. The Nikolayevskiy Station and the lighting establishments were occupied. The cruiser "Avrora" approached and dropped anchor at the Nikolayevskiy Bridge. The Pavlovskiy Regiment set up pickets on Millionnaya Street, near the Winter Palace, stopped everyone, made arrests and sent people to the Smolnyy Institute. A team of sailors occupied the State Bank without resistance. The Petrograd Cossack regiments refused to act in support of the Provisional Government. The telephones of the headquarters and the Winter Palace were cut off. The Varshavskiy Station was taken. Political prisoners were released from the "Kresty". Subunits of the Izmaylovskiy Regiment occupied the Mariinskiy Palace and demanded that members of the representative parliament vacate the premises. The Pavlovskiy Regiment occupied Nevskiy Boulevard. What Stalin was doing is not known.

An emergency session of the Petrograd Soviet of Worker and Soldier deputies began at 14.35 hours under the chairmanship of Trotskiy. To noisy applause Trotskiy declared that the Provisional Government no longer existed, the representative parliament had been dissolved, prisoners had been set free and radio messages had been sent to the army in the field concerning the fall of the old authorities. The fate of the Winter Palace was to be decided in the next few hours. Then, greeted by a stormy ovation, Lenin, who was appearing in public for the first time after a long interval, spoke:

"Comrades! The worker-peasant revolution, about the need for which the Bolsheviks have been speaking all along, has been accomplished!"

It is known that the organizational preparation of the uprising had been entrusted to the Military-Revolutionary Center composed of Central Committee members (five persons, including Stalin) and also the Military-Revolutionary Committee attached to the Petrograd Soviet, which performed an immense amount of work on mobilizing the revolutionary forces for the decisive assault. In his historic letter of 24 October to the members of the Central Committee Lenin had urged the party leadership:

"It is necessary at all costs this evening, this night to arrest the government, having disarmed (defeated, if they resist) the cadets and so forth.

"We cannot wait! All could be lost!!

"...The government is vacillating. It must be *finished off at all costs!*

"Delay in action could mean death!"

Lenin's call found abundant soil in the public mind—the socialist revolution was accomplished triumphantly. Its first results were enshrined at the Second All-Russian Congress of Worker and Soldier Deputies, which opened in the evening of 25 October. Elected as the congress' presidium were the Bolsheviks Lenin, Zinovyev, Trotskiy, Kamenev, Sklyanskiy, Nogin, Krylenko, Kollontay, Rykov, Antonov-Ovseyenko, Ryazanov, Muranov, Lunacharskiy and Stuchka and also the left SR's Komkov, Spiridonov, Kakhovskaya, Mstislavskiy, Zaks, Karelin and Gutman. In the events of these days Stalin

simply went missing. On the Military-Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, he was engaged in carrying out Lenin's current assignments, transmitted circular instructions to the committees and took part in the preparation of material for the press. In not one of the archives documents with which I acquainted myself concerning these history days and nights is his name mentioned. Stalin was like the "invisible man"....

Martov attempted at the congress to propose a resolution on the need for a peaceful solution of the crisis; the SR Gendelman imposed on behalf of the Socialist Revolutionary Party Central Committee a resolution condemning the "seizure of power" (but even among the SR's it collected only 60 votes in favor to 93 against), and the Bund opposed the seizure of power, as did the right SR's. Internationalist Mensheviks and other groupings walked out of the congress. Meanwhile by two in the morning the Winter Palace had been occupied. Hardly any mention is made today to the general reader of the names of former ministers of the Provisional Government Kishkin, Palchinskiy, Rutenberg, Bernatskiy, Verderevskiy, Manikovskiy, Salazkin, Maslov and others, who on the orders of Antonov-Ovseyenko were imprisoned in the Trubetskoy Bastion of the Fortress of Peter and Paul. And the congress went on right until morning....

John Reed described its atmosphere as follows: all around—between the columns, on the window sills, on every step leading to the stage and on the edge of the stage itself—was the audience, also consisting of ordinary workers, ordinary peasants and ordinary soldiers. Bayonets bristled among the audience here and there. Exhausted Red Guards, girded with cartridge belts, were sleeping on the floor by the columns. The hall was not heated, live heat coming merely from the bodies, and hoar-frost was appearing on the glass of the high windows. The air was bluish from tobacco smoke and people's breath.

The celebrated Lenin decrees on land and peace were adopted at this congress. The congress elected the 101-man All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK), in which the Bolsheviks had 62 seats, but unity in the party leadership was lacking. Kamenev, Zinovyev, Nogin and Milyutin believed it necessary to share power with the other groupings. As a condition of the formation of a coalition socialist government the conciliators demanded the removal therefrom of Lenin and Trotskiy. A bitter political struggle developed. On Lenin's side were Bubnov, Dzerzhinskiy, Stalin, Sverdlov, Stasova, Trotskiy, Ioffe, Sokolnikov and Muranov, some of whom were in the future to swing repeatedly away from the party "line".

How did Stalin conduct himself in the critical October days? Why is his name encountered extremely seldom in revolutionary news items, although he was regularly, almost always, a member of various executive bodies?

First, some testimony. This is how Stalin's role in the revolution is assessed by the "Concise Biography of I.V. Stalin". It says that "Lenin and Stalin were the inspiration and organizers of the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution. Stalin was Lenin's closest comrade in arms. He was directly in charge of the entire business of preparation of the uprising. His directive articles were reprinted by the regionalBolshevik newspapers. Stalin summoned the representatives of the regional organizations, briefed them and outlined the operational assignments for individual regions. On 16 October the Central Committee elected the Party Center for Leadership of the Uprising headed by Comrade Stalin." And that's actually all there is. The apologetics areclear: only Lenin and he, Stalin. He led in no other manner than by way of "summonses" and "briefings," but this is to take things from the practice and terminology of the 1930's. It was difficult for the authors of the biography to say anything specific for at the time of the revolutionary apogee Stalin was "leading" nothing, "directing" nothing and "briefing" nobody but merely episodically carrying out Lenin's day-to-day assignments and the decisions of the Petrograd Soviet Military-Revolutionary Committee. He was an obscure functionary.

Stalin continued to write short articles commenting on party decisions. Indeed, on 24 October, when Kerenskiy ordered the closure of the party's central organ, RABOCHIY PUT, Stalin, with a detachment of Red Guards, adopted measures to defend the proletarian paper. In the afternoon of 24 October the issue was carrying an inexpressive article by Stalin, wholly at odds with the spirit of the times, entitled "What Must We Do?" in which he continued to speak of the need for the convening of a constituent assembly. In fact Stalin's article somehow echoed the letter of sorry renown of Zinovyev and Kamenev "The Current Moment" of 11 October, in which these two pendular figures opposed the Central Committee decision concerning the preparation of an armed uprising. Zinovyev and Kamenev had written that "we are holding a revolver to the head of the bourgeoisie" and that it would not be in a position under this threat to frustrate a constituent assembly. Stalin also on the eve of the uprising deemed it possible to return once more to the idea of "constituenting". He was proving simultaneously, it is true, that "it is essential to replace the Kishkin-Konovalov government with a government of a soviet of worker, soldier and peasant deputies."

Stalin was a member of the first Soviet government, becoming people's commissar for nationality affairs. But while a member of the "iron ring" of party leaders deciding upon all the most important issues of the revolution, in not a single undertaking in 1917 did Stalin once display important initiative and creative originality and did not put to the Central Committee any original idea. Here was a person from the second or third echelon of the leadership, and all subsequent glorification concerning Stalin's exceptional role in the revolution fails to correspond to reality. This role was concocted.

While a part of almost every conceivable revolutionary body, Stalin meanwhile was responsible specifically for virtually nothing. But his attentive, persistent gaze saw a great deal. He was astounded by the energy of Trotskiy, the diligence of Kamenev and the impulsiveness of Zinovyev. On several occasions Stalin saw also Plekhanov, toward whom for some reason or other he nurtured a feeling resembling respect. He was struck by Plekhanov's abrupt words at a meeting: "Russian history has not yet ground the flour from which the wheaten cake of socialism will be baked."

As we know, the brilliant propagandist of Marxism and a founder of the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party did not stop at this. Plekhanov called Lenin's April Theses "gibberish" and condemned the October socialist revolution and, subsequently, the Brest Peace also. Rejected by the blind impulses of revolution, Plekhanov, disenchanted with a reality which did not "correspond" to his theory, retired to Finland. He could not accept October but nor had he any desire to fight against it. His political principles were moral ones.

When, on 4 June 1918, at a joint session of the VTsIK, the Moscow City Soviet and professional and worker organizations of Moscow, attended by Lenin also, the deceased Plekhanov was remembered by a minute's silence, Stalin was amazed. For him a person who had expressed public disagreement with his cause became an enemy for all time. In the same way he considered excessive at this session the funeral speech of Trotskiy and Zinovyev's obituary notice in PRAVDA. For Stalin the revolution was only *struggle*. Either or. Either ally or enemy. Stalin's binary logic, if he was not prepared to support one side, allowed only of temporizing, nothing more. In his heart Stalin called the respects paid the deceased Plekhanov "liberalism" unworthy of revolutionaries. His party comrades would have further opportunities to see for themselves the consistency of the future "leader's" beliefs.

Three years after the October armed uprising a group of participants in those events gathered for a reminiscing party on 7 November 1920. Stalin had been invited also, but he had no wish to participate in the party. Many people came, including Trotskiy, Sadovskiy, Mekhonishin, Podvoyskiy, Kozmin and other participants in the events. A stenographic account of this evening has been preserved. There were very frequent reminiscences about Lenin, talk about Trotskiy and mentions of Kamenev, Kalinin, Zinovyev, Nogin, Sverdlov, Lomov, Rykov, Shaumyan, Markin, Lazimir, Chicherin, Valden and other creators of the birth of the new world. It occurred to no one to mention the name of Stalin either in connection with the activity of the Military Revolutionary Committee and the conflict over the withdrawal from the garrison or in the light of the Bolsheviks' work among the soldiers and sailors. Yet almost all the abovementioned and many, many others rushed in those historic hours to the "Avrora," intercepted the bicyclist battalions summoned by Kerenskiy and organized the capture of the bank, the telegraph office and the stations. Stalin remained for everyone an obscure extra incapable of revolutionary creativity.

The future autocrat felt his "obscurity" and insignificance very sensitively. In the 1930's Stalin was able to listen with composure about October only in the light of the activities of the "two leaders". Initially the genuine heroes of the revolution were "subjected" to suppression, "historical purge" and correction, but subsequently, in the tragic years of 1937-1939, were removed physically also. By the 1940's the active leaders of the October armed uprising could be counted on the fingers of one hand. There remained, as a rule, those who had created the leader's new "October biography". The fewer the veterans of the revolution became, the more exaggeratedly Stalin's role in the October days was portrayed.

Naturally, Trotskiy, who after 1929 had made Stalin the main target of his critical findings, writes about the October period of Stalin's activity very slightingly. He maintains in his work "The Stalin School of Falsifications" that at meetings in 1917 Stalin remained silent, as a rule, and kept to the official track laid down by Lenin, "but we do not find in him a single independent thought, a single generalization on which one could dwell. Whenever an opportunity presented itself, Stalin would stand between Kamenev and Lenin." Trotskiy evidently refers here to the several occasions when Stalin, while supporting Lenin, at the same time attempted to defend Kamenev with his political zigzags, in the press included. Quite friendly relations were maintained for some time between Stalin and Kamenev after their return from the Turukhanskiy exile. Subsequently, particularly in the 1930's, both Kamenev and Zinovyev would attempt at the tragic moments for themselves to force Stalin to remember the old "friendship," but they did not know him well....

After the death of Lenin, Trotskiy published an essay on the departed leader. On one page of his work he quotes the following dialogue:

" 'What,' Vladimir Ilich once asked me shortly after 25 October, 'if they kill us, will Sverdlov and Bukharin be able to cope?'

" 'Perhaps they will not kill us,' I replied, laughing.

" 'The devil only knows,' Lenin said and himself burst out laughing.

"Following the appearance of the essay... the members of the then 'threesome'—Stalin, Zinovyev and Kamenev—felt mortally offended by my lines, although they made no attempt to dispute that they were correct. It remains a fact: Lenin did not name among his successors this trio, but only Sverdlov and Bukharin. Other names simply did not occur to him."

Trotskiy subsequently quotes this same fragment in volume two of his memoirs "My Life". They should hardly be taken completely on trust, knowing the ambition and love of power of Trotskiy, who in his heart believed that only he could be Lenin's "successor" on the path of party leader. It may with equal justification be assumed that Trotskiy was attempting with hindsight in 1924 to consolidate his positions and reputation in the power struggle.

It is known that Stalin always reacted very sensitively to any information filtering into the press which threw light on his more than modest role in October. It was to a considerable extent these motives which dictated Stalin's speech in November 1924 at an AUCCTU plenum, which was published as a separate brochure by the State Publishing House only in 1928. In his speech Stalin analyzed as follows the role of Trotskiy in the October armed uprising. "Yes," Stalin said, "Trotskiy fought well at the time of October. But in the October period it was not only Comrade Trotskiy who fought well, even such people as the left SR's, who at that time stood side by side with the Bolsheviks, fought pretty well also. But, one wonders, when Lenin proposed the election of a practical center to lead the uprising, why did he not recommend for it Trotskiy but proposed Sverdlov, Stalin, Dzerzhinskiy, Bubnov and Uritskiy. As you can see," Stalin continued, "the 'inspiration,' 'principal figure' and 'sole leader of the uprising'—Trotskiy—did not figure in the center. How to reconcile this with the popular opinion concerning Comrade Trotskiy's special role?" Once again Stalin was juggling the facts here. The course of the uprising was led by the Military Revolutionary Committee, not the practical center.

As we can see, several years after the revolution two well-known party figures were attempting on the one hand to emphasize their particular role in the accomplishment of the armed uprising and, on the other, to belittle the contribution of their political and personal opponent. Although at the time of October there could not have been a phenomenon which would later be called cabinet leadership, Stalin's role was confined to the preparation of Central Committee instructions and directives and their transmission to the revolutionary authorities. There is not a single piece of documentary evidence of his direct participation in combat operations and the organization of armed detachments of the revolution and journeys to the units, the ships and the plants with the assignment of raising the masses to the accomplishment of specific tactical and strategic assignments. By the will of circumstances Stalin found himself in the headquarters of the revolution, on its central stage, but... as an extra. The intellectual gifts, moral attractiveness, burning enthusiasm and bubbling energy so loved by revolutionary times were lacking in him. In the revolution, at its epicenter, there was always the figure of Lenin. Much lower, Trotskiy. Lower still, Zinovyev, Kamenev, Sverdlov, Dzerzhinskiy, Bukharin... After them, the entire cohort of Bolsheviks of the Lenin school, somewhere in whose ranks was Stalin. There were no "two leaders" in the revolution. If, let us say, Krestinskiy, Radek, Rakovskiy, Rykov, Tomskiy, Serebryakov and dozens of other Bolsheviks had been told in 1917 that 15 years later the "official history" would report that the revolution had been led by two leaders—Lenin and Stalin—they would, I believe, have considered this not even a joke but gibberish. But, alas! History and its flow are irreversible. Only in our minds can these questions be put to those who departed long since.... Stalin became an antedated "hero".

Although Stalin had been a party member since the end of the 1890's, a member of the Central Committee since 1912 and a member of various soviets, committees and editorial offices and people's commissar for nationalities, all this created for him only official (bureaucratic, in a certain sense) status among the revolutionaries. Stalin's presence at numerous sessions, meetings and conferences kept his name at the level of a person who was a part of the highest echelons of leadership. All this enabled him to get to know and study a wide range of people, grasp in greater depth the mechanism of staff work and gain political experience. And, what is most important, Stalin, as he hoped, had succeeded in gaining V.I. Lenin's opinion about him as a dependable political worker capable not only of rectilinear decisions and actions characteristic of an ordinary executant but also of skillful compromise, maneuvering and selection of the main component in the wide spectrum of emerging problems. In the October Bolshevism Stalin was a centrist who knew how to wait and see and adapt.

Russia burst its banks into the October Revolution. The social flood swept all from its path. The main month of the main year of the new history of Soviet Russia proved exceptionally turbulent and triumphal for the Bolsheviks. A comparatively small party still on the eve of 1917 had in several months become a powerful political force. However, the "honeymoon" was too brief. Problems which had seemingly been deferred made their presence felt at the end of the unforgettable year in menacing, mortal dangers. Upon seizing power the Bolsheviks promised the people land, bread and peace. They began to give out the land. The land gave hope of bread. But peace was not up to the Bolsheviks alone; just as it is impossible to applaud with one hand, so peace cannot be achieved by just one side. A just, democratic peace without annexations and contributions even less... How to achieve it if the Hapsburg and Hohenzollern hordes were already trampling Russia's western lands?

The leader of the revolution displayed unprecedented perspicacity and willpower. If we do not sign a peace, burdensome and unjust, "the peasant army, intolerably depleted by the war, will after the first defeats—not in months but in weeks, most likely—overthrow the socialist government." It was thus a question of the fate of the revolution. At the Central Committee meeting on the question of peace there was a clash of two polar viewpoints—those of Lenin and the left communists.

We know that Trotskiy, who at this stage headed the Soviet delegation at Brest-Litovsk, surprisingly took a reckless step, despite the fact that the correlation of forces in the Central Committee had by the time of his departure changed in favor of peace. At the meeting on 10 February 1918, following a short debate on individual issues, Trotskiy suddenly announced a breaking off of the negotiations. "Our plowman soldier," he said, "must return to his plowland to peacefully cultivate this spring even the land which the revolution has transferred from the landowner to the peasant. Our worker soldier must return to the workshop to make there not implements of destruction but implements of creation.... We are quitting the war and giving the order for our demobilization of our armies.... In connection with this statement," Trotskiy continued, "I hand over the following written and signed declaration:

" 'In the name of the Soviet of People's Commissars and the government of the Russian Federative Republic it is hereby conveyed to the governments and peoples at war with us and to allied and neutral countries that, renouncing the annexationist treaty, Russia, for its part, declares the state of war with Germany, Austro-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria at an end.

" 'The Russian forces are simultaneously being ordered to fully demobilize along the entire front.

" 'People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, L. Trotskiy.

" 'Delegation members: V. Karelin, A. Ioffe, M. Pokrovskiy, A. Bitsenko.

" 'Chairman of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, Medvedev.'"

Speaking 3 days later at a meeting of the VTsIK, Trotskiy attempted to show that his decision would "revolutionize" the workers movement in the West and that the "no peace, no war" slogan was supported by the German soldiers even.

The notorious "no peace, no war" slogan opened to the aggressor the way deep into Russia. Historically and to this day authorship of this phrase is attributed to Trotskiy. However, back in April 1917 Paleologue, the French ambassador in Petrograd, had assessed in his dispatch to Paris the Russian ally's military possibilities thus: "In the present phase of the revolution Russia can neither conclude a peace nor fight a war." Whether Trotskiy knew of the "precedence" of the French ambassador's assessment it is hard to say. Lenin insisted on acceptance of Germany's predatory terms for doing otherwise would have meant perdition. The decision to sign the peace was adopted by seven votes to four. Without discussion, G.Ya. Sokolnikov signed the protocol on peace on 3 March.

Stalin's position looked pallid. Let us say plainly that his role was, for the most part, passive not so much owing to his disagreement with this position or the other but simply by virtue of the insufficient clarity for him of this entire complex and dynamic problem. On 23 February, for example, at the Central Committee meeting, when Lenin, for the purpose of putting pressure on his comrades, threatened (at a critical moment!) to quit the government and the Central Committee in the event of his proposal concerning the signing of a peace being turned down, Stalin wavered and vacillated, succeeding, it is true, in asking: "does not resignation from office mean actual resignation from the party?"—to which Lenin replied in the negative.

Trotskiy portrays the situation as follows. Stalin lacked a clear-cut position on this most acute issue. "He temporized and schemed. The old man is still hoping for peace, he nodded to me in Lenin's direction, his peace will not come off. He then went to Lenin and probably made the same remarks about me. Stalin never spoke out. No one was particularly interested in his contradictions. There is no doubt that my main concern: making our behavior on the question of peace as comprehensible as possible to the world proletariat was for Stalin a secondary matter. He was interested in 'peace in one country,' as, subsequently, 'socialism in one country'. In the decisive vote he sided with Lenin. Only several years later, in the interests of combating Trotskiyism, did he formulate for himself something resembling a 'viewpoint' on the Brest events." In his speech at the seventh party congress Trotskiy declared:

"I abstained from the voting in the Central Committee when this most important question was being decided for two reasons: first, because I do not believe this attitude or other of ours toward this question decisive for the fate of our revolution.... On the question of where the greater opportunities lie: there or here, I believe that the greater opportunities are not on the side on which Comrade Lenin stands.... Only Comrade Zinovyev has held to the viewpoint of an immediate signing of a peace from the very outset." Speaking of those who insisted on signing the peace, Trotskiy declared that this way had "certain real opportunities. However, it is a dangerous way, which could lead to life being spared, but its meaning renounced."

Lenin was not afraid of the charges of "capitulatory conduct," "retreat" and "surrendering to the tender mercies of imperialism" which were showered on him by the left SR's, left communists, phrasemongers and people who had a rectilinear, primitive understanding of the essence of revolutionary honor. Stasova, Sverdlov, Sokolnikov, Smilga and Kamenev thought the same way as he at this dramatic time. At the time of decisive votes Stalin was with Lenin, but, I repeat, it was clear that in this bitter game also he played the part of a political extra.

The Russian Vendee

The leaders of October frequently sought in their speeches analogies and examples from the history of the Great French Revolution. At the start of 1918, less than 6 months after the victorious October uprising, they had a reason to recall the Vendee—a vast region in Western France between Brittany and the Loire. In June 1793 the Vendee revolted. The new is never accepted simultaneously by everyone, and for illiterate peasants spurred on by cornered wealthy property owners and a fanatical clergy the revolution seemed a mysterious monster devouring indiscriminately all that had become established and habitual. Bloody internecine strife enveloped Brittany, Normandy, Poitiers, Bordeaux and Limoges. Vendee became the epicenter of provincial counterrevolution. "The Vendee turned," P.A. Kropotkin observed, "into a festering wound of the republic," becoming a symbol of brutal civil war intensified by foreign intervention. A domestic Vendee was brewing in Soviet Russia.

The breathing-space was brief. Foreign military intervention, which revived hope in the bourgeoisie and the landowners of revenge, began as early as March-April 1918. Rebellions and counterrevolutionary protests of White officers, Cossacks, kulaks and nationalists were everywhere. Devastated by 4 years of war, the country found itself not only in a ring of fire, it was itself entirely engulfed in the flames of war. The republic did not have borders, only fronts.

Paris, London, Berlin, Tokyo, Washington and dozens of other of the world's capitals were sure: Russia is in her death throes. One of the biggest emigre waves pertains to this time. The bourgeois, landowners, industrialists, professors, considerable numbers of the artistic intelligentsia and important government officials left Russia. In their articles, statements and appeals many of them vividly described not only the horror which had hit the country following the seizure of power by the "exultant lout" but also predicted the swift end of the soviets. Writing several years later in connection with the publications in the White Guard DNI, M.I. Kalinin wrote in IZVESTIYA: "Now you are victims bearing the adversities of civil war, but even your adversities, however great they seem to you, are a drop in the ocean of the people's suffering from 1914 to 1917. You did not see the people's torments, you drowned them out with patriotic howling."

The end of Soviet power seemed quite close, the more so in that a real hunt for the commissars had begun. In Petrograd the SR Kenegisser felled Uritskiy with a bullet; in July Nakhimson, the well-known commissar of the Lettish riflemen, was murdered by White Guards; Pershin, commissar for food of the Turkestan Republic, was slain by insurgents in Tashkent. The counterrevolution struck the most dreadful blow in 1918 in Moscow: the SR Fanni Kaplan shot at Lenin following a speech to workers of the Mikhelson Plant.

A boundary of blood was splitting Russia. The Vendee of civil war, when brother could attack brother and a father would fight with his sons, engulfed long-suffering Russia. It was as if the words of Jean Jaures addressed to the Vendee of 1793 had been written to describe the civil war in Russia: "How many towering passions are flaring up in these cities which have felt the knifepoint virtually at their very hearts! What hatred will break out tomorrow! How much repression of both the enemy and those who are suspected of being his accomplices who helped him by active endeavors or their inertia!" In terms of its bitterness and implacability the civil war in Russia was akin to a profound class hatred which split the people into two hostile camps. Life became cheaper. The class call was stronger than compassion, pity, wisdom and good sense. The country was awash with the blood of compatriots. This war was fought not only by the armed forces of the rival classes, a large part of the population actually participated also. The main catalyst of and inspiration behind this war was the foreign military intervention. "World imperialism," V.I. Lenin specified, "which brought about, essentially, the civil war in our country, is guilty of prolonging it also...." The Central Committee declared martial law in the country and formed the Republic Revolutionary Military Council headed by Trotskiy. Vatsetis was appointed commander of the armed forces, who would be replaced by S.S. Kamenev. In response to the white terror the red terror began.

In the civil war Stalin was more noticeable. Although in secondary roles, as before, the assignments of Lenin and the Central Committee were now more complex and crucial. Tsaritsyn had come to play an important part on the right flank of the Eastern Front by mid-1918, and not so much from military considerations as from food difficulties. Stalin was dispatched there as special Central Committee representative for food supply. On 31 May V.I. Lenin signed a Sovnarkom decree of 29 and 30 May 1918 on the appointment of I.V. Stalin and A.G. Shlyapnikov general leaders of food affairs in Southern Russia endowed with special rights. Lenin had already formed a firm opinion of one of the Soviet Government's people's commissars as a dependable executant. The taciturn man of the Caucasus seldom asked questions, never publicly questioned the decisions adopted by the Central Committee and composedly set about any assignment. He was content, seemingly, with the role of obscure, but reliable functionary which had been carved out for him. Stalin received just as serenely his assignment to Tsaritsyn. Prior to his departure south, he was informed that in addition to the Sovnarkom decree Lenin had ordered S.I. Aralov, an executive of the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs, to earmark a detachment of 400 men (including, obligatorily, 100 Lettish riflemen) to be dispatched together with Stalin.

Stalin had at once to tackle military assignments: Tsaritsyn was in a tight ring of Cossak encirclement. He headed the district military council, and the military council quickly succeeded in uniting scattered units,

conducting mobilization, forming several new divisions, a number of special units and an armored train column and in creating operational home guard detachments. At Stalin's request Lenin sent an urgent telegram to the Water Transport Main Administration ordering the immediate and unquestioning fulfillment of all orders and injunctions of People's Commissar I.V. Stalin, special representative of the Sovnarkom.

Tsaritsyn was declared to be in a state of siege. For some time prior to the relative stabilization of the situation Stalin acted as a military dictator. He did not manifest a mood of panic in his daily telegrams to Moscow demanding shells, cartridges and arms: "With a revolutariony hand we will bring order to bear and will hold the front." In his headquarters Stalin would write a large number of "papers" with instructions to the units and institutions under his jurisdiction, simultaneously demanding help from the center. Thus to a Stalin telegram of 9 June 1918 requesting the additional shipment of money and goods for grain procurement Lenin responded to him concerning the measures which were being adopted in this respect and requested protection of the trains and the arrest of saboteurs and hooligans. Stalin would often address Lenin directly with petty, routine questions over the heads of the commanders, the commanding officer and the Republic Revolutionary Military Council.

Tsaritsyn's position strengthened when units of the former 5th Army commanded by Voroshilov had forced their way through here from the Donbass. It is interesting to note that Stalin did not send his dispatches to Trotskiy, although he was operationally under his jurisdiction. The majority of Stalin's telegrams were characterized by an absence of profound generalizations, political evaluations and forecasts. They were, if it may be so put, particularly empirical. As a result of the measures which had been adopted Tsaritsyn had quickly prepared itself for a siege. Despite the assistance to Denikin on the part of the treacherous former tsarist officer Nosovich, the assault on Tsaritsyn was unsuccessful for the White Guards. Subsequently Tsaritsyn, like other places in which Stalin spent time during the civil war, was to acquire not simply legendary but mystical significance even in our history.

Lacking operational and tactical knowledge, at the critical moments of the battle for Tsaritsyn Stalin displayed dictatorial ways and a "firm hand". In a memorandum to the center Stalin wrote: "I am chasing and cursing all who need it and I hope that we will soon restore the situation. You may be sure that we will spare no one—neither ourselves nor others—and will produce the grain. Had our military 'experts' (shoemakers!) not been sleeping and not been loafing, the line of the front would not have been breached. And if it is restored, it will not be thanks to the military but in spite of them." The treachery of Nosovich and a number of other former officers of the tsarist army increased Stalin's already suspicious attitude toward the military experts. The people's commissar, endowed with special powers in questions of food, did not conceal his distrust of experts. He had supporters. It was not fortuitous that in his speech on the military question at the eighth party congress V.I. Lenin condemned the partisan movement and said unequivocally that "the regular army must be at the forefront, and we need to switch to a regular army with military specialists." Stalin did not take issue with Lenin, but even at the end of the 1930's the corporate affiliation of the red commander to the tsarist officer body in the past served as an aggravating circumstance.

The Southern Front Revolutionary Military Council composed of I.V. Stalin, K.Ye. Voroshilov, Tsaritsyn Soviet Chairman S.K. Minin and Front Commander P.P. Sytin did not work harmoniously. Stalin believed that decisions, even insignificant ones, should be adopted collectively, but Sytin, as commander, attempted, in accordance with military logic, to avoid the endless "coordination" and "clarification" of decision-making. Stalin made it understood in Moscow that Sytin was not to be trusted. Sytin responded in a special memorandum to the Republic Revolutionary Military Council, in which he maintained that Minin, Stalin and Voroshilov were inhibiting his activity as commander of the front, demanding the coordination of all, even trifling, issues with the military council, which was severely complicating operational command. Stalin gained the upper hand—at the start of November Sytin was recalled as commander. As a result of numerous telegrams to Lenin and the Republic Revolutionary Military Council Stalin ultimately obtained authority with which he put the military experts in the position of persons under constant supervision. Stalin knew that Trotskiy was from Moscow and his train, on which he was continuously traveling from front to front, taking the part of the military experts. Even at that time telegram skirmishes, which developed their profound mutual dislike, which turned to enmity and ultimately hatred, flared up repeatedly.

Stalin did not trouble himself with visiting the trenches, hospitals, assembly points and observation posts—he was constantly in his headquarters, endlessly sending dispatches, summoning commissars and commanders, demanding reports and synopses, threatening tribunals and sending people for checks. In the years of the civil war even Stalin repeatedly resorted to extreme measures: orders for the execution of saboteurs, suspected military experts and persons who, in the opinion of the special representative, were harming the cause. So it was in Tsaritsyn, Perm and Petrograd. Lenin spoke directly in his speech at the eighth congress about Stalin's executions in the process of his work in Tsaritsyn and about the disagreements on this question which existed between them. Stalin felt more confident in this war than in October 1917. He resembled Convention member Carrier, described by J. Michelet, who considered natural the unchecked outburst of brutal passions and violence in the name of the achievement of the ends. Even

then, in the civil war, Stalin believed in the omnipotence of violence, which, in his opinion, was always justified in respect of enemies.

Many people did not like his style of work. The most perspicacious commanders could not help but feel even at that time that this man had an iron grip and that it was difficult "pushing" him into a chance decision and influencing his intentions. Of interest in this respect is a letter of Antonov-Ovseyenko written on 19 May 1919 to the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee, in which he complains about "the unfair attitude toward him as commander of the Ukrainian Army." Complaining of the center's inadequate support for his activity, he nonetheless noted that "Lev Davidovich understands this" (he is speaking about Trotskiy), but that "Comrade Stalin should have been disapproving as the Ukrainian comrades switched from intrigues to action." Antonov-Ovseyenko hereby indirectly confirmed Stalin's capacity for influencing the state of affairs at the front.

Ignorant of the niceties of operational art, Stalin relied on discipline, proletarian duty and revolutionary consciousness and frequently threats of "revolutionary punishment". After Tsaritsyn he felt considerably more assured among his Central Committee and Sovnarkom comrades. By this time Stalin was quite a well-known individual in the circle of party leaders, members of the Central Committee and "military instructors". True, while at the civil war fronts and carrying out Lenin's assignments he had displayed no particular military gifts. An evaluation of the operational situation, inferences from the correlation of forces, the advancement of an original strategic idea—we have here no particular reliable objective evidence confirming his "high capabilities". The "pressure" style, which subsequently became ingrained as the command-bureaucratic style, may consider as its author primarily Stalin. His operational guidelines were highly simplistic, if not to say primitive. The record of a conversation by direct contact of I.V. Stalin, member of the Southern Front Revolutionary Military Council, and G.K. Ordzhonikidze, member of the 14th Army Revolutionary Military Council, in October 1919 may be cited as an example. Ordzhonikidze had reported to Stalin that the army was preparing to take back the city of Kromy and that reinforcements were needed. Stalin replied:

"The intent of our recent directive was to afford you an opportunity to assemble the regiments in a single group and obliterate Denikin's best regiments. I repeat, obliterate. For it is a question of obliteration. The enemy's taking of Kromy is an episode which can always be put right, the main mission, however, is not launching assault groups one at a time but hitting the enemy with a single massive group, in one particular direction."

The power thrust in the instructions of the member of the Southern Front Revolutionary Military Council could always be sensed, which could not be said about the military art of the leader, although it was Stalin's art of military leadership about which many books were written and dissertations defended in the 1930's and subsequently. Particular apologetic are K.Ye. Voroshilov's works on Stalin as the "greatest military leader of all time," but he was not a military leader but a political representative of the center, a representative and, in a number of cases, member of the revolutionary military councils. Many Central Committee members proved themselves in the civil war to be more productive than Stalin. These were primarily Antonov-Ovseyenko, Gusev, Berzin, I.N. Smirnov, Smilga, Sokolnikov, Lashevich, Muralov, Frunze, Ordzhonikidze....

Whatever the case, Stalin's personal participation in the civil war was marked not only by his performance of his duties as commissar of two people's commissariats but was also notable in the political, propaganda and actually in the military respect. In the course of the civil war Lenin made use of Stalin repeatedly as special Central Committee representative, the person sent to inspect, put matters right and obtain detailed information for the center. Thus in June 1918 V.I. Lenin telegraphed Stalin that the government's orders sent to the fleet in Novosibirsk had to be fulfilled unconditionally, otherwise the culprits would be outlawed. The telegram proposed that Stalin send to Novosibirsk an authoritative official capable of implementing the order concerning the sinking of the Black Sea Fleet. Speaking the same month at a conference of trade unions and factory-plant committees of Moscow, V.I. Lenin, responding to a question concerning the fate of the Black Sea fleet, explained the situation, adding: "People's commissars Stalin, Shlyapnikov and Raskolnikov will soon be coming to Moscow to tell us how things went."

Briefing Stalin prior to his trips to the front, V.I. Lenin saw him not only as a member of the Central Committee but also as a representative of a multinational country whose fate depended to a tremendous extent on Russia's alliance with the other Soviet republics. Preparing a draft Politburo decree on the defense of Azerbaijan, Lenin wrote in his own hand: instruct Stalin via the Orgburo "to dig up from anywhere the maximum number of communist Muslims for work in Azerbaijan."

Stalin repeatedly performed the role of political leader in individual "chapters" of the civil war. Thus at the time of the first counterrevolutionary attempt to have done with Soviet power with the aid of General Krasnov's rebellion Stalin, on V.I. Lenin's instructions, together with F.E. Dzerzhinskiy, G.K. Ordzhonikidze, N.I. Podvoyskiy, M.S. Uritskiy and Ya.M. Sverdlov participated in the organization of the defense of Petrograd and the mobilization of available forces for smashing the insurgents. At Lenin's suggestion Stalin carried out specific assignments for bringing the troops of the Petrograd Garrison to a state of combat readiness, constructing defensive lines and forming Red Guard detachments at the plants and factories.

Even here many people had an opportunity to see for themselves the energy and inexorability of the short Georgian dictating directives and giving orders in a voice which brooked no objections. But at the same time observant party members noted not only the vigor but also the vengefulness and rancor. In December 1918 Stalin together with Voroshilov accused A.I. Okulov, member of the Southern Front Military Revolutionary Council, of disorganization. At Stalin's insistence Lenin adopted the decision: "In view of the extremely exacerbated relations of Voroshilov and Okulov we deem it necessary for Okulov to be replaced by someone else." While agreeing in this case with Stalin, at the eighth party congress Lenin spoke in defense of Okulov: "Comrade Voroshilov went so far as to say such outrageous things as that Okulov had destroyed the army. This is outrageous. Okulov pursued the Central Committee line, Okulov reported to us that the partisan movement persisted there." In this same speech Lenin sharply criticized Voroshilov for implantation of the partisan movement. "There were no military specialists, and we have 60,000 losses. This is dreadful." It was against this that Okulov had been fighting.

In June the following year in Petrograd there was once again a clash between Stalin and Okulov, who demanded that the Petrograd Military District put be under the command of the Western Front. As a result of the persistent demands of the special representative of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee and the Defense Council in Petrograd Lenin instructed Sklyanskiy, deputy chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council, to dispatch a telegram per pro him, Lenin, recalling Okulov "lest the conflict grow." But in the end Stalin would still remember Okulov at the end of the 1930's.

Lenin began to make active use of Stalin in the civil war, perhaps, from the time of the elimination of the Dukhonin rebellion. When, on 9 November 1917, V.I. Lenin was in direct telegraph communications with Dukhonin's headquarters, Stalin and Krylenko were alongside him. The monarchist Dukhonin ignored the Soviet Government's orders, and then, after a brief deliberation right there, by direct contact, Lenin conveyed to headquarters the concise order that Dukhonin had been removed as army commander in chief and that Ensign N.V. Krylenko, people's commissar for military affairs, had been appointed in his place. A day later the new commanding officer, accompanied by a 500-man detachment, went to the headquarters, where in a skirmish with supporters of the rebels Dukhonin was killed.

V.I. Lenin and the Republic Military Revolutionary Council used Stalin also for investigating the reasons for the defeats and catastrophes in individual sectors of the front. This was necessary inasmuch as not only disorganization characterized the troops' operations on a number of axes but sometimes also the direct treacherous actions of individual fellow travelers of the revolution and disguised monarchists and White Guards. The 3d Army in the area of Perm suffered a major setback in December 1918, which created a serious threat of Kolchak linking up with counterrevolutionary forces in the North and units of British, American and French forces in occupation of considerable territory around Murmansk and Arkhangelsk. The Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee dispatched to Vyatka a special commission headed by Stalin and Dzerzhinskiy. The empowered emissaries acted decisively and without delay. The group of persons deemed responsible for the defeat were sent before a military tribunal, inadequate commanders and commissars were stripped of their commands and emphasis was put on stepping up political work with the Red Army soldiers, tightening discipline and improving supplies. Stalin, who had always regarded military expert commanders with suspicion, taking advantage of actual instances of the treachery of certain former officers, acted abruptly and ruthlessly. As a result of the measures which were adopted the 3d Army (in conjunction with the 2d) succeeded in restoring the situation in a January counteroffensive. In his report to the center he wrote that "as a result of the measures which were adopted the troops' fighting capacity has been restored. A serious purge of Soviet and party establishments is under way in the army's rear services. Revolutionary committees have been organized in Vyatka and the district cities. The provincial special commission has been purged and filled with new workers...."

Stalin's judgments were, as always, categorical. Here, for example, is how the 3d Army Military Revolutionary Council was evaluated. It "consists," Stalin wrote, "of two members, of whom one (Lashevich) is in command; as far as the other (Trifonov) is concerned, I was unable to ascertain either the function or the role of the latter: he does not monitor supplies, he does not monitor the army's political training authorities and does altogether nothing. In fact there is no 3d Army Revolutionary Military Council." Without naming Trotskiy, Stalin transparently "hints" in the report at the inadequate role of "certain leaders" of the Republic Revolutionary Military Council confining their work to the issuance merely of "general orders".

On Stalin's instructions a large group of officials was indicted before the military tribunal. Here also Stalin's excesses had to be rectified: following discussion of the representatives' report at a meeting of the Central Committee on 5 February 1919, it was decided "to transfer all those arrested by the Stalin and Dzerzhinskiy commission in the 3d Army to the jurisdiction of the appropriate institutions." Stalin got to know Dzerzhinskiy better on this trip and was apparently filled with respect for him for his thoroughness and decisiveness, after all, he prized decisiveness and willpower more than anything—Stalin himself had never been lacking in these qualities.

Sometimes his "decisiveness" showed itself in categorical demands of the center also. In his letter to V.I. Lenin from the front of 3 June 1920 he demanded the speediest

elimination of the Crimean Front. It is necessary, Stalin wrote, "either to establish an actual truce with Vrangel and thereby gain an opportunity to take one or two divisions from the Crimean Front or reject all negotiations with Vrangel, anticipate the moment of Vrangel's reinforcement, hit him now and, having smashed him, free forces for the Polish Front. The present situation providing no clear answer to the question of the Crimea is becoming intolerable." V.I. Lenin wrote directly to Trotskiy in connection with this letter: "This is clearly utopian. Would there not be too many casualties? We would be laying out thousands of our soldiers. We need to think carefully and check things ten times over. I propose that we reply to Stalin: 'Your proposal concerning an offensive against the Crimea is so serious that we must make inquiries and think things through ultra-carefully. Wait for our response. Lenin. Trotskiy.'"

Having received the return memorandum from Trotskiy, which said that in appealing to Lenin directly Stalin was in violation of established procedure (in his opinion, A.I. Yegorov, commander of the Southwest Front, should have been reporting on this), Lenin added: "There is some caprice here, perhaps. But matters have to be discussed urgently. But what special measures?"

Despite Lenin's attempts to mend relations between Stalin and Trotskiy, they remained coolly guarded. The future general secretary was sensitive to the growth of Trotskiy's popularity and considered it undeserved. During his infrequent visits to Moscow he was shown in the Republic Revolutionary Military Council several telegrams of similar content. We shall quote one of them:

"Comrade Trotskiy, chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council,

"On the first anniversary of the October Revolution... the citizens of the village of Kochetovka of Tambov Province's Zosimovskaya Volost have decided to rename the village, naming it after you—Trotskoye village. We request your authorization for us to call our village by the name which is dear to us of the leader and inspiration of the Red Army. S. Nechayev, chairman of the Council of Deputies." Incidentally, the first renamed cities in Soviet Russia (the present Gatchina and Chapayevsk) came to be bear the name "Trotsk" during the civil war even.

While operationally subordinate to Trotskiy, Stalin frequently ignored him and sometimes acted contrary to directives even. Thus while in Tsaritsyn he had attempted over the heads of the supreme authority to give orders to the 9th Army—protests followed. Trotskiy's reaction in support of Raskolnikov and the 9th Army Command was as follows:

"I subscribe fully to Comrade Raskolnikov's protest against the interference of *individuals* (my italics—D.V.) from the Commissariat for Nationality Affairs in procedures at the front. I have made the appropriate complaint to the Commissariat for Nationality Affairs...."

Trotskiy's cancellation of certain of Stalin's military instructions painfully wounded the representative, who never forgot insults.

Sentences are encountered on several occasions in Lenin's wartime correspondence expressing surprise at Stalin's tetchiness and quarrelsomeness. Thus Stalin replied to a telegram from Lenin on the need for assistance to the Caucasus Front: "It is not clear to me why the Caucasus Front is primarily my concern.... Strengthening the Caucasus Front is wholly the concern of the Republic Revolutionary Military Council, whose members, according to my information, are perfectly healthy, and not with Stalin, who is overloaded with work as it is." Lenin's reply was firm and laconic:

"Speeding up the approach of reinforcements from the Southwest Front to the Caucasus Front is your concern. It is necessary in general to help in every possible way, and not squabble about departmental jurisdiction.

"20 February 1920.

"Lenin."

But subsequently also notes of capriciousness in Stalin's reports could be heard very distinctly. On 4 August of the same year Lenin requested of Stalin by telegram:

"A Central Committee plenum has been set for six in the evening tomorrow. Try to send before then your findings concerning the nature of the temporary hitches with Budennyy and on the Vrangel front and, equally, concerning our military prospects on both these fronts. Most important policy decisions could depend on your opinion.

"Lenin."

Stalin was disheartened. On the one hand he was evidently reluctant to bear the responsibility for possible "most important political decisions," on the other, he had never been distinguished by his forecasting capabilities. He replied by telegram that "war is a game, and considering everything is impossible," and answered in respect of Lenin's proposal:

"I do not know why you actually need my opinion, and therefore I am not in a position to convey to you the findings which you require and shall confine myself to the bare facts without elaboration.

"Stalin."

Yes, here was an executant of the center's directives. But in cases where there was required of Stalin something more than he himself wished, one clearly feels in the replies and behavior of the "special representative" a sense of grievance and perplexity mixed with capriciousness, which Lenin so subtly caught.

A change on the civil war fronts in favor of the revolutionary forces showed through at the start of 1919. But a weak spot in the work was the comminution of the Red Army and the insistent need for the close military alliance of the Russian peoples. In April 1919 Commanding Officer I.I. Vatsetis and S.I. Aralov, member of the Republic Revolutionary Military Council, prepared for Lenin a report which, based on an analysis of the state of affairs, posed the question of the subordination of all armed forces of the Soviet republics to a uniform command. Having studied the report, V.I. Lenin proposed that the Republic Revolutionary Military Council "draw up the wording of a directive from the Central Committee to all 'nationals' on military unity (merger)." The following month V.I. Lenin prepared the "Draft Central Committee Directive on Military Unity". It said that "a single command of all Red Army detachments and the strictest centralization in the disposal of all forces and resources of the socialist republics" was essential for defense of the revolutionary achievements. On Lenin's instructions Stalin, as people's commissar for nationalities, was charged with implementing a number of measures in realization of these ideas. Stalin, however, as people's commissar of two commissariats, frequently traveling on Lenin's assignments to the fronts, was at that time himself personally little involved in national relations, as also, incidentally, in the work of the other people's commissariat which he headed.

I shall permit myself one digression. The archives contain the voluminous mailbag of L.D. Trotskiy. There are many letters to him from, particularly, A.A. Ioffe, his long-time supporter and sympathizer. In one of his prolix letters (more than 20 pages long) Ioffe actually requests Trotskiy's patronage for some influential position, people's commissar of the Worker-Peasant Inspectorate, possibly. Ioffe wrote that "whereas Stalin could in the interests of the cause be removed from the position of Worker-Peasant Inspectorate people's commissar, since he would be useful in any position, but does not work in the Worker-Peasant Inspectorate, Chicherin cannot be removed from the position of people's commissar for foreign affairs for nowhere would he be more useful." It is difficult to understand why Stalin would be "useful in any position". Because he "does not work"? Or was Ioffe taking into consideration the people's commissar's potential? Incidentally, the letter provides a description of other figures also, through, most likely, the prism of Ioffe's personal ambitions. Thus, for example, he writes that "Karakhan is essentially in charge of the housekeeping of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and is capable of nothing else. As far as Chicherin is concerned, he possesses the great merit of being able to make entirely his an idea supplied him from above.... But a shortcoming is that none of his own ideas ever emerge."

A.A. Ioffe wrote to Lenin also. To which he received a response of the following content:

"First, you are wrong to reiterate (repeatedly) that 'I am the Central Committee'. This could only have been written in a state of great nervous irritation and overtiredness....

"Second.... How to explain matters? By the fact that you have been *abandoned by fate.* I have seen this in many workers. Stalin is an example. He, of course, would stand up for himself. But 'fate' has prevented him *ever* in three and a half years being *either* people's commissar of the Worker-Peasant Inspectorate *or* people's commissar for nationalities. This is a fact....

"A firm handshake,

Yours, Lenin."

In the course of the civil war Stalin continued to be sent, like many other comrades from the center, as representative and special representative of the Central Committee to various fronts. Thus in the spring of 1919 Stalin, with the mandate of special representative, was constantly either in the Petrograd Soviet or in the headquarters of the defense forces. As always, his work methods were dictatorial: removal of those who had failed to cope, commitment to trial of those whom he considered to blame for the situation, the organization of supplies and the "shakeup" of the managerial bodies. A conspiracy was uncovered in the headquarters of the Western Front, as also in the 7th Army defending Petrograd; the conspirators were, naturally, shot. The foolhardiness of political mass meetings slowly gave way to practical composure and revolutionary resolve. In accordance with the appeal "In Defense of Petrograd" the leaders of the city's defenses, Remezov, Tomashevich, Pozern, Shatov, Peters, the recently arrived Stalin and other comrades,prepared a repulse of the counterrevolution. For the defense of Petrograd Stalin, like Trotskiy also, was awarded the Order of the Combat Red Banner.

Previously things have been portrayed thus: wherever Stalin was sent, the situation changed for the better. This was not always the case. We would add, furthermore, that, as a rule, Stalin traveled as part of a group and was implementing the guidelines of Lenin and the Central Committee. In fact, militarily his contribution was more than modest, but as of 1918 comrades in the party's leading nucleus knew that he was not simply a selfless executant but also a specialist in "special measures". Notes of self-praise began to creep in with Stalin even at that time.

In a telegram to the center from Petrograd Stalin reports: "In the wake of the 'Red Hill' the 'Gray Horse' has been liquidated also. The guns at them are in full working order, and a rapid purge and strengthening of all forts and fortresses is under way. Naval specialists would have us believe that the taking of the 'Red Hill' from the sea

overturns all naval science. I can only weep for the so-called science. I consider it my duty to declare that I will continue to operate thus, despite all my reverence for science."

When Stalin would return from a trip, he was used in the Central Committee machinery for current business. A number of telegrams from the front testifies that even at that time Stalin possessed a certain amount of real power. Thus on 15 November 1921 Trotskiy wrote in a telegram to Stalin: "It is necessary to firmly and finally settle the question of the Transcaucasus national brigades and military stores." Trotskiy went on to speak of the need to have the Politburo approve three decisions in this sphere. Stalin commissioned the preparation of the appropriate decrees. This was one of Trotskiy's rare telegrams to Stalin—they tried not to notice one another, as it were. Stalin was angered that the chairman of the Republic Revolutionary Military Council traveled to the fronts in a special train accompanied by one and sometimes two armored trains and a special large detachment of young Red Army men garbed in tight-fitting leather. The comfort in which Trotskiy waged war was for Stalin provocative. But somewhere deep down he envied (and hated at the same time) the chairman's brilliant volubility, his energy and his attractiveness for people. When Trotskiy publicly declared: "An army cannot be built without repression. Masses of people cannot be led to their deaths without the arsenal of the command having the death penalty," Stalin did not condemn this line, in his heart he was in agreement with it. In critical situations he himself had resorted to these measures, and not only he. On 12 May 1920 a member of the Southwest Front Revolutionary Military Council reported:

"Comrade Trotskiy, chairman of the Republic Revolutionary Military Council.

"Instances of the disgraceful flight of units during the Poles' offensive occurred on the 14th Army's front. The order to execute every 10th man of those who ran was issued.

"Berzin."

The Vendee of the civil war was cruel both to its enemies and its own. Stalin considered this in the nature of things and was increasingly persuaded of the "universality" and broad opportunities for achieving the desired result by methods of violence. As the colonel in the tsar's army, Nosovich, former chief of the operations section of an army of the Southern Front (who subsequently deserted to the Whites), recalled, Stalin displayed no hesitation if he was certain that he was faced by enemies. Thus the engineer Alekseyev and two of his sons and several former officers, who were accused of involvement in a counterrevolutionary organization, were arrested in Tsaritsyn. Stalin's decision was laconic: "Execute". People were executed immediately, without any trial. Stalin had a profound belief in the dependability of punitive means capable of securing the necessary political "result".

Among other matters discussed at a meeting of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee on 25 October 1918 was Stalin's letter concerning sabotage in the work of supplying the 10th Army. Stalin resolutely insisted on the trial by military tribunal of the commander of the front and members of the military council. The Central Committee session, which was chaired by Sverdlov, decided otherwise, however: "Judicial proceedings to be instituted against no one, but Comrade Avanesov to be entrusted with conducting an investigation and reporting the results to the Central Committee."

Having sensed his power and capacity for influencing events and current processes, if only of local, but quite pronounced, significance, Stalin began in a number of cases to reveal his "character," which would in the future be a source of many troubles. As a member of the Southern Front Revolutionary Military Council, Stalin differed in his opinions from Smilga, member of the Republic Revolutionary Military Council, in respect of determination of the direction of the main assault against Denikin's forces. Stalin was in his reasoning abrupt, coarse and impatient. It was important for him not simply to insist on his own viewpoint but simultaneously also to humiliate his opponent. Instead of a patient discussion with his comrades (they were all, after all, members of the *council*) of the pluses and minuses of this proposal or the other, he would adopt an implacable position close to an embittered nonacceptance of other viewpoints. Incidentally, 3 years later V.I. Lenin was to note in one of his last memoranda the display of bitterness in Stalin when important matters were being tackled. But "bitterness generally," Lenin observed, "usually performs the worst role in politics." If people did not agree with him, Stalin would argue, call for assistance on the authority of the center and for instructions and directives from Moscow and express doubt as to an individual's reliability. Practically everyone with whom he had conflicts (and there were many) in the civil war paid cruelly for this two decades later. Stalin had a vindictive memory.

He expressed his disagreement in a number of telegrams and letters to the Politburo, Lenin and Commanding Officer S.S. Kamenev. Specifically, he peremptorily demanded in a telegram of 14 November for the Politburo the acceptance of his plan for an offensive through the Donbass. Stalin demanded an end to Trotskiy's interference in the affairs of the front, the recall of S.I. Gusev as member of the Republic Revolutionary Military Council and the "immediate cancellation" of the former plan of struggle against Denikin. Having studied all the circumstances of the military-political situation, the Politburo approved in its directive the idea proposed

by Serebryakov and Stalin—launching the main attack via Kursk, Kharkov and the Donbass. At the same time the Politburo recorded in its decisions the impermissibility of Stalin "buttressing his practical demands with ultimatums and statements concerning resignations." Incidentally, Stalin would continue in his political life at the start of the 1920's to resort repeatedly to ultimatums and twice in 1924 submit his resignation as general secretary, but in neither case was his resignation accepted.

Having been for quite a time a member of the Southwest Front Revolutionary Military Council, Stalin quite quickly found a common language with its commander A.I. Yegorov, a future marshal of the Soviet Union and important military leader, who with Stalin's knowledge and approval would be repressed at the time of the bloody purge. There was even an episode when Stalin (the rarest occurrence!) stood up for his colleague. For failures at the front Moscow was studying Trotskiy's proposal concerning the replacement of A.I. Yegorov as commander of the front. Stalin's opinion was sought. It proved highly original.

"Trotskiy, Russian Communist Party Central Committee, Moscow.

"I emphatically object to the replacement of Yegorov by Uborevich, who is not yet ready for such a position, or Kork, who is not suitable as commander of a front. The Crimea was let slip by Yegorov and the commanding officer together for the commanding officer was in Kharkov 2 weeks prior to Vrangel's offensive and left for Moscow without having noticed the disintegration of the Crimean Army. If it is necessary to punishment some people, it should be both. I believe that we will not now find anyone better than Yegorov. It is the commanding officer, who is darting between extreme optimism and extreme pessimism, tripping over his own feet and confusing the front commander, unable to produce anything positive, who should be replaced.

"14 June 1920. Stalin."

Stalin was "defending" Yegorov most likely because the proposal had come from Trotskiy. And as for those who had "let slip the Crimea," well, Stalin had been here also. In 1920 even Stalin could peremptorily say of the commanding officer: "he is tripping over his own feet". Stalin's moral deficiency had long been a vital attribute of his. As his position was consolidated, this deficiency would in the future become increasingly dangerous and ominous. Tracking this evolution, one sometimes wonders: did Stalin have a concept of conscience at all?

Since the times of the civil war Stalin had known closely not only Yegorov but also many other Soviet commanders born of the revolution—Tukhachevskiy, Krylenko, Kork. After the first important successes in the struggle against bourgeois-manorial Poland, the troops of the Red Army suffered, as is known, a serious setback. Almost 20 years later Stalin would charge Yegorov, Tukhachevskiy and other military leaders with "criminal slowness dictated by treacherous intentions." It would not occur to him that he, as a member of the military council, was also fully responsible for both successes and defeats.

When, on 2 August 1920, the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee Politburo adopted the decision to separate the Crimean sector of the Southwest Front into the independent Southern Front, Stalin submitted the proposal that the 12th and 14th armies and 1st Mounted Army be transferred to the Western Front. A rapid transfer was not possible, and on 13 August Yegorov and Stalin reported to the commanding officer that the armies of the front were already involved in the fighting in the Lvov-Rava Russkaya area and that "the armies' basic assignments cannot be changed under these conditions."

When, however, Commanding Officer S.S. Kamenev sent the Southwest Front a new directive concerning transfer of the 12th and 1st Mounted armies to the Western Front, Stalin refused to sign the directive, it being signed only by R.I. Berzin, a member of the military council. While these squabbles, liasion and coordination were taking place, time was slipping by. The withdrawal of the 1st Mounted Army from the engagement on the Lvov axis began only on 20 August, and it was not in time to help the Western Front. Of course, blame for the strategic blunder lay with the Republic Revolutionary Military Council, the commanding officer and the front command. Yet back on 5 August Stalin himself had submitted a proposal concerning the transfer of three armies to the Western Front, but had at the decisive moment impeded matters, which had severe repercussions. Stalin made no effort to realize his own proposal, which had been approved in Moscow. He was to blame just as much for the major setback as Trotskiy, Tukhachevskiy, Yegorov and other officials. But, naturally, it did not occur to Stalin to acknowledge his own blunder, the qualities of "infallibility" were showing through in him even then.

Lenin showed once again that there must never be any deviating from the truth in assessing any situations. Analyzing the sources of the setback, V.I. Lenin said that when our forces had reached Warsaw, they "were so worn out that they no longer had the strength for victory, and the Polish Army, supported by the patriotic uprising in Warsaw and aware of being in their own country, found support and found a new opportunity to advance. The war, it transpired, had afforded an opportunity for the complete rout of Poland almost, but at the decisive moment we lacked the strength." It is highly significant that subsequently military chroniclers, while emphasizing Stalin's "special" contributions to the "turning point" on the Southern, Eastern and Northwest fronts, never recalled his role in the Polish campaign.

Despite his great workload and frequent trips and meetings, Stalin did not curtail his participation in propaganda activity. In the civil war years he published more than 30 articles on various questions of the struggle against the class enemy. The most notable of them—"The Petrograd Front," "The Military Situation in the South" and "New Entente Drive Against Russia"—were printed in PRAVDA. As before, Stalin's articles were simple, guileless, intelligible and categorical. His ideological product would remain such throughout his life.

Disregarding all that Stalin was to do in the future that was dreadful and unforgiveable and not considering him a "villain" from birth, Stalin's particular contribution to the civil war cannot be denied. But this was the contribution of a "representative," the man for assignments. Stalin made no "decisive contribution," as it came to be written later, although he had from the very start of the revolution been a member of the highest party authorities and had been one of those who had held several offices simultaneously. Stalin was people's commissar for nationalities, people's commissar for state control, member of the Republic Revolutionary Military Council, member of the military councils of a number of fronts (alternately) and member of the Council for Labor and Defense. Gradually, by degrees, particularly toward the end of the civil war, Stalin's position strengthened, and he became a principal member of the party's leading nucleus.

A close analysis of Stalin's activity at this time shows that he was inferior to many party leaders. As a theorist, he was no more than a popularizer; he was not known for his oratical skill, so important at times of historic revolutionary upheavals; no one could say of him that he was an "affable," "good" man. Stalin was manifestly wanting in the moral attributes which it is customary to put among the virtues, but he had something else which Zinovyev, Kamenev, Trotskiy, Rykov, Tomskiy, Bukharin and other leaders of the revolution and the young socialist state lacked. Surprisingly for many people, Stalin displayed rare purposefulness and possession by a specific idea. When achieving the goals set by the leadership, his willpower, firmness and decisiveness made an impression on the people with whom he worked. It has to be seen that Stalin, as a leader, took shape to considerable extent in the civil war years. He sensed power, understood its mechanism at the center and locally and believed that exigency, pressure and violence could at critical moments produce the desired results.

Among the party leaders many comrades were from the intelligentsia or, as Stalin once, at the end of the 1920's, sarcastically remarked, "writers". He never developed this theme publicly primarily because V.I. Lenin was also an "intellectual," "writer" and "emigre". But the brilliance of this man was so great that Stalin, having subsequently put forward the concept of the "second leader," who was always "by Lenin's side," indulged in no direct personal attacks on the real, undisputed leader of the party and the revolution. When Lenin criticized Stalin (on the issue of "autonomization," foreign trade monopoly, affairs of the front and others), the latter would usually always quickly agree with Lenin's arguments. Lenin's spiritual, intellectual "hold" over Stalin was total.

Who knows how much further Stalin's formation as a leader of the "second or third" rank would have proceeded had not Vladimir Ilich's mortal illness caught him so early?! To a party or Soviet position? Who knows, although for all of us, who now know much about this man, the very thought of Stalin as a leader of any scale echoes with pain and protest.

The rarest courage
is courage of thought...,

A. France.

Chapter II. The Leader's Warning

Could anyone have supposed at the end of the civil war that among the pleiad of brilliant revolutionaries who were Lenin's comrades in arms there would also be one who would become his successor without being more gifted, clever and striking than the others? Could Stalin himself even have thought in Lenin's lifetime that it would be he who would head the party and, in fact, the whole people? Could anyone at that time have said that a confluence of objective circumstances, decisions which did not come to be and historical accidents would bring Stalin to the highest crest of power in a giant state? Hardly. Most likely Stalin himself even, while Lenin was healthy, thought merely of not disappearing from the general cohort of his comrades in arms, which was very high in terms of its intellectual and moral level.

Lenin rarely complained about his health. He was a sturdy fellow capable of bearing colossal physical and intellectual strain. It is sufficient to have a mental picture of how much Lenin wrote (himself, without assistants and advisers, who are obligatory today) of brilliant stuff in the revolution and civil war years alone! And this at a time when he bore the colossal responsibility for the fate of the revolution itself and its present and future. While Lenin was healthy, the question of his associates and those close to him never arose in the sense of possible successors and "inheritors" of his role. But as soon as, at the end of 1921, the first signs of inhuman overexertion and subsequently illness appeared, an increasingly large number of people involuntarily began to pay attention to those by Lenin's side....

"The first rumors concerning Lenin's illness," N.I. Sedova recalled, "were communicated by whisper. It was as though no one had ever thought that Lenin could take ill. Many people knew that Lenin kept a sharp eye on the health of others, but he himself, it seemed, was not

susceptible to illness. In almost the entire elder generation of revolutionaries the heart had given out, excessively fatigued from great strain. The engines were misfiring in almost all of them, the doctors complained. There are only two hearts in good working order, Professor Getye said. Those of Vladimir Ilich and Trotskiy." As the well-known professors Ferster, Osipov, Abrikosov, Felberg, Veysbrod and Deshin and People's Commissar for Health Semashko subsequently wrote in IZVESTIYA, "the start of V.I. Lenin's illness pertains to the end of 1921; determining the precise time of the start of the illness is difficult since, according to all the data, it developed slowly and was gradually undermining his powerful organism at the height of its activity, and Vladimir Ilich himself, furthermore, failed to pay his illness the proper attention. In March 1922 the doctors examining Vladimir Ilich were still unable to detect any organic lesions either on the part of his nervous system or on the part of his internal organs generally, but in view of his severe headaches and the symptoms of overfatigue, it was proposed that he take several months' rest, as a consequence of which he moved to 'Gorki'. However, soon after this, at the start of May, the first signs of organic brain damage were discovered. The first attack expressed itself in general weakness, loss of speech and a sharp weakening of the movement of the right extremities.... Thanks to his strong organism and the solicitous care of those around him, there was in July even an appreciable improvement, which was so consolidated in August and September that in October Vladimir Ilich returned to his activity, although not to the former extent. In November he delivered three big program speeches."

By today's standards Lenin was still young. Lenin had had practically no rest since the time of his return to Russia in April 1917. When he had taken ill, his secretaries say, he once remarked that he had "rested" only twice in all these years. The first time, in hiding in Razliv from the sleuth-hounds of the Provisional Government (but we know that in this time he wrote the brilliant work "The State and Revolution"); the second, by "courtesy" of Fanni Kaplan, who had shot at Vladimir Ilich. He worked 14-16 hours a day.

Sensing the first warnings of a serious ailment, Lenin understood that in his absence there would happen, possibly, something that could lead to a split in the party leadership. I believe that at the end of 1921 even Vladimir Ilich was attempting to take a special look at his associates. Perhaps the idea of the "Testament" came to him for the first time even then. As if with a presentiment of new bouts of the cruel illness, in November 1922 Vladimir Ilich, handing to Librarian Sh.M. Manucharyants books which he had looked through, specially asked to be left F. Engels' book "Political Testament (From Unpublished Letters)". He wrote on the cover: "Keep on the shelf. 30.11.1922. Lenin."

Less than a month later, having barely recovered from a severe attack in the night of 26 December, Lenin dictated to L.A. Fotiyeva part three of "Letter to the Congress". It is this letter which testifies that, despite the pain and suffering and the worries of the present, Lenin was continually thinking of the future, about what would happen *after* him. Lenin was a leader without official status, by virtue of his exceptional intellectual and moral qualities. Who were those by his side? Why had they proven to be on the crest of the revolution? How did Stalin look in the pleiad of Lenin's comrades in arms? We shall attempt to answer these questions.

Pleiad of Comrades in Arms

The real brain of the country on the frontier of the 1920's was the party Central Committee headed by Lenin. At that time its numbers were small. For example, the 10th congress elected a Central Committee of 25 members and 15 candidates, and there was only a negligible increase in the Central Committee at the 11th congress, the last led directly by V.I. Lenin—27 members and 19 candidates. In Lenin's lifetime Central Committee plenums were usually held bimonthly. A nucleus took shape within the Central Committee, mainly composed of the Moscow comrades, to whose lot fell the brunt of current work, the solution of economic questions and military development, the establishment of close relations with the party's national detachments and determination of policy in respect, say, of the "Decentralizers" and the "Worker Opposition," realization of NEP policy and so forth. Some members of this, as we would now say, "informal," "noninstitutional" nucleus would themselves often associate with this grouping, "platform" and faction or the other. Everything was new: the party had become the ruling party, and its power, real. For this reason very much depended on the political positions, moral attributes and professionalism of the executives of the nucleus.

Lenin was the sole Central Committee member who at all postwar congresses—the 10th, 11th and 12th (although he was not present at this)—was elected unanimously! His influence, experience, theoretical works and whole line of behavior were unique in terms of the power of their impact on the party Central Committee and its leading nucleus. This was felt particularly keenly when Lenin took ill.

Delivering the organizational report at the 12th party congress on 17 April 1923, Stalin emphasized: "There is within the Central Committee a nucleus of 10-15 persons who have become so proficient in the business of leadership of the political and economic work of our authorities that they run the risk of becoming leadership high priests, as it were. This could be good also, but it has a very dangerous side: having acquired great leadership experience, these comrades could become infected with self-importance, withdraw into themselves and become divorced from work in the masses.... If they do not have around themselves a new generation of future leaders closely connected with work locally, these highly qualified people have every chance of becoming ossified and becoming estranged from the masses." This is how Stalin

spoke while Lenin was alive. The entire content of this part of the report was imbued with Lenin's idea of the constant renewal of the executive nucleus. Fifteen years later the evolution of Stalin's views would lead him to entirely different conclusions, although even in 1937-1938 he would frequently say one thing, but do the polar opposite. But at that time, at the start of the 1920's, the discrepancy between word and deed in him had yet to be discerned. While developing the idea of the party's guiding nucleus of essentially Lenin's associates and pupils, Stalin formulated in the report at the congress his idea as follows: "The nucleus within the Central Committee, which has become adept at leadership, is becoming old and needs to be replaced. You know Vladimir Ilich's state of health; you know that the other members of the basic nucleus of the Central Committee are quite worn out also. But there is as yet no new shift—this is the problem. Creating party leaders is very difficult: years, 5-10 years, more than 10 years are needed for this; it is far easier conquering this country or the other with Comrade Budennyy's cavalry than forging two or three leaders from the masses capable in the future of really being the country's leaders."

We may evidently agree with Stalin's conclusions concerning the need for constant renewal of the Central Committee. But how young this Central Committee was at that time by today's standards! Lenin, who had barely turned 50, was the "oldest"! It was with good reason that his associates would sometimes among themselves call him the Old Man. The basic group of Central Committee members were revolutionaries in their forties. The age which the ancient Greeks called the period of acme—the happy high point of life—for it was believed that the harmony of mental and physical powers and the time of one's prime were reached by one's forties.

Before examining the features of the portrait of certain of Lenin's associates, we shall throw at them all without exception a belated and now useless reproach. It is brief: his associates did not take care of Lenin. They loved him, appreciated him and respected him, but... did not look after him. Look what Lenin did on regular days of his work. Of course, all the main, cardinal decisions passed through his hands. However, there was alongside so much of what even at that time was called "small stuff," "vermicelli" and "routine business". Lenin dealt with questions of the supply of fuel to Ivanovo-Voznesensk, corresponded with A.M. Anikst, member of the board of the People's Commissariat for Labor, on the provision of miners with clothing and dealt with the question of the manufacture of dynamos; studied the solution of the question of the allocation of rations; reviewed books and brochures at comrades' request; elucidated issues raised in a letter to him from engineer P.A. Kozmin concerning the use of wind-powered engines for lighting the countryside....

Of course, all these questions were important. Their solution by Lenin has gone down in history forever as a striking example of the profound, specific and direct work of a high executive.

But why, for all that, did his associates not relieve Lenin of the solution of these and many other current questions? The same Trotskiy would regularly go fishing and hunting and for recreation to the area south of Moscow and take leave to write his works, nor did Stalin, who did not spare himself in work and who was in charge of organizational matters in the Central Committee, seek ways to radically unburden the leader of the revolution of much current, frequently routine business. On the contrary even. While Lenin was still recovering from his bouts of illness, on 28 June 1922 Stalin, for example, was advising him to receive a correspondent for a discussion. Lenin was forced to decline. Although later, when, in December 1922, the Central Committee plenum entrusted by special decree Stalin with personal responsibility for compliance with the regimen determined for Lenin by the doctors, he deemed it permissible to threaten N.K. Krupskaya for having "violated" it.

It may with a certain degree of accuracy be said that the following comrades were members of the party's leading nucleus made up of the pleiad of V.I. Lenin's associates at the start of the 1920's: N.I. Bukharin, F.E. Dzerzhinskiy, G.Ye. Zinovyev, M.I. Kalinin, L.B. Kamenev, V.V. Kuybyshev, G.K. Ordzhonikidze, Ya.E. Rudzutak, A.I. Rykov, I.V. Stalin, Ya.M. Sverdlov, L.D. Trotskiy and M.V. Frunze. Molotov, Pyatakov, Petrovskiy, Radek, Smilga and Tomskiy should also, possibly, be attributed to the nucleus. Of course, these were people with the most varied revolutionary destiny and education and various personal sympathies and antipathies. Almost half of Lenin's closest associates had spent years as emigres and taken part in numerous social democratic, socialist and simply humanitarian-cultural conferences, congresses and meetings. Stalin had fallen out of this "iron ring". Fate had formed Stalin not so much as a revolutionary as the *functionary* of an idea and executant of directives and "lines". Stalin understood and sensed sooner than anyone else among Lenin's associates the possibilities of the apparat and its power. The majority, on the other hand, who were members of Lenin's cohort manifestly underestimated the role of the faceless structures of power. Stalin's attitude toward each member of the leading nucleus took shape by degrees. These people, who, according to Stalin, had "become adept at leadership," were very different.

Initially Stalin, for example, felt very insecure when he encountered the eloquence of Trotskiy and his high-handedness and self-importance. But he would subsequently understand that this was more often a person of posture, phrase and fine words. In the revolution and the civil war Trotskiy had "shone"—the attributes of tribune helped him greatly. He acquired broad popularity, and supporters appeared. There were people who saw him not simply as the "No 2" but also the future leader of the party. Trotskiy was a person whose strongest side consisted not of an organizer's talent but of oratorical capabilities. Thanks to them, Trotskiy could carry people with him and ignite them at the civil war fronts, skillfully stoking his popularity. But when it came time

for monotonous routine work, he began rapidly to fade and become lusterless. For Trotskiy the main thing was the slogan, the rostrum and an effective gesture, and not unskilled work. Sooner than many people, probably, the general secretary spotted both the strong and sham facets of this individual. Considering Trotskiy's great popularity, Stalin initially wanted to establish with him, if not friendly, at least, loyal relations. There was even an episode when Stalin attempted to establish closer relations with Trotskiy with Lenin's assistance. Vladimir Ilich's telegram to Trotskiy of 23 October 1918 testifies to this, in particular. It set forth Lenin's discussion with Stalin and the military council member's assessment of the situation in Tsaritsyn and desire to cooperate more actively with the Republic Revolutionary Military Council. At the end of the telegram to Trotskiy Lenin wrote:

"In communicating to you, Lev Davidovich, all these statements of Stalin I ask you to ponder them and answer, first, whether you agree to make yourself understood to Stalin personally, for which he agrees to appear, and, second, whether you consider it possible, on certain specific conditions, to have done with the former discord and organize joint work, which Stalin so desires. As far as I am concerned, I believe that it is essential to make every effort to organize joint work with Stalin."

However, nothing came of this. Trotskiy did not conceal his arrogant attitude toward an individual whose intellectual level, in his opinion, was largely below his. Trotskiy himself wrote about Stalin thus: "Given his tremendous and envious ambition, he could not have failed to have been aware at every step of his intellectual and moral inferiority. He evidently attempted to get on closer terms with me. Only later did I recognize his attempts to create something like familiar relations. But he repelled me by the traits which subsequently constituted his strength on the wave of the decline: narrowness of interests, empirism, mental crudity and the particular cynicism of a provincial whom Marxism had freed from many prejudices without, however, having replaced them with a philosophy which had been thoroughly thought through and passed into his mentality." Stalin commented highly in several speeches on Trotskiy's role in the revolution and the civil war, but this absolutely did not alter his cold attitude toward him.

Interesting descriptions of members of the Central Committee nucleus are contained in A. Lunacharskiy's "Revolutionary Silhouettes," which was published in 1923, K. Radek's "Portraits and Pamphlets" and the books and articles of N. Dudel, M. Orakhelashvili, N. Podvoyskiy, M. Roshal, V. Bonch-Bruyevich, A. Slepkov and I. Levin. These works, like many others, reveal the character of Lenin's associates and portraits of those who came to the revolution with Lenin and who conquered therein and embarked on the creation of the world's first socialist state.

A notable place in this pleiad was occupied by G.Ye. Zinovyev and L.B. Kamenev. They have gone down in history as a kind of "duo". They were close to one another in their views, almost never fought between themselves and held identical positions, as a rule. The leader in this tandem had always been Zinovyev (G.Ye. Radomyslskiy), who had long held a prominent position in the party. There were in his turbulent political career high flights and stunning falls. Having joined the party back in 1901, Zinovyev spent many years in exile engaged in literary work. At the time of the October uprising both Zinovyev and Kamenev damaged their revolutionary reputation considerably, as is known. V.I. Lenin would later write that "the October episode of Zinovyev and Kamenev was no accident, of course."

The apogee of Zinovyev's political career were the almost 7 years he spent as chairman of the Comintern Executive Committee. He was the author of many articles, which he actively attempted to publish as separate digests and brochures and in a special collection of his works even. Here is a sample of Zinovyev's style: "The international proletariat in the shape of its individual detachments, moving toward its victory, will still not once and not twice be knocked from its path and, drenched in blood, will seek a new road. Smashed in the first world imperialist war and crucified and deceived by the pseudo-leaders of the Second International, the international proletariat has yet to free itself from the nightmarish feeling of impassable roads."

Zinovyev polished up many of his best qualities through having for a long time been in close contact with Lenin since exile times. In his "Revolutionary Silhouettes" A. Lunacharskiy goes particularly far in his estimation of Zinovyev's role. He considered that Zinovyev was one of Lenin's standbys and that he was among "the four or five persons who were predominantly the political brain of the party." Lunacharskiy wrote that everyone considered Zinovyev "Lenin's closest assistant and confidant."

Zinovyev was a magnificent speaker widely known to the party and seethed with volcanic energy, but there were frequent plunges in his mood. Sometimes unrestrained optimism, sometimes despondency—down to depression or "cold" hysterics. He had to be constantly cheered up and "started up". For a long time he treated Stalin condescendingly, haughtily even. On several occasions, around the start of the 1920's, Zinovyev had teased Stalin, amiably, it is true, about the style of his articles, which suffered from tautology and aridity. Some of his numerous articles were highly trenchant. The article "From the First Battles for Leninism," for example, in which Zinovyev subtly and cogently showed the bankruptcy of Trotskiy's claims to a special position in the party.

As a leader of the Petrograd party organization, Zinovyev had at one time attempted to display firmness and even dictatorial ways, although at the moment of Yudenich's approach to the cradle of the revolution, he frankly lost his head. And this confusion was noticed at that time by I.V. Stalin, who evaluated Zinovyev in his thoughts as a "milksop" who had often nonetheless

displayed vanity and heightened ambition. Prior to the death of Lenin, Stalin had tried to maintain almost friendly relations with Zinovyev and Kamenev. When V.I. Lenin held a select meeting at the start of November 1922 consisting of Zinovyev, Kamenev and Stalin, one might full well have gained the impression that this "trio" was very cohesive, friendly and united. But it could only have appeared such for a certain time—each of the three held an important place and personal ambitious plans. Who could have known that on Stalin's initiative Zinovyev would twice be expelled from the party and then reinstated and that the third time, in 1934, the expulsion would mean his swift demise. Exactly the same fate awaited the other half of the "duo" also—Kamenev—incidentally.

Zinovyev was considered one of the party's best speakers. It was no accident that at the 12th and 13th party congresses the Central Committee instructed precisely him, in Lenin's absence, to deliver the main, political, reports. Zinovyev was one of those who approved the existence of a nucleus in the political leadership. Speaking in 1925 at the 14th party congress, Zinovyev said: "Vladimir Ilich had been taken ill... we had to conduct the first congress without him (the 12th—D.V.). You know that there was discussion about the nucleus which had taken shape in our party's Central Committee and that the 12th congress tacitly agreed that this nucleus would lead, given the full support of the whole Central Committee of our party, of course, until Ilich was up and about."

Zinovyev had long been considered (like Kamenev also) a close friend of Stalin. When he was expelled from the Politburo in 1926, Zinovyev believed that this would not be for long. On the eve of the new year of 1927 he and Kamenev, snatching up a bottle of cognac and champagne, suddenly showed up at Stalin's apartment, seeing that they lived close to each other. A "peaceful settlement" had been achieved, seemingly. They "thou'd" one another and reminisced about the past and friends, but did not speak about business. Koba was hospitable, received his old "friends" warmly and conversed simply and affably, as if it had not been he who in July and October had sought their departure from the Politburo. The "duo" went away encouraged, but Stalin had long since decided that these people, who knew so much about him, were no longer necessary to the general secretary.

There would be one further occasion when they would come (no, they would be brought!) to Stalin together. In 1936 they were both in prison and had written a letter to the "leader," and he suddenly responded. Lenin's former associates, former Politburo members, who not without reason were looking forward to a high position in the party and the state following the death of Vladimir Ilich, would be entering the office of a man whom they had once so underestimated. Besides Stalin, Voroshilov and Yezhov were present. They said their greetings. Stalin did not reply, nor, incidentally, did an invitation to be seated follow. Pacing up and down the office, Stalin offered a deal: their guilt had been proven, a new trial could sentence them to the "highest measure". But he remembered their past contributions (something most likely trembled within in Zinovyev and Kamenev at these words). If at the proceedings they confessed everything, particularly direct leadership of their subversive activity on the part of Trotskiy, he would spare their lives. He would try. And then seek to ensure their release. Decide. It had to be this way.... There was a long silence. Zinovyev, more pliant and weaker, softly said: "Very well, we agree." He was accustomed to deciding for Kamenev also. Two months later they were executed.

This is what I was told in Siberia in 1947 by a prisoner who, I recall, was called Boris Semenovich. He himself had been "sent down" in 1938 and prior to this had worked in the "organs," in the prison in which Stalin's former associates were incarcerated. He had accompanied them to their last "appointment" with him. When they came for Zinovyev and Kamenev at night, they behaved differently. They had both written Stalin repeated petitions for clemency and, evidently, hoped for clemency (they had been promised it, after all!), but sensed here that this was the end. Kamenev walked along the corridor in silence, nervously rubbing his hands. Zinovyev was choked with hysterics, and he was carried out. Less than an hour later they crossed the fatal line. They more than anyone else had reinforced Koba's positions. They paid for their "contribution" with their lives.

Stalin knew L.B. Kamenev (Rozenfeld) more closely from exile in Turukhanskiy region, which we have described. Even at that time Stalin noted in him sound erudition and some impulsiveness: a capacity for rapidly reaching certain conclusions, but just as quickly abandoning them. Stalin's attitude toward Kamenev was strongly influenced by the fact that the latter was Lenin's deputy in the Sovnarkom (together with the office of chairman of the Moscow City Soviet) and frequently chaired plenums and Sovnarkom sessions and presided repeatedly at party congresses. In Lenin's lifetime even Kamenev, as a rule, chaired the Politburo sessions. Although Zinovyev and Kamenev were notable organizers and publicists, these people lacked a firm "pivot" and were capable at a critical time, at a pivotal moment, of performing a flip-flop in their behavior and accomplishing a maneuver pursuing primarily personal ends. Unfortunately, whether this was what they intended or not, they carried their struggle with Stalin over into the sphere of the apparatus and party machinery, but even then their chances of successes in this field were slight, although both leaders possessed outstanding capabilities, high intelligence and perseverance in achieving their ends.

Aware of the weaknesses of Zinovyev and Kamenev, Lenin nonetheless relied on them actively. This applies particularly to Kamenev, who repeatedly performed many of Lenin's personal assignments. It was known that

Kamenev was good at negotiating and settling various tricky matters in a party environment. Kamenev was less popular than Zinovyev, but sounder and more intelligent. He had his own ideas, was capable of quite profound theoretical generalizations and was bold and decisive. The words which Lev Borisovich Kamenev spoke on 21 December 1925 (on Stalin's birthday), addressing the 14th party congress, would go down in history:

"We are opposed to the creation of a 'leader' theory, we are opposed to the making of a 'leader'. We are opposed to the Secretariat, actually uniting both policy and organization, being above the political body. We support our upper stratum being organized internally such that there be a truly plenipotentiary Politburo uniting all politicians of our party and at the same time a Secretariat subordinate to it and technically fulfilling its decrees.... I should have started by saying that I personally believe that our general secretary is not the figure who could unite around him the old Bolshevik headquarters.... It is because I have repeatedly said this to Comrade Stalin personally, because I have repeatedly said this to the group of Leninist comrades that I repeat it at the congress: I am of the conviction that Comrade Stalin cannot perform the role of uniter of the Bolshevik headquarters. I began this part of my speech with the words: we are opposed to individual theory, we are opposed to the creation of a leader!"

These were courageous words. In addition, from what was said publicly against Stalin's absolute rule, which had at that time only just begun to show through, these were the most telling words of warning. Kamenev deserves respect for this alone. He had assimilated better than others, seemingly, the lesson of courage of thought which had been taught the party by V.I. Lenin. But why at that time did not the "group of Leninist comrades," as Kamenev called them, support the sober, prophetic proposals of a member of the leading nucleus? Not only the "Leninist comrades" myopically evaluating the situation but Kamenev himself were to blame for this. His unscrupulous darting in the struggle against Stalin sometimes toward Trotskiy, sometimes away from him created the impression (not far from the truth) that the driving motives of his behavior were connected to a considerable extent with personal ambitions. Kamenev was not destined to be the personality who would "stop" Stalin. Instead of a weakening of Stalin, his positions strengthened: after all, Kamenev had "attacked" the general secretary as a "member of the opposition".

Relations between Trotskiy, Zinovyev and Kamenev were complex. Despite the fact that Kamenev was Trotskiy's brother in law, there were essentially no close relations between them. The whole point being that both Trotskiy and Zinovyev laid claim to leadership in the party, particularly when it had been ascertained that the situation concerning the leader's health was dangerous. Having written his sensational "Lessons of October," Trotskiy portrayed the role of Zinovyev and Kamenev in the revolution in a most unattractive light. The latter, as is known, demanded the removal of the author of the "Lessons" from the Politburo and expulsion from the party. But Stalin was not at that time what he would be at the end of the 1920's and in the 1930's. He would say in this connection that at the 14th party congress the Central Committee confined itself to the removal of Trotskiy from the position of people's commissar for military affairs. "We did not agree with Zinovyev and Kamenev because we knew that a policy of severance was fraught with great dangers for the party and that the method of severance, the method of blood-letting—and they were demanding blood—is dangerous and infectious: today one person is severed, tomorrow, another, the next day, a third—what would be left of the party here?"

The congress greeted these words of Stalin's with applause, but 3 or 4 minutes later, continuing his closing remarks, Stalin would say in connection with the ban on the publication of the journal BOLSHEVIK in Leningrad: "We are not liberals. For us the interests of the party are higher than formal democratism. Yes, we have banned the publication of a factional organ and will continue to ban similar things." These words were greeted with stormy applause. The delegates liked Stalin's firmness and decisiveness. Did they know that not much time would elapse before Stalin also would have matured for the "severance method" and that very many of them would be mounting the guillotine of lawlessness?! And that there would be hardly anything left of revolutionary democracy other than formal attributes....

Let us run ahead a little. When Kamenev, ejected from the leading iron ring, became director of the World Literature Institute, Stalin threw out during a routine Yagoda report:

"Watch out for Kamenev.... I believe he is linked with Ryutin. Lev Borisovich is not one to give in quickly. I have known him more than 20 years. He is an enemy...."

And Yagoda "watched". In 1934 Kamenev was arrested, tried and given 5 years. He was shortly after retried—his term was increased to 8 years. The "i's" were dotted after 18 months. Permanently.

While performing his duties Stalin would closely scrutinize primarily the members of the Politburo and other authoritative comrades from the Central Committee. He noted to himself that the most influential part of the nucleus was composed of those whom he to himself called "writers". This was his name for the former exiles. He could not have failed to have noticed that they were all distinguished by great intellect, theoretical preparedness and high general erudition. This caused inner irritation in Stalin: "While we here were preparing the revolution, they were there reading and writing...."

He once spoke about this almost openly. When a comrade was being confirmed as a Central Committee representative in a provincial committee, it was ascertained that he could barely read and write. But Stalin threw into the balance his opinion:

"He was not abroad, where could he have learned! He will manage."

There were many outstanding persons among those close to Lenin. Stalin could see that Bukharin, Rykov and Tomskiy, although not constituting any special group, were greatly drawn toward economic, management and industrial matters. They were good economists and "technocrats". Unfortunately, later, in the 1930's, and for decades after the Great Patriotic War also, there was practically no room for such figures in the upper echelons of power. Their places were occupied, as a rule, by bureaucrat administrators of the Kaganovich and Malenkov type. Nor, incidentally, given the directive-command style of work, were important economists like Voznesenskiy needed either.

Bukharin, of course, was the standout in this trio (Bukharin, Rykov, Tomskiy). One sensed in his first book even "Political Economy of the Rentiers" the depth of penetration of the genesis of economic relations. The first volume of "Economics," in which Bukharin intended to reveal the process of the transformation of the capitalist economy into a socialist economy, appeared in 1920. Caught up in the vortex of the struggle and changing circumstances, Bukharin did not write the second volume. He maintained in "Economics" that "we did not build capitalism, it built itself. We will build socialism, as an organized system. The most important thing for us is finding the balance between all components of the system." Stalin, who had only primitive, elementary economic knowledge, sized Bukharin up closely.

There were no particular complications in relations between them at that time: after all, Nikolay Ivanovich was an obliging, "gentle intellectual". One had the impression at times that Stalin and Bukharin were close friends, and they lived in the Kremlin in neighboring apartments. The future general secretary would soon understand that Bukharin had no ambitious plans. Bukharin believed that, granted all the colossal significance of Lenin for the revolution and the party, its highest authority was the Central Committee. The struggle for leadership and the friction which had begun to be displayed between individual members of the Politburo were incomprehensible and unpleasant for him. It was no accident that he tried for quite a long time to adopt no particular position in terms of support either of the "triumvirate" or Trotskiy. Trotskiy subsequently called his contributions in debate and his speeches "odd peacemaking". I believe that the would-be leader was wrong: Bukharin valued highest of all the authority of Lenin, although he would often argue with him heatedly, and the collective opinion of the Politburo.

Stalin had always adopted a guarded attitude toward Rykov. Not only because the latter, after the death of Lenin, replaced him as Sovnarkom chairman. Rykov was an exceptionally straight, frank individual. Thanks to such character traits, Rykov did not always succeed in establishing good relations with his colleagues. Well known, for example, is the instance when I.T. Smilga sent a complaint to the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee in which he asked to be released as deputy chairman of the Supreme Council of the National Economy (VSNKh) and Main Administration for Fuel Industry chief in view of the impossibility of working with A.I. Rykov. Familiarized with Smilga's letter, Lenin wrote a note to Stalin in which he recommended holding off for the time being from releasing Smilga, evidently believing that relations between party members could and should be mended.

Rykov usually told one to one's face what he thought. And wrote the same way. In 1922 he wrote the work "The Country's Economic Situation and Conclusions Concerning Further Work". Aleksey Ivanovich essentially supported the NEP and opposed the attempts to solve economic problems by way of directive methods. The GOELRO, Dneprostroy, the Turkestan-Siberian Railroad, the growth of the cooperative movement, the First Five-Year Plan and other memorable "process stock" of the socialist state are linked with Rykov's name. It was Rykov who subsequently attempted to persuade Stalin and his supporters that it was necessary to perfect socialism and develop commodity-money relations and not limit the economic independence of the direct producers. Alas, it was as though they were speaking different languages....

When Stalin already had great political authority, at the end of the 1920's, Rykov once threw at him directly, following a discussion of immediate collectivization directives: "Your policy will not mean economy!" The general secretary remained impeturbable, but the rejoinder was not forgotten. Stalin never forgot anything: his cold computer-like memory kept securely in its cells thousands of names, facts and events. Nor had he forgotten that Lenin had greatly valued Rykov—the name of Rykov is mentioned in the leader's works 198 times, not much less than Stalin. As chairman of the USSR Sovnarkom, as of 1926 Rykov headed the Council for Labor and Defense and the Committee for Science and Assistance to the Development of Scientific Thought. Stalin had not forgotten how Rykov, speaking in March 1922 at a plenum of the Moscow City Soviet, had said that once again descending to the methods of "war communism" was impermissible, sharply criticized those who were attacking the NEP, calling these sallies "exceptionally harmful and dangerous," and had demanded the abandonment of methods of coercion in the countryside, where, according to him, "revolutionary legality" should be observed. When, many years later, A.I. Rykov would, for the last time in his life, address a Central Committee plenum, rejecting the monstrous charges of espionage, sabotage and terror, Stalin would

recall for some reason or other that Rykov's party pseudonym in underground work had been Vlasov... And, further: Rykov had been a member of the first Soviet Government as people's commissar for internal affairs. But several days later, having made a mistake, tendered his resignation as a sign of protest against the fact that the entire government was not a coalition but Bolshevik. Stalin would grin gloatingly: "He was always the same."

Bukharin and Rykov were somehow particularly moved by the fate of the Russian peasant, whereas Trotskiy (and in his heart Stalin agreed with him) believed that "this is material for revolutionary transformations". It was impossible not to see what great popularity Bukharin and Rykov enjoyed among the people. They walked about without protection and were very accessible and responsive. The ordinary people always value these qualities of leaders highly, Stalin, however, called this simplicity and approachability "flirting with the people". Even the natural behavior of a decent man was suspicious to him.

In the same way Stalin was always distrustful of M.P. Tomskiy (Yefremov). A participant in three revolutions, the eminent trade union official knew how to defend his viewpoint. Stalin tolerated this "friend of Rykov's" for a long time, until he brought into the AUCCTU Presidium Kaganovich and Shvernik, who "ousted" from the Presidium its chairman. When, on 22 August 1936, at his dacha in Bolshevo, Tomskiy committed suicide, Stalin said:

"His suicide is confirmation of his guilt before the party...."

But we know today that everything was the other way about—it was an extreme form of protest.

A notable place in the party's nucleus was occupied by F.E. Dzerzhinskiy and M.V. Frunze. Bukharin called Dzerzhinskiy the "proletarian Jacobin". He was one of the oldest members of the party and organizers of the social democracy of Poland and Lithuania. Evaluating Dzerzhinskiy's role subsequently, K. Radek observed: "Our enemies created an entire legend concerning the all-seeing eyes of the Cheka, the all-hearing ears of the Cheka and the ubiquitous Dzerzhinskiy. They portrayed the Cheka as some vast army encompassing the entire country and thrusting its tentacles into their own camp. They did not understand the nature of Dzerzhinskiy's strength. It was what constituted the strength of the Bolshevik Party—the most complete trust of the working masses and the poor." Stalin had good relations with Dzerzhinskiy, particularly following a number of joint journeys with him to the fronts in the civil war years. Sparing in exalted judgments, Stalin said following Dzerzhinskiy's premature decease: "He wore himself out in furious work in support of the proletariat."

M.V. Frunze was not very striking outwardly but exceedingly charming. Stalin, who had himself experienced years of prison and exile, had a particularly respectful attitude toward Arseniy, as the old comrades sometimes called Frunze even after the revolution. Everyone knew that in 1907 Mikhail Vasilyevich had twice been sentenced to death and had spent many weeks on death row and in penal servitude. There were few who knew in detail at that time what great work Frunze performed for the achievement of victory on the Eastern, Turkestan and Southern fronts. Stalin, who himself possessed uncommon decisiveness, was amazed at the composed manner of leadership of this proletarian commander capable of the highest display of political and military willpower. In his short time as people's commissar for military and naval affairs Frunze astounded everyone by the profundity of his intellectual calculations concerning military doctrine, proposals pertaining to reform of the armed forces and views on operational art in modern warfare.

Had not Frunze met with an absurd and, to a certain extent, puzzling death from an operation which was quite simple even for those times (and, as it subsequently proved, entirely unnecessary), it may be assumed that Frunze's role in the highest party and state leadership would have been even more substantial.

Frunze suffered from a peptic ulcer and preferred conservative treatment, the more so as the exacerbation was passing. But the consultation gave its finding: "An operation is necessary." According to a number of sources (I.K. Gamburg's book "How It Was," B. Pilnyak's "Story of an Undarkened Moon" and others), Stalin and Mikoyan went to the hospital, spoke with Professor Rozanov and insisted on an operation. Shortly before the operation Frunze wrote a note to his wife: "I now feel absolutely healthy, and it is even somehow ridiculous not only to agree to but even to think about an operation. Nonetheless, both consultations have decreed that it take place."

After Frunze's death many medical people expressed the opinion that the operation had not been necessary. Stalin said at M.V. Frunze's funeral: "Perhaps this is what it takes for old comrades to go down so easily and simply to their graves. Unfortunately, not so easily and far from as simply do our young comrades ascend to take the place of the old ones." Some people have seen in these words an innermost meaning known only to Stalin. But let us not conjecture: we do not have real proof for categorical conclusions. One thing is clear: Stalin felt that Frunze could have played an outstanding part on the political stage and Stalin remembered also Lenin's attitude toward Frunze. E.M. Sklyanskiy told him of Lenin's support for the "clever proposal" of M.V. Frunze, at that time commander of the forces of the Ukraine and the Crimea, that it was necessary to draft into the army young people chiefly from the starving provinces. All that Frunze did bore the stamp of his exceptional, original mind.

An important organizer in the Central Committee was Ya.M. Sverdlov. Personal ambition was totally lacking, as Lunacharskiy wrote, in Yakov Mikhaylovich, he was the classic, selfless executant: "He had orthodox ideas on everything and was only a reflection of the general will and general directives. He personally never offered them, he only transmitted them, receiving them from the Central Committee, sometimes from Lenin personally." When he spoke, Lunacharskiy recalled, his speeches resembled editorials of the official newspaper. But he possessed that in respect of which not many people could be compared to him—a brillant knowledge of the slightest nuances of the situation in the party and wonderful organizer's capabilities. It may even be said that until the time when it was decided to have in the Secretariat a first person—the general secretary of the Central Committee—these duties were being performed by Ya.M. Sverdlov. Stalin liked the way in which Sverdlov conducted Central Committee sessions in businesslike, terse manner. Following Sverdlov's early demise, V.I. Lenin gave him a most brilliant evaluation: such people are irreplaceable, it takes a whole group of workers to replace them.

As a member of the cohort of Lenin's associates and pupils, Stalin should, one would have thought, have perceived much that was valuable from contact with the leader and those close to him, but this was not the case. Much that was embedded in him in his early years—secrecy, cold calculation, bitterness, cautiousness, poverty of feelings—not only did not disappear with time but developed to the maximum. One further quality, which Hegel called "probabilism," began to show through in Stalin's character. The essence thereof is that in engaging in some morally unseemly act an individual tries inwardly to justify it by some particular arguments of his. Having convinced himself that the generally recognized leader was seriously ill, Stalin began by degrees the great "game" aimed at the maximum consolidation of his position in the leadership. Initially he attempted to prove to himself that this was necessary in the interests of the defense of Leninism. Later the "probabilism" principle would occupy an important place in the arsenal of Stalin's political weapons. People should know, Stalin believed, that all that he was doing was in the name of the good of the people.

I believe that many of the people close to Lenin were for a long time unable to "rumble" Stalin. For some he seemed simply an executant, for others, a pretty good representative of the party's national detachments, for yet others, an ordinary mediocrity, of whom there are always many in the leading circles of all regimes and systems.

Yes, Lenin's associates underestimated Stalin, he, on the other hand, "rumbled" everyone, even those who were close to Lenin—Zinovyev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Rykov, Tomskiy, Rudzutak, Kosior, Yevdokimov and many others. After all, it was he who "noticed" that in the civil war the Red Army had been led almost exclusively by "enemies of the people": Trotskiy, Blyukher, Yegorov, Uborevich, Dybenko, Muralov and hundreds and thousands of other "traitors". Lenin had not guessed, but Stalin, do you see, had shrewdly "spotted" that the "commanders of industry" were nearly all "wreckers": Pyatakov, Zelenskiy, Serebryakov, Lifshits, Grinko, Lebed, Semenov and thousands of others; only Stalin had been able to "discern" that at the head of the Soviet international department there were also "spies" at virtually every step: Krestinskiy, Rakovskiy, Sokolnikov, Karakhan, Bogomolov, Raskolnikov.... And how many other "double-dealers" had the member of the leading nucleus "rumbled" and "exposed" in practically all spheres of the life of the people! Such a person could hardly have been an ordinary "mediocrity"—Trotskiy was mistaken here. Speaking in the Convention on 5 February 1794, Robespierre declared: "The first rule of our policy must be control of the people, with the aid of reason, and of the enemies of the people, with the aid of terror." How dualistic and nonuniversal Robespierre's method was! Stalin made his rule of policy monistic: controlling both by one method—violence.

Let us say once again: Trotskiy was, of course, mistaken in saying that Stalin was an "outstanding mediocrity". This seems like praise: a mediocrity does not have manifest enemies or friends either. Stalin had more than enough of both, as the whole party and the whole people would soon learn. Having performed a most obscure role in the revolution and having shown himself to be somewhat more assertive in the civil war, Stalin sensed that Lenin's closest associates, while superior to him, possibly, in many respects, were inferior to him in some respect. Had he known Hegel, he could have said, if only in his thoughts: "Man is master of his own destiny and his purpose."

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[Text]

The General Secretary

The 11th party congress was the last at which Lenin was present. The report on the Central Committee's organizational activity was delivered by V.M. Molotov. Describing the state of intraparty life, Molotov showed how overburdened with work were the Central Committee departments. In "a year 22,500 party workers have passed through the Central Committee, that is, approximately 60 comrades a day." Molotov raised the question of a simplification of the "movement" of personnel, the organization of proper registration and greater organization in the activity of the Central Committee machinery. The report emphasized that there had been an increase in the number of Central Committee sessions in the past year; the number of questions discussed in the Central Committee had increased, as had the number of conferences and other all-party meetings. The delegates to the congress who spoke expressed dissatisfaction with the work of the central authority. Thus Osinskiy

reproached the Politburo for being involved to a great extent in "vermicelli" (that is, petty) matters like "whether to allocate the people's commissar for farming the 'Boyarskiy dvor' or not and whether to allocate such-and-such an institution a printing plant or leave it for another?" For an improvement in the management of party and country the delegates proposed that the Central Committee have three bureaus: the Politburo, an Orgburo and an Ekonomburo.

Reading the stenographic accounts of the first congresses, one admires the openness and genuine glasnost in the expression of opinions. Criticism was as natural as air. There was no eulogizing, worship of rank and flattery. No one sought unity for unity's sake, there were leaders, but no cult of them. For example, at the 11th congress Lenin's report, granted the general high evaluation of its propositions and conclusions, was criticized by many delegates: Skrypnik, Antonov-Ovseyenko, Preobrazhenskiy and Osinskiy. Ryazanov, for example, to the general laughter of the delegates, declared, criticizing the activity of the Central Committee: "Our Central Committee is an absolutely special institution. It is said that the English Parliament can do everything; only it cannot make a man into a woman. Our Central Committee is far more powerful: it has already turned more than one very revolutionary man into an old woman, and the number of these old women is multiplying unbelievably." Ryazanov went on, "until the party and its members participate in the collective discussion of all these measures which are being implemented on its behalf, as long as these measures fall like snow on the heads of the party members, what Comrade Lenin called a panicky mood will be created in our country."

The candid, open discussion of all questions concerning party life was the immutable rule. Incidentally, later, in the 1930's, all critical speeches which had been made earlier were seen as being "wrecking" speeches. For entire decades subsequently it was possible only to "unanimously approve," "support," admire....

As early as 1920 the practice of work of the Central Committee machinery had shown that a leading, specially selected person was necessary for organizing the activity of the Secretariat. Having discussed this question, at its session on 5 April 1920 the Russian Communist Party Central Committee passed the following decision:

"1. To elect as secretaries Comrades Krestinskiy, Preobrazhenskiy and Serebryakov. The question of the appointment of one executive secretary not to determine in advance. To recommend that the secretaries, at the prompting of experience, submit to the Central Committee after a certain time a proposal in this connection.

"2. To make members of the Orgburo, aside from the three secretaries, Comrades Rykov and Stalin."

Familiarity with the Central Committee minutes, which were recorded on separate pages of a school exercise book, shows that "the question of the appointment of a single executive secretary" had arisen not in 1922, but considerably earlier. Following the 11th congress, one secretary was distinguished particularly. Executive secretaries had been elected earlier also: Stasova, Krestinskiy and Molotov, but it was now a question of an elevation of the status of executive secretary to the level of general secretary. Whose suggestion was this? Where had it come from? According to available information, from Kamenev and Stalin. There is no doubt also that Lenin knew about this impending innovation. There is every reason to believe that these questions had been "agreed" with him in advance.

The plenum of the Central Committee formed at the 11th party congress, held on 3 April, elected in accordance with the delegates' wishes a Politburo, Orgburo and Secretariat. The plenum adopted the decision to introduce the office of general secretary of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee. This same day the person elected as first general secretary (who could at that time have believed that it would be for many years) was I.V. Stalin (to be precise, Stalin was not officially elected general secretary after the 17th party congress, as the documents say. But even without formal status he was already more than "general," to judge by the extent of his absolute rule. Yes, he was individual "leader," and this evidently suited him more. When he died, incidentally, the official documents contained no mention of him as general secretary). Thus Stalin held three high positions simultaneously: member of the Politburo, member of the Orgburo and general secretary. Politburo candidates Molotov and Kuybyshev were elected secretaries at that time. Today historians, philosophers and all people who are disturbed by domestic history are asking: why Stalin, and not someone else? Who nominated him? What part did Lenin play in this act? Did Stalin's appointment as general secretary imply the transfer to him of special powers? In order to answer these and similar questions let us turn to dispassionate documents.

The following Central Committee members were present at its plenum: Lenin, Trotskiy, Zinovyev, Kamenev, Stalin, Dzerzhinskiy, Petrovskiy, Kalinin, Voroshilov, Ordzhonikidze, Yaroslavskiy, Tomskiy, Rykov, Andreyev, Smirnov, Frunze, Chubar, Kuybyshev, Sokolnikov, Molotov and Korotkov. The following Central Committee candidates also participated in the session: Kirov, Kiselev, Krivov, Pyatakov, Manuilskiy, Lebed, Sulimov, Bubnov and Badayev, as did Solts, member of the Central Control Commission.

Several questions were aired and decisions made thereon. The first was the constituting of the Central Committee. Concerning the chairman:

"To confirm unanimously the established custom whereby the Central Committee does not have a chairman. Secretaries are the sole officials of the Central

Committee. A chairman, on the other hand, is elected at each given session."

There followed discussion of the question of why on the list of members of the Central Committee elected by the congress there were notes concerning the appointment as secretaries of Comrades Stalin, Molotov and Kuybyshev. Kamenev explained (the plenum took note) that "at the time of the elections I stated, with the full approval of the congress, that an indication on certain cards of the office of secretary is not intended to inhibit the Central Committee plenum in the elections but is merely the desire of a certain part of the delegates." This "desire" emanated primarily from Kamenev, Zinovyev and, tacitly, Stalin.

Although officially the congress had elected only Central Committee members, there is reason to believe that Kamenev performed considerable "work" on the organization of support for the election of the future secretaries. There has to be seen in this (inasmuch as Kamenev knew that the question of the new office of general secretary would be examined) an endeavor to have certain people elected to the Secretariat. More simply, Kamenev wanted to have as "his" man the leader of the Central Committee machinery. At that time his relations with Stalin were very good. The future general secretary had emphasized repeatedly the particular significance of Kamenev, Lenin's former Sovnarkom deputy—at that time this was rated higher, possibly, than position in the party hierarchy. Much oblique evidence is such that Kamenev endeavored to have Stalin elected to the office which was being newly introduced with the clear knowledge and desire of the latter: Stalin liked the work in the apparat and he sensed the possibilities which it afforded.

The Central Committee plenum minutes went on to say:

"To establish the offices of general secretary and two secretaries. To appoint Comrade Stalin general secretary, Comrades Molotov and Kuybyshev, secretaries."

In the minutes, below, Lenin's hand recorded:

"To adopt the following proposal of Lenin's:

"The Central Committee instructs the Secretariat to strictly determine and abide by the allocation of the hours of official receptions and to publish them and to make it a rule here that the secretaries must not entrust to themselves personally any work, other than that which is truly fundamentally guiding work, turning such work over to their assistants and technical secretaries.

"Comrade Stalin is instructed to immediately find for himself deputies and assistants relieving him of work (except for fundamental guiding work) in the soviet establishments.

"The Central Committee instructs the Orgburo and Politburo to submit within 2 weeks a list of candidates of the board and deputies of the Worker-Peasant Inspectorate so that within a month Comrade Stalin may be relieved completely of the work of the Worker-Peasant Inspectorate."

The next day, 4 April, PRAVDA reported: "For the information of organizations and members of the Russian Communist Party. The Central Committee elected by the Russian Communist Party 11th Congress has confirmed a Russian Communist Party Central Committee Secretariat consisting of Comrade Stalin (general secretary), Comrade Molotov and Comrade Kuybyshev. The Central Committee Secretariat has confirmed the following procedure of reception in the Central Committee daily from 12 until 3 in the afternoon: on Monday, Molotov and Kuybyshgev, Tuesday, Stalin and Molotov, Wednesday, Kuybyshev and Molotov, Thursday, Kuybyshev, Friday, Stalin and Molotov, Saturday, Stalin and Kuybyshev. Address: Central Committee, 5, Vozdvizhenka.

"Stalin, secretary of the RKP Central Committee."

This same plenum elected a seven-man Politburo: Lenin, Trotskiy, Stalin, Kamenev, Zinovyev, Tomskiy and Rykov and three candidates: Molotov, Kalinin and Bukharin. The Orgburo was formed. A single candidate (Kamenev) was proposed for the position of general secretary, there being no objections. This was how it all occurred.

V.I. Lenin spoke at the 11th congress about the need for an improvement in the work of the Central Committee and the Politburo, paying particular attention to an improvement in organizational work. Lenin made a number of very important observations here, which, unfortunately, were not fully taken into account either then or later, under Stalin. One concerned the standard of administration and the ability to administrate. Lenin said that in many communist executives the standard of administration was simply paltry and wretched. But a procedural foundation of administration, he observed, was an ability to distinguish the main link in a general chain of problems. As of today, Lenin said at the congress, this main link is the selection of the right people.

Immediately following the revolution the secretarial, technical functions had been performed by several comrades, who had been led by Ya.M. Sverdlov. Following his death in 1919 from a simple cold, everyone immediately perceived how great the loss was. Current business swamped the work of the Central Committee. Following the eighth congress, the office of executive secretary was introduced; Ye.D. Stasova, member of the party since 1898, became such. She was subsequently replaced by N.N. Krestinskiy, who was simultaneously elected a member of the Politburo (he further acted here as

people's commissar for finances of the RSFSR!). Following the ninth party congress, a further two secretaries—Preobrazhenskiy and Serebryakov—were elected to assist Krestinskiy. In their place Molotov, Mikhaylov and Yaroslavskiy were elected secretaries at the 10th congress. After the death of Sverdlov, Lenin was frequently unhappy with the work of the Secretariat: with its slowness, hidebound ways and its mistakes. Thus in his memorandum to V.M. Molotov of 19 November 1921 V.I. Lenin expressed dissatisfaction with the Orgburo decree defining the attitude of the judicial inquiry establishments' toward communists' malfeasance which had been prepared by Molotov. Lenin wrote:

"Comrade Molotov,

"I am transferring this matter to the Politburo.

"It is altogether wrong for such matters to be decided in the Orgburo: this is a purely political, wholly political matter.

"And it should be decided differently."

It may be said that the introduction of the new party office had been dictated by a need to streamline the work of the Central Committee "headquarters"—the Secretariat. But at the same time we would emphasize that the position of general secretary was at that time by no means the main, key, decisive position. Had this been the case, the first general secretary would evidently have been Lenin.

The doctors continued to insist on Lenin's serious treatment, and in April 1922 they concluded that prolonged rest and mountain air were necessary. They decided that a trip to the Caucasus would be useful. Lenin agreed and even wrote several letters to I.S. Unshlikht and G.K. Ordzhonikidze, who were working in the Caucasus at this time. Here is one letter sent on 9 April 1922:

"Comrade Sergo,

"Apropos Kamo's request and in connection with it I have to add further that I need to be housed separately. The way of life of a patient. I can hardly bear a three-party conversation (Kamenev and Stalin were once at my house: a *deterioration*!). Either small detached houses or only such a big house in which absolute separation is possible. This must be taken into consideration. There must be no visits...,

"Your Lenin."

But, alas, it was not possible to carry through the planned trip.... Lenin continued to work. He wished to check out the activity of the Central Committee machinery, excluding hidebound ways and bureaucratism.

The Politburo met, in accordance with Lenin's proposal, once a week, and current work had to be performed daily. The Secretariat prepared the material for the Politburo sessions, organized the notification of the executants of its decisions and carried out the assignments of the Politburo members. The Secretariat did not deal directly with questions of the economy, defense, the machinery of state and education. It performed to a considerable extent a technical-executant role in the overall mechanism of control of the party apparatus. Inasmuch as the main departments were headed by prominent Bolsheviks who did not pay that much attention to the technical aspect, it was decided to make one Politburo member responsible for the entire work of the Secretariat with the rank of the new office of general secretary.

Did Stalin have the qualities for holding this position? Formally, evidently, he did. Judge for yourselves: Stalin had been a party member since 1898 and a member of the Central Committee since 1912 and was part of the Central Committee Bureau and a member of the Orgburo and member of the Politburo. He was the sole Politburo member to hold two offices of state: people's commissar for nationalities and people's commissar for state control (Worker-Peasant Inspectorate); a member of the board of the All-Russian Special Commission for Combating Counterrevolution and Sabotage VChK-OGPU from the Central Committee, member of the Republic Revolutionary Military Council, member of the Council for Labor and Defense.... We have still not named all the positions of I.V. Stalin which he held at the time of his election as general secretary of the Central Committee.

Undoubtedly, membership of the highest party and state authorities testified not only to recognition of his contribution to the cause of the revolutionary restructuring of society but also Stalin's knowledge of the mechanism of political and state control. Whereas many of the important revolutionaries of that time found irksome or, to put it this way, were not particularly disposed toward administrative work, many people noticed Stalin's devotion to managerial work. As a whole, Stalin's promotion to the new office was not perceived as anything unexpected. The majority of leaders continued to consider this an ordinary, organizational position. All this was the case while Lenin was healthy and alive, while the leader of the party and leader of the state was not at issue. In his new role Stalin was for the party and for the people, as before, one of many, in the leadership, on the other hand, all his positive and negative qualities came as of this moment to be seen in greater relief.

It would be decades before it was possible to describe Stalin's character: this man knew how to conceal his feelings very deeply, and few people saw his anger even. He was capable of adopting the cruelest decisions with composure. In the future his associates would see this as a sign of great wisdom and pertinacity. Can everyone maintain composure in the midst of the world's infinite

confusion? Pity was unknown to Stalin. Feelings of filial love and for his children and grandchildren? Hardly: of his eight grandchildren, he saw several times only the children of his daughter Svetlana and the son and daughter of Yakov, his first-born. His personal life was shielded totally, only work, work and more work. Decisions, meetings, hearings, instructions, speeches....

The surrounding world was for Stalin, as for a person who was color blind, only black or white, all the colors of the rainbow of the infinitely rich world being squeezed into the following channel: if it does not correspond to the "line," it is all hostile. He did not recognize halftones and essentially loved binary logic, revolvement around the two categories of "yes" and "no". Categorical and unequivocal. But life is, after all, immeasurably richer, it has so many disturbing uncertainties, vagaries, transitions and plays of the colors of existence.... This was incomprehensible to Stalin. A peremptory, telegraph style of memoranda, speeches and reports. Even at that time many people liked this: a man of business, a man of duty. No sentimentality, he did not like the word "humanism". But no one at that time knew anything about this and much else. Everyone in the Central Committee saw that for Stalin nothing was higher than party discipline, party duty and the general line of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik).

In the course of 1922 and the start of 1923, until illness conclusively deprived Lenin of the opportunity of writing and dictating, he sent Stalin several dozen memoranda, draft documents and letters. It can be seen from them that Lenin was concerned at the organizational and political solution of a number of questions. It was not at all accidental that 9 (!) months after Stalin's election as general secretary Lenin concluded that the candidacy had been unsuccessful and that it needed to be transferred elsewhere. Lenin had been convinced of this by a number of precipitate steps which Stalin had taken as general secretary while the former was still alive even.

Thus, for example, Stalin's decision in support of the proposal of Sokolnikov and Bukharin concerning abolition of the state foreign trade monopoly had been mistaken. In his note to Stalin Lenin was categorical:

"Comrade Stalin, I suggest by a *polling* of Politburo members passage of the directive: 'The Central Committee confirms the monopoly of foreign trade and decrees a halt everywhere to the elaboration and preparation of the question of the merger of the VSNKh and the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade. To be secretly signed by all people's commissars' and the original returned to Stalin, no copies.

"15 May, Lenin."

In September, when Lenin was recuperating following his first severe attack, Stalin presented the idea of "autonomization," that is, unification of the national republics via their entry into the RSFSR. This was in fact a policy not of the creation of a union of soviet socialist republics but a Russian soviet socialist republic, of which the other national formations would be members with autonomy status. Stalin had already managed to get his proposal through the Central Committee commission dealing with this question. Lenin reacted immediately in his letter to Kamenev addressed to the members of the Politburo:

"Comrade Kamenev, You will most likely have already received from Stalin the resolution of his commission concerning the independent republics' membership of the RSFSR....

"In my opinion, the question is of the utmost importance. Stalin has somewhat of an urge to hurry. You (you once had the intention of studying this and even did so somewhat) should ponder it well and truly; Zinovyev also."

No one, perhaps, visited Lenin in Gorki during his illness as often as Stalin. Sometimes Vladimir Ilich invited Stalin for information about current business himself, often the general secretary would come on his own initiative. During the numerous conversations V.I. Lenin would ask in detail about the work of the apparat and the course of fulfillment of party decisions and would inquire after the general state of the comrades who were in ill health—Dzerzhinskiy, Tsyurupa and other officials. It is known, for example, that Lenin also discussed the health of Stalin himself, having chatted beforehand by telephone with V.A. Obukh, the physician treating Stalin.

Following Stalin's rash idea concerning "autonomization," Lenin invited the general secretary to Gorki on 26 September and chatted with him for about 3 hours on ways of uniting the Soviet republics. Lenin proposed a fundamentally new basis for the creation of a union state: the voluntary unification of the independent republics, including the RSFSR, in a union of soviet socialist republics, with the preservation of complete equality for each of them. Stalin did not argue with Lenin and swiftly accepted all his arguments, although it is sometimes maintained, with references to Soviet sources of the 1920's, that Stalin had described Lenin's position on the nationality issue as "liberal".

These frequent conversations with the general secretary were for Lenin not simply a method of obtaining information and passing on advice and suggestions but simultaneously also the training of the leader of the Central Committee machinery and study of him. It would seem that in the course of the numerous meetings and conversations with Stalin Lenin was able to better understand this man's stong and weak aspects, and the evaluations and suggestions in respect of the general secretary which he made at the end of 1922-start of 1923 were the result of in-depth analysis and reflection. The nationality question and Stalin's attempts at a solution thereof in his own way revealed for Lenin not only certain new political

facets of this personality but primarily moral facets also. Later, but this year still, V.I. Lenin evaluated this idea in his notes "The Question of the Nationalities or Their 'Autonomization'" as a retreat from the principles of proletarian internationalism. Summing up, as it were, Lenin collated the political and moral characteristics of the general secretary:

"I think that Stalin's haste and enthusiasm for administrative rule and also his animosity toward the notorious 'social nationalism' played a fatal part here. Animosity generally usually plays the worst part in politics."

Ordzhonikidze also "catches it" in this letter for his "muggings" at the time of his trip to the Caucasus with the commission. Lenin wrote with all certainty that "no provocation, no insult even can justify this Russian mugging" and that Comrade Dzerzhinskiy was irreparably at fault for having treated this mugging frivolously. Stalin had not adopted a scrupulous position in this conflict, which enabled Lenin to publicly note in the general secretary not only "haste and an enthusiasm for administrative rule" but also, which is particularly important, "animosity" in deciding political matters.

Lenin returned to this matter repeatedly, as evidenced by the "Diary of V.I. Lenin's Secretaries," which contain L.A. Fotiyeva's record of the fact that Vladimir Ilich had ordered the delivery of additional material on this "incident". Stalin responded with a refusal, referring to the need to protect the patient from unnecessary agitation. But Lenin insisted. Five days before a new exacerbation of his illness, as a result of which Lenin would lose the power of speech, he wrote on 5 March 1923 the following note to Trotskiy:

"Dear Comrade Trotskiy,

"I would request very much that you assume defense of the Georgian cause in the party Central Committee. This matter is now under the 'prosecution' of Stalin and Dzerzhinskiy, and I cannot depend on their impartiality. Quite the contrary even."

The same day Lenin wrote one further note, to Stalin this time. The letter is ostensibly of a personal nature, but only ostensibly. Its prehistory is as follows. In December 1922 V.I. Lenin had dictated to N.K. Krupskaya a number of most important letters for the fate of the party. Following one such session of dictation, of a letter to Trotskiy, evidently, on the question of the monopoly of foreign trade, in the night of 22-23 December, there was a deterioration in Vladimir Ilich's state of health—paralysis of the right arm and right leg set in. This was reported to members of the Politburo. The next day Stalin ticked off and abused Nadezhda Konstantinovna by telephone in the crudest, high-handed form for "violation of the regimen of the sick leader." This was done in an extremely tactless and rude manner. The very next day, 23 December, Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya, upset by the general secretary's high-handedness, wrote to Kamenev:

"Lev Borisovich, in connection with a very short letter which I wrote to Vlad. Ilich's dictation with the doctors' permission Stalin yesterday permitted himself in respect of me the crudest outburst. I am no newcomer to the party. In all these 30 years I have not heard from a single comrade one rude word, and the interests of the party and Ilich are no less dear to me than to Stalin. We need now the maximum self-possession. What may and may not be discussed with Ilich I know better than any doctor, since I know what excites him, and what, not, and better than Stalin in any event. I appeal to you and Grigoriy, as closer comrades of V.I., and ask you to protect me against crude interference in my personal life, which is undeserving of abuse and threats. I have no doubt as to the unanimous decision of the Control Commission, which Stalin permits himself to hold out as a threat, but I have neither the strength nor the time to waste on this stupid row. I am a living person also, and my nerves are strained to the utmost. N. Krupskaya." In accordance with the Politburo's decision, Stalin was protecting the leader from excitement, but it may be assumed that Lenin's isolation from information and limitation of his influence on affairs in the party were a part of his plans for strengthening his position in the uncertain period of Lenin's illness.

Kamenev conveyed the content of Krupskaya's note to Stalin. Without any argument the latter wrote a letter of apology to Nadezhda Konstantinovna, explaining his behavior exclusively by concern for Ilich. How sincere the general secretary was here it is hard to judge. After all, he confessed rules of morality in an exclusively pragmatic manner: if it was to his benefit, he could transgress any. Whatever, Lenin learned about Stalin's outburst in respect of his wife only 2 months later from Nadezhda Konstantinovna—on 5 March 1923. The leader saw in this act of the general secretary not only something personal but something more.

Thus shortly after the conversation with his wife, Lenin summoned M.A. Volodicheva, dictated to her a letter to Trotskiy and asked her to convey it by telephone and report the reply as soon as possible and then dictated a letter to I.V. Stalin. This is what it said:

"Dear Comrade Stalin,

"You had the rudeness to call my wife on the telephone and abuse her. Although she expressed to you her agreement to forget what had been said, this fact nevertheless became known through her to Zinovyev and Kamenev. I do not intend to forget as easily what was done against me, and it goes without saying that what was done against my wife I consider done against me also. For this

reason I ask you to consider whether you agree to take back what was said and apologize or whether you prefer to sever relations between us.

"Respectfully, Lenin. Five March 1923."

Lenin was abrupt. No one in the party knew that he had written back in December 1922-January 1923 the "Letter to the Congress," in which he had made an evaluation of the personal qualities of figures from the party nucleus and proposed that Stalin be moved from the office of general secretary. With his note to Stalin of 5 March he was merely adding to the political and moral picture of the circumstances of his attitude toward him. Lenin had finally come to the conclusion that Stalin's moral inferiority, undesirable, but necessarily tolerable in usage between rank and file comrades, was absolutely impermissible for a leader. Lenin discerned with foresight in the moral anomalies of Stalin's character a danger for the policy and the entire cause of the party leadership. Unfortunately, in the long subsequent years moral characteristics came to mean altogether little compared with class and political characteristics.

But this is not all. The next day Lenin dictated the last document in his life, in which Stalin figured.

"To Comrades Mdivani, Makharadze et al. Copies to Comrades Trotskiy and Kamenev. Dear Comrades, I am following your case wholeheartedly. I am angry at Ordzhonikidze's crudity and the connivance of Stalin and Dzerzhinskiy. I am preparing memoranda and a speech for you.

"Respectfully, Lenin. Six March 1923."

Most sorrowfully, Lenin prepared neither memoranda nor speech. Four days later a new stroke deprived him of the possibility not only of writing but also of dictating. However, there is every reason to suppose, and the last three memoranda dictated by Lenin on 5 and 6 March point to this, that Stalin's actions in respect of the Georgia incident had persuaded Lenin even further of the soundness of the conclusions drawn in the "Letter to the Congress". Lenin was not easily persuaded that the choice made by the Central Committee at the start of April 1922 had been profoundly mistaken. In that case everyone, himself included, who had supported Kamenev's proposal had been mistaken. However, the mistake could be rectified. An immoral person, a potential danger to the cause, could not be permitted to head the Central Committee machinery. If Stalin was capable of rudeness and duplicity and a display of animosity in respect of the people closest to Lenin, how would he behave with others? Perhaps the deterioration in Lenin's health in precisely this first 10 days of March was not fortuitous either? We have no grounds for categorically concluding that the "Georgian incident" or the personal squabble with Stalin accelerated the fatal course of Lenin's illness, but it is precisely in these March days that we see so dramatic a confluence of circumstances that such is a great possibility.

Here we would merely add that that for which Lenin had fought in the field of national relations came to be. The formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was proclaimed at the First Congress of Soviets, which opened on 30 December 1922. The report, the basis of which were made the ideas of V.I. Lenin's letter "The Question of the Nationalities or 'Autonomization'" (Lenin's letter itself saw the light of day only 34 years later), was delivered by I.V. Stalin. In his speech, as also in the Declaration on the Formation of the USSR, which was read out by the general secretary of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee, the idea of proletarian internationalism, the devotion of all nationalities of the union to friendship, class solidarity and fidelity to revolutionary ideals, was pivotal. At the present stage, Stalin reiterated Lenin's ideas, but passing them off as his own, the particular task of the new union was to eliminate the actual inequality of the nations inherited from the past.

Lenin was ill, but was able with exceptional persistence to uphold the most correct solution of the nationality question in a vast country populated by more than 100 nationalities.

Numerous foreign biographers of Stalin of the A. Avtorkhanov type draw the blunt conclusion concerning Stalin's culpability in Lenin's demise. Trotskiy, who maintained in his memoirs that only illness had prevented Lenin "smashing Stalin politically," thought roughly the same. He wrote that the general secretary's wilfulness frequently drove the sick leader to distraction, as a result of which his illness became progressive. We have no specific information concerning Lenin's intention of "smashing" the general secretary. However, the mere fact that just 9 months after Stalin's election to this office on 2 April 1922, namely, on 4 January 1923, Lenin came to the conclusion concerning the need for his "removal" from the position of general secretary speaks volumes. In this sense Lenin's "Letter to the Congress," known together with other last articles and letters as his "Testament," is of key, methodological significance for an understanding of the political and moral character of I.V. Stalin.

"Letter to the Congress"

Today we know that Lenin was great not only because he was wise and possessed colossal intellectual power and moral perfection but because he was also a person of striking political courage. At death's door, he asked the doctors in the morning of 23 December to allow him (for just 5 minutes!) to dictate a few lines for "one thing was troubling" him. He was insistent in his request. He demanded. Permission was obtained. Lenin began to dictate his celebrated "Letter to the Congress". It was very great courage of thought.

At moments when no one could have been sure whether the attack would not resume to be followed by a new stroke, Lenin was thinking about the future. His letter was a philosophical parting warning. He sensed the danger and was afraid that the leader who attempted to see himself as the epicenter of existence could ruin the cause to which he himself had given his whole life.

About what was the genius thinking as he prepared to dictate his final articles and letters? Was it not about the fact that, contrary to expectations and forecasts, the fire of October had not spread to other countries of Europe and that there had been no "revolutionary breakthrough toward the East"? And now Russia, not having been the detonator of world revolution, would have to establish and defend itself within national boundaries? Perhaps about the fact that only now, when the Bolsheviks held power, had the multitude of most difficult problems appeared to them in all their gigantic complexity? Perhaps he was thinking about this. But perhaps he was recalling the words of G.V. Plekhanov, the patriarch of the Russian social democrats, which he had addressed to Lenin:

"I hear in your novelty the olden days!"

"Why?"

"The time of the plebeian revolution has not come...."

Yes, Plekhanov had defected from the revolution. But he has, perhaps, remained in the history of scientific socialism alongside Kautsky, Lafargue, Guesde, Bebel and Liebknecht. Remained forever.

Perhaps at that moment he called to mind Martov (Yu.S. Tsederbaum)? People once spoke abroad of the "trinity": Lenin, Potresov and Martov. Martov's murderously tedious speeches concealed a subtle, even cultivated mind capable of "dismembering" everything that an adversary said and taking advantage of absolutely every blunder and every tiniest deviation. He was, perhaps, a singer of philosophical impressionism who experienced satisfaction from endlessly changing his views. It was an instance of the exquisiteness of personal breeding not being based on firm social, philosophical foundations. Lenin had last thought about an alliance with Martov in June 1927 [as published]. But the latter, forever leaning to the right, as A. Lunacharskiy wrote, "sealed his own fate: that of being unrecognized either for this or for that and eternally vegetating as a more or less biting, more or less noble, but always impotent opposition." Thus did the brilliant Marxist remain in the background of the revolution! Almost 2 years previously, at a Central Committee session, Lenin had seen on a long list of matters to be discussed the following:

"10. Letter from the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party Central Committee to the Council of People's Commissars concerning authorization for Martov and Abramovich to travel abroad....

"Russian Social Democratic Workers Party Central Committee petition granted."

He fled to foreign parts. Trotskiy had, possibly, been right when, back in April 1922, he had given an apt and devastating description of Martov in his eighth volume of works "Political Silhouettes". As always peremptory, but not without intellectual subtlety, Trotskiy had written: "Martov is undoubtedly a most tragic figure of the revolutionary movement. A gifted writer, inventive politician and penetrating mind. While having graduated from the Marxist school, Martov will nonetheless go down in the history of the workers' revolution as a major defect. His thought lacked courage, and his perspicacity lacked willpower. This finished him. Deprived of a resolute spring, Martov's thought invariably directed the entire power of its analysis at theoretically justifying the line of least resistance. There hardly exists and there hardly will ever be another socialist politician to so giftedly exploit Marxism to justify deviations from it and direct betrayal of it. In this respect Martov may without the least irony be called a virtuoso.... An exceptionally, purely feline tenacity—the willpower of lack of will, the stubbornness of indecisiveness—enabled him for months and years to hold firm in the most contradictory and hopeless positions."

But a revolution has not only a background, it also has a vanguard, forward line and "headquarters". This is what was at stake now. It was a disquieting situation in the Central Committee and the Politburo, changes were needed, unity was essential, democratic principles in the work of the Central Committee needed to be firmly established. His opinion was respected, he must express it. Lenin demanded once more that he be permitted to dictate. His plan was far-reaching: he not only intended speaking about the ways to strengthen the party leadership but also to dictate his vision of the ways of building the socialist society.

The fate of Lenin's last works is dramatic. A considerable part of them was concealed from the party and shrouded in the blanket of Stalin's secrecy. The exceptionally profound works "Imparting Legislative Functions to the Gosplan," "The Question of Nationalities or 'Autonomization'," "Letter to the Congress" and certain other Lenin addenda appeared only following the 20th party congress. The wish was initially to print the article "How We Should Organize the Rabkrin" only in... one copy to show to Lenin. But even having published it (with cuts), the Politburo and Orgburo sent a special letter to the provincial committees saying that this was a page from the diary of the sick Lenin, who had been given permission to write owing to the intolerability of mental inactivity. This piece of tactlessness was signed by Andreyev, Bukharin, Kuybyshev, Molotov, Rykov, Stalin, Tomskiy and Trotskiy on 27 January 1923.

Lenin's quest, based on an understanding of the dangers of authoritarianism, was not comprehensible to Stalin. Lenin was so far above his associates intellectually that quite often it was as if his voice did not carry to their consciousness.

The main idea traceable in all these works is profoundly optimistic: socialism in Russia has a future. All cardinal issues—industrialization, the rearrangement of agriculture on cooperative lines and the conversion of culture into the property of all the people and questions of the creation of the party and state control mechanism—are seen through the prism of implementation of the genuine power of the people and the indispensable democratization of all aspects of the life of society. The contours of the plan of the creation of a new society which had been set forth demanded people who could fight for its realization; this was the main thing for Lenin now.

A close study of Lenin's last letters, notes and articles is reason to say that he spotted sooner than others the danger of authoritarian rule. Discoursing on the sources of Caesarism, A. Gramsci once expressed the interesting idea that when contending forces have worn each other out, a third force which would subordinate the rival parties to itself could intervene. But it should be a question here, I believe, not only and not so much of specific groupings of people but primarily of the main social forces of the country. They, these forces, were the working class, the peasantry and the party, more precisely, as Lenin said, "the immense, undivided authority of that finest stratum which could be called the old party guard." Socialism could only be built on the basis of the wise compromise proposed by Lenin—the NEP and the gradual formation of the countryside into cooperatives. Any other way led to a clash with the peasantry and the establishment of totalitarian methods of government, and totalitarianism always needs Caesars. Stalin, like certain other leaders among those close to Lenin, was unable to comprehend Lenin's words to the effect that "our party is a small group of people compared with the entire population of the country... and for this reason the NEP is a principal condition of progress toward socialism."

The Bolsheviks were the product of the urban proletariat. Alliance with the peasantry, if it could not yet at that time be equal, should proceed from the peasant's possibility of owning land and carrying on free trade. Only the voluntary formation of cooperatives could, as Lenin prophetically saw, bring the peasant close to socialism, and the alliance of the two forces could be cemented with the aid of the NEP. Even in the "finest stratum" of the party not everyone understood the profundity of the leader's designs and the magnitude of the dangers which might await the people on any other path. Another path could not avoid violence and a direct move toward authoritarianism and Caesarism.

Being very sick, Lenin made haste. Fate might not allow him time to reflect on the future. Lenin insisted, beseeched. In the morning of 24 December Stalin, Kamenev and Bukharin discussed the situation: they did not have the right to enforce the leader's silence. But cautiousness, prudence and the maximum repose were needed. The following decision was adopted:

"1. Vladimir Ilich is accorded the right to dictate for 5-10 minutes daily, but this must not be of the nature of correspondence, and Vladimir Ilich must not expect a reply to these notes. Meetings are not allowed.

"2. Neither friends nor family must communicate to Vladimir Ilich anything of political life lest this give him material for reflection and worry."

Lenin had secretaries on duty during his illness. He dictated memoranda to the Politburo, asked for something or other to be conveyed to comrades by telephone and requested various information, material, papers. He was usually attended in turn by N.S. Alliluyeva (Stalin's wife), M.A. Volodicheva, M.I. Glyasser, Sh.M. Manucharyants, L.A. Fotiyeva and S.A. Flakserman. M.A. Volodicheva was on duty on 23 December, when Lenin began to dictate "Letter to the Congress". Her diary entry is laconic:

"He dictated for 4 minutes. He felt unwell. The doctors came. Before starting to dictate, he said: 'I want to dictate to you a letter to the congress. Take it down!' He dictated quickly, but his sickly condition was perceptible."

Looking out the window, at distant prospects hidden by snow-covered trees, Lenin articulated:

"Letter to the congress...."

For the 12th party congress was to be held the following April. If he was not up and about by the time it started, let his letter be read out to the delegates. The sentences were polished and well considered. They had, after all, been brought forth long since.

"I would very much advise this congress to make a number of alterations to our political system."

Lenin was categorical. Upon first reading one "stops short"—it is a question of changes in the "political system". But after a few lines one begins to understand that Lenin is talking about what is most urgent: democracy in the party, people's power in society and the ways to achieve them. The great thinker perspicaciously saw democratism as a most important lever, means and, finally, mode of existence of the new system.

"I wish to share with you the considerations which I consider the most important.

"I make paramount an increase in the number of Central Committee members to several dozen or 100 even. I believe that our Central Committee would face great dangers were the flow of events not to be entirely favorable to us (and we cannot count on this)—if we do not undertake this reform.

"...I believe that our party has a right to demand of the working class 50-100 Central Committee members and may obtain them from the former without an undue exertion of effort on its part.

"...Such a reform would increase the strength of our party considerably and facilitate for it the struggle amid hostile states, which, in my opinion, could and has to intensify severely in the coming years. I believe that, thanks to this measure, our party's steadfastness will benefit a thousandfold."

"Lenin.
"23 December 1922.

"Recorded by M.V."

The first step en route to the genuine democratization of all aspects of the life of the party and the state, as Lenin conceived it, was broader representation in the party headquarters of the main force of the revolution—the workers. It was necessary to increase the Central Committee two- or threefold. The broader the representation, the fuller the renewal, the closer to the masses and the less the possibility of the inordinate influence of the conflicts of small groups on the fate of the entire party. And, further. Lenin warned: the international situation would in the immediate foreseeable future become strained, it was necessary to make haste!

Unfortunately, often, too often, Lenin was not fully understood by his associates, which we have already mentioned. But this was, perhaps, not the fault of those close to Lenin but their tragedy. What Lenin saw, his associates did not. On the last occasion he would not be understood and supported even after his death: many of his warnings would be underestimated. Earlier, even when Lenin had been in a minority, the strength of his arguments, passion and willpower was sufficient to take with him by the right road the whole revolutionary caravan. This would not now be the case, and he would never know that his last wish in respect of Stalin would not be carried out.

Twentyfour December 1922.

"I mean steadfastness as a guarantee against division for the immediate future and I intend to examine here a number of considerations of a purely personal nature.

"I believe that the main thing on the issue of steadfastness from this viewpoint are such Central Committee members as Stalin and Trotskiy. Relations between them, in my opinion, constitute a large half of the danger of the division which could be avoided and whose avoidance should, in my opinion, be served by, incidentally, an increase in the number of Central Committee members to 50, to 100."

Some scholars still underestimate Trotskiy's political importance at that time. "A large half of the danger" was the relations between Trotskiy and Stalin. Lenin saw that Trotskiy was more popular than the general secretary, but was already convinced of the latter's grip. The strained relations of these central figures were threatening to develop into a conflict which could split the party.

"Having become general secretary, Comrade Stalin has concentrated in his hands boundless authority, and I am not sure whether he will always know how to avail himself of this authority with sufficient caution."

To what did the "boundless" authority of the general secretary amount? The solution of all current questions, frequently of vital importance to the party, was his responsibility. But the main thing in which this authority was manifested was the selection and promotion of party personnel at the center and locally. Thousands of officials.... Initially the political possibilities associated with the assignment of the *right* party officials had not been spotted by everyone. In addition, Stalin had in a number of instances identified the apparat with the party. Lenin spotted this sooner than others.

"On the other hand, Comrade Trotskiy, as his struggle against the Central Committee in connection with the question of the People's Commissariat for Railways showed, is distinguished not only by outstanding capabilities. He is personally, perhaps, the most capable man in the present Central Committee, but also excessively possessed of self-confidence and an inordinate enthusiasm for the purely administrative aspect...."

Lenin might have recalled Trotskiy's lively report on the Red Army at the last congress. At the end of his not very profound analysis Trotskiy began to speak, instead of summary conclusions concerning ways to upgrade military organizational development, about "the soldiers' elementary military-breeding education". To the general animation of the hall Trotskiy proclaimed: "Let us seek to ensure that the soldiers be free of lice. This is a tremendous, most important task of education for what is required here is perseverance, relentlessness, firmness, example and repetition to free masses of people from the dirtiness in which they grew up and which has eaten into them. After all, a soldier with lice is not a soldier but half a soldier.... And illiteracy? This is spiritual lousiness. We must eliminate it, by May Day, for certain, and subsequently continue this work with unflagging effort." Lenin liked the expression: "illiteracy is spiritual lousiness". As was often the case with Trotskiy, the publicist gained the ascendancy over the politician, self-admiration over commonsense and an endeavor to please those around him over elementary modesty! No, he and Stalin would not get on. What he said about Stalin and subsequently about Trotskiy points with certainty to their polarity....

"I will not go on to describe other Central Committee members by their personal qualities. I would recall merely that the Zinovyev and Kamenev October episode was, of course, no accident, but that blame may just as little be imputed to them personally for it as non-Bolshevism to Trotskiy.

"Of the young Central Committee members I wish to say a few words about Bukharin and Pyatakov. They are, in my opinion, most outstanding forces (of the youngest forces), and we need to bear in mind in respect of them the following: Bukharin is not only the party's most valuable and important theoretician, he is also rightfully considered the favorite of the entire party, but his theoretical views may attributed to the entirely Marxist category with very great misgivings for there is in him something scholastic (he has never studied and, I believe, never entirely understood dialectics)."

In the secretaries' diary M.A. Volodicheva had written after Lenin's dictation: "The next day (24 December) between 6 and 8 Vladimir Ilich called me once again. He cautioned me that what he had dictated yesterday (23 December) and today (24 December) was *top* secret. He stressed this repeatedly. He demanded that all that he dictated be kept in a special place under special responsibility and be considered *absolutely* secret...." Unfortunately, Fotiyeva, who was head of the Sovnarkom Secretariat and who also took down Lenin's dictations, notified Stalin (and some other Politburo members also) about the December transcriptions. For this reason Lenin's "Letter" did not come as a total surprise to the party leadership.

The following day V.I. Lenin continued to dictate his unique document, which would capture the imagination of millions, but... many years later.

"Twentyfive December. Then Pyatakov—a man of undoubtedly outstanding willpower and exceptional capabilities, but too engrossed in administrative dealings and the administrator's side of things to be relied upon on a serious political issue....

"Lenin.
"25 December 1922.

"Recorded by M.V."

On 26 December Lenin continued to dictate the "Letter to the Congress," developing the idea of an expansion of intraparty democracy. He saw this as a guarantee of an improvement in the work of the machinery of state also. And with us, Lenin wrote, "it was essentially inherited from the old regime since remaking it in such a short time, particularly given the war, the famine and so forth, was absolutely impossible." Lenin made the important addition here that the Central Committee should be enlarged not only by workers but by peasants also. Vladimir Ilich deemed essential their presence at Politburo sessions too. However, dictating these ideas, he returned, as before, to specific persons.

Having given a description of the Central Committee nucleus exhaustive in its laconic brevity, Lenin continued to ponder the question: who could become leader in the event of his departure? It appeared to him in all clarity that the post of general secretary would in his absence be decisive, with "boundless authority". He was the acknowledged de facto leader, not by virtue of office but as a result of his intellectual and moral attributes. Illness had imperiously distanced him from the direct running of the Central Committee, and a member of the Politburo had automatically moved into the leading positions. Stalin was not only a member of the Politburo but also the general secretary in charge of the whole work of the Secretariat and current business. It had become clear that, in the event of the irremediable (and Lenin made full allowance for this, otherwise he would not have begun to prepare the "Testament"), Stalin would attempt to consolidate his position of potential leader. But this could be sought by Trotskiy also. There would be a struggle, and a split was possible. Even more specific warning counsel was needed. And several days later, in January 1923, V.I. Lenin dictated an addendum of providential importance to the letter of 24 December 1922:

"Stalin is too coarse, and this shortcoming, while perfectly tolerable among and in relations between us communists, becomes intolerable in the office of general secretary. For this reason I suggest that the comrades think of a way of moving Stalin from this position and appointing in his place another person who in all other respects differs from Comrade Stalin in just one superior feature, namely, is more tolerant, more loyal, more polite and more attentive to his comrades, less capricious and so forth. This circumstance might seem a paltry trifle. But I believe that from the viewpoint of guarding against a split and from the viewpoint of what I have written concerning the relationship of Stalin and Trotskiy this is no trifle or this is such a trifle as could acquire decisive significance.

"4 January 1923.

"Lenin."

A celebrated addendum. Complete certainty as to the main thing: Stalin had to be moved from the post of general secretary elsewhere. There were no major political complaints about him, Stalin. He was, perhaps, true to the grand idea. True, it was as though he did not understand as he should. At the same time, however, Stalin did not "prevaricate" like Trotskiy, and his political reputation was as yet spotless. But morals always go hand in hand with politics. If harmony is lacking here, either political intriguing or dictatorship are born. The history of the Paris Commune provided abundant food

for thought. Lenin's addendum contained profound concern for the future, but there was no personal dislike. Lenin knew how to rise above it. "In his attitude toward his enemies," A. Lunacharskiy wrote, "one did not sense any animosity, but, nonetheless, he was a severe political opponent.... In political struggle he would use any weapons other than dirty ones."

Lenin had noticed in Stalin ominous moral anomalies, but Trotskiy was dangerous also. And the main thing was not only that he was an inordinately self-assured individual. Complete trust in him politically was lacking—Trotskiy's long "non-Bolshevism" could not have passed without trace. The latter's ambition was well known to the whole party, and political lack of scruple had repeatedly driven Trotskiy to counterpose himself to the whole Central Committee. Trotskiy's Bonapartist ambitions were so strong that he deemed it insulting and unacceptable for himself to accept the offer made to him in September 1922 of the position of deputy chairman of the Sovnarkom, Lenin's deputy. Trotskiy was hoping for a special situation. As Trotskiy's biographer, I. Deutscher, wrote, "realization of Lenin's testament concerning Stalin's removal would inevitably have brought Trotskiy to the position of party leader. He, Trotskiy, was certain of this."

Lenin's assessments, inflammatory in their candor and bluntness, of the "two outstanding leaders" are a surpassing example of party high-mindedness. Comradely bluntness, incidentally, had always been a most characteristic quality of true communists, and even the years of the cult of personality were unable to eliminate it completely. Here is an example from 1942, far distant from the events which we have been examining on these pages.

In accordance with the practice of that time, Verkhorubov, regimental commissar of the Worker-Peasant Red Army Political Administration, visiting formations at the fronts, would write, following the completion of his work, brief references pertaining to the political officers whose work he had inspected. This is what is contained in his comment on Divisional Commissar L.I. Brezhnev, chief of the Poiltical Department, kept in the personal file of the political officer, the future general secretary. The first part of the reference speaks of the commissar's devotion to the idea of the party of Lenin and Stalin and his readiness to do his duty. But there subsequently follow several phrases of the following content: "Shuns heavy work. Comrade Brezhnev's military knowledge is very weak. He tackles many questions as a manager, not as a political officer. He is not equally equable in his treatment of people and is inclined to have favorites." Just a few phrases, but the reader himself has a chance to judge the objective or subjective nature of the regimental commissar's findings.

Returning from this digression, we would note that in suggesting that Stalin be removed from the position of general secretary Lenin did not answer the question: whom to appoint in his place? And this, in our view, was the leader's great wisdom. Indication of the specific name of the "prince" would have resembled literal "inheritance". Vladimir Ilich believed in the wisdom of the party and its Central Committee, which were capable in their composition, and not only in their nucleus, to which Stalin had referred at the 12th congress, of finding a worthy successor. I believe that, after what had happened, permutations on the chessboard of history of possible alternative figures were pointless for the party. I am sure that, having characterized the best-known political figures in his "Letter," Lenin made it understood that none of them was suitable for the role of party leader. None! This is clear from the wording of his testament, as it is clear also that he did not propose that this leader be found among other executives either. Lenin very likely assumed that the very fine stratum of the "Old Guard" should, was obliged to and was capable of acting as *collective* leader. Having created and formulated the legal, political and moral guarantees guarding against the possibility of the seizure of power in favor of a single person, this collective "leader" could elect to the leading role any of one or two dozen well-known politicians. In that case it would not be of decisive significance whether the leader who had been nominated was very talented or less talented. Primarily a *democratic system,* which would support in accordance with constitutional and party rules only what was in keeping with the interests of the people, the state and the party, would perform its "work". Only in this case would it be possible to secure the interests of society, and not the *apparat.*

Stalin, however, was able with the help precisely of the "Old Guard" to create not a democratic but bureaucratic system. Still no one can give a satisfactory answer as to why this happened, why Stalin, as a "surprise" to everyone, found himself at the pinnacle of the pyramid of power. In order to answer this question it is necessary to recall Russia's history with its autocratic traditions, it is necessary to imagine the low level of political culture of the people and party, the absence of democratic traditions in the new society, the one-party system, which makes particularly high demands on the social maturity of the masses, the absence of legal guarantees against abuses of power and the particularity of the class structure in the USSR.

Among these factors there is one further secret of Stalin's "invulnerability," which in a personal respect proved decisive: he usurped the right to represent, interpret and comment on Lenin's ideas. Ultimately his systematic "defense" of Leninism created the firm idea in millions of people that always at the leader's side was Stalin, his associate, student and continuer. The Stalin phenomenon is a social, historical, intellectual, moral and psychological phenomenon. Preparing the "testament," Lenin sensed, as it were, the possibility with the aid of the "boundless authority" of the general secretary of so transforming the system which was coming into being that it would be the personification of a totalitarian bureaucracy.

In pondering the "Letter to the Congress," Lenin knew, of course, about Marx's message to Kugelman, in which Marx noted that revolutionary development depended to a considerable extent on many incidentals, "among which figure also such an 'incidental' as the character of the people at the head of the movement originally." Those who do not correspond to the demands of the historical moment must give way to others. After all, Engels observed in his unpublished letters, put out in 1922 as his "Political Testament": "The proletariat will inevitably pass in its movement through various phases of development, leaving behind in each phase some people who will go no further." It was clear to Lenin that Stalin should go no further in the leading nucleus of the party. The value of Lenin's warning may be understood in full measure only against the background of the coming "triumphs" of the leader and the tragedy of the people.

A Central Committee plenum was held 2 months prior to the 12th congress. It examined the theses concerning the reorganization and improvement of the party's central institutions compiled on the basis of Lenin's article "How We Should Reorganize the Worker-Peasant Inspectorate" (the ideas of this article were continued and developed by Lenin in another article—"Fewer, But Better"). Proceeding from Vladimir Ilich's wishes, it was decided to study the organizational issue as a special clause on the congress' agenda. The theses pointed out that it was expedient to enlarge the Central Committee from 27 to 40 members and introduce regular Politburo accountability to Central Committee plenums. It was assumed that the three permanent representatives of the Central Control Commission would be present at Politburo sessions. This group of representatives, Vladimir Ilich wrote in his article, would have to watch to ensure, without respect of persons, "that the authority of no one, *neither of the general secretary* (my italics—D.V.) nor of any other Central Committee member, may prevent them making a request, checking documents and generally seeking unreserved notification and the strictest correctness of affairs."

Lenin believed that, besides the congress' control over the elective leading authority, it was necessary in the intervals between the communists' forums for a special commission to control the work of the Central Committee and the Politburo. The plenum basically agreed with Lenin's conclusions and deemed it necessary to enlarge the Central Control Commission and establish the closest liaison between the organs of state and party control. Who could then have known that the role of the Central Control Commission would shortly be reduced to the insignificant recording of party business at the top and then abolished altogether?

Although Stalin had been general secretary for approximately a year already, nothing outwardly distinguished his position. When the participants in the Central Committee plenum came to examine the theses of the paper "National Aspects in Party and State Building" which Stalin had submitted, they subjected them to serious criticism. The plenum did adopt the theses as a basis, it is true, but the resolution expressed a long list of fundamental observations. It was decided after additional work had been done on them to show the theses to Lenin. The wording of them, which had been prepared by Stalin himself, confirmed that even on an issue on which the general secretary was considered a "specialist" he had many deficiencies. For final completion of the theses the plenum set up a commission consisting of Stalin, Rakovskiy and Rudzutak.

An implacable position was adopted at the plenum by Trotskiy. According to him, an enlarged Central Committee would deprive it of "the necessary structure and stability" and would ultimately "threaten to inflict extraordinary damage on the precision and soundness of Central Committee work." He put forward the idea of the creation of a "party council" of 20 or 30 elective persons. This body, according to Trotskiy's idea, would issue the Central Committee directives and monitor its work. In fact Trotskiy, this demon of revolution, was proposing a "diarchy" and "dual center nature" for the party. The Central Committee plenum turned down these proposals without lengthy discussion. We know today that the 12th congress supported Lenin's proposal and created the Central Control Commission—Worker-Peasant Inspectorate joint body. Thus the documents of Lenin's "Testament" began operation in his lifetime even, although far from all of them, it is true.

It is known that the "Letter to the Congress" was printed in five copies and that they were placed in sealed envelopes: one for Lenin's secretariat, three copies for Nadezhda Konstantinovna and the fifth for Vladimir Ilich. Lenin told stenographer M.A. Volodicheva to write on theenvelopes: "To be opened only by Lenin, after his death, by Krupskaya". Volodicheva could not bring herself to type the words "after his death". Only the first part of the letter (concerning an enlargement of the Central Committee) was conveyed to Stalin. The proposal concerning an increase in the numbers of the Central Committee was conveyed to the congress as a proposition of Stalin's report "Central Committee Organizational Report," although Lenin's authorship was not mentioned. Lenin was alive, and the envelopes containing his "Testament" had not been opened. The delegates to the congress unanimously elected Lenin (only him!) to the new Central Committee and sent the leader warm greetings. L.B. Kamenev, who presided at the session of the congress, read them out to stormy applause:

"From the bottom of the hearts of the party, the proletariat and all working people the congress sends its leader, the genius of proletarian thought and revolutionary action, greetings and words of ardent love to Ilich, who even at this time of serious illness and long absence rallies the congress and the entire party by his personality as much as ever.

"The party is more than ever aware of its responsibility to the proletariat and history. More than ever it wishes to be and will be worthy of its banner and its leader. It firmly believes that day when the helmsman will return to the helm is not far off.

"The congress sends its comradely and fraternal sympathy to Nadezhda Konstantinovna, wife and associate, and to Mariya Ilinichna, sister and friend, of Ilich and asks them to remember that all the heavy troubles are being lived together with them from day to day by that great family which is called the Russian Communist Party."

I would merely like to add that in the future thousands, perhaps, even millions of letters of greeting to Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev and other leaders, letters impersonal in their bureaucratic prevalence of cliche, would be adopted. The letter to Lenin and his near ones is moving in its very heartfelt sincerity and humanity.

A new dreadful stroke shook Lenin in March 1923. His chances of influencing the situation in the party could be realized henceforward only by his name, ideas and authority. Vladimir Ilich could no longer intervene in the realization of his "Testament". The question of the party's future leader had to be squarely faced.

Stalin or Trotskiy?

The question concerning the congress for which Lenin had prepared his "Testament" has not been cleared up sufficiently among historians. We recall that it begins with the words: "I would very much advise that a number of changes be made at *this* (my italics—D.V.) congress...." It may be assumed that it was for the 12th congress, although this is nowhere indicated directly. On the other hand there is evidence that Lenin adjured that the envelopes containing the "Letter to the Congress" be opened only after his death. It was possibly addressed to both the 12th and 13th congresses. Inasmuch as the question of the general secretary was not raised at the 12th party congress, it confronted the Central Committee with new force after the March attack of Lenin's illness, as a result of which he virtually lost the possibility of actively communicating.

As of this time Stalin, continuing to perform the duties of general secretary, adopted a whole series of measures to shore up his position. His authority had strengthened to a certain extent following the 12th party congress, at which he had delivered the Central Committee organizational report, spoken on the question "National Features in Party and State Building" and also presented the conclusions in respect of these reports. He was, perhaps, on view to the congress' delegates more than anyone. Stalin inserted many personal points, clearly expressed oversimplification, primarily, in the Central Committee reports. He always liked to set out everything "shelf by shelf," and this usually made an impression inasmuch as it increased the clarity, precision and certainty of the ideas. Thus it was he who brought into use the idea of "machinery" and "drive belts" linking the party with class. "The first, main drive belt" he termed the unions, where now, according to him, "we have no powerful enemies." The second "belt" were the cooperatives: consumer, agricultural. But here, Stalin acknowledged, "we are still not strong enough to release the local cooperatives from the influence of forces hostile toward us," meaning the kulak. The third "drive belt," in the speaker's opinion, were the youth unions. The enemy's attacks in this sphere were particularly persistent. Stalin listed all these "belts": the women's movement, the school, the army, the press. He tried here to give them all, in his way, eloquent expressions: the press was the "party's tongue," the army, the "rallying point of workers and peasants," and so forth. It was very characteristic that in his report the general secretary said very little strictly about the *content* of the work of these "drive belts," but, on the other hand, a great deal about what hostile forces confronted us there. The class struggle was still going on, but more now in concealed, covert forms, but Stalin lived by struggle, clashes and confrontation with manifest and imaginary enemies....

Just a few years ago, in the turbulent days of October and the war years, he could not have supposed that circumstances could have evolved such that he could really lay claim to the highest positions in the party and the state. Fate is odd. A person who lacked education, a profession, moral charm and the volcanic energy of a revolutionary surprisingly for all found himself at the very pinnacle of the pyramid of power. It was here that he showed potential rivals that subtle calculation multiplied by adroit manipulation of the apparat counts for a good deal.

Let us say, by the way, that Stalin's present opponents were frequently attacking him for concealing the true state of affairs in the country. Prior to the start of the 1930's this had not been the case—Lenin's tradition of glasnost did not die immediately, and one may see this for oneself by picking up generally accessible party documents and newspapers of those years. Thus Stalin spoke bitterly in the report at the 12th party congress about the famine of 1922 and its consequences, the "horrifying depression of industry," the dissipation of the working class and other bitter matters. What was true was true.

Following the March attack of V.I. Lenin's illness, Stalin began to display heightened assertiveness, increasingly limiting his consultations with Zinovyev and Kamenev and speaking more rarely with Bukharin and extremely little with Trotskiy. Stalin's political authority in the party gradually began slowly, but surely to grow, which was expressed primarily in the general secretary's increased influence in the Politburo. He achieved this by way of increasing the isolation of Trotskiy, which, in turn, could not have been done without the support of Zinovyev and Kamenev.

As I was told by Aleksey Pavlovich Balashov, an Old Bolshevik and official of Stalin's secretariat, there emerged the so-called "hoop". "Once in the Politburo a skirmish erupted between Zinovyev and Trotskiy. Everyone supported the viewpoint of Zinovyev, who threw out at Trotskiy: "Surely you can see that you are in a hoop? Your tricks will not work, you are in a minority of one." Trotskiy was furious, but Bukharin attempted to smooth everything over. "It was often the case," A.P. Balashov continued, "that prior to a Politburo session or some meeting, Kamenev and Zinovyev would meet in advance at Stalin's, evidently coordinating their position. We in the Secretariat among ourselves called these meetings of the "trio" at Stalin's the 'hoop'. Stalin always had two or three assistants in the 1920's. In different years these were Nazaretyan, Kanner, Dvinskiy, Mekhlis, Bazhanov.... They were all aware of Stalin's keenly negative attitude toward Trotskiy and acted in the apparat accordingly." Zinovyev and Kamenev, who were themselves nurturing highly ambitious plans, the first particularly, actively helped in the gradual ouster of Trotskiy, whose popularity after the civil war had begun to decline, from real power.

Stalin managed to attract the "duo" to his side without particular difficulty for both were more apprehensive about Trotskiy than Stalin. For this reason when, on 8 October 1923, Trotskiy sent the Central Committee members a letter containing sharp criticism of the party leadership, Stalin did not fail to avail himself of this, the more so in that objectively he was largely right, opposing the importunities of his political opponent.

Trotskiy was supported by the group of Bolsheviks who signed the so-called "platform of 46". There were among them also such well known people in the party as Preobrazhenskiy, Pyatakov, Kosior, Osinskiy, Sapronov, Rafail and others. Trotskiy put forward as the principal reproach of the Central Committee the proposition that "the party has no plan for further advancement." He repeated once again his ideas "concerning the strict concentration of industry" providing for the closure of a number of major plants and a "toughening of policy in respect of the peasantry" and once again insisted on a policy of the "militarization of labor". It is worth dwelling on this in more detail.

Back at the Ninth Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Congress Trotskiy had proclaimed in his speech that "when we approach the question of the building of the public economy on the principles of communism, we immediately come up against the question of militarization. Militarization is now all the more necessary in that we have switched to the broad mobilization of the peasant masses, forming therefrom units which in terms of type are approximate military units. The same applies to all working masses also. Given common labor activities, the worker masses should be transferred, appointed and commanded in just the same way as soldiers. This is the basis of the militarization of labor, and without this we cannot talk seriously about any industry on new foundations under conditions of devastation and starvation." Three years later Trotskiy believed that the idea of the use of military methods in industry and agriculture retained their significance. As the singer of "barracks communism," Trotskiy frequently contradicted himself: on the one hand he liked to talk about the lack of democracy in the party, on the other, he insisted on the use of methods of militarization as universal in the transitional period. One way or another, the debate initiated by Trotskiy in the fall of 1923 on economic conditions under conditions where Lenin was seriously ill was aimed at compromising not only Central Committee policy on these matters but primarily Stalin in the office of general secretary.

A Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee and Central Control Commission joint plenum condemned the actions of the Trotskiy opposition. Only 2 of the 114 who participated in the session voted for him. In fact before the start of the struggle for the position of leader Trotskiy was isolated in the party, and his defeat was total. He then attempted to rely on the army, in which he still had considerable authority. With the help of Antonov-Ovseyenko, chief of the Revolutionary Military Council Political Directorate and his longtime supporter, he intended using the armed forces to express disagreement with the Central Committee line. However, the communists of the army and navy did not, with a few exceptions, support Trotskiy. The results of the debate were summed up by the 13th party conference, which not only condemned the dissidents but also adopted a number of important decisions in the sphere of economic policy. Subsequently Trotskiy in fact acknowledged that the attacks on the Central Committee and the debate which he had initiated were aimed at his becoming leader of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik). However, one is struck by the fact that Trotskiy began each of his debates at a moment which was extremely disadvantageous to him, virtually knowing in advance that defeat awaited him.

It is very symbolic that at the very moment when, in October 1923, Trotskiy had ignited the fratricidal bonfire of struggle in the party, Lenin visited Moscow for the last time. As if sensing that his worst misgivings in respect of a split in the party leadership could be a reality, the leader, in defiance of the doctors' wishes, was brought to the capital by car on 18 October. Glancing at the Central Committee building and the Sovnarkom, Lenin was probably thinking that Trotskiy's October attack was a new stage of the struggle for leadership in the party. Why do people have such strong personal ambitions? What feeds their love of power? Why here, in Moscow, would they not understand that the revolution had to survive? And that it could only survive by having suppressed Caesarist motives. The next day his attentive gaze would for the last time take in the square and the cathedrals of the Kremlin, Moscow's streets and the pavilions of the Agricultural Exhibition. Having returned to the Kremlin, Lenin selected books for himself from the library and drove back to Gorkiy. There

were no meetings with his associates. His silent and semi-secret visit to Moscow and the Kremlin was a farewell, as it were, to all that bound Lenin to this restless and troubled world....

What was the political character of Trotskiy, a person laying claim after Lenin's death to the highest position? It is well known that as of the second party congress he had affiliated himself with the Mensheviks. After February 1917, Trotskiy, as one of the "mezhrayontsy" at the sixth party congress, was admitted to the party and immediately elected to the Central Committee. In the October period, as chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, Trotskiy had performed great work. This had been noted even by Stalin. In his speech "Trotskiyism or Leninism?" he said: "I am far from denying Comrade Trotskiy's undoubtedly important role in the uprising.... It is true, Trotskiy fought well in October. But it was not only Comrade Trotskiy who fought well in the October period...."

Indeed, Trotskiy had in the revolution and the civil war rapidly earned for himself great popularity thanks to his outstanding oratorical attributes and publicist's skill. Lenin's high evaluation of Trotskiy in September 1917 is well known also. Speaking of the nomination of party candidates for the Constituent Assembly, Lenin said that "no one would argue with such a candidacy, for example, as Trotskiy's since, first, Trotskiy immediately upon his arrival adopted the position of an internationalist; second, he fought among the mezhrayontsy for merger; third, in the difficult July days he showed himself to be on top of his assignment and a devoted supporter of the party of the revolutionary proletariat."

It would evidently be the historical truth to say that at some particular stage after the October armed uprising and in the course of the civil war and immediately after it Trotskiy was second in popularity only to Lenin. At the time of lists of names, the alphabetical principle was not employed then, and Trotskiy always (or almost always) came right after Lenin. Glancing through the minutes of Central Committee plenum sessions in 1918-1921, in which the members of the leading party authority present at them are noted, one sees that, as a rule, the listing was as follows: Lenin, Trotskiy, Zinovyev, Kamenev, Stalin, Rudzutak, Tomskiy, Rykov, Preobrazhenskiy, Bukharin, Kalinin, Krestinskiy, Dzerzhinskiy, Radek, Andreyev. The members of the Central Committee at the meeting of the Russian Communist Party Central Committee Plenum of 20-21 November 1920 were listed thus, for example. But Trotskiy's popularity was not expressed in a large number of supporters. A paradoxical picture was taking shape: Stalin, who was not personally popular, personified the party "line". Trotskiy, a noticeably more popular leader, had acquired early the stamp of "factionalist," which could not have seriously added sympathizers. In addition, as I. Deycher wrote, "Trotskiy was so sure of his position in the party and in the country and of his superiority to this adversary that for a long time he had no wish to become mixed up in an open struggle for the succession." He believed that, after Lenin, the party would necessarily rest its choice with him.

However, upon a close analysis of Trotskiy's works, it can be seen that he did not fully share Lenin's fundamental ideas. It is known, for example, that in his struggle with Stalin which flared up after Lenin's death he attempted to adopt ideas of socialist democracy, although they were alien to him. He was closer to Bonapartism, Caesarism and military dictatorship than to the idea of the genuine power of the people. He was Stalin's coeval (both were born in 1879 two months apart), but Trotskiy's intellect was more refined and richer. He was characterized, as attested by people who knew him and numerous of Trotskiy's biographers, by a liveliness of thought, sound European culture, indomitable energy, broad erudition and a brilliant speaking style. But from an overestimation of the significance of his persona Trotskiy was with everyone except Lenin arrogant and authoritarian and intolerant of others' opinions. The absence of strong crystals of Marxist beliefs made him a "hero of the moment," a naive prophet and a would-be dictator.

Stalin gradually probed all the weak aspects of Trotskiy's nature and used them with the maximum consistency in his struggle against him. Trotskiy did not concern himself all that much with the "well-combed nature" and balance of his speeches, observations and pronouncements, thinking more of their aphoristic, paradoxical and figurative nature. Once in conversation with Lenin he had spoken an "inspired phrase" which had became known to Stalin: "The cuckoo will soon by cuckooing the death of the Soviet Republic." Henceforward Stalin had a "cast-iron" argument for accusing Trotskiy of lack of faith and faint-heartedness. And the more Trotskiy excused himself, the more he *accused* himself. Even at that time Stalin showed himself to be an exceptionally tenacious and keen fighter, holding out against whom was for a political or ideological enemy very difficult.

Whereas Trotskiy's practical activity in the years of the revolution and civil war merit a serious evaluation, with a number of appreciable reservations, it is true, politically and theoretically he was a man pursuing his own narrow egotistic, careerist interests. He was a supporter of stern methods, repression and execution. In his memoirs he set out his credo in this respect as follows: "The army cannot be built without repression. A mass of people cannot be led to their deaths without the arsenal of the command having the death penalty. It is necessary to place the soldier between possible death in front and inevitable death behind," thus was the cynical reasoning of the would-be premier. While noting the oratorical, literary capabilities of an extremely ambitious man, V.I. Lenin, like many other party leaders also, saw his profound political myopia, which amounted to the nonacceptance of many most important ideas of Marxism.

This was expressed particularly strongly in Trotskiy's well-known work "Permanent Revolution".

A.M. Gorkiy recalled that he was amazed at the high marks which Lenin gave Trotskiy's organizing capabilities. "Noticing my amazement, Vladimir Ilich added:

" 'Yes, I know, nonsense is talked about my relations with him. But, what is true is true, what is not is not, I know this also. He knew how to organize the military experts.'

"Remaining silent for a while, he added more softly and somberly:

" 'But, for all that, he is not one of us! With us, but not one of us. Ambitious. And there is in him something... bad, of La Salle.'"

Indeed, Trotskiy had with rare persistence implemented Lenin's idea concerning the use of old experts in the interests of the revolution. It was on his initiative that the decision to release from detention all officers taken as hostages was adopted at the Central Committee session on 25 October 1918. The Central Committee decree recorded that those in respect of whom membership of the counterrevolutionary movement was not discovered could be admitted to the Red Army. True, it was stipulated here that they "must hand over a list of their families, and it must be pointed out to them that their families will be arrested in the event of their switching to the White Guards." Stalin recalled this Central Committee session. Trotskiy's proposals concerning the former tsarist officers were supported at that time, but Stalin's plan for a military tribunal to try the commander and member of the military council of the Southern Front was turned down. It was recorded: "Judicial proceedings to be instituted against no one, and Comrade Avanesov to be entrusted with conducting an investigation and with reporting the results to the Central Committee." Stalin viewed both these decisions as "intellectual liberalism," particularly in respect of the former officers.

In the first edition of his "Portraits and Pamphlets" Karl Radek wrote in the article "Lev Trotskiy" that the latter, "thanks to his energy, succeeded in subordinating the former regular officer corps.... He knew how to earn the trust of the best elements of the experts and convert them from enemies of Soviet Russia to its convinced supporters. I remember the night when the late Admiral Altfater, a leading officer of the old army, who had begun not from fear but conscience to help Soviet Russia, came to my room and said to me simply:

" 'I have come here because I am compelled. I did not believe you, but now I will help you and perform my duties more than I have ever done in the profound belief that I am serving the motherland.'"

Trotskiy, Radek writes, was a ruthless man. When a mortal danger to red Russia had arisen, Trotskiy stopped short at no economic or material sacrifices. He spoke, Radek recalled, the paradoxical phrase: "We have plundered all of Russia to conquer the Whites." In his essay K. Radek idealizes Trotskiy and ascribes to him much of what belonged to more than just him. But it may be assumed that Lenin, seeing the intelligence and great organizing and propaganda capabilities of Trotskiy, tried for a long time to "turn" him completely in the right direction. However, the exceptionally high ambition and weakness of the philosophical principles of a "leader of the revolution" very strongly hampered this. Although, who knows, perhaps Trotskiy would have evolved had Lenin been alive. This would have been difficult: on almost all the main points he had at various times been at odds both with Lenin and the party. As S. Koen writes, Trotskiy, for example, "saw the NEP as the first sign of Bolshevism's degeneration and the Russian revolution's loss of its radical nature." His proposals concerning the "dictatorship of industry," the deployment of "labor armies" and the need for "blood and nerves" when reaching a goal were, given their ostensible leftishness, extremely dangerous. Trotskiy, S. Koen continued, "felt that when the civil war was over, the culminating point of his fate had been reached."

With hindsight, in exile, Trotskiy would persistently put about the story that Lenin had enlisted him in a "bloc" against Stalin and wished to carry out together with him, Trotskiy, the act of removal of the general secretary at the 12th party congress. Trotskiy maintains in the book "My Life" that "Lenin was systematically and persistently working to strike at the 12th congress, in the person of Stalin, the severest blow against bureaucratism, officials' mutual support, arbitrariness, wilfulness and rudeness. Lenin had essentially succeeded," Trotskiy goes on to write, "in declaring war on Stalin and his allies, and only those directly concerned, but not the party, had learned of this, what is more." What was the point of these disclosures? To subsequently declare without beating about the bush that Lenin had been preparing him, Trotskiy, as his successor. To this end he commented in his own way on Lenin's "Letter to the Congress" and concluded: "The undoubted purpose of the testament was *to facilitate my executive work* (my italics—D.V.). Lenin wished to achieve this, of course, with the least personal friction." Here in these words is the whole secret (secret?) meaning of Trotskiy's long struggle. He already saw himself as leader, dictator, chief.

Lenin's lines indicate the groundlessness of Trotskiy's version. Lenin had no need of a "bloc" with Trotskiy to remove Stalin. Lenin's authority was unquestioned. That he was sometimes, owing to the varying "heights" of intellects, not understood is another matter. When Vladimir Ilich took ill, some people tried to explain this failure to understand as a consequence of the illness, difficulty of communication and the leader's detachment from the realities of life. However, there is no doubt that

had Vladimir Ilich been healthy, merely his suggestion concerning replacement of the general secretary at a Politburo session, underpinned, as always, by in-depth arguments, would have done the job. Lenin considered the figure of Stalin in the office of general secretary unsuccessful, but no less unsuccessful, and politically dangerous also, was the candidacy of Trotskiy.

Prior to the death of V.I. Lenin Stalin's relations with Trotskiy had been complex. Stalin initially had even admired the "tribune," but subsequently quite quickly understood that what Trotskiy seemed did not reflect his entire essence. Stalin sensed earlier than others, not counting Lenin, of course, that Trotskiy had designs on the role of successor to the leader. Stalin's inward dislike of Trotskiy gradually developed into carefully concealed, for the time being, hatred. To himself Stalin would in his own mind call his enemy an "adventurer" and "rogue," paraphrasing Lenin's words about the "cheating" of the former Menshevik Trotskiy. Possessing an excellent memory, he strung together Trotskiy's numerous mistakes, zigzags, twists and turns and adventures on the thread of his future arguments, exposures, criticism, condemnation....

He had not forgotten Trotskiy's "revolutionary" phrase at the time of Brest which had smacked of treachery; he recalled how Trotskiy had given the order for the execution of a large group of political officers of the Eastern Front for the betrayal of some military experts (the tragedy had been averted only thanks to Lenin's intervention); he remembered Trotskiy's absurd proposal concerning the dispatch of a cavalry corps to India to foment revolution and recalled Trotskiy's "cuckoo," which was ready to cuckoo the end of Soviet power....

Many people had not liked the fact that shortly after the revolution Trotskiy had surrounded himself with a whole staff of assistants and secretaries. Glazman, Butov, Sermuks, Poznanskiy and other "sword-bearers" helped Trotskiy manage large archives and correspondence and prepare propositions and material for innumerable articles and speeches and frequently lent creative impetus also. Trotskiy anticipated in this respect the role of the intellectual entourage of politicians of the end of the 20th century, who are frequently simply helpless without such a staff.

The general secretary was convinced that in the revolution and the civil war and in the first years of the country's transition to a peaceful track Trotskiy had seen all Russia's numerous problems merely through the prism of his power-hungry interests. Their relations were soon characterized by a deep mutual dislike. It would be appropriate to say that Trotskiy had bad relations with more than just Stalin. Since he did not conceal his "superiority" to others, he had never in fact had close supporters in the leadership. Even the brief alliance with Zinovyev and Kamenev which was to emerge later merely on an anti-Stalin basis would be forced. But it needs to be said plainly that Trotskiy severely underestimated Stalin, this "outstanding mediocrity in the party," as he had begun to say openly following his removal from the Politburo in 1926.

With the March attack of Vladimir Ilich's illness Stalin inwardly considered himself bound not to admit Trotskiy to the leadership of the party. The latter's defeat in the debate unleashed by the Trotskiyites had noticeably reduced his chances, irrespective of the decision which would be adopted by the congress on Lenin's letter. Stalin was convinced, which he would say repeatedly subsequently among friends, that were Trotskiy to move toward leadership of the party, the revolutionary gains would be in mortal danger. Trotskiy not only underestimated the will and keen mind of Stalin but had also by his incessant attacks, discussions and sensational articles involuntarily enhanced the authority of Stalin, who under these conditions was appearing as the defender of Lenin's inheritance and guardian of party unity. The more Trotskiy "pounced" on Stalin, the more his popularity declined. And it was not a question of Stalin here but of the idea created in public opinion to the effect that Trotskiy was attacking the party line. Essentially Trotskiy himself helped Stalin strengthen his political positions. In the eyes of the members of the party Stalin had not once "swung" right or left (but had in reality been in opposition to Lenin), relying in the struggle against Trotskiy on his future enemies Zinovyev and Kamenev.

Who needs in a semi-devastated country an endlessly bickering leadership? A reminder of this was given by the 13th party conference, which was held over 3 days in mid-January 1924. It discussed tasks of economic policy and pronounced its verdict on the Trotskiyite opposition. The conference resolution "Results of the Discussion and the Petty Bourgeois Deviation in the Party" made a political assessment of the opposition. On 19 and 20 January N.I. Krupskaya read to Lenin gradually, in "doses," the material of the party conference. "When, on Saturday," Nadezhda Konstantinovna later recalled, "Vladimir Ilich began to grow agitated during my reading, I told him that the resolutions had been passed unanimously." Discussion of the question of the opposition had been keen. Zinovyev and Kamenev, future allies of Trotskiy, demanded at the conference that he be removed from the Politburo and the Central Committee. It is not hard to imagine how difficult it must have been for many months for Lenin not having been able, although his mind was perfectly lucid, to take part actively in party affairs! To see, hear and understand everything and do a great deal of thinking and *be powerless*.... Powerful thought was in dumb confinement. We can only guess at the depth of the genius' spiritual tragedy. Lenin understood that his suppositions concerning the possibility of an exacerbation of the factional struggle in the party leadership were a reality.

During the day of the 21st there was an abrupt deterioration in V.I. Lenin's state of health. Yevdokiya

Smirnova, a garment factory worker who since the day of Lenin's March attack had helped Nadezhda Konstantinovna look after the sick Ilich, recalled:

"In the morning, as always, I gave him his coffee, but he greeted mecourteously and walked past the table, did not drink any, went to his room and lay down. I waited for him until four with hot coffee, thinking all the while that he would wake up and take a drink. But he was in a bad way. He asked me for hotwater bottles.... By the time I had filled them and fetched them, they were no longer of use to him...."

In the evening, at 6.50, Lenin was no more. The doctors' diagnosis merely confirmed the causes of the titan's death—the basis of the illness was very pronounced vascular sclerosis of the brain from the undue strain of mental activity. The immediate cause was a brainhemorrhage. For some reasons which are not clear, Trotskiy, who was at a southern resort, did not attend the funeral, although he had sufficient time. However, he cabled from Tiflis Station on 22 January to PRAVDA a shortish article. It contained the following lines:

"So Ilich is no more. The party is orphaned. The working class is orphaned. It is this feeling which is engendered primarily by the news of the death of the teacher and guide. How will we go on, will we find the way, will we not be knocked off course?

"Our hearts are now stricken with such inordinate grief because we were all, by the great grace of history, born as contemporaries of Lenin, worked alongside him and learned from him.

"How will we go on? Carrying the light of Leninism...."

It would be blasphemous to question the sincerity of Trotskiy's dolorous words—even he had to bow down before Lenin. But the emphasis on "orphanhood" was no accident, after all, they were Lenin's "contemporaries," who had "worked alongside him."

There was an emergency meeting of the Central Committee plenum in the night of the 22d, and on 27 January the coffin bearing Ilich's body was installed in the mausoleum in Red Square. Important decisions were adopted at the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets, which began on 26 January, to perpetuate the memory of V.I. Lenin.

The sorrowful session of the Second Congress of Soviets was held in the crape-lined Bolshoy Theater.

At 6.20 in the evening M.I. Kalinin, first chairman of the USSR Central Executive Committee, asked the members of the USSR Central Executive Committee Presidium and the members of the Russian Communist Party Central Committee to take their places at the Presidium table. Until recently our press has portrayed matters such that it was only Stalin with his "vow" who spoke. But it was all quite different. Petrovskiy, chairman of the USSR Central Executive Committee, called upon M.I. Kalinin to speak, then N.K. Krupskaya and G.Ye. Zinovyev. Zinovyev, chairman of the Comintern Executive Committee, bluntly asked those present: "We will be able to take our country further to the promised land which was vouchsafed the spiritual gaze of Vladimir Ilich? Will we be able, if only just, exerting all our powers of collective intelligence and collective organization, to fulfill what Vladimir Ilich taught us?" Bukharin, Klara Tsetkin, Tomskiy, Bukhtarasulin, Krayushkin, Sergeyev, Narimanov, Zvereva and Kamenev spoke. An interesting thought was heard in the speech of the latter: "He was never afraid to be alone, and we know of great crucial moments in the history of mankind when this leader, called upon to lead the human masses, was alone, when around him not only were there no armies but groups of sympathizers also.... Naturally, what never left him was his faith in the creativity of the genuine people's masses." Speeches were made at the session by Oldenburg, Voroshilov, Smorodin and Rykov. Stalin spoke fourth, after Zinovyev.

Stalin delivered his speech (as always, he had prepared the text himself, subsequently familiarizing the members of the Politburo with it) in, unusually for him, the emotional style of a vow. His "catechetical" thinking made itself felt here also. Everything was set out "shelf by shelf". He called for the creation of a "kingdom of labor on earth, and not in heaven." But there was in his speech also something which was to be characteristic of him always, until the last days of his life: a hymn to strength and a readiness for sacrifice—"we will spare no effort," "warding off innumerable blows," "strength of our party," "this is our strength," "we will not spare our lives". On behalf of the party Stalin vowed to preserve the title of member of the party and its unity, reinforce the dictatorship of the proletariat, strengthen the worker-peasant alliance and strengthen the union of fraternal republics and fidelity to internationalism. The speech contained no mention of either the power of the people or socialist democracy. They were implied, possibly, in the channel of consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat? After all, it had more than just a forcible aspect. However, it is most likely that Stalin simply had no need of thse "subtleties".

A new chapter of history began. Lenin's successor as Sovnarkom chairman was A.I. Rykov, and L.B. Kamenev was promoted to the position of chairman of the Council of Labor and Defense. Continuing as general secretary, Stalin awaited the decisions of the 13th party congress, at which, in accordance with the wishes of the deceased V.I. Lenin, his letter to the congress was to be read out. But did he know about this letter for certain? There is conflicting information on this score.

Distant Sources of the Tragedy

There are events which remain for a time in history's shadow, although meriting immeasurably more. This applies, in particular, to the fate of Lenin's "Letter to the

Congress". We have already said that it could have been addressed to the delegates of both the 12th and 13th party congresses, but was not a "plenary" subject of their attention. Lenin's thoughts set forth in the letter could not for the specific historical moment, owing to the opposition, have performed the role to which they were geared, but for the future their role was inestimable. They will remain in the history of political thought as a prophetic warning proclaiming that the highest and noblest aims require for their realization moral purity.

In accordance with Vladimir Ilich's wishes, N.K. Krupskaya conveyed V.I. Lenin's letter of 24-25 December 1922 and the supplement thereto of 4 January 1923, typed out and placed in envelopes, to the party Central Committee on 18 May 1924, five days prior to the start of the 13th Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Congress. In a special statement recording the handover of these invaluable papers N.K. Krupskaya recorded by hand: "I have handed over the writings which Vladimir Ilich dictated at the time of his illness from 23 December through 23 January—13 individual records. This does not include the record on the nationality issue (at this time with Mariya Ilinichna).

"Some of these writings have already been made public (on the Worker-Peasant Inspectorate, on Sukhanov). Among the unpublished writings there are those of 24-25 December 1922 and of 4 January 1923, which contain personal descriptions of certain Central Committee members. Vladimir Ilich expressed the firm desire that this record be conveyed after his death to the party congress. N. Krupskaya."

The plenum held on the eve of the congress adopted in respect of the report of the commission which had accepted Lenin's papers a decree of the following content: "To adjourn publication of the accepted documents, in accordance with Vladimir Ilich's wishes, until the congress, making them public by delegation and determining that these documents are not to be reproduced and to be announced to the delegations by members of the commission for acceptance of Ilich's papers."

This was the first congress without Lenin. The political report was delivered by Zinovyev. He began the reading of the report in an unusually disturbed state: "In today's PRAVDA one of our native worker-poets has beautifully portrayed the mood of the party pertaining precisely to this moment of the congress:

"There was evidently mental trepidation,
"Anguish in the maelstrom of eyes
"Had lost its way.
"The political report of the Central Committee...
"Is being read... is being read...
"Not by Lenin...

"Without Lenin, without the lamp, without the most brilliant mind on earth we now have to tackle the issues of tremendous importance on which our party's fate depends."

Zinovyev's lengthy report examined a wide range of questions: the year's results, the time factor in socialist transformations, the work of the Central Committee and Politburo, the results of the debate, the nationality question, the international situation, the work of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) in the Comintern, the results of the NEP and Lenin's plan for the formation of cooperatives. The report contained a special section to the effect that the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) "is not only the party of the city," the "cultural scissors" and so forth. However, neither Zinovyev's report nor Stalin's organizational report in fact broached the questions which V.I. Lenin had raised in his last letters. Lenin had, after all, not simply set forth a "plan for the building of socialism," as subsequently came to be said with us for a long time, in the sphere of industrialization, collectivization and culture. The primitive nature of the thinking of Stalin, who was accustomed to breaking everything up and simplifying things beyond recognition, was reflected here also. Lenin's "Testament" was his concept of socialism, at the center of which were questions substantiating the power of the people and examining guarantees of democracy. Lenin was essentially looking for ways of preventing the alienation of the working man and toiler from *his* power. How to conquer the emergent bureaucracy? How to make the machinery democratic and flexible? How to enhance the role of public control? It was all these questions which constituted the *essence* of Lenin's intention concerning "a number of changes in our political system."

Most unfortunately, the Politburo and its nucleus—Zinovyev, Kamenev, Stalin, Trotskiy, Bukharin—had no wish or were, perhaps, unable to fully understand Lenin's brilliant intentions. While studying many important issues of current life, the 13th party congress tackled tasks of the present, and not of the future. The central idea of Lenin's "Testament" concerning the development of the power of the people was not the main one in the work of the congress.

Questions of an expansion of the democratic aspect of the dictatorship of the proletariat and renewal of the executive authorities and the extensive enlistment of the masses in the solution of questions of state were not in fact raised. Stalin merely touched on the question of an *enlargement* of the Central Committee. However, we recall, Lenin spoke about the enlargement of the Central Committee by workers and peasants, whereas at both the 12th and 13th congresses the Central Committee was joined by people who were, while admittedly worthy, professional revolutionaries, for the most part. There were very few new members of the Central Committee from the ranks of the workers and peasants, and this, you will agree, is not the same thing.

Zinovyev's political report illustrated questions of socialist democracy, about which Lenin was so concerned, in distinctive manner. The speaker quoted a statement by a plant engineer, a specialist, who had declared that giving people basic necessities was not enough, they had to be given *"human rights"*. Until we have these rights, the engineer declared, we will be inert. Until it is recognized that "man is the highest value in the state," people's social and labor assertiveness will be low. True, together with this profound utterance the specialist made many wrong judgments also. Zinvoyev responded to such sentiments on the part of the intelligentsia as follows: "We must improve specialists' material position, but they will not obtain the political rights such as they request on a plate." This was the thinking not only of Zinovyev but of many in the Central Committee also who had not had an opportunity to grasp the profoundly humanitarian concept of socialism. This ignorance also concealed the sources of future troubles. Undoubtedly, only 6 and one-half years had elapsed since the revolution. Without the dictatorship of the proletariat the union of republics simply could not have withstood the pressure of internal and external enemies, but the disregard for democratic principles and the power of the people, about which Lenin so much cared, could not have failed to have taken its toll sooner or later.

Lenin's letter did not occupy at the congress the place it should have. Individual delegations were familiarized with the letter by specially designated people. Kamenev was particularly industrious. There was no discussion. The culmination of this briefing was a comrade from the commission for acceptance of Lenin's papers submitting the proposal, which had been prepared in advance, that Stalin in his practical work be conjured to take account of Lenin's critical remarks. This was the end of work in connection with the letter. Thanks to this form of communication of Lenin's letter, it was in fact essentially underestimated. A most important document of historic significance did not become the basis for the affirmation of democratic standards in party life or the basis for organizational changes in the party's leading echelon and the promotion of a new person to the position of general secretary.

It has to be considered here that from the time the "Letter" was written almost 18 months had elapsed. In this time Stalin had headed the struggle against Trotskiy, who not long before Lenin's death even was, employing various pretexts, launching fierce attacks on the general secretary. Stalin acted decisively against these attacks, and he was supported by a majority of the party. All this could not have failed to have been reflected in the delegates' attitude toward Stalin. Many could have thought: getting rid of Stalin means recognizing that Trotskiy was right....

The political level of many delegates (and this was not their fault but a reflection of the general situation in the country) was low. Many had an inadequate grasp of the intricacies of real politics and frequently took what seemed to be for what was. After all, it had not been fortuitous that, thanks to his demagogic speeches, Trotskiy had long remained popular among people with a low political consciousness. Doubts had not arisen in the delegations when reading the letter as to why this most important document was not being discussed at the congress. Why this secrecy? Why not make Lenin's proposals public? All this was not only the result of a certain "indoctrination" and pressure but primarily also of the low political level of many delegates.

A cause of the future troubles was the underdevelopment at the particular stage of the political culture not only the bulk of the population but of party members also. There were hardly many of them who suspected that it was at this time, having after the revolution renounced the god in the heavens, that they had taken a step toward creating him on earth. Nor did they know that the god in the heavens was a symbol and more often demanded symbolic sacrifices, but that this would not satisfy the "god" on earth and that the sacrifices for him would be terrible. Such seers as Lenin are, alas, a unique historical rarity.

But not everyone had low political breeding! Did Zinovyev, Kamenev, Rykov, Tomskiy, Dzerzhinskiy, Kalinin, Rudzutak, Sokolnikov, Frunze, Andreyev and many other Bolsheviks not understand that the leader's "Testament" needed to be analyzed most closely? They did, I believe, but the slogan of "unity," frequently formally understood, drowned out the voice of intellectual conscience. It may even be said that it, the *conscience of opportunities,* was not used. As would be the case repeatedly: the new leader would be exalted not only under the conditions of the continuous compression, abridgment and castration of real democracy and the conversion of the party into a machinery of power but also of a stifling of the call of the conscience of many of those who should publicly and openly have protested against the usurpation of power by one man. Everyone knew how this would end for the specific individual, but the point is precisely that this opportunity of conscience can only be used in alliance with courage of thought. Inner servitude, however, proved stronger, as a rule.

When Stalin learned of Lenin's letter, he announced his resignation. This was the right move—any Bolshevik would have had to have acted only thus in his place. Had it been accepted, much, possibly, would have been different. In the 1920's, incidentally, Stalin announced his resignation repeatedly. In quite categorical form after the 15th congress, for example. The Trotskiy-Zinovyev opposition had been defeated at that time, the congress officially registering this organizationally. At the first plenum following the congress Stalin addressed the following request to the Central Committee members.

"I believe that until recently there were conditions which made it necessary for the party to have me in this office as a more or less severe individual representing a certain

antidote to the opposition. Now the opposition has not only been smashed but has been expelled from the party. Meanwhile we have Lenin's instruction, which, in my opinion, should be implemented. For this reason I request that the plenum release me from the position of general secretary. I assure you, comrades, that the party will only benefit from this." But Stalin's authority had by this time grown, and he personified in the party a person fighting for unity and implacably opposed to various factionalists. His resignation was once again refused. But it seems that Stalin had been confident of this, and the resignation request was aimed at strengthening his position.

At the 13th congress Kamenev and Zinovyev took every step to see that Lenin's insistent recommendation remained unsatisfied. They persuaded Stalin to take back his verbal announcement and together formulated the line in accordance with which it was proposed that Stalin take account of the deceased leader's desires and critical remarks. Zinovyev and Kamenev personally performed this work in the large delegations, virtually disavowing Lenin's ideas. They did much to whitewash their future grave-digger!

It seemed most important to these politicians, who were not without capabilities and services to the revolutionary movement, not to admit Trotskiy to the leading parts. It was not the fate of the revolution, the fate of Lenin's "Testament" and the country's future which were of primary interest to them. An imperative as old as the hills came to the fore: personal interests, ambitions and vanity. They both, like Trotskiy, manifestly underestimated Stalin. It is known, for example, at the start of the 1920's Zinovyev had said among friends: "Stalin is a good doer, but he always has to be and can be controlled. Stalin himself lacks this capacity for self-control." Evidently Zinovyev, and Kamenev with him, was calculating in his plans that Stalin would remain in the part of general secretary merely the leader of the Secretariat, while in the Politburo first fiddle would be played by another. Zinovyev, of course! Stalin saw these calculations and made out for the time being that such an "allocation" suited him. After all, it was no accident that he strove to have as the speaker on the main, political, question at the 13th congress Zinovyev! Zinovyev and Kamenev feared Trotskiy and did not consider Stalin dangerous. Trotskiy, however, was passive at the congress, as if simply awaiting his call.... Such was the situation in the leading nucleus of the Central Committee.

Today, decades later, it may be said that the main persons in the way of realization of Lenin's wishes were Zinovyev and Kamenev (and Stalin himself, of course, but he could have done nothing by himself). It was these two politicians, guided by personal interests of the moment, who acted in defiance of the leader's last wishes. They had gone against him in 1917 and they opposed him when he was no longer alive also. Yet Zinovyev loved publicly to proudly say that prior to the revolution he had for 10 whole years (from 1907 to 1917) been Lenin's closest pupil! Nobody, he said, had supported Lenin in Zimmerwald and Kienthal like he had. Kamenev had been personally close to the Ulyanov family and did not conceal this. Whatever the case, these two political twins had come to believe in their special role after Lenin. It was they together with Stalin who had made the decision not to make public Lenin's "Letter to the Congress". And although, at Ordzhonikidze's suggestion, this document was published at the 15th party congress in the daily bulletin, it was not conveyed to the broad party strata.

The authoritarian, antidemocratic approach displayed in the case of the letter was assimilated well by Stalin, and he would subsequently repeatedly avail himself of the lesson and "school" of Zinovyev and Kamenev. They wanted to leave the past to the past, but this is not always possible. Without themselves knowing it, these people were sowing the conflict of the past with the future. Their heads also would in time roll in the bloody harvest. As soon as he had with their help overcome Trotskiy, Stalin immediately lost all use for them, and just over 10 years later was cold-bloodedly sanctioning their physical extermination. It is not hard to imagine how many times Zinovyev's and Kamenev's thoughts would return with despair to the times when they, scorning Lenin's letter, themselves pushed upward the dictator, their future executioner!

True, when the rupture occurred between Stalin on the one hand and Zinvoyev and Kamenev on the other, they began to see the light. Inasmuch as it was a question of personal position, the political twins, forgetting about the recent defense of Stalin, went against him. At the 14th party congress in December 1925 Kamenev would, as we know, appeal to the delegates: "I have come to the conviction that Comrade Stalin cannot perform the part of unifier of the Bolshevik headquarters." The congress delegates viewed this statement as another attack of factionalists. What these short-sighted politicians had done earlier in keeping Stalin, in defiance of Lenin's wishes, in the office of general secretary they could no longer change. Nor, incidentally, could anyone.

Under these conditions Trotskiy, who had suffered unreserved defeat in the debate which had been conducted, attempted to "save face" by temporarily adopting a gutta-percha position. Zinovyev described his speech at the 13th congress as not a "congress" but "parliamentary" speech. In his opinion, Trotskiy was addressing not the delegates but the party and attempting "to say something totally different from what he thought." Indeed, Trotskiy's speech was unusual. Its main content was aimed against the bureaucratization of the party machinery. To appear convincing he quoted Lenin and Bukharin, attacking the Central Committee leadership from the standpoints of an innovator and fighter for the preservation of revolutionary traditions in the party. "The masses think more slowly than does the party," Trotskiy maintained. It order to preserve the party's

capacity for "thinking quickly and correctly" it was necessary to be rid of the indispositions in the form of the bureaucracy of the party machinery. It might have seemed that he was familiar with the ideas of Lenin's last (still unknown!) letters. But Trotskiy was apparently loosing his arrows against bureaucratism for a different purpose: in his opinion, the bureaucracy was engendering *factionalism.* The bureaucracy, he believed, was excusing the ideological and political attacks of the party headquarters. In other words, his challenge to the party to debate was, it transpires, a response to the bureaucracy in the Central Committee, the provincial committees and all echelons of the party hierarchy. Trotskiy remained himself: he needed the cloak of fighter for democracy as camouflage and verbal cosmetics to justify his attacks on the policy of the Central Committee. Although the party had not forgotten that it was he who had been an instigator of the methods of "barracks communism" inevitably engendering bureaucratic distortions.

It may be said that not even the 13th congress made headway in the development of Lenin's ideas of democratization. Here is the source of many future tragedies. Nine months had been sufficient for Vladimir Ilich to have studied Stalin as general secretary from all sides and to have seen in him something that had seriously alerted him, but the congress delegates failed to carry out Lenin's last wishes.

It should be said for fairness' sake that, possibly, many Central Committee members understood that, were Stalin to be removed, this would involuntarily create the impression that Trotskiy had been right. And, who knows, had Trotskiy not compromised himself by the October (1923) challenge, his chances could have been quite high. The Trotskiy alternative never suited the majority of Lenin's associates so it may with a certain amount of assumption be said that Stalin kept his position as general secretary thanks also to Trotskiy's "assistance".

Lenin merely laid the democratic foundations of state and party building, but he did not succeed in developing them. Let us take just one facet of democracy: rotation of executives. After all, even if Stalin had remained as general secretary, his period in office would have been confined to the established statutory term and the cult abnormality in the future could have been avoided. It is perfectly understandable that Queen Victoria, Empress Catherine II or Shah Reza Pahlavi of Iran reigned for decades, they were monarchs! But Stalin's three decades in office, limited virtually by nothing and no one, could not have failed to have led to deformations. Could not have! The idea concerning the obligatory replacement of the executive party authorities and delimitation of the functions of the Central Committee and Soviet power shows through in Lenin's proposal to the 12th party congress "How We Should Reorganize the Worker-Peasant Inspectorate". The first shoots of democracy were not tended and were gradually completely choked off by more powerful sprouts of dogmatism, bureaucracy and mechanical administrative rule. The future cult of the "great leader" was no accident.

There were initially no ostensible signs of a usurpation of party power, on the contrary, Stalin conducted the struggle against Trotskiy under the slogan of collective struggle against his Bonapartist, dictatorial ways, pretensions to sole leadership and inordinate ambitions. Trotskiy continued to exploit the political capital which he had acquired in the civil war years, not noticing that it, this "capital," was rapidly dwindling. Criticizing Trotskiy's claims to a special part in the leadership, Stalin proposed another, more progressive and democratic alternative—"collective leadership". True, this leadership had gradually transformed itself in a direction favorable to the general secretary himself. Stalin had already mapped out for himself a plan of a gradual change in the party's leading nucleus. The first person whom he had to remove from the leadership was, of course, Trotskiy, but there was no need meanwhile to force events. Thus following the 13th congress the Politburo remained virtually as before, even Trotskiy keeping his place in it. Bukharin, who was rapidly gaining authority in the party, was the only new member. Lenin's description of Bukharin as the "party's favorite" had accelerated his entry into the highest party body. Dzerzhinskiy, Sokolnikov and Frunze were elected Politburo candidates. The Secretariat, however, had a new look: general secretary, Stalin, second secretary, Molotov, secretary, Kaganovich. The new Central Committee nucleus had become stronger from the viewpoint of support for Stalin. The most difficult hours of Stalin's party career were, perhaps, over: not only had he not been removed from the position of general secretary, on which Lenin had insisted, he had consolidated his position in the party leadership.

Following the 15th party congress, Lenin's "Letter to the Congress" vanished from the party's field of vision for whole decades and was not published in the "Lenin Digest," although Stalin himself had promised to secure this. True, in the mid-1920's the "Letter" surfaced several times in connection with the intraparty struggle. It was even published in Bulletin No 30 of the 15th party congress (edition of more than 10,000 copies) with the stamp: "For Members of the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Only" and sent out to the provincial committees and the communist factions of the Central Executive Committee and All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions; part of the letter was published in PRAVDA on 2 November 1927. For this reason it cannot be said that the party was completely in the dark concerning this document. But, not having carried out Lenin's wishes straightaway, it later became more difficult to do so primarily because Stalin had initially attempted, if only outwardly, to alter his behavior. In time the letter became a "secret". Meanwhile only the delegates to the 13th party congress and the Central Committee members knew about it, but their circle

gradually shrank—the general secretary would give preference to people without a past. True, according to a number of pieces of evidence, in 1926 final attempts were made to preserve the letter for legal party history. Rykov and Petrovskiy proposed that it be appended to the stenographic report of the congress which had been prepared for publication or published in the "Lenin Digests". However, as we know, the party learned of Lenin's testament only after the 20th CPSU Congress. Such "secrets" are dangerous, they destroy, like corrosion, democratic principles, involuntarily creating in people the false notion that the truth may be incarcerated. Incidentally, K. Radek had written in his brochure "Results of the 12th Russian Communist Party Congress," which appeared in 1923, that certain persons wished to "make capital" out of Lenin's last letters, saying "that there is some secret here" preventing their publication.

The more the truth is concealed from the light, the more, as historical experience testifies, the opportunities for abuses. The affair of the "Letter" reminds us once again that a lie is always made, manufactured and created, but that the truth does not need to be "manufactured"—it simply needs to be revealed, illumined and defended. Truth needs light, much light; a lie always seeks darkness, concealment and "secrecy". And Stalin had a passionate liking for "secrets". A multitude of stamps would soon appear on "cases," files and elementary documents. Of course, there have always been and always will be, evidently, state and party secrets. But the conversion into some secret of simple correspondence, accounts, telegrams and elementary information created a special seam of life, as it were, for some people. No one gave any thought to the fact that the inordinate classification of state and public life is the soil for venality. At the center of all "secrets" was Stalin himself, who found time to respond personally to the continuous stream of communications.

Not without Trotskiy's participation, the text of Lenin's "Letter to the Congress" was published repeatedly in the West. Initially in the United States M. Eastman published the text of the document with a lengthy anti-Soviet commentary. Then in the 1930's in France B. Suvarin, a French citizen of Russian extraction and employee of L'HUMANITE, returned to this document. Trotskiy made constant efforts to attract attention to the "Letter," extracting individual fragments from it and changing them beyond recognition. At the end of his life, we repeat, he was in fact interpreting this document of Lenin's unequivocally: Lenin had proposed that Stalin be removed as general secretary and had recommended that the delegates promote as leader of the party him, Trotskiy, as the most capable and intelligent. He repeated this proposition in his books and articles so often that he had evidently come to believe it himself.

Lenin's ideas contained in the "Testament" provided for a wide spectrum of democratic steps in the world's first socialist state. An increase in the influx of fresh forces in the leadership of the party and the state and an enhancement of the role of the unions, the soviets, public organizations and the people's and control authorities and leaders' accountability to the working people were contemplated. Granted there were not yet specifically questions concerning plebiscites, referenda, polls, the obligatory accountability of executives, the strict rotation of party personnel and other aspects of the "technology" of democracy. It is important that Lenin saw as the essence of socialism a synthesis of democracy, humanism and justice.

The gradual departure from Lenin's original positions of broad democratism could not have failed to have been reflected in all spheres of the life of the Soviet state. It is here that the deep-lying sources of all future deformations, cult deformities and abuses of power lie. But the ideological charge of October was so invincible that all the filters and insulators of dogmatism and bureaucracy could not extinguish and stifle it entirely.

The political system of society which was created attached tremendous significance to the education of the population and the younger generations on the ideals of revolution, socialism and communism. The image of the "new man," some model of the personality of the future, was in vogue. Despite the start of the increase in bureaucratic trends, even in the 1920's paramount significance was attached to the ideological aspect of the restructuring of society. Simplicity, modesty in everyday life, non-demandingness in daily commuity living, a readiness to respond to any call of society, a profound hatred of philistinism and cupidity, the lofty inspiration of people to whom mercantile calculation was alien—all these traits of the man of the 1920's, 1930's, 1940's and later years testified that bureaucratism had not killed off the best in the man of the first land of socialism. People were strong in their belief in the idea.

Distant sources of the tragedy among those which we have cited may be seen also in the fact that the strictly centralized system which had been created was dangerous, if only potentially. A person who had concentrated in his hands "unbounded power," a functionary of the idea, had even at that time set his goal—taking over sole control of this system—and he was not prevented. Lenin's warning was not appreciated, and the "Old Guard," engaged in fratricidal struggle, failed to assume the historic role of collective leader. The freedom which had been won clouded the vision of the future. As Nikolay Berdyayev wrote in his experiment in philosophical autobiography: "The experience of the Russian Revolution confirmed my long-held idea that freedom is not democratic but aristocratic. Freedom is of no interest and is unnecessary to the insurgent masses; they cannot bear the burden of freedom." A contentious idea, but interesting in the sense that neither the masses nor the "Old Guard" were able or knew how to dispose of the freedom which had been won in the way that Lenin taught. The future was, as always, in a haze....

The man-made nature of the future is no less enigmatic than the irreversibility and mysteries of the past.

Chapter III. His Struggle

[Text]

Truth is the daughter of time,
and not of authority.

F. Bacon

Following the 13th party congress, the confidence which he had lost began to return to Stalin. Before Lenin's death he had hardly been visited by serious ambitious intentions, but after... it could hardly be maintained with full confidence that even at that time he believed in the possibility of the realization of a seemingly impossible opportunity.

In Stalin's library, which he had begun to create little by little as of 1920 in his small Kremlin apartment, a large part of the literature was of prerevolution origin: digests of the works of Marx, Engels, Plekhanov, LaFargue, Luxemburg, Lenin and the Utopianists, books by Tolstoy, Garshin, Chekhov, Gorkiy and Uspenskiy and the now little-known works of G. Binshtok, R. Zonter, Hobson, Kenworthy and Tankhilevich. Many of the books were not, as would be the case decades later for our contemporaries, merely the environment of a modest abode. Many books contain pencil notes and underlinings made, possibly, by Stalin.

A sentence from the emperor's memoirs is heavily marked off in the margins in Napoleon's "Thoughts": "It was in the evening at Lodi* that I came to believe in myself as an exceptional man and was imbued with ambition to accomplish great things, which hitherto had seemed to me a fantasy." Was not for Stalin his Lodi the moment of his securing, despite Lenin's wishes, of the position of general secretary? This was, perhaps, the culminating point for Stalin's political career: the 45-year-old secretary sensed that after Lenin's death he was in no way weaker than his Politburo and Central Committee comrades.

Stalin would reflect on this increasingly in his rare moments of recreation, on the way to his suburban dacha in Zubalovo. There were at the start of the 1920's in the Moscow area hundreds of neglected private residences, dachas and suburban homes abandoned by the "ci-devants". Many of them had fled abroad, some had fallen in the bloody carnage of the civil war and from others these attributes of "bourgeois luxury" had simply been expropriated. The majority of these homes were given over for hospitals, shelters for the homeless, recreation centers and storehouses for numerous state institutions, which began rapidly to multiply. Not far from Usovo Station there were about 10 dachas. One of them, which had previously belonged to the oil industrialist Zubalov, was picked out by Stalin. Voroshilov, Shaposhnikov and Mikoyan and, somewhat later, Gamarnik and other party, state and military leaders of the country had taken up residence near by.

A son, Vasiliy, was born to Stalin's family in 1921, Svetlana would appear a few years later. His son from his first wife, Yakov, also would come to live here later. Nadezhda Sergeyevna, Stalin's wife, would set about organizing the simple existence with the selflessness and zeal of a young housewife. They lived modestly on Stalin's wages until his wife went to work in the editorial office and secretariat of the Sovnarkom and later began to attend the Industrial Academy as a student. Stalin unexpectedly said to his wife at table for some reason: "I have never loved money because I have usually had none." Familiarizing myself with the papers of Stalin's archives, it was interesting to read Stalin's receipts which he had handed to Stasova in confirmation of having obtained in the party cashier's office an advance of R25, R60, R75 and so forth "on salary" for the following month. Later a nurse and housekeeper would appear in the home. There were at that time no heavy guard, no wardens, no messengers and the dozens of other positions which would emerge later, and the leaders of the party and state themselves would call these people "attendants" in order not to repeat the bourgeois "servants".

Stalin, like all leaders of the party, lived the first years after the revolution simply and modestly in accordance with his family budget and party principles. In October 1923 even the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee and Central Control Commission prepared and sent to all party committees a special document which set forth measures which had been formulated back at the Ninth Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Conference. It spoke of the impermissibility of the use of official resources for the upkeep of private dwellings, the equipping of dachas and the payment of bonuses and compensation in kind to executives. The strictest compliance with the moral character of party members and the prevention of a big gap in wages between the "specialists" and executives on the one hand and the bulk of the working people on the other was prescribed. To ignore "these regulations," the circular said, "means violating democratism and could represent a source of corruption of the party and a lowering of communists' authority." Lenin's proposition that "responsible worker-communists do not have the right to receive personal rates, as, equally, bonuses and overtime pay," was confirmed. There was in Lenin's time even an unwritten tradition of Central Committee members transferring their literary royalties to the party fund.

Party leaders had no valuables, and even talk of something of the sort was a sign of bad, philistine and even antiparty taste. Let us say right away that Stalin was able throughout his life to preserve asceticism as a character trait. He was found after his death to have virtually no personal effects other than soled felt boots and a patched

peasant sheepskin coat. He was in his everyday simplicity and lack of covetousness true to his views to the end, although a large staff of "attendants" had taken shape in the 1930's even. The majority of his Central Committee comrades were the same.

They would sometimes get together, the situation permitting, on Sundays, more often than not at Stalin's. Bukharin and his wife were visitors, as were Ordzhonikidze, Yenukidze, Mikoyan, Molotov, Voroshilov and Budennyy, frequently with their wives and children. To the accompaniment of Budennyy's accordion they would sing Russian and Ukrainian songs and would dance even.... But Trotskiy never visited Stalin's dacha.

Seated at the table, they would conduct lengthy discussions concerning the situation in the country and the party and current domestic and international affairs. Also present here was the old Bolshevik S.Ya. Alliluyev, father of Stalin's wife, who held his son in law in high regard. Usually Alliluyev would interject merely occasional comments concering the "old days" (he had been a member of the party since the time it was founded, of which he was very proud). They would often argue, sharply at times. Everyone was on "thou" terms. Stalin was one among equals. There were no signs even of any reverence for rank, of glorification or ingratiation even less. Meeting here were people who less than 10 years previously even had been outcasts of society, but who now, by the will of historical circumstance, were at the head of a giant state which had barely recovered from the innumerable wounds which had been inflicted on it by the swords of war, internecine strife and rebellions. Many of the questions discussed here were frequently submitted subsequently to the Politburo. Thus, for example, Molotov once adduced at the table interesting information: how much grain in Russia was being consumed in moonshining, and how much money the treasury was losing because of this. A few days later, on 27 November 1923, a Politburo session decreed in the wake of Molotov's report: "To entrust the Secretariat to set up the Standing Commission To Combat Moonshining, Cocaine, Alehouses and Games of Chance (specifically, lotto) consisting of Comrade Smidovich, chairman, Comrade Shvernik, deputy, and Comrades Beloborodov, Danilov, Dogadov and Vladimirov, members. Secretary of the Central Committee, Stalin."

As we can see, there is nothing new under the sun.... True, we are not, it would seem, currently struggling against "lotto," but something more dangerous in the shape of drug addiction has appeared.

Discussing thus in a small group the causes of Lenin's illness and death, it was decided to adopt certain measures to enhance care and supervision of the health of the party leadership. At a session of the Central Committee plenum on 31 January 1924 Voroshilov presented the question "Protection of the Health of the Leading Party Personnel". Having discussed the matter, they resolved: "To request the Central Committee Presidium to discuss the necessary measures to protect the health of the leading party personnel and to predetermine, what is more, the selection of a special comrade to monitor the health and work conditions of the leading party personnel."

Under Lenin, I believe, the question would have been posed differently, more broadly, through the prism of concern for the health of the whole people, including the executive body.

They would often argue over how to "introduce socialism". The dotted line of movement into the future charted by Lenin, like a trajectory, had become lost somewhere in the mist beyond the horizon. The vector of movement and its direction were clear. But how to proceed and what the pace, methods and modes of struggle for the future should be—all this appeared confused.

How To Build Socialism?

It is ideal when between strength and wisdom there is harmony. This is the case very rarely, and the future more often belongs to the strong, and not necessarily, unfortunately, to the wise. Usually one principle gains the ascendancy at some segment of the historical path. Whether we recognize this phenomenon or not, it exists together with the others. Socrates once expressed a thought relevant not only to his times: "Philosophers should be rulers, and rulers, philosophers." Strength always needs wisdom. Stalin possessed strength, but did not possess wisdom, although we all for a long time took his cleverness, subtlety and cunning mind for wisdom. At the moment of choice of means and paths of realization of the great ideas this played a tragic part.

The energy of the masses of the world's first worker-peasant state had been released. How to channel it correctly toward the target, toward the ideal, toward the pinnacles which had seemed close even to Lenin? How to materialize socialism? The party press was full of articles of the "old" and new theoreticians giving advice and instructions as to how to proceed, how to build socialism. Everything was new. It often seemed that if there were sufficient correct slogans, all would be well.

At the end of 1924 Trotskiy wrote in Kislovodsk his scandalous "Lessons of October". He once again attempted in them to belittle the role of other leaders of the revolution and involuntarily Lenin also in order to "theoretically" substantiate his claims to leadership. As an article in BOLSHEVIK (No 14 for 1924) observed, Trotskiy has switched in his "lessons" from the standpoints of an "annalist" to the position of a partial prosecutor. He tried to show in the next volume of his works, in which the "Lessons of October" was published, that in the revolution "the Central Committee was right when it was in agreement with Trotskiy and that Lenin was wrong when he was in disagreement with Trotskiy."

Trotskiy wrote that in matters of revolution there is a tide which should be taken at the "flood" and that if it is let slip, the flood may not return for whole decades. The revolution had "taken place" because, in defiance of the majority of "Old Bolshevism," it was headed by Lenin and Trotskiy. Such was the version of the new prophet.

Trotskiy would once again raise the issue of the fact that the fate of the revolution in Russia would depend to a decisive extent on "the sequence in which revolution occurred in various countries of Europe...." In his work "Permanent Revolution" he is even more definite: "The completion of socialist revolution within a national framework is inconceivable. Preservation of the proletarian revolution within a national framework may only be a temporary regime, as the experience of the Soviet Union shows." Only after this is it possible to talk seriously about the ways and means of building a new world. To the question of how to build socialism Trotskiy essentially replied: in "expectation of world revolution," pushing it forward.

For this reason the theory of socialism in an individual country, Trotskiy believed, which had risen on the yeast of reaction, was incompatible with the theory of permanent revolution. Only superindustrialization at the expense of the peasant sector, Preobrazhenskiy wrote, supporting Trotskiy, could provide the state with an industrial foundation and opportunities for socialism.

Stalin knew economics very primitively and superficially, but he saw in what a grim situation the country was. The time of debate and argument, which had excited the party for almost a decade, had been a period of struggle not only for determination of the level and nature of the democratic society but also for a search for ways of economic development. Had Stalin had economic perspicacity, he could have seen in Lenin's last articles the contours of a *concept of socialism* connected with the need for the country's industrialization and for the formation of cooperatives, a major upsurge of the culture of the broad masses, an improvement in social relations and the indispensable development of democratic principles in society. Lenin's words to the effect that it was NEP policy which afforded the confidence that out of NEP Russia would come socialist Russia Stalin never entirely understood.

In the first years he had taken an interest in the economic views of such people as Bukharin, Preobrazhenskiy, Strumilin, Leontyev and Brudnyy, but Stalin understood the essence of the intricacies of economic terms, laws and trends only with difficulty. And this man, who had never worked on the shop floor, had never inhaled the scent of the spring plowland and had not mastered even the rudiments of economic policy fundamentals, ultimately acceded to the inevitability of the "commodity starvation" under socialism which attends us still. True, Stalin nonetheless attempted to understand some things in economics. O. Yermanskiy's pamphlet "Scientific Organization of Labor and the Taylor System" was in his library. It is known, for example, that Lenin had praised the author for having been able to provide an exposition of the "Taylor system and, what is more, what is particularly important, both its positive and its *negative aspects.*" This was why Stalin read the pamphlet, perhaps?

However, taking his works, notes and pronouncements and, what is most important, practical actions as a basis, one is persuaded that Stalin's economic credo was simple: the country had to be strong, no, not simply strong but powerful. The most important thing was the utmost industrialization. Then, the maximum introduction of the peasantry to socialism. The way, method and means—the broadest reliance on the dictatorship of the proletariat, in which Stalin recognized only the "power" aspect. At one point during a meeting in the Central Committee he uttered the following formula here: "The bigger the tasks facing us, the more difficuties there will be." In BOLSHEVIK (Nos 9-10 for 1926) this idea was reflected thus: "We are setting ourselves increasingly serious and major tasks, whose accomplishment will ensure increasingly successful steps in the direction toward socialism, but the *enlargement of the tasks* will be accompanied by the *growth of difficulties* also." How all this fits in with the future ominous formula concerning "exacerbation of the class struggle as the movement toward socialism accelerates"! In the mid-1920's Stalin had a very vague idea of the paths of socialist building, but he undoubtedly already had a method: strength, command, directive and instruction. Is this contrary to dictatorship?

Reading numerous speeches of prominent party figures, Stalin sensed that the wide spectrum of views on the fate of socialism in the USSR was brought about not only by the differentiation of the ideological and theoretical positions of their authors but also by the fact that reality was far more complex than the Bolsheviks had supposed. After all, Nikolay Ivanovich Bukharin would write correctly in BOLSHEVIK: "Earlier we had imagined things thus: we will win power, take almost everything into our hands and immediately introduce a planned economy; some trifling matters, which are being puffed up, we will partly make short shrift of, partly overcome, and this will be the end of the matter. Now we see perfectly clearly that things will be entirely different." Yes, entirely "different".

Leafing through articles and reading reports, inquiries and communications, Stalin sensed that the most dangerous person in this period of uncertainty was Trotskiy. Even upon a mental mention of this name, Stalin would be seized with a state of profound dislike developing into animosity. He had recently been told that, addressing a group of his disciples, Trotskiy had declared that some new "big noises" in the party could not forgive him the historic role which he had performed in October. Of course, the "big noise" from his lips meant Stalin. Even more unflattering epithets of Trotskiy and his supporters addressed to Stalin reached the general secretary.

Although Stalin continued to have ostensibly reasonable relations with Zinovyev and Kamenev, he sensed that his straightforwardness and gradually increased influence were not to the "duo's" liking. He understood this particularly keenly following the 13th party congress. In his report at district committee secretary courses Stalin criticized Kamenev's statement concerning the existence of the "dictatorship of the party". After all, comrades, Stalin concluded to the approving murmurings of his audience, we have in our country a dictatorship of the proletariat, not of the party. It should be said for truth's sake that Bukharin also at that time shared the idea of a "dictatorship of the party". At a Central Committee plenum he declared the following: "Our task is to spot two dangers: first, the danger which emanates from the centralization of our apparat. Second, the danger of political democracy, which could result if democracy steps out of bounds. But the opposition sees one danger—in the bureaucracy. It fails to see behind the bureaucratic danger the political democratic danger. But this is Menshevism. In order to support the dictatorship of the proletariat it is necessary to support the dictatorship of the party." Radek hereupon added: "We are a dictatorial party in a petty bourgeois country."

But Stalin came to criticize only Kamenev. He had nothing to gain from "warring" with many. The main thing was to do things gradually, by turns, all in good time. Hereupon the political tandem reacted. At a Politburo session Stalin's criticism of Kamenev was condemned as "uncomradely" and inaccurately expressing the "essence of the position of the person criticized". Stalin at once announced his resignation, for the second time in his history as general secrertary, and not the last. His resignation was refused on this occasion also... by Kamenev himself with the support of Zinovyev. Stalin sensed in this act his opponents' growing lack of confidence—they were, as before, afraid of Trotskiy. And the general secretary was once again persuaded as to the "weather-vane" thinking of both Kamenev and Zinovyev. What was the latter's book "Leninism" worth! In fact Zinovyev was attempting once again to camouflage and excuse his and Kamenev's truckling in the October period and his disagreements with Lenin. Stalin would necessarily make use of these facts subsequently. When he had struck the telling blow at Trotskiy, it would be Zinovyev's and Kamenev's turn, if they did not become tame. Meanwhile these facts needed to be saved up, written down and preserved. Here they are, these facts, recorded in documents:

"Our position in respect of the Provisional Government and the war needs to be preserved both against the corrupting influence of 'revolutionary defensism' and against the criticism of Comrade Lenin";

"As far as Comrade Lenin's general outline is concerned, it would seem to us unacceptable inasmuch as it proceeds from a recognition of the bourgeois-democratic revolution as complete and is based on the immediate growth of this revolution into a socialist revolution";

"Lenin's (April) Theses say nothing about peace. For Lenin's advice—'explaining to the broad strata the inseparable connection between capital and imperialist war'—explains nothing decisively."

Stalin had decided even at that time that as soon as Trotskiy was out of the way as a potential rival, he would remove these "unscrupulous chatterers". Zinovyev's high-handedness sometimes grated even on him, who had made a virtue of his rudeness. Addressing the evening session of the Central Committee plenum on 14 January 1924 in connection with the "Leaflet for Discussion," Zinovyev made familiar descriptions of many members of the Central Committee, Bolsheviks and participants in the discussion as if he was assessing, as squadron commander, his subordinates. "Pyatakov," Zinovyev said with self-assurance, "is a Bolshevik. But his Bolshevism is still immature. Green, immature." Just a few hours earlier, Zinovyev had categorically declared, speaking about Pyatakov's amendments to the resolution on economic issues: "These are not amendments but a platform, which differs from a good platform in that it is bad. And nothing more." Speaking about Sapronov, he called him a "man of the soil. He stands with both feet on the ground and represents whatever you like, only not Leninism." Osinskiy was a "representative of a more dilettante inclination, which has nothing to do with Bolshevism." He did not omit even to kick Trotskiy, which clearly pleased Stalin, although without any visible connection: "When we once arrived for the congress in Copenhagen, we were given an issue of the paper VORWAERTS containing an anonymous article which said that Lenin and his entire group were criminals and expropriators. The author of this article was Trotskiy."

Stalin listened and thought: he already considers himself the "chief" and leader. Upstart, windbag! Of course, there was no Stalin reaction to Zinovyev's speech at that plenum but 2 years later he would in the debate demolish Zinovyev's position completely. In May 1926, for example, analyzing a routine Zinovyev statement, Stalin sent a memorandum to the members of the office of the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) delegation to the Comintern addressed to Manuilskiy, Pyatnitskiy, Lozovskiy, Bukharin, Lominadze and Zinovyev himself, in which he wrote that he had "come across a whole eight pieces of tittle-tattle and one ludicrous statement of Comrade Zinovyev." On each point: Bordiga, the liquidationist statement of Rafes, the Profintern, the ultaleft deviation in the Comintern and so forth—Stalin made his categorical assessments, and on Zinovyev himself summed up in the following deadly manner: "Comrade Zinovyev declares braggingly that it is not for Comrades Stalin and Manuilskiy to teach him the need for struggle against the ultraleft deviation, referring to his 17 years of literary activity. That Comrade Zinovyev considers himself a great man is not, of course, in need of proof. But whether the party also considers Comrade Zinovyev a great man is open to doubt.

"In the period from 1898 right up to the 1917 February revolution we old illegals were visiting and working in all areas of Russia, but did not encounter Comrade Zinovyev clandestinely, in the prisons or in exile, if we disregard a few months in Leningrad. Our old illegals cannot help but know that there is in the party a whole pleiad of old workers who joined the party much earlier than Comrade Zinovyev and who built the party without clamor, without bragging. What is Comrade Zinovyev's so-called literary activity compared with the labor which our old illegals put in in the underground period for 20 years?"

In the mid-1920's even Stalin's chief opponents would understand that the "outstanding mediocrity" was an exceptional politician: strict, resourceful, cunning and arbitrary. This would shortly be understood by all his opponents, and in the years to come, by many party and state leaders who had dealings with him.

The reader may gain the impression that the author is paying too much attention to the *personal* struggle in the selection process. Unfortunately, all this was the case. For an understanding of the essence of this selection it is important, in my opinion, to understand a number of things.

The debate which developed after Lenin about the ways and methods of socialist building was considerably complicated by personal rivalry and struggle for personal leadership. This struggle was joined primarily by Stalin, Trotskiy and Zinovyev. There were behind it, of course, specific questions of policy, building, the attitude toward the peasantry, ways of industrialization and the theory and practice of the international communist movement. Sometimes the differences in view on these problems were of a secondary nature and could have been brought to a "common denominator" quite easily. But personal ambitions, rivalry and militant irreconcilability, of Stalin and Trotskiy particularly, imparted a dramatic nature to this struggle and contributed to any ideas, views and positions differing, say, from those of Stalin being seen merely as "class-hostile," "truckling," "revisionist," "treacherous" and so forth.

The fact that Stalin was continually "defending" Lenin by no means signifies that he was right. Lenin was "defended" also by the members of the opposition, those who opposed Stalin—it was all a question of how Lenin's ideas, Lenin's principles were interpreted. The idea that Stalin did "not retreat" from Lenin's views, in the 1920's at least, has long been predominant in our historical science. This is not the case. It is sufficient to mention Stalin's mistaken tendencies on the nationality issue, in respect of the NEP and the ways of socialist transformations in the countryside, on the implantation of a bureaucratic style of management in the party and the state and so forth. Stalin's departure from Leninism on many issues showed through even at that time, in the 1920's. Were this not to be said with all certainty, it would transpire that all that Stalin did corresponded to Lenin's concept of socialism. And this, of course, is far from the case. And in many cases absolutely wrong.

It is wrong also to see events such that it was only the members of the opposition who were in error, and that the party and Stalin were always right. Many of Stalin's mistaken decisions were sanctified and enshrined by party documents. After all, had the party not made mistakes and had always adopted the right decisions, there would have been no cult of personality, bloody terror and voluntarism and subjectivism in leadership, there would not have been the years of stagnation and we would not now be proclaiming the vital need for renovation: "More socialism and more democracy!"

Finally, one further consideration. Stalin did not immediately settle on some particular concept of the building of the new society. He did not always understand and, possibly, did not share Lenin's views, particularly those set forth in his last letters and articles. Stalin returned often in his thoughts to the ideas of "war communism," but had been forced for some time to "tolerate" the NEP, understanding that he could not solve the USSR's numerous problems without the close, organic alliance of the working class and the peasantry. Stalin was no profound theoretician, and his conclusions were based more often on quotations multiplied by arbitary impulses. Trotskiy's "power" methods were intrinsically close to him, and he was in this respect essentially closer to the former than to any other of the Bolshevik leaders. But this intrinsic similarity, embellished by personal irreconcilability, maintained the constant "repulsion" and tension between two poles of ambitions.

Turning over in his thoughts the pearls of Zinovyev and Kamenev, Stalin would smile: "And these people write about Leninism!" He would write about Leninism, and write in such a way that everyone sensed the fundamental contrast between the understanding of Leninism by Stalin and his temporary fellow travelers. Meanwhile it was necessary to hit Trotskiy. Stalin was particularly careful in his preparation of his planned speech at the plenum of the communist faction of the AUCCTU on 19 November 1924. He spoke in the wake of Kamenev's report, making the heading of his speech "Trotskiyism or Leninism?"

The general secretary devoted all of his long speech to merciless criticism of Trotskiy, taking, it is true, in passing under protection (as yet!) Kamenev and Zinovyev. These figures' October episode Stalin described as incidental: "the disagreements lasted only a few days because and only because we have in the persons of Kamenev and Zinovyev Leninists, Bolsheviks." Here he was going against his own conscience—he did not consider them either Leninists or Bolsheviks. It was simply that as yet he needed them for the struggle against Trotskiy and the consolidation of his own position. Stalin threw out to the audience the questions:

"What necessitated Trotskiy's new literary protests against the party? What is the purpose, mission, goal of these protests now, when the party has no wish to discuss, when the party is swamped with urgent tasks, when the party needs cohesive work to restore the economy, and not a new struggle over old issues? Why did Trotskiy need to drag the party back, to new discussions?"

Following this lengthy tirade, he took in the audience and in a thick, even voice sternly answered:

"This 'intention' is, by all accounts, the fact that Trotskiy is in his literary protests making yet another (yet another!) attempt to prepare the conditions for the substitution for Leninism of Trotskiyism. Trotskiy has an 'urgent' need to debunk the party and its personnel who carried out the uprising in order to switch from debunking the party to debunking Leninism."

Here Stalin was right: in endowing Lenin and Leninism with flattering epithets, of which he, incidentally, had no need, Trotskiy was little by little and many times over calling in question Lenin's most important views on the building of socialism. According to Trotskiy, without the support of other countries, socialism in Russia was impossible; industrialization only at the expense of the peasantry; the NEP, the start of capitulation; the cooperative plan, premature; October, simply a continuation of the February revolution; without the education of the population in "labor armies," it would not comprehend the "advantages of socialism"; and so forth.

Considering that both Zinovyev and Kamenev had hastened to accommodate Trotskiy, cobbling together the so-called "new opposition" for the purpose of "laying siege" to Stalin, the latter's move initially against Trotskiy and later against his "new" allies could at this stage be categorized as a defense of Leninism. Stalin was as yet fighting by permissible methods, but he was more often "defending" quotations without their theoretical interpretation. All his speeches of this period were complete quotations. Concluding his speech to the unions' Central Committee members, Stalin said unequivocally: "There is talk about punitive measures against the opposition and the possibility of division. This is nonsense, comrades. Our party is strong and powerful. It will not permit any division. As far as punitive measures are concerned, I am emphatically against such."

Stalin was as yet "sparing," not criticizing Zinovyev and Kamenev, and even took them under his protection against Trotskiy's attacks. However, the founders of the "new opposition" did not accept this gesture on the part of the general secretary. At a Politburo session at the start of 1925 Kamenev, supported by his fellow-thinker, declared that the USSR's technical and economic backwardness combined with the capitalist encirclement were an insurmountable obstacle to the building of socialism. On the main issue Zinovyev and Kamenev essentially formed a bloc with Trotskiy, whom just a few months previously they had been subjecting to scathing criticism for precisely what they were now proclaiming.

The protest against the policy of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) demanded repudiation and the formulation of an all-party directive on further actions in the sphere of socialist building. In this sense an important place was occupied by the 14th Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Conference, which was held at the end of April 1925. Stalin neither delivered a speech thereat nor spoke in the debate. The pivotal issues at the conference were those concerning the formation of cooperatives (Rykov being the speaker), metal industry (Dzerzhinskiy), the agricultural tax (Tsurup), party building (Molotov), revolutionary legality (Solts) and the tasks of the Comintern and the Russian Communist Party in connection with the enlarged Comintern Executive Committee (Zinovyev). By tradition (or inertia?) Kamenev chaired the conference. Just as he had usually chaired sessions of the Sovnarkom and the Politburo. He and Zinovyev would no longer be presiding at such forums.... The main thing, perhaps, which the conference determined was the assertion, contrary to Zinovyev's original propositions, concerning the possibility of the victory of socialism in the USSR even under the conditions of a slowdown in the rate of development of the world proletarian revolution. However, the victory of socialism could only be considered conclusive, the conference concluded, when there were international safeguards against a restoration of capitalism.

The discussion of the question of revolutionary legality was important. Having once served a term in exile together with Stalin in the Turukhanskiy region, the speaker Solts observed that, following the victory of the revolution, we "felt more acutely the need for an improvement in our economy than in the establishment of revolutionary legality." Now, however, Solts said shrewdly, "party members, those exercising Soviet power, should understand that our laws in all their manifestations also confirm and strengthen the building which we wish to realize and consolidate and that violation of our laws will destroy this building." It is only a pity that in about a decade or so these true thoughts, enshrined in the conference resolution, would be forgotten.

Several days after the 14th party conference Stalin delivered a report at a meeting of the activists of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Moscow organization. In his long and quite tedious report the general secretary highlighted as a special section "The Fate of Socialism in the Soviet Union". He once again venomously criticized Trotskiy, mentioning many of his works and deriding—for the umpteenth time!—the "permanent revolution" theory in this figure's version. With great enthusiasm and conviction Stalin explained to the party activists the essence of the full and final victory of socialism in the USSR, but the first signs of his particular role and particular place in the party had begun to

appear here. Thus, for example, he deemed it possible, casting aside humility, to quote himself at length. In expounding the well-known propositions Stalin was gradually preparing the party for his possession of special rights to postulation of the truth.

The general secretary attempted to test his own understanding of the ways of transition to socialism not only in his speeches in the Central Committee and the press but also on the very rare occasions that he would meet with the workers. Stalin's aide Tovstukha took down one such speech which the general secretary delivered at the Stalin Workshops of the October Railroad.

Glancing at the hundreds of pairs of eyes of the workers looking with curiosity at the little-known individual, Stalin reasoned unhurriedly, waving his arm in time with his speech:

"We are accomplishing the transition from a peasant country to an industrial, manufacturing country, managing without outside help. How have other countries traveled this path?

"Britain created its industry by way of plunder of the colonies over a whole 200 years. There could be no question of us taking this path.

"Germany exacted 5 billion from conquered France. But nor does this path—that of plunder by means of victorious wars—suit us. Our business is a policy of peace.

"There is a third path, which Russia's tsarist government followed. This was the path of foreign loans and enslaving deals at the expense of the workers and peasants. We cannot take this path.

"We have our own path—that of our own savings. We will not manage without mistakes here and we will miscalculate. But the edifice which we are building is so majestic that these mistakes and these miscalculations will be of no great significance ultimately."

The next day correspondent Svetlanov produced an account in RABOCHAYA MOSKVA:

"Uglanych chaired the meeting. A machinegun drumming of applause. A man in soldier's khaki, pipe in hand, in worn-down boots, waiting in the wings. 'Long live Stalin! Long live the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee.' Notes handed to Stalin. Twirling his black moustache, he diligently studied the notes. The breaker-like roar of the auditorium abated, and Stalin, the general secretary of the Bolshevik Party, after whom the workshops are named, began his conversation with the workers." This was an extremely rare occasion: Stalin, we repeat, liked more to speak at meetings in the Kremlin and at Central Committee plenums. Subsequently his "appearances" to the people would become even more infrequent—an enigmatic, mysterious chief always provides more food for legend.

Preparations for the 14th party congress were conducted under conditions of the achievement of the first successes in economic and cultural building. It had been possible in 1925 to achieve, and in a number of indicators, surpass the prewar level in the agricultural sphere. Thus the gross agricultural product exceeded 112 percent of the prewar level. Industrial production, which had for more than 5 years been in a state of total disarray, had exceeded three-fourths of the prewar level. The first new construction projects had appeared, these being, naturally, power stations—Lenin's behest concerning electrification was borne in mind primarily. Yet most important overseas economists had predicted the achievement of the prewar level no sooner than 15-20 years hence! Considerable success had been scored in the fight against illiteracy. The network of schools, particularly in the national republics, had grown, and the first steps had been taken in the creation of a system of higher education in the country. The Central Committee and the Politburo had adopted a number of imported decrees on the acceleration of cultural-enlightenment and educational work in the state. The Russian Academy of Sciences had been converted into the All-Russian Academy. Works of a world standard of such Soviet scientists as V.I. Vernadskiy, N.I. Vavilov, V.R. Vilyams, N.D. Zelinskiy, I.M. Gubkin, M.N. Pokrovskiy, A.F. Ioffe, E.Ye. Fersman and many others had appeared at this time. With the simultaneous implementation of military reform the Red Army had been successfully switched to a peaceful posture. This work had proceeded particularly rapidly following the dismissal at the Central Committee January 1925 Plenum from the position of people's commissar for military and naval affairs and chairman of the Republic Revolutionary Military Council of Trotskiy and the appointment as commissar for military and naval affairs of M.V. Frunze, chairman of the USSR Revolutionary Military Council.

We should evidently recall one episode which occurred at the plenum, when Zinovyev and Kamenev made a surprise move. Kamenev proposed in place of Trotskiy as people's commissar for military and naval affairs and chairman of the Republic Revolutionary Military Council... Stalin. This may be taken variously. It cannot be ruled out that Zinovyev and Kamenev, sensing the uncheckable growth of the general secretary's influence, had resolved to transfer him to the honorary, responsible office, which would have enabled them at the upcoming congress to shift Stalin from the present office, having once again "raised" the Lenin's "Letter to the Congress". Possibly, the political tandem wanted by this step to kill two birds with one stone: finally remove Trotskiy and abruptly reduce Stalin's opportunities. But, alas, if Trotskiy did play the part of a party "bird," Stalin could in no way go along with it. The general secretary gave public vent to this astonishment and displeasure at the proposal, which many Central Committee members noticed at the session. Kamenev's proposal was rejected by majority vote.

The issue was settled in Trotskiy's absence—he had reported sick. At the most decisive moments of the

struggle this politician made extremely unsuccessful moves, facilitating Stalin's task of "hitting his enemies one by one". As a whole, this plenum meant much for Stalin. Trotskiy's positions were weakened even further. The plenum essentially also denied Zinovyev and Kamenev support. In the "game of combinations" the general secretary was able to do what his opponents were not: kill two birds, that is, weakened Trotskiy and the old duo. The influential trio in the shape of Stalin, Zinovyev and Kamenev had essentially disintegrated—the general secretary no longer needed it.

The country approached the party congress, which would be an important landmark in the choice of paths of the industrialization, mechanization and technicaliation of the national economy. But by December 1925, when the congress was held, it was hard to believe that what the papers were writing would come to pass. The Dnepr was still calmly rolling along, unchecked by the dam; where the Turkestan-Siberian Railroad would run, storms where whipping up clouds of sand; the site of the future celebrated Stalingrad Tractor Plant was a wilderness; no one could have thought that in the 5-year plan there would rise up at the age-old mountain the blast furnaces of Magnitka; who could have supposed that the pioneers of rocket assembly were bringing us close to the era of spaceflight—the first Soviet (GIRD-Kh) would be launched at the start of the 1930's....

The new economic policy had afforded the Bolsheviks additional opportunities. The NEP had helped raise agriculture and brought industry close to the prewar level. Shrewd people saw the GOELRO plan not simply as the path of the country's electrification but also as a method of raising the socialist economy to the heights of the new political structure. But this was only the beginning.

The industrial trusts, which had begun operating on commercial principles, themselves set prices. Distortions emerged: for example, for a bar of soap, a measure of cotton and a bucket of kerosene the peasant had to sell three-four times more grain than in 1913. Discontent increased, and this was a worrying symptom. Industry could not grow at the expense of a weakening of agriculture. Hopes for the development of concessions were not justified, the anticipated loans from capitalist states were not obtained and the amount of foreign trade had not reached even half of the prewar level. Some 1.5 million unemployed had crowded onto the labor market. One out of every two adults in the country was still unable to read and write. There was no point purchasing lathes and machinery, there were virtually no large-scale construction sites. But people who followed the newspapers sensed that the country was on the verge of enormous changes. The young state possibly had no other choice, and a powerful spurt ahead had to be made to survive in this difficult, dangerous world.

The 14th party congress was held against such a background. The most noticeable figure thereat was Stalin primarily because the political report which the general secretary delivered occupied the principal place in the delegates' work. The congress confirmed the decision of the 14th party conference concerning the possibility of the building of the socialist society in full. The congress' resolution noted the economic offensive of the proletariat based on the new economic policy and the advancement of the USSR economy in the direction of socialism. The congress proclaimed a transition to industrialization as a key task of the socialist rearrangement of society. The delegates recognized that this course would require superexertion and sacrifices. The question of the tempo arose. Many people, the leaders included, were not entirely clear on this question.

Together with examination of the main question of an economic nature questions of struggle against the "new opposition" were at the center of the congress' work. It is known that the Leningrad delegation headed by Zinovyev represented the main forces of the opposition. It was he who delivered the supporting report from the opposition, but his congress speech sounded very insipid. The arguments of Zinovyev and his sympathizers were weak and unconvincing. Zinovyev, Kamenev and Sokolnikov at the same time warned, not without reason, about the danger of bureaucratization of the party. However, their speeches were of too personal a nature to make the due impression on the frame of mind of the delegates. Kamenev said plainly for the first time at the congress that he had "come to the conviction that Comrade Stalin could not perform the role of unifier of the Bolshevik headquarters." When Kamenev uttered these words, the majority of the congress delegates began to chant: "Stalin! Stalin!" and virtually gave an ovation for the general secretary. Stalin sensed that his line of "defense of Leninism," which he had not tired of reiterating, would gain ever increasing party support. Stalin's authority little by little reached the all-party level. The fact that for the whole time that had elapsed since V.I. Lenin's death Stalin had spoken on behalf of the "collective leadership" and fought for realization of Lenin's behests most comprehensible to the masses: the country's economic restoration, development of the cooperative movement, resuscitation of trade and the spread of literacy also played a decisive part here, I believe.

It was as though Stalin had not once "swung" toward any opposition. But this impression took shape because he passed off any step, decision, criticism and proposal *only* as Leninist! At the same time, however, an analysis of Stalin's practical activity persuades us that he made many most diverse mistakes and frequently supported sometimes one, sometimes another grouping, but was able to "adjust" his positions quicker than others. Stalin had learned better than anyone else to *identify* his line, his policy in words with Lenin's. Here lies a "secret" of the party's support for Stalin. Of course, on many (but not on all!) questions Stalin did, indeed, speak in defense of Lenin's ideas, but the further it went, the more apparent it became that his, Stalin's, vision of these ideas was increasingly assuming an autocratic nature. For the overwhelming number of Bolsheviks party policy and

the work of the Central Committee were largely personified in a specific individual. And inasmuch as, in Lenin's absence, there was no clear leader, Stalin, the "unifier of the Bolshevik headquarters," was the personal spokesman for the first successes in the national economy and the party's policy of unity, and the revival of agriculture which had occurred thanks to the introduction of the tax in kind act was linked with his name. It was clear to the majority of delegates that Zinovyev, Kamenev and Trotskiy, who remained in the shadows at this congress, had been launching all their attacks on the Central Committee and its policy primarily from their aspiration to occupy the leading position. But the defeat of the opposition was unconditional.

The next stage of the struggle in the party acquired organizational expression also. The All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)—(as the party had now come to be called)—recalled Zinovyev from the position of Comintern Executive Committee chairman, and shortly after, at the initiative of the Soviet delegation, this post was abolished. S.M. Kirov became leader of the Leningrad party organization. Kamenev was dismissed as deputy Sovnarkom chairman and removed from the office of chairman of the Council for Labor and Defense. True, Zinovyev and Kamenev maintained their Politburo membership for some further length of time. It included for the first time Voroshilov and Molotov, which sharply strengthened Stalin's positions. In his concluding remarks, which lasted more than an hour, on the Central Committee Political Report Stalin once again subjected to withering criticism Zinovyev, Kamenev, Sokolnikov, Lashevich and other of their supporters.

Undoubtedly, the basic line of the closing remarks was geared to the affirmation of the party's policy of the building of socialism and the unity of its ranks. But at the same time the fact that Stalin was making the rule the constant quoting of his own articles, memoranda and appeals and doing so without the least hint of embarrassment could not, specifically, escape the attention of attentive people. People with high political schooling, of whom, unfortunately, there were at that time not that many, could not have failed to have noticed either Stalin's high-handedness, which he displayed at the time of his critical analysis. Thus Stalin commented in an insulting tone on Krupskaya's speech, calling her views "pure rubbish". He would subsequently return to Krupskaya once again: "What, in fact, distinguishes Comrade Krupskaya from any other responsible comrade?" And continued, not without a touch of demagogy and irreverence: "You do not think that the interests of individual comrades should be put higher than the interests of the party and its unity?" For us Bolsheviks, Stalin emotionally concluded his tirade to applause, "formal democratism" is a hollow thing, but the real interests of the party are everything." Lashevich he called an "intriguer," Sokolnikov, inclined to endlessly "play tricks" in his speeches, Kamenev, "muddle-headed," Zinovyev, "hysterical," and so forth. Stalin had already, seemingly, began to slide toward a position where nonformal democracy also would be for him a "hollow thing". And the unforgivable rudeness toward Krupskaya should be explained not simply by political tactlessness in respect of her and Lenin's memory but also by secret revenge for the memorable letters, calls and conversations to which she had been party during Lenin's lifetime.

Sensing, evidently, that in his closing remarks he had "hit too hard" and gone "over the top" in his assessments, Stalin resorted to a method which he would subsequently employ repeatedly. Explaining the abusive nature of his critical comments on Zinovyev's weak article "Philosophy of the Era," Stalin said that his rudeness was displayed only in respect of what was hostile and alien, but that it came from his straightforwardness. The general secretary gradually made of his repellent character trait an all-party virtue and revolutionary attribute almost. But even at that time, at the 14th congress, in 1925, there was, unfortunately, no communist, delegate or Central Committee member capable of calmly, but properly evaluating this slide toward abusive criticism, which would in time have the force of a sentence on this person or the other.

Having subjected many members of the opposition to unceremonious criticism, Stalin did not, naturally, overlook Trotskiy. Having felt the support of the majority of the congress, he swept aside Kamenev's proposal concerning the conversion of the Secretariat into a simple subordinate staff, declaring at the same time that he was opposed to the "chopping" of individual members of the leadership from the Central Committee. "The method of cutting off heads, the method of blood-letting," Stalin declared to applause, "is dangerous and infectious: today one person is chopped, tomorrow, another, the day after tomorrow, yet another—what will be left to us of the party?" Putting on a show of bravery, given the support of the majority, he deemed it appropriate to declare once again that if the comrades insisted, he was "ready to make way without fuss". Stalin delivered his speech like an experienced politician, seeking the support of the delegates again and again and displaying, as it were, personal disinterest and a concern for all-party needs. In deriding and criticizing the factionalists Stalin was able to subtly show his "magnanimity," framing his speech with words like "very well, so be it". Although Stalin had already decided that it was "time to have done with" Zinovyev and Kamenev, he nonetheless deemed it necessary to demonstrate peaceability: "We are for unity, we are against chopping off heads. The policy of chopping off heads is repellent to us. The party wants unity and it will achieve it together with Comrades Kamenev and Zinovyev if they wish it, without them, if they do not."

In the final sentences of his closing remarks Stalin formulated a number of propositions which, had they been fulfilled, could have averted the most difficult period in our party's history. To the applause and manifest approval of the delegates Stalin declared that "the plenum will decide everything with us and will call

its leaders to order when they begin to lose equilibrium.... If any of us overstep the mark, we will be called to order—this is essential, this is necessary. The party cannot be led uncollegially. It is foolish to dream of this after Ilich, it is foolish to talk about this. Collegial work, collegial leadership, unity in the party, unity in the Central Committee bodies, given subordination of the minority to the majority—this is what we need now."

Of course, all these were the right words. But had these ideas about collectiveness been underpinned by real rules and democratic parameters, the possibilities for future abuses of power would have been precluded. But the whole point was that correct principles were not enshrined in statutory regulations governing the rotation of leadership, the term in party office of the general secretary and other leaders, leaders' accountability and so forth. But it was to this that Lenin's ideas concerning an improvement of the party machinery and a consolidation of democratic principles in the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) and society led. The 14th congress was, perhaps, the last in Stalin's time when criticism and self-criticism were still inalienable components of the atmosphere of the forum. There was increasingly less thereof at subsequent congresses. Subsequently only Stalin or someone on his instructions could criticize. Democratic principles in the party were not developed, and the thing of greatness hardly knew that its negation was being engendered alongside it. Not everyone knew at that time that authoritarian power would have to be paid for by personal liberty—this is not a paradox but a law of autocracy.

Popularizer of Leninism

The words "theory" and "theoretician" caused an inward shudder in Dzhugashvili in his youth. "True theory," Martov said, "is always a friend of the truth." Stalin understood this phrase now—he had become familiar with both theory and theoreticians. Taking in the Gothic outlines, strange compared with the Orthodox temple, in the Church of the Brotherhood, at which the Fifth Russian Social Democratic Workers Party Congress was held in 1907 in London, Stalin recalled a saying of Solomon: "May grace and truth remain with you; wrap them around your neck, inscribe them on the tablets of your heart." He had in his youth been an industrious seminarist, and the years of his wanderings had not vented the Biblical collars from his mind. "Grace" meant nothing to him: he had never cared for sentimentality, but truth....

It seemed to him that he had not been all that enriched by it at the congress. The lengthy arguments about the attitude toward the bourgeois parties, class solidarity and the role of the proletariat in the bourgeois revolution seemed to him abstract and insufficiently linked with Russian reality. And this reality gave a reminder of its presence very imperiously right in the middle of the congress: suspending the session, the chairman suddenly announced that the party coffers lacked the resources for completion of the work, payment for the premises and the delegates' hotel residence and return journey. It was announced that one liberal had agreed to provide a promissory note of 3,000 pounds sterling on condition that it be returned at a high rate of interest and if the note were signed by all the delegates.... After a pause, all began to talk loudly, in agreement. The unexpected Maecenas had to wait more than 10 years for the return of his pounds. He was taking a risk: far from all revolutions in history had been accomplished "to order".

The day before, during a break in the session, Dzhugashvili found himself next to Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and Trotskiy, who were arguing about permanent revolution. The buzzer indicating the resumption of the session sounded, and Lenin ended the argument with a joke:

"Rosa probably knows the Russian language somewhat worse than Marxist language, and this is why there are some disagreements between us.... But this is rectifiable!"

Dzhugashvili had a dim understanding of the essence of permanent revolution and did not join in that fleeting argument. Yet there had to be truth here also. How many such truths does a revolutionary need? He needed them now particularly, perhaps, although he was not about to inscribe them on the tablets of his heart. By this time Dzhugashvili, nonvoting delegate to the congress, was the author of two or three dozen most simple articles and his first, as he believed, important theoretical work "Anarchism or Socialism?" In his heart Stalin was proud of it, although none of the "litterateurs" in London was familiar with this work.

Could Stalin have known that a little over 30 years later he would be unanimously elected honorary member of the Academy of Sciences of a mighty country? Could he even have suspected that the most important luminaries of world science from this academy would present him on his 70th birthday with a very fat folio panegyric of almost 800 pages in which the words "brilliant scientist," "brilliant theoretician" and "very great thinker" would be repeated time without number?! Academicians M.B. Mitin, A.Ya. Vyshinskiy, B.D. Grekov, A.V. Topchiyev, A.F. Ioffe, T.D. Lysenko, A.I. Oparin, V.A. Obrychev, A.V. Vinter and others would relate in this magnificent book how enormous had been I.V. Stalin's contribution to the development of the theory of scientific communism, philosophy and political economy, as also the methodological significance of his ideas for science in general. "Very great thinker and coryphaeus of science," as recorded in record No 9 of the general assembly of the Academy of Sciences of 22 December 1949, yet he was and would remain for many years a dogmatic popularizer of Marxism and a primitive, but energetic interpreter of Lenin's ideas.

In 1949 Academician P.N. Pospelov wrote the article "I.V. Stalin—Great Leading Light of Marxist-Leninist Science" and several years later, on the instructions of

the Central Committee, he would be preparing the shattering unmasking conclusions which would form the basis of N.S. Khrushchev's celebrated report at the 20th party congress. Such is the wicked irony of fate....

But let us return to the 1920's. Finding himself at the head of the Central Committee nucleus, Stalin rapidly sensed that, besides the organizer's qualities which he possessed and the "firm hand" which many in the machinery had already felt, he had to show himself to be a theoretician also. On the one hand transition to the new phases of struggle for the creation of a new society required the theoretical comprehension of a broad range of questions. On the other, Stalin understood that the leader of the party, and he wished to be such not only formally but also in fact, had to have a steady reputation as a Marxist theoretician. He understood that the vast majority of his day-to-day articles had left no trace in the public consciousness of the party and the working class. The majority of them had been devoted to some episode and aspect of polychromatic reality. Stalin's relatively tedious articles simply became lost in this variegated mosaic of slogans, ideas and appeals which the revolution had splashed over people's consciousness. True, by the time Stalin had begun to gradually establish himself in the party leadership, he had published several theoretical works also. We have already mentioned one: "Anarchism or Socialism?" The nature of its theoretical, philosophical level may be judged if only by the following fragment: "The bourgeoisie is constantly having the ground knocked from beneath its feet," Stalin wrote, "and is retreating with every passing day, but however powerful and numerous it is today, it will ultimately nonetheless be defeated. Why? Because as a class it is disintegrating, weakening, growing old and becoming a superfluous burden in life. Whence has a emerged a certain dialetical proposition: all that really exists, that is, all that grows from day to day, is judicious, but all that is disintegrating from day to day, is injudicious and, consequently, will not escape defeat." The dispiriting primitivism and naviete of these inferences are obvious, which did not, it is true, prevent Academician M.B. Mitin calling this fragment "a classical description of the new."

Such theoretical works of his as "Marxism and the Nationality Question" (1913), "The October Revolution and the Nationality Question" (1918),"Toward an Understanding of the Question of the Strategy and Tactics of Russia's Communists" (1923) and certain others remained unnoticed works also. Stalin sensed quite soon that he was not in principle capable of making a contribution to the theory of Marxism which could have been a truly new word in the great teaching. He became increasingly convinced that Lenin's genius had anticipated an extraordinary amount. To whatever sphere of activity Stalin had to apply his efforts in the hurly-burly of everyday life, he would see therein the tracks of the chief's ghost stretching far ahead.

The bitter fratricidal strife, which had not ceased to shake the party, objectively demanded that Stalin resort as widely as possible to propaganda of Lenin's legacy. There thus came to him the idea of delivering the short lecture series "Fundamentals of Leninism" at Sverdlovsk University. These lectures were delivered shortly after the death of V.I. Lenin and were subsequently, in April and May 1924, published in PRAVDA. It was the lectures, perhaps, which brought Stalin certain recognition as a "theoretician".

The educational level not only of the bulk of the population—the peasantry—but of the working class and party members also was low, and what was often simply needed was study of the elementary rudiments of Leninism. Only the utmost popular nature, intelligibility, clarity and simplicity could secure an understanding of the basic ideas of Leninism. Stalin proved ready for the accomplishment of this task. He did not have to reorganize himself: all his early and later works were primitive, simple and undemanding. Stalin's "catechistic" thinking was as appropriate here as could be. Telegraphically short sentences, no intricate terms, absence of depth, but clarity, clarity, clarity.... Following publication, the lectures were well received and were employed extensively by the agitation and propaganda workers to eliminate the political ignorance of great masses of people. Subsequently "Questions of Leninism" and "Fundamentals of Leninism" were canonized and turned by assiduous Stalinist propagandists into a dogmatic book of quotations. The works indeed resembled a mosaic of quotations: were they to be removed from the digests, perhaps, all that would be left of some works would be the punctuation marks. One publication followed another....

Stalin proved a capable popularizer: he was able to make complex ideas and propositions intelligible to semiliterate people. But to be accurate, this was not popularizing. Stalin did not endeavor to write specially in a generally intelligible form; he knew no other way. His thinking was theoretically simplistic of itself. Black-white, ally-enemy, victory-defeat.... Within the framework of these antinomies he squeezed the entire diversity of reality. But this was not popularizing but an expression of primitivism of theoretical thinking. But in interpreting Lenin's conclusions the general secretary appreciably recarved many of them. Thus revealing the essence of the dictatorship of the proletariat, he in fact emphasized merely its forcible aspect, completely "freeing" it of democratic content. Today, for example, we cannot read without shuddering the pages of Stalin's theory of the "elimination of the kulaks as a class," knowing what lay behind this.

Digest after digest was published in the State Political Literature Publishing House. Editors did not dare alter, amplify or amend anything without Stalin. Therefore when reading, for example, the digest of Stalin's articles and speeches "Questions of Leninism," which was published in the 11th edition in 1945, one comes across places which are dumbfounding. Stalin polemicizes, addresses, curses, criticizes, defames... Zinovyev, Trotskiy, Kamenev, Sorin, Slutskiy, Bukharin, Rykov and many, many others, as if they were still alive: "Let

Us Listen to Radek," "Trotskiy Has Been Speaking for 2 Years Now," "Kamenev Intends," "But What Does Zinovyev Say?? "These Facts Are Known to Zinovyev," "Bukharin Speaks Again...". Of course, we know that these works of Stalin's on the publisher's production line were written when all these people were, like thousands and millions of others, alive. But years had elapsed since that time, and Stalin was continuing to conduct polemics with his opponents, whom he had ordered killed and destroyed. The arguments which Stalin advanced, struggling now with the ghosts of the departed, are not simply scientifically groundless but also the height of blasphemy. Set up in bold face in the book continually are: "applause becomes an ovation," thunderous applause," "all rise and greet the beloved leader," "thunderous hurrahs!"—and all this was the case—and one has the constant feeling that the book itself is out of a nightmare. Only a person who had totally transgressed the standards of morality common to all humanity could have destroyed his theoretical opponents and continued to mock the dead. For this reason even the correct opinions which are encountered in Stalin's primitive popularizing have to be taken as blasphemy.

When Stalin prepared the lectures for delivery and, subsequently, for the press, he was still not captive to the ideological prejudice which he himself subsequently persistently cultivated. Thus, for example, it is impossible to imagine that Stalin could at the end of his life have permitted what he had written about Lenin's style of leadership in 1924. In the mid-1920's he could fairly maintain that the style of Leninism consisted of a combination of Russian revolutionary scope and American practical efficiency. "American practical efficiency is the indomitable force," he wrote, "which knows and recognizes no barriers, which washes away by its practical insistence each and every obstacle and which cannot fail to complete what has been started." I believe that had anyone spoken publicly in later years such Stalinist words as "combination of Russian revolutionary scope and American practical efficiency—this is the essence of Leninism in party and state work," he would have bitterly regretted this. In the 1920's Stalin's thought, albeit without flight and illumination, was, for all that, not entirely bound by the hoop of militant dogmatism.

It may be maintained, particularly from the "celebrated" chapter four of the "Short Course in the History of the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)," that Stalin had not thoroughly grasped the correlation of theory and method, the relationship of the objective and subjective and the essence of the laws of social development. His assertions that everything in nature is programmed by iron necessity manifestly smack of fatalism: "The socialist system follows the capitalist system like day follows night." Marxist theory is the compass on a ship which willnecessarily reach the other shore, but more quickly with the "compass". Stalin derided those who paid heed to the "demands of reason" and "general morality" and sang the praises of vulgar materialism mixed up with violence. Of course, he maintained that "an example of the total correspondence of production relations with the nature of the productive forces is the socialist national economy in the USSR." His line of reasoning always sounded either like an assertion or a verdict. The whole history expounded in the "Short Course" is a chain of victory for some and defeat for others: spies, double-dealers, enemies, criminals. Stalin packed everything into the Procrustean bed of the idea that there had to be in life, as in theory, what he had expounded. This is precisely the instance about which Marx and Engels spoke—such an approach could reduce ideology to "false consciousness". Everything that happens, in Stalin's logic, is a regularity: growth of the communist parties, yes; smashing of the right deviation, undoubtedly; the "treachery" of the social democratic parties, naturally; and so forth. The chapter finds absolutely no room for creativity, willpower, play of the imagination, daring consciousness.

Stalin's intellect was in the grip of a pattern. Judge for yourselves: three basic features of dialectics, four stages of the development of the opposition bloc, three basic features of materialism, three particular features of the Red Army, three basic roots of opportunism and so forth. All theory is arranged "by shelf" and niche. For educational purposes, yes, this is, perhaps, permissible: students like patterns of learning. But to conduct an "audit" of all theory and reduce it to several features, particularities, stages and periods—all this impoverishes social science and renders the world outlook dogmatic.

Ritual elements began as of a certain time to show through in Stalin's works also. It is hard in his thinking to distinguish nuances, conversions, reservations, original ideas and paradox. The leader's intellect was unambivalent: everything that came from his pen was the development of Marxist-Leninist theory. Each of his speeches, a program. Everything that did not accord with his principles, suspicious or, most likely, hostile. Vulgarization, oversimplification, ready-made categories, a rectilinear approach and high-handedness imparted to Stalin's intellect a primitive-orthodox and, in a certain sense, a Manicheaen character even. There is every reason to maintain that Stalin entertained no doubts as to the "brilliance" of what he said. Evidence of such a conclusion is his love of self-quotation.

Granted all this here, Stalin's intellect was, perhaps, characterized also by a strong feature: its practical nature. The general secretary would attempt to tie in each theoretical proposition (frequently very mechanically) with the actual requirements and needs of social practice. Let us say at once: not all works of other Marxists are characterized by this specific-practical thrust. But with Stalin it was not, we emphasize yet again, of a dialectical nature. Mechanicism and automatism of action frequently smacking of fatalism would often lend Stalin's works the nature of caricature.

Addressing the First All-Union Meeting of Stakhanovites, Stalin said: "It is very difficult, comrades, to live by freedom alone (shouts of approval, applause). In

order that we may live well and happily it is essential that the benefits of political freedom be supplemented by material benefits. A characteristic feature of our revolution is the fact that it has afforded the people not only freedom but also material benefits and the possibility of a prosperous and cultured life. This is why living has become a happy business with us, and this is the soil in which the Stakhanovite movement has grown." There is no need to add any commentary to such "reasoning" of the sources of the Stakhanov movement. Vulgarity and primitivism have long been implanted in the people's social consciousness, and we still fail to recognize at times what serious and long-range consequences this "obstruction" of people's minds entailed.

The choice of methods of struggle for the socialist rearrangement of society was accompanied in the 1920's by a stimulation of the party leaders' theoretical work. PRAVDA and BOLSHEVIK, the theoretical organ, which began to appear in 1924, regularly carried articles by Trotskiy, Zinovyev, Kamenev, Stalin, Bukharin, Kalinin, Yaroslavskiy and other party figures. Some of them were very successful in having their works published. Thus the journal BOLSHEVIK carried several reviews of the works of L.D. Trotskiy, who in the 10 years following the revolution had had 21 volumes published. PRAVDA of 4 October 1924 reported the start of the publication by the Leningrad branch of the State Publishing House of the works of G.Ye. Zinovyev in 22 volumes. The commission for publication of the works assessed them as a kind of "worker encyclopedia". Information was carried here, in PRAVDA, on the publication of the digest "October. Selected Works of V.I. Lenin, N.I. Bukharin and I.V. Stalin". There was a particularly large amount of material at this time prepared by Bukharin—"Contradictions of Present-Day Capitalism," "The New Economic Policy and Our Tasks" and other articles.

Stalin endeavored not to "lag behind". However, the bulk of his articles in the 1920's was devoted not so much to the popularization of Leninism as polemics with the leaders of various groupings, oppositions and factions. Stalin felt like a pig in swill here. It was thanks, perhaps, to the struggle against members of the opposition and the vigorous, loud criticism of his past comrades that he became a "theoretician". His reports at party congresses and conferences, plenums and Politburo sessions were tough, resolute and implacable, for the most part, although, it is true, at times Stalin, proceeding from tactical considerations, would permit himself liberal "indulgences". Thus on 11 October 1926 Stalin addressed a Politburo session on the question "Measures To Alleviate the Intra-Party Struggle". These "relaxing measures" amounted to the formulation of five categorical points which the leaders of the opposition had to accept if they wished to remain in the Central Committee.

In a polemic with his ideological opponents Stalin became transformed—a trenchancy of expression, at times of a personal-insult nature, it is true, appeared. The general secretary even took pride in his reputation as a coarse, but implacable fighter for party unity, against factionalism and for the purity of Leninism. Delivering the closing remarks on the Central Committee political report at the 14th party congress, Stalin, as if arrogating to himself the right to coarseness as an attribute of the general secretary, emphasized to the approving laughter of the delegates: "Yes, comrades, I am a plain and coarse individual, it is true, I do not deny it."

In reply to S. Pokrovskiy, who had attempted to ascertain Stalin's position on the theory of proletarian revolution, the general secretary called his correspondent at the very start of his letter a "conceited smart aleck". He concluded his reply on the same note: "Have you understood not one iota—precisely not one iota—of the question of the growth of bourgeois revolution into proletarian revolution? Conclusion: one has to have the insolence of ignorance and the smugness of a narrow-minded tightrope-walker to so unceremoniously stand things on their head...." Such was the style and language of Stalin's criticism of his opponents, in whose face he would frequently without a hint of particular embarrassment throw: "windbag," "slanderer," "muddle-head," "ignoramus," "prattler," "yes-man".... The serious arguments which Stalin employed in struggle against the opposition were frequently framed by epithets verging on profanity. The general secretary judged with full confidence: here is the truth, here, error.

We have already said that in line with the establishment of his authority and the increased political significance of the post of general secretary Stalin resorted increasingly to the use as arguments of pronouncements from his own articles and speeches. In this case they were already the truth in the highest instance. Thus having given a definition of Leninism in his lectures at Sverdlovsk University, Stalin presents this definition in the work "Toward an Understanding of Questions of Leninism" as consummate and universal. Subsequently he would resort reiteratively to abundant quotation of himself accompanied by the invariable evaluations: "all this is correct since it ensues entirely from Leninism" and so forth. One is at times struck by how highly the general secretary placed and evaluated his own conclusions. Subsequently this would become the rule: referring readers to his own articles and books.

In his reply to Comrade Pokoyev "The Possibility of the Building of Socialism in Our Country" Stalin not only maintained total silence about the fact that this idea belonged entirely to V.I. Lenin but maintained that it was he, Stalin, who was the author of this concept. Not troubling himself with particular arguments, the general secretary said, without beating about the bush, in a postscript to the article: "Get hold of BOLSHEVIK (Moscow) No 3 and read my article there. This might make things easier for you." As far as the reply to Pokoyev proper is concerned, Stalin harps, together with correct propositions, on one idea: "the working class in alliance with the working peasantry can *finish off* (here

and subsequently my emphasis—D.V.) the capitalists of our country," "the opposition, on the other hand, has said that we cannot *finish off* our capitalists and build a socialist society"; "if we were not looking to *finish off* our capitalists... we took power to no purpose" and so forth. The emphasis on "finishing off" in 1926 of the vestiges of the exploiter classes was too obvious. "Smashing" and "finishing off" would soon become Stalin's main preoccupation, virtually.

But the most negative feature of Stalin's theoretical "creativity," perhaps, is the fact that he gradually "substantiated," if it may be so put, "sacrificial socialism". He in fact cast aside the humanitarian essence of socialism. The price of Stalin's model of socialism was immense, but it was this which corresponded to his theoretical "views". These philosophical principles of the general secretary would in time permit him to light-heartedly agree to unprecedented mass repression and the widespread use of violence as the main social method of building the new society. Essentially a comparison of Stalin's theoretical views (their materialization, particularly) tells us that the general secretary gradually departed from Leninism. It sounds paradoxical, but it is a fact that, while formally remaining a Bolshevik, Stalin would ultimately not be a Leninist! Of the many varieties of socialism—utopian, petty bourgeois, barracks, scientific—Stalin created something of his own, a bureaucratic socialism carrying within it both dogmatic and barracks features. "Stalinist," in a word. Of course, he could not, did not know how, did not have the time to deform everything in the living fabric of socialism, which had been built by millions. But we know today that it is still too early to speak of a state in which the degree of socialization is high, in which the collective is "higher" than the personal and in which merely everything is planned as a socialist state. True socialism, as Lenin saw it, is that at whose center is *man.* Lenin's concept of socialism means democracy, humanism and social justice. Such an approach can never imply violence, alienation of the authorities from the people and the existence of ademigod-leader.

Granted all the popularizing, frequently primitive essence of Stalin's theoretical quest, it has to be said that the general secretary usually labored over his articles, speeches, rejoinders and replies himself. Testimony of his aides who worked with him at various times—Tovstukha, Mekhlis, Kanner, Stasova, Bazhanov, Poskrebyshev and other executives from the general secretary's staff—is reason to conclude that, despite his enormous workload, Stalin did much work on his own account. In accordance with his special commissions, he was daily selected literature and provided with extracts from articles, summaries of the party press of the provinces and foreign press roundups.

He once spent a long time over a letter from Berlin with the return address of V.P. Krymov, Villa Nina, 11, Waldemarstrasse, Zellendorf. This was quite an unusual letter. Its author was a writer who had fled Russia in 1917, but who had followed closely, until his eyes ached, what had been happening there since the revolution. Reading the letter, Stalin marked off the lines: "I am writing to you as a most important statesman in modern Russia. I am a pacifist and internationalist, but I nonetheless love Russia more than any other country. I can, perhaps, see things from here that are not that clear to you, despite all your knowledgeability from within (this doubly underlined in red pencil).

"...You leaders of the proletariat need to hold on to power at all costs, sparing nothing. Remember: 'Whoever is incapable of villainy, cannot be a man of state'. Primarily the army. It must not wage war but must exist. All must be aware of it in exaggerated manner. The more all kinds of military demonstrations, the better.... No resources should be spared in the concern to increase the population of Russia and its full education. This is the most formidable weapon against the capitalist world. It is clear today that modern Russia could provide a new law of history: there could even be no swing of the pendulum in the other direction; it could remain on the left forever.... There is no need for lies but for two truths, and it is necessary to remain silent about the greater for a while and thereby compel belief in the lesser; and, when necessary, the small truth will give way to the large truth.... There is no need to oppress religion, this would strengthen it. Attract private capital. As long as state power is yours, this represents no danger.... No expenditure should be spared in manifesting modern Russian culture. Literature, say, perhaps, ballet. You need to throw to the rest of the world glittering crystals of modern Russia: this can sometimes do more than the most wide-ranging propaganda.... The revolution has already done a colossal amount. But the experiment is dragging on, some *real* results are needed. Some fulfillment of the promised prosperity of the proletariat is needed. You still have more red tape than in the tsarist system. There are instances when delay is beneficial, but continuously this system is disastrous."

Stalin sat over this letter for a long time, ceasing to underline since almost every line was, it seemed to him, clever, balanced and arduously arrived at. He glanced once again at the sweeping signature: "Vl. Krymov, publication of my letter undesirable." Stalin put the letter in the file containing papers to which he would return.

In the period 1924-1928 Stalin would repeatedly summon professors from the Industrial and Communist academies to obtain advice in the social science field. He was particularly aware of his weakness in philosophy; he had as yet a very middling knowledge of history; he displayed no particular keenness to extend his economic knowledge. At the same time long experience of work in a position in which he had to deal with the most diverse problems had shaped a subtle sense and highly practical mind capable of sizing up a situation rapidly and getting

his bearings in a kaleidoscope of problems and distinguishing therein the principal components. Natural powers of observation, an excellent memory for faces, names and facts and a wealth of experience of contacts with a whole cohort of most educated people from the persons close to Lenin could not have failed to have also cultivated in Stalin something of his own, in a way inimitable. For example, while not being an important theoretician, he was superior to many of his comrades in terms of a pragmatic approach to theory and an ability to "couple" it as fully as possible with practical tasks.

...Preparing to address a ceremonial session in the Military Academy, he recalled numerous letters of civil war invalids. The state had as yet been unable to give them anything (or barely anything). It was thought that a draft Sovnarkom decree being discussed in the Secretariat and Orgburo needed to be adopted more quickly. It stipulated that Red Army invalids would receive a pension ranging from R6 to R15 per month. But inasmuch as the state did not possess these resources, determined for realization of this decision the following:

a 4-percent duty on farecards;

a 25-percent duty on theater and motion picture tickets;

a 10-percent duty on inheritance taxes and legal fees....

Stalin rarely looked back, but war invalids were not simply a wound of the past. The authorities had as yet been unable to give much of what had been promised, which seemed natural given power of the people.... However, Stalin always stopped himself in these reflections—do not weaken, the revolution continues, there will be further sacrifices, no sentimentality!

Stalin was a past master at *simplification* of the theory of Marxism-Leninism, frequently to the point of primitivism. It is to him that the credit is due for the implantation of oversimplification in party theory and history. It was soon, by the end of the 1920's, possible only to comment on, "look into" and eulogize Stalin's works. For whole decades theoretical thought in social science sank into a state of profound stagnation and standstill. It was Stalin who initiated the adaptation of this conclusion of theory or the other to the realities of life and social existence. The reduction of Marxism-Leninism to elementary ideas and a certain preparation thereof even abruptly impeded the development of social thought. Dogmatism may be compared with a boat which has run aground. The waves rush by, and the the boat stays put, but the semblance and appearance of movement is maintained. Stalin approached ideology purely pragmatically, believing that true ideology within the party should function like cement, but outside of it, as an explosive....

Many of his "theoretical" conclusions became in time the source of great social disasters. I sometimes think that an interesting, original conclusion has a "coloring," as it were: orange, violet, purple, emerald-azure.... How it is done is all the same if the beam penetrates the fog, gloom and dusk, outlining the contours of the desired Truth. Perhaps the world of thought is not only multi-stringed but also multi-colored, but we need to know how to see these colors. With Stalin thought was gray and in time showed itself in practice in the gloomiest tones. Judge for yourself.

A Central Committee plenum, which studied a whole number of questions, was held 14-15 January 1924. The report on the international situation was delivered by Zinovyev. The rapporteur and those who spoke made a critical analysis of the failure in Germany, in which, many people believed, advantage had not been taken of the revolutionary situation. In his speech Stalin dwelt on the role in these events of Radek, who was in Germany at that time. "I am against the application of punitive measures in respect of Radek for his mistakes on the German question. He made a whole number of them, of which I shall highlight here seven." Stalin's favorite occupation was stringing out others' mistakes on a long rope; we will not reproduce all of them, we shall cite merely the mistake which Stalin numbered, as on an inventory, "fourth". Radek believes, the general secretary continued his speech, "the main enemy in Germany to be fascism and considers necessary a coalition with the social democrats. But our conclusion is that what is needed is mortal combat with social democracy." This was not simply a theoretical mistake in analysis. Stalin's political short-sightedness in the evaluation of fascism and social democracy was to cost the communists and democratic forces dear in the future. His "gray" illustration of a most acute problem testifies to a manifest inability to analyze polysemantic connections.

Or a further example of his theoretical "dimness". The question of work in the countryside was, inter alia, discussed during the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee October (1924) Plenum. The speaker was Molotov. A lengthy speech was delivered by Zinovyev, who, like both Molotov and Stalin, incidentally, had a poor sense of direction on agrarian issues. But even he evaluated the general situation quite correctly: "We are discussing now not only the question of work in the countryside but also of the attitude toward the peasantry in general, that is, a far more general question, which will most likely be with us for a number of years, that is, it comes down entirely to the problem of the exercise of dictatorship in this situation." Stalin attempted in his speech to make a number of political and theoretical recommendations, in which the embryo of future major mistakes may be discerned. He once again began to indulge in "stock-taking". The first thing we had to do was "conquer the peasantry anew"; second, see that "the field of struggle has changed"; third, "it is necessary to create personnel in the countryside." It was 1924, but Stalin's speech sounds as though it were from 1929.... Astounding "perspicacity" and consistency in the confirmation of serious mistakes. Such was Stalin as an "interpretor" of Lenin, and we will touch on his theoretical views many times more.

Intellectual Confusion

The philosopher Ye. Trubetskoy, a follower of Vl. Solovyev, developed in the article "Two Wild Animals" the idea that Russia was threatened by two extremes—"the black wild animal of reaction and the red wild animal of revolution." For many figures of culture and literature these "wild animals" were real. Ideological fluctuation swung through the greatest range: from frank, avowed nonacceptance of the very idea of revolution (Z. Gippius, D. Merezhkovskiy, I. Bunin) to its exultant glorification (D. Bednyy, A. Zharov, I. Utkin, M. Svetlov). However, far from all quickly defined their ideological positions.

The power of the old had been broken, but it would have been unnatural to have expected all artists to have begun to welcome the approaching dawn. Both on the highway of great literature and on its fringes there was muffled and, at times, tempestuous ferment. The main questions which were tormenting the artistic intelligentsia were the place of culture in the "new temple," the problem of creative freedom and the attitude toward the spiritual values of the past. Some writers believed in all seriousness that Russian literature had but one future—its past. Many masters of the word were frightened by the revolutionary squall, which they saw as a threat not only to themselves but to all of culture also.

The majority of the intelligentsia did not accept the socialist revolution. This did not necessarily mean that all who did not accept it were its enemies, no. The bulk of the intellectuals, perhaps, might have been suited by the results of the February bourgeois-democratic revolution, with some parliament and other attributes of liberal multiple authority. The confusion and intellectual turmoil lasted several years, and then diametrically opposite trends began to emerge: complete acceptance of the ideas of October and their complete rejection, long fluctuations and gradual changes. Highly typical in this respect was the short digest "Volte-Face," which appeared in July 1921 in Prague. The authors who wrote in it, mainly of the Cadet organization and active figures of the White camp, called for people to "go to Canossa". Klyuchnikov, Potekhin, Bobrishchev-Pushkin and Ustryalov declared that by the will of "the fatal irony of history" the Bolsheviks had become "the custodians of the Russian national cause." Incidentally, in his speeches in the 1920's Stalin repeatedly mentioned Ustryalov and "volte-face-ism" itself as a symbol of the decomposition of the enemy camp. The authors of "Volte-Face" did not conceal the fact that they considered Bolshevism utopian but understood that "history will make and is already making short shrift" of them, the fugitives. The nostalgic motifs embellished in a Slavophile tone marked something more important: the change of part of the intelligentsia toward support for socialist Russia. This confused attraction for the motherland suppressed class instincts and reconciled them, albeit painfully, with the new realities in Russia.

But many intellectuals absolutely could not accept Bolshevism. The journal POLITRABOTNIK wrote about them in 1922 in the article "Fugitive Russia" thus: "The Great October Revolution has its 'Koblenz'.... The 'patriotic' exploits and way of life of this fugitive Russia are well known. It lacks even a soupcon of the sad beauty of late fall, an impression of which may be caught in the representatives of the dying feudal society in Koblenz of the Great French Revolution. Putrefaction, the abomination of desolation, squabbling, petty and large-scale intriguing and lickspittling, speciously named 'policy-making,' are predominant here."

A spokesman for extreme nonacceptance of October was Z.N. Gippius, who in her "Gray Book" and "Black Notebook" expressed total rejection of the idea of the revolution which, in her opinion, had buried the culture of Russia:

> All for nothing: the soul is blinded,
> We are given over to the worm and the louse;
> And not even the ashes remain
> Of Russian truth on the earth.

Gippius compared the revolution with a "hollow-eyed, red-haired whore watering the cold stones." Describing her and her husband's (D.S. Merezhkovskiy's) political position, she said proudly: "Perhaps only we will preserve the whiteness of the emigre raiment." She saw her motherland as the "kingdom of Antichrist". Even Trotskiy, who was relatively tolerant of all these fulminations and considered the intellectual commotion of the intelligentsia inevitable, fired off an angry rejoinder apropos Gippius' "whining". Her art, in which the preaching of a mystical and erotic Christianity had predominated, had immediately been transformed, and the "Red Army soldier's well-shod boot" would only have to "tread on her little toe. She would immediately begin to howl with a clamor in which could be heard the voice of a hag obsessed by the idea of the sanctity of property." The spectrum of Stalin's aesthetic interests was immeasurably narrower than Trotskiy's erudition, and decadent, iconoclastic traditions and tendencies were of little concern to him. Stalin would hardly in way seriously have known anything about Gippius, Balmost, Berdyayev, Belyy, Voronskiy, Losskiy, Asorgin, Shmelev and many other intellectuals championing in one way or another the vestiges in history of national culture. With his mind, empirical and devoid of emotional richness, he looked on the whole temple of culture initially purely from pragmatic standpoints: "helps," "does not help," "hinders," "harms". Artistic criteria, even if he had any, were not, in his opinion, of decisive significance.

It should be said for fairness' sake that although the wave of emigration overseas was very substantial, more than 2-2.5 million, possibly, these being mainly representatives of the well-to-do strata and the intelligentsia, the artistic intelligentsia included (M. Aldanov, K.D. Balmont, P.D. Boborykin, I.A. Bunin, D. Burlyuk, Z.N.

Gippius, A.I. Kuprin, D.S. Merezhkovskiy, I. Severyanin, A.N. Tolstoy, Sasha Chernyy, V. Ivanov, G. Ivanov, V.F. Khodasevich, I.S. Shmelev, M. Tsvetayeva and many others), they were not all inimically disposed toward Soviet Russia. Their fate differed also. There were many who found their end in the slums of Shanghai and the doss-houses of Paris or who returned to their native parts. The possibility of a revival of literary and other creativity awaited some, others were unable to adapt to the new social environment and remained forever silent, yet others ended up under the millstones of lawlessness.

The artistic intelligentsia which remained in Russia also behaved variously. There rapidly began to arise artistic unions and creative associations: "Peasant Writers Union," "Serapion Brotherhood," "The Crossing," "Russian Proletarian Writers Association," "Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia," "The Forge," Experimental Phonetics Laboratory and other artistic alliances. There were heated discussions in cold club-rooms and palaces about proletarian culture, literature and politics and the possibilities of the use of the values of bourgeois culture. In the process of this literary ferment and, at times, intellectual commotion original concepts were born and a unique opportunity for the creation and establishment of creative pluralism in the artistic consciousness arose. Command methods, which for art and literature were the equivalent of creative atrophy, were not in vogue that time.

Stalin, who had little interest in these matters initially, saw no danger in the mosaic of literary schools and directions, the less so in that the majority (after their own fashion) were speaking about revolution, the new world, the new man and "places calling from far away". Even the avant-garde, frequently sectarian fascination for "radical methods" of creativity seemed only naive and amusing—nothing more. There were not at that time in the Central Committee the ideas and doctrines of a Zhdanov type, all this was to come. This creative pluralism, natural as art itself, was soon able to provide motion pictures, literature and painting with works which became forever a part of the treasure house of our spiritual culture.

As a whole, the 1920's were characterized by an emancipation of thought, creative search and bold innovation. Artists, masters of the word, the stage and the cinema had much to say about the freedom of creativity. Among writers there was an aspiration born of the revolution to comprehend the mystery of the great, the eternal, the everlasting. There was much talk of geniuses and genius which would frequently overstep the mark in its judgments. Incidentally, the highest pinnacle of the pyramid of creativity is always genius, and why would the master of the word not aspire to it? Perhaps the important Russian writer and philosopher N. Berdyayev was right when he said that "the cult of holiness should be replaced by the cult of genius"?

The revolution accelerated the creative maturation of many people, and the frequent discussions, arguments and competitions of various artistic schools evidently indicated a natural and fruitful condition. What a pity that in a few years this atmosphere of searching would to a considerable extent evaporate in the quarries of bureaucratic style and obsessionalism, like a spiritual uniform, and give rise to a multitude of books with a "fungoid life," the bulk of which no one now recalls even.

Several issues of the journal BOLSHEVIK (1926) published P. Ionov's article on proletarian culture and "napostu confusion" critically analyzing the views of the pillars of "napostu-ism" Vardin and Averbakh, who expressed their views in the journal NA POSTU (whence the "napostu-ists"). BOLSHEVIK showed the impossibility of the existence of "pure art" not subject to the influence of social storms, economic upheavals and class skirmishes. Some time later BOLSHEVIK carried Leopold Averbakh's response to P. Ionov amounting to the fact that the cultural revolution would be accompanied by an intensification of class struggle: "Who remakes whom—either the masses can break down into individual bricks the old culture and take what they want or the edifice of the integral old culture will prove stronger than proletarian culture promotion."

The proposition concerning the need for administrative control of cultural processes would soon be proclaimed. Highly characteristic in this respect, for example, was an editorial in the same journal BOLSHEVIK entitled "Command Personnel and the Cultural Revolution". It postulated that the problem of "education of cultural command personnel of the builders of socialism" was a political problem. And as soon as the "command cultural personnel" had been trained, the churches began to collapse, the original artistic associations to disappear and inimitable individualities to fall silent. And art, alienated from man's spiritual being, was already becoming a surrogate of culture.

Of course, not only is the substitution for methods of ideological leadership of a directive style dubious. Politics has many spheres in which it has dictated and will continue to dictate, but there are also spheres where it may only interact and where the "political scalpel" is contra-indicated, otherwise in the process of its use a result opposite to that expected is obtained.

Stalin kept a close watch on the processes of ferment in literature. He felt that, having initiated huge shifts in public consciousness, the cultural revolution would inevitably bring about increased interest in fiction and poetry and cultural values generally. By the mid-1920's the literacy of the country's population had risen noticeably. The changes in the national republics were particularly striking. Compared with 1922 the number of working people able to read and write in 1925 had grown 15-fold in Georgia, five-fold in Kazakhstan and fourfold in Kirghizia. There was a similar picture in other places

also. The worker clubs in the cities and peasant reading rooms in the country became true centers of culture and literacy. The print runs of periodicals had tripled compared with 1913, book publication increased and a general process of the creation of libraries began. Film studios opened in Odessa, Yerevan, Tashkent and Baku.

The Politburo studied repeatedly the question of the creation of better conditions for introducing the masses to artistic culture and increasing ideological, Bolshevik influence thereon. In June 1925 the Politburo approved the resolution "Party Policy in the Sphere of Fiction and Poetry". The resolution noted the need for a solicitous attitude toward the old masters of culture who had accepted the revolution and also, at Stalin's suggestion, the importance of continuation of the struggle against tendencies of a volte-face nature. The document emphasized that "the party must eradicate in every possible way attempts at home-made and incompetent administrative interference in literary matters." Unfortunately, these correct conclusions would be consigned to oblivion in the 1930's. But at that time the party Central Committee was still abiding by Lenin's behest concerning the fact that for genuine socialism what is needed is "precisely culture. Nothing must be done here unceremoniously or by pressure, glibness or energy or by some better human attribute generally."

Stalin's aides regularly "reported" to the general secretary on new books and articles by proletarian writers. He could not, naturally, read all of them, but Stalin's library contained volumes and booklets of those years in cheap bindings with his notes in red pencil. He made the majority of his remarks in the book margins, incidentally, in colored pencils and was particularly fond of red. Many of his associates wittingly or unwittingly imitated him, K.Ye. Voroshilov particularly. Judging by the notes, there is reason to believe that Stalin was familiar with Furmanov's "Chapayev" and "The Rebellion," Serafimovich's "Iron Stream," the stories of Vs. Ivanov, Gladkov's "Cement," the books of Gorkiy, whom the general secretary liked, and the verses of the poets Bezymenskiy, Bednyy, Yesenin and other famous craftsmen of the word. Stalin noticed Platonov and his "Chevengur," "For Future Use" and "The Foundation Pit". But, to judge by everything, the gifted writer, who penetrated deep-lying seams of the human spirit, remained incomprehensible to him. The sleepless satanoid of the writer's quest irritated the general secretary, of which, inter alia, he once informed Fadeyev.

Stalin loved the theater and the cinema. Subsequently, particularly in the 1930's and 1940's, he was a frequent visitor to the Bolshoy Theater and would regularly view new films at night in the Kremlin or at his dacha. Painting he cared for less and did not conceal the fact that he lacked the proper taste. He would discuss questions of artistic culture frequently not only in the group of Politburo members, in which the majority were rather low appraisers of art, but also with the writers Gorkiy, Demyan Bednyy and Fadeyev and, of course, with Lunacharskiy.

In his speeches artistic images were immeasurably less frequent than with Lenin, Bukharin, Trotskiy and certain party figures. He needed them, as a rule, to reinforce the critical charge of his speeches. Stalin's speech at a joint session of the Comintern Executive Committee-International Control Commission in September 1927 may be called a rare example of such use. Responding to Vuyovich, Stalin fired off:

"Vuyovich's criticism does not deserve a response." And went on to say: "I recall a little story involving the German poet Heine. He was once forced to respond to his importunate critic Aufenberg as follows: 'The *writer* Aufenberg I do not know; I assume he is like (Darlenkur), whom I also do not know.'" And, continuing, Stalin added:

"Paraphrasing Heine, Russian Bolsheviks could say as regards Vuyovich's critical exertions: 'the *Bolshevik* Vuyovich we do not know, we assume he is like Ali Baba, who we also do not know."

But, I repeat, his appeal to the classics was infrequent, which reflected the general secretary's highly limited acquaintanceship with the masterpieces of world and national literature.

In a number of public speeches Stalin did not pass up the opportunity to express his attitude toward this writer or the other and his works. The general secretary's opinions were, as always, categorical and unceremonious. For example, in his letter to Bill-Belotserkovskiy Stalin unequivocally condemned Bolshoy Theater producer Golovanov for the latter's having opposed a mechanical renewal of the repertoire from the classics. The general secretary hereupon characterized "Golovanovitis" as a "phenomenon of an anti-Soviet order". In the 1930's such an evaluation could have cost him his head. Here, however, Stalin evaluated Bulgakov's "The Race" as an anti-Soviet phenomenon, adding, it is true, a mollifying tirade of the following content: "I would not, however, have anything against the performance of 'The Race' were Bulgakov to add to his eight dreams one or two more in which he portrayed the interior social springs of the civil war in the USSR so that the audience might understand that all these Seraphims, 'honest' in their own way, and all temporary lecturers were kicked out of Russia not at the whim of the Bolsheviks but because they were sitting on the people's neck."

Continuing the "investigation" of Bulgakov's work, Stalin inquired:

"Why are Bulgakov's plays staged so often? Because, probably, there are not enough of *our* plays suitable for presentation. In the land of the blind even. The 'Days of the Turbins' is king." And he went on to evaluate the play as follows: This play is not that bad for it does more good than harm. Do not forget that the main impression that the audience is left with from this play is one that is pleasant for the Bolsheviks: "if even such people as the

Turbins have been forced to lay down their arms and submit to the will of the people, having recognized theirs as finally being a lost cause, the Bolsheviks are, consequently, invincible...."

These sentences of Stalin's highlight once again the old truth that it is time which makes the ultimate evaluation of this work or the other. A grandee's verdict may years later appear ridiculous and naive, unjust and cruel, even considering the specific nature of the historical moment. Yet how often in our history attempts have been made to make "conclusive" evaluations! This, for example, was precisely how the general secretary acted, and such peremptoriness was the whole Stalin: undoubting, sure of himself, deriding the intellectual reflections of the artist.

The general secretary could be hard even on those whom he usually treated with respect. Demyan Bednyy, a Bolshevik since 1912, rapidly became after the revolution a recognized proletarian poet. A multitude of his fables, ditties, songs, satires in verses, tales and parables enjoyed invariable success among the masses at large, and the topical interest of each line of the folk poet constantly maintained his popularity. But then in a number of his works ("Breaking Apart," "Come Down From the Stove," "Without Mercy") Bednyy criticized the sluggishness and other traditions alien to us which, like a train, were stretching out to us from the past. The Central Committee Propaganda Department saw this as anti-patriotism. D. Bednyy complained about the peremptory shout in his letter to Stalin. The answer was swift and pitiless:

"You have suddenly begun to grouse and shout about a noose...."

"Perhaps the Central Committee does not have the right to criticize your mistakes?"

"Perhaps Central Committee decisions are not binding on you?"

"Perhaps your poems are above all criticism?"

"Do you not find that you are infected with a certain unpleasant disease called 'conceit'?"

Following these scathing questions, Stalin summed up, saying that the criticism in D. Bednyy's works was a *calumny* against the Russian proletariat, the Soviet people and the USSR. "This is the point, not the hollow lamentations of a frightened intellectual chattering in his fright about the fact that people allegedly want to 'isolate' Demyan, that 'they will no longer publish' Demyan and so forth."

Just like that. Stern and unequivocal. Just a few years earlier, in June 1925, Stalin himself had edited a Central Committee decree on policy in the field of fiction and poetry, which said that it was necessary to expunge "the tone of literary command" and "any pretentious, semi-literate and smug communist conceit." At the end of the 1920's these correct propositions of Stalin's had already been forgotten.

After all, just 3-4 years before this Stalin asked that his gratitude be conveyed to D. Bednyy for the "correct, party" verses about L. Trotskiy. They had been carried in PRAVDA for 7 October 1926 under the heading "All Things Must Pass". We have only to adduce part of the poem, perhaps, for a fuller sense of the atmosphere and political picture of that complex time:

> Trotskiy—best put his portrait in OGONEK!
> Let all delight in beholding him!—
> Trotskiy is prancing on an old steed,
> Conspicuous by its rumpled plumage,
> And galloping like some red-finned Murat
> With all his "staff,"
> With the opposition generals
> And proposition-morals—
> A staff sufficient to subjugate the whole planet!
> But troops there are not!
> Not one proletarian company!
> The workers have no desire
> To follow such a staff to the slaughter,
> Sacrificing the party and themselves.
> Arrant politicking serves sufficiently
> As a target for our party!
> It is, finally, time, to put an end
> To this disgraceful business!

The general secretary read the poem with pleasure and called Molotov and some others. All viewed Bednyy's political satire with approval. Stalin observed: "Our speeches against Trotskiy are read by a smaller number of people than this poem." He was, perhaps, right here. But the poet had only "to lose the tone" somewhat and display "resentment" for Stalin to become totally different: cold, malicious, commanding and instructing.

Knowing how much the fate of a work depended on his evaluation, masters of the literary word would request of Stalin his opinion. More often than not his summary was condescending, with an unfailing indication of the work's "weaknesses". Sometimes, on the other hand, he would ascend to praise. Thus in a letter to Bezymenskiy Stalin inscribed: "I have read both 'The Shot' and 'A Day in Our Life'. There is nothing either 'petty bourgeois' or 'anti-party' in these works. Both, particularly 'The Shot,' may be considered models of revolutionary proletarian art for the present time."

The testimony of persons who knew Stalin closely confirms that the general secretary kept a very close watch on the political physiognomy of the most important writers, poets, scholars and figures of culture. He sensed that among the artistic intelligentsia not all had accepted the revolution, and examples of this were not only the numerous emigres. He was alerted by V. Korolenko's letter to Lunacharskiy published after the important

Russian writer's death in Paris, in which he expressed concern that violence in post-revolution Russia would impede the growth of socialist consciousness. Stalin considered the letter a forgery. He was also angered by Ye. Zamyatin's article "I Fear" published in a small Petrograd journal, DOM ISKUSSTV. The writer, who at the start of the 1930's would become a defector, wrote quick-temperedly, but essentially correctly: "There can only be real literature where it is created not by efficient and dependable officials but madmen, renegades, heretics, dreamers, insurgents and skeptics. I fear that we will have no real literature until the Russian demos ceases to be viewed as a child whose innocence needs to be preserved. I fear," Zamyatin continued, "that we will have no real literature until we cure ourselves of some new Catholicism which, no less than the old, fears any heretical word." The philosophical mood of some writers was attested by a book by A. Bogdanov, who maintained that real creativity is only possible if compulsion between people is eliminated and if the social system forbids belief in fetishes, myths and cliches. Bogdanov was clearly hinting at the impermissibility of dictatorship in respect of artistic creativity. Even this was going too far.

Stalin began to ponder methods of channeling artistic thought more fully and directing with its help the people and the masses toward the solution of the innumerable problems confronting the country. But the forms of influence on people's creativity as Stalin understood them were basically administrative: decrees, banishment of the unwelcome and the creation of censorship. Incidentally, he agreed here with Trotskiy, although was not about to make this unanimity public. Trotskiy unceremoniously maintained in his work "Literature and Revolution" (about what did this fertile fiction writer not write!) that there had to be in a country of the victorious proletariat "strict censorship". Stalin would take account of this advice—he would help artists make the correct choice! How? He would think about it, but not the least place would be occupied by political censorship here.

While Lenin was ill, an unusual action was carried out on the initiative of the GPU and with the support of Stalin: 160 persons representing the nucleus of Russian culture (writers, professors, philosophers, poets, historians) were expelled from the country. PRAVDA of 31 August 1922 published an article with the telling heading "First Warning," which justified the need for more resolute struggle against counterrevolutionary elements in the sphere of culture. The birth and establishment of the principle of socialist realism were accompanied by struggle, misunderstanding and the intellectual confusion of many in the creative arts. Putting the emphasis on the pragmatic facets of this principle, officials of the "ideological front" made it a directive instead of helping each artist to recognize with heart and mind his place in the revolutionary restructuring of the fatherland.

The banishment was undoubtedly a warning signal. Instead of the extensive democratic enlistment of figures of science, literature and art in the process of socialist building and patient work with them, Stalin made it understood that dictatorship in the sphere of culture also meant primarily power and strength. Stalin had never lacked the resolve to use it. Only with A.M. Gorkiy, perhaps, could he not permit himself the condescending, at times crude tone in which he frequently spoke with other writers. At virtually the same time that D. Bednyy was being hit for "slander"-criticism the general secretary was writing in quite a different style to Gorkiy. The latter had in a letter to Stalin from overseas expressed doubt as to the expediency of the undue criticism and self-criticism of our shortcomings. Stalin replied to the writer with conviction:

"We cannot do without self-criticism. Simply cannot, Aleksey Maksimovich. Without it, stagnation, putrefaction of the apparat and the growth of bureaucratism are inevitable...." And he continued: "Of course, self-criticism is material for our enemies. You are absolutely right about this. But it provides material (and a boost) for our advancement."

As we can see, Stalin was capable of expressing mature opinions on questions of the democratization of social life, in the literary field included. But the whole point is that gradually the correct conclusions and evaluations increasingly came to be at variance with social and literary practice.

His aides sometimes reported to the chief on the literature of Russian emigres also. When he was shown the multivolume novel of the White Guard general P.N. Krasnov "From the Double-Headed Eagle to the Red Banner," which had been published in Berlin in 1922, Stalin did not even pick it up, observing:

"And when did he find time, the scum?"

The return to the USSR at various times of A. Kuprin, A. Tolstoy and certain other less famous poets and writers was authorized not without his participation. When Stalin was told that I.A. Bunin had become the first Russian to win the Nobel Prize, the general secretary observed:

"Well, now he will not want to return.... What did he say there in his speech?"

Having read the brief "extract"-report on the traditional speech of the new prizewinner Bunin in Stockholm, in which the words "the main thing for the artist is freedom of thought and conscience," which he had spoken at the banquet, were quoted, Stalin fell silent and began to think. For him this was incomprehensible: had Bunin not been afforded an oppportunity here to think and reflect in accordance with his intellectual conscience?! Was he, Stalin, against freedom of thought if it served the dictatorship of the proletariat? Stalin could not, it is true, recall what Bunin had written, but vaguely and not all that mistakenly, perhaps, made "his" evaluation of

his work: "This writer of the nobility prophesied some things about the mystery of death and the other world." Bunin was of no further concern to him.

Poetry was generally of little interest to Stalin, although in his youth he wrote, as we have already mentioned, 30 naive poems. He never understood that the most powerful poems are those in which the poet is "transported," as it were. Endless struggle, which had in past years become for Stalin the essence of his life, had not given him the gift for comprehension of this human magic. He had virtually never had to read poetry. True, once, while in Tsaritsyn, some poem of Pushkin's had been taken as the basis for a code. It was used to report to Moscow the number of grain trains dispatched and their travel warrants....

A little more about an emigre—the poet V. Khodasevich—was reported to Stalin, it being said that he was very talented, "even more so, perhaps, than D. Bednyy." He was even read some of his lines about "the drying up of the creative spring in foreign climes." But this hopeless impasse of Khodasevich, as of V. Ivanov, I. Shmelev, A. Remizov, M. Osorgin, P. Muratov and other fugitives, was of no interest to Stalin.

PRAVDA for 30 December 1925 published an obituary in connection with the death of S. Yesenin, this "populist of the revolution". This is what the newspaper said:

"Hardly any poets of our day were read and loved like Yesenin."

"In Yesenin Russian literature has lost, perhaps, its sole true lyric poet."

"Yesenin could not entirely accept and understand the city.... He remained a romantic of hayfield Russia. And there is something symbolic in his death: a (Lel) who hanged himself on a central heating pipe. It also is, after all, an achievement of culture."

Suicides were incomprehensible to Stalin; it was something akin to turning oneself in.... And he had read somewhere that "Pegasus should be kept in check".

He was more interested in the attitude of the writers, poets, playwrights and producers here, in Moscow, Leningrad and other cities of the fatherland toward what was happening in the country. He experienced contradictory feelings from B. Pilnyak's "Poor Year," I. Babel's "Cavalry Army" and the works of A. Platonov, V. Kin, A. Veselyy, Yu. Tynyanov, V. Khlebnikov, B. Klyuyev.... He liked right away the clear works of D. Furmanov, A. Fedin, A. Tolstoy, L. Leonov.... Stalin liked the films of D. Vertov, L. Kuleshov, S. Eyzenshteyn, V. Pudovkin and F. Ermler. He heard that the plays of A. Lunacharskiy, "Oliver Cromwell," K. Trenev, "Spring Love," Vs. Ivanov, "Armored Train 14-69," and L. Seyfullina, "Virineya," were performed well. His wife, N. Alliluyeva, saw these performances together with employees from the People's Commissariat for Nationality Affairs. It was a good thing that such major producers as Vl. Nemirovich-Danchenko and K. Stanislavskiy were using Soviet plays—a revolution on the stage would strengthen the revolution in real life.

Stalin was less well informed as to what was happening in painting and music. He viewed with derision all the searchings of "industrial painting," the avant-garde, constructivists, futurists and cubists. The people behind these "affectations," which were barely comprehensible to him (and, he was certain, to others also), had not, in his opinion, been "appointed" to this business.

The heated arguments among artists were incessant. They argued frequently not about whether to support the revolution or not—the debate was about art forms, freedom of expression and the "reference points" of the new creativity.... The names of newer and newer artistic unions and associations were glimpsed fleetingly in the newspapers, like a motley mosaic; PROUN (Project for the Establishment of the New), NOZH (New Painters Society), Proletarian Culture Theatrical Studio and many others. Stalin believed that order needed to be brought to this kaleidoscope, although, true, he did not have sufficient time for this; he was struggling now against one, now against another opposition. Lunacharskiy, however, in his opinion, was permitting too many "liberties".

The party needed unity, a concerted policy for the future adopted by the majority. The last congress had done much in this direction. It was becoming increasingly clear to Stalin that industrialization and the cooperativization of the peasantry were essential. While the hated tsar, landowners and bourgeoisie were around, the burdens of the struggle were justified, but it would, after all, soon be 10 years since the day of the October Revolution uprising! Yes, we had done away with exploitation and given the peasant land, and the workers had gained access to the management of the plants, but why were there so many malcontents? Why were things moving more slowly than was desirable? Perhaps the opposition was in some respects right?

All the talk was of bureaucracy. Here today we had PRAVDA publishing Comrade Lebed's report "Measures To Improve the Machinery of State and Combat Bureaucratism". How bitingly it would write at that time: "What kind of shortcomings are there in our machinery of state? The principal ones are swollen staffs and the low qualifications of the officials, and the latter, what is more... have to be attributed to the local soviet machinery. The unwieldiness of the structure, parallelism in work, bureaucratism and red tape and a selection of specialists which is not always correct and which is based on an inadequate consideration of these specialists' qualifications and, finally, control of the fulfillment

of assignments of the higher authorities and control of the work of the enterprises themselves which is sometimes totally lacking." Mayakovskiy would write about this too....

The idea of speeding up the smashing of all these oppositions, of which everyone was pretty much sick and tired, on a platform of an acceleration of socialist transformations was maturing in Stalin (he did not as yet know how to realize it, it is true). In this case it would be possible to more actively "press" the intelligentsia and more fully "harness" it to the general cause of industrialization and the restructuring of agriculture, and the ferment in the minds of these artists would then be less. In a class society there is not nor can there be neutral, free art. We need, Stalin thought, enlisting well-known old masters, to raise our own worker-peasant writers. There would be nowhere for antiproletarian elements in culture to go....

The intellectual confusion of the artists seemed to Stalin simply counterrevolutionary heresy, less dangerous, true, than that which Trotskiy, the general secretary's implacable enemy, was preaching.

Before switching to an analysis of the next stage of the struggle against Trotskiy, let us make one further observation. We have been speaking of culture and the intelligentsia and the attitude toward them of Stalin, whose most characteristic trait in time became total lack of respect for freedom of creativity, freedom of expression of artistic ideas and freedom of comprehension of the mysteries of art. This was not fortuitous; Stalin recognized only *freedom* of power. He considered natural a renunciation of freedom of the intellect in the name of strength, in the name of power, it not occurring to him that he could be sacrificing also the personal freedom of millions. In the 1930's the problem of freedom no longer existed for him—only he possessed freedom (although he also was a prisoner of the System). Even the formal head of state had no "bearing" on freedom.

At the start of the 1920's N. Berdyayev delivered a petition to M.I. Kalinin for the release from prison of the writer M. Osorgin, who had been arrested in connection with the "Committee To Aid the Hungry and the Sick affair". Having listened to the celebrated Russian philosopher and idealist, M.I. Kalinin declared:

"A recommendation from Lunacharskiy for release is of no significance; if I appended my signature to the recommendation, it would be all the same—it also would be of no significance. Were Comrade Stalin to make the recommendation, that would be a different matter."

Even at that time Kalinin was saying that he, the head of state, was of "no significance" compared with Stalin. And all this signifies the triumph of freedom.

N. Berdyayev writes perspicaciously in his book "Kingdom of the Spirit and the Kingdom of Caesar" that "Caesar has an irresistible tendency to demand for himself not only what is Caesar's but... subordination of the man entire. This is the main tragedy of history, the tragedy of freedom and necessity.... The state, which is disposed to serve Caesar, is not interested in man; man exists for it only as a statistical unit." The intellectual confusion of the intelligentsia, frequently protest, exodus and creative silence were the result of the attempt against freedom. Caesar and freedom are incompatible. What constituted Lenin's vision of socialism precluded *idolatry,* autocracy, on the contrary, presupposes and demands it.

Stalin never addressed the philosophical category of freedom. He thought in utilitarian, pragmatic fashion, but since "his time" we have been accustomed to linking people's hopes and aspirations mainly with the future. Yes, man must have a view of the long term, his own and that of society, but speaking endlessly of progress and people's fate only in the context of the "felicity of future generations" is an illusory freedom. Harmony, perfection, abundance and prosperity transferred only to the future are not worth much. It is necessary to find the optimum combination of present and the actual and the future, which makes sense only in connection with those alive at present. It was about this that many of those whom Stalin could not or was unwilling to understand spoke and wrote. The years would go by, and art and literature would be engaged mainly in glorifying him, the chief. There would be left the shadow of freedom, and its return would be long and difficult.

Defeat of the 'Demon of Revolution'

Trotskiy liked to travel and liked to holiday well and displayed much concern for his health, which was monitored by several doctors. In the spring of 1926 he and his wife decided to travel to Berlin to consult physicians. The Politburo tried to talk Trotskiy out of the trip, but he insisted. With his wife and the former chief of his army front train, Sermuks, Trotskiy, seen off at the station by Zinovyev and Kamenev, left for Germany. His papers had been drawn up in the name of Kuzmenko, member of the Ukrainian board of the Commissariat for Public Education.

We have already said that Trotskiy was not an outstanding politician in the struggle for power, primarily on account of his overestimation of his influence on the course of affairs and of his personal popularity. In the struggle against Stalin one sometimes has the impression that Trotskiy frequently made the worst decisions for himself: he did not attend Lenin's funeral and failed to show at a number of Central Committee plenum and Politburo sessions. And on each occasion he was "torn away" from these important political matters by recreational outings, travel and hunting trips. Stalin took the fullest advantage of his absence to strengthen his own positions.

Trotskiy would subsequently have plenty of time to describe these years. He would say in one of his works that, while in Berlin, he had concluded that there could be no compromise with Stalin, one of them would have to give way, but continued to believe that it would be Stalin who would find himself on the sidelines. Zinovyev and Kamenev were trying to "get in" with him, Trotskiy recalled, and they decided that they could together wrest the initiative from the general secretary. "I thought that we could still prevent a Thermidorean degeneration," Trotskiy bombastically wrote. "Stalin had to be forced to comply with Lenin's wishes."

Besides public speeches against Trotskiy, Stalin was by degrees working on limiting his influence. As A.P. Balashev, an official of Stalin's secretariat, testifies, the general secretary's supporters would prior to a Politburo session frequently gather at his place, where a position in respect of weakening Trotskiy's influence was agreed. Only Trotskiy, Pyatakov and Sokolnikov were not invited to these preliminary meetings. "We knew," Aleksey Pavlovich told me, "that Stalin would be preparing an anti-Trotskiy dish."

Stalin once discovered that in the program of political training for members of the Red Army Trotskiy was called, as before, "leader of the Worker-Peasant Red Army". The reaction was immediate. Stalin's memo to Frunze of 10 October 1924 proposing that these programs be revised as quickly as possible is extant. They were clarified a few days later. Frunze's memo with the appended report of Aleksinskiy, chief of the Republic Revolutionary Military Council Political Directorate Agitation and Propaganda Service, says that "Trotskiy no longer figures in the political training as leader of the Red Army." Stalin also "lent a hand" in ensuring that as of the latter half of 1924 Trotskiy's name was no longer bestowed on inhabited localities and enterprises and that it figured less in the press in an apologetic style. Certain other steps by Stalin to gradually limit the popularity and influence of the former "leader of the Worker-Peasant Red Army" are known also.

Stalin, and he was supported by the majority of the Central Committee, consistently and persistently in the period between the 14th and 15th party congresses initiated a number of joint Central Committee and Central Control Commission plenums, Central Committee plenums and Politburo sessions which discussed the actions of the opposition and made the appropriate decisions. The most varied measures of pressure were applied in respect of Trotskiy and his allies: warnings, party reprimands and expulsion from party bodies. The line of the members of the opposition, however, was invariable: a struggle for leadership was conducted simultaneously with the struggle for the "correct" party policy. But major cracks soon appeared in the camp of the opposition. On the initiative of Stalin, who was supported by the other party leaders, Zinovyev was expelled from the Politburo in July, and Trotskiy, in October 1926. Kamenev was dismissed as Politburo candidate, and at the same time, as we recall, a Central Committee plenum deemed impossible Zinovyev's continuation in the Comintern. A number of other dissidents were dismissed from party and state office also.

During the 15th party conference, which took place in October-November 1926, Stalin delivered the report "The Opposition and the Intra-Party Situation," which sternly criticized the opposition trio and their associates. Stalin set forth these ideas in his report at the Comintern Executive Committee Seventh (Enlarged) Plenum in December of the same year. It can be seen from the rough copies of the report how carefully Stalin prepared for the exposure of the recalcitrant ones. All the weak points of the opposition, its "sins," were written out on special sheets:

1) Trotskiy, Zinovyev, Kamenev: no facts, only inventions and gossip.

2) Let Trotskiy explain with whom he associated prior to October: the left Mensheviks or the right Mensheviks?

3) Why was Trotskiy not in the ranks of the Zimmerwald left?

4) Is Stalin really persecuting the semi-Menshevik Mdivani? Gossip.

5) Kamenev said at the fourth party congress that it had been a mistake "to open fire to the left." Is Kamenev left?

6) Trotskiy maintains that he "anticipated" Lenin's April Theses.... Comparing the fly and the giant!

7) Kamenev's telegram to Mikhail Romanov.

8) Zinovyev insisted on acceptance of the enslaving terms of the Urquhart concession.

9) Zinovyev: "dictatorship of the party" and so forth.

Stalin punctiliously, meticulously assembled all the major and minor transgressions of the members of the opposition known to him (did Stalin have none?) and throughout his lengthy reports would relentlessly throw newer and newer damning facts onto the bonfire of the struggle. At the Comintern Executive Committee plenum his report "Once More on the Social Democratic Deviation in Our Party" together with the conclusion lasted approximately 5 hours! Stalin gave the opposition battle mainly on the point "Leninism or Trotskiyism"? Having put together in a pile all past mistakes, wobbles and numerous "platforms," the general secretary put the members of the opposition in a hopeless position of vague defense. Stalin did not criticize but "struck" with words. He did not notice here that in fulminating against his opponents he was himself increasingly in opposition to Leninism. Together with correct criticism, there was much in his speeches that was petty and secondary. The

general secretary's orthodox approach stifled the very idea of a struggle of opinions. Even at that time Stalin believed that any, even honest, dissidence was impermissible.

The leaders of the opposition had an opportunity to defend their views. Zinovyev, Kamenev and Trotskiy spoke unconvincingly, but at length, persuading the delegates to give them initially an hour to speak each, then a further half-hour, then requested an additional 10-15 minutes.... Familiarization with the stenographic account of the conference dispassionately testifies that, apart from an innumerable number of quotations of the founders of Marxism-Leninism and their own, they could counterpose little to the charges of factionalism. Even Trotskiy, who was renowned for his eloquence, could not find satisfactory arguments justifying his countless attacks on the Central Committee and the party. At the end of an extraordinarily prolix, indistinct statement he merely confirmed: "We will not accept views imposed on us." The delegate Larin, who spoke after him, aptly noted that they were all present at a moment when "the revolution is outgrowing some of his leaders." Larin was correct in saying that the lengthy reports of the leaders of the opposition contained only "a literary dispute concerning quotations and various interpretations of various passages of various works." Trotskiy, Zinoyvev and Kamenev "behaved not as political leaders but as irresponsible men of letters." The speakers observed that these leaders would like to implement industrialization merely at the expense of the peasantry, without thought for the social consequences.

The battle with Trotskiy was fought not only in the Central Committee and Central Control Commission and in the press but also in the Comintern, of whose Executive Committee he was a member. When, in May 1927, the TsKKA [as published] 10th Plenum discussed the question of Chinese revolution, Stalin decided to strike at Trotskiy here also. We shall quote a fragment of this speech of the general secretary's, which is little known to the reader at large:

"I shall try, as far as possible," Stalin said, "to brush aside the personal element in the polemic. The personal attacks of Comrades Trotskiy and Zinovyev on individual members of the All-Russian Communist Party Central Committee Politburo and the Comintern Executive Committee Presidium are not worth dwelling on. Comrade Trotskiy would evidently like to portray himself as some hero at Executive Committee sessions in order to convert the Executive Committee's work on questions of the military danger, the Chinese revolution and so forth into work on the question of Trotskiy. I believe," Stalin continued, "that Comrade Trotskiy does not merit so much attention (voice from the floor: "correct!"), the more so in that he is reminiscent more of an actor than a hero, and an actor can in no event be confused with a hero. Not to mention that there is nothing offensive to Bukharin or Stalin in the fact that such people as Comrades Trotskiy and Zinovyev, found guilty by the Seventh Enlarged Executive Committee Plenum of social democratic deviation, are abusing the Bolsheviks so much in vain. On the contrary, it would be for me the profoundest insult were semi-Mensheviks of the Trotskiy and Zinovyev type to praise, and not abuse, me."

Stalin's essentially shallow speech was, nonetheless, vigorous and fierce, pinned labels on the members of the opposition and demeaned them as figures. The Executive Committee prepared itself for Trotskiy's expulsion from its ranks, which took place on 27 September of the same year. Trotskiy remained isolated, but continued perseveringly the hopeless struggle. Soon the voice of Trotskiy, following his banishment from the USSR, would be the sole one, perhaps, to expose Stalin up to 1940. Whatever our attitude toward Trotskiy, who made many mistakes, it has to be acknowledged that he was one of the few who did not tremble before Stalin and who had spotted the approaching threat of absolute rule. But the longer and more fiercely this lonely voice was heard, the more obvious it became that Trotskiy was fighting not for the revolution and its ideals but merely for himself. Until his dying day he would be unable to reconcile himself to his failure, when he, almost a "genius," would be kicked out by, as he would say, the "cunning Ossetian". Soon Marxism and socialist values would only be of temporizing significance for Trotskiy: the main thing was how to use them to debunk Stalin. And for the general secretary Trotskiy would be right up to his death in Mexico a symbol of evil and degeneracy and most profound personal hater. He would in his life, perhaps, experience a feeling of detestation of such intensity only toward Hitler, who "deceived" and "outwitted" him in 1939-1941. Meanwhile the struggle continued.

The members of the opposition did not lay down their arms: in the spring they forwarded to the Central Committee a new platform, which was signed by 83 of Trotskiy's supporters. After several sessions of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission, Trotskiy and Zinovyev were expelled from the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee in October 1927, on the 10th anniversary of October, and the following month, together with Kamenev, they were expelled from the party also. True, Zinovyev and Kamenev, repenting yet again, would once again be restored to the party and would even deliver penitential speeches at the 17th congress.

Trotskiy's halo as "hero of the revolution" was gradually "fading" and growing dim. In the eyes of the party and the international proletariat he appeared increasingly as a phrase-monger, petty intriguer and would-be dictator. In foisting on the party debate after debate, Trotskiy, contrary to his wishes, more than anyone strengthened Stalin's authority as the new leader of the party. This might appear paradoxical, but it is a fact. It is significant that when Stalin was given the floor for his report (as also for the closing remarks at the 15th party conference), the

delegates accorded him alone an ovation. He cannot be accused here of "organizing" a "performance" which he had prepared: in the eyes of the bulk of the delegates the general secretary had begun to gradually personify a real leader of the party. This impression strengthened noticeably against the background of the unconvincing speeches of the representatives of the opposition, which, in addition, lacked courage. While defending himself with some quotations, Kamenev attempted at the same time to make advances to Stalin, calling his report "thorough," with "correct quoting," the "right conclusions" and so forth. "The sole concern of Zinovyev and his friends was now," Trotskiy angrily recalled, "to truckle in good time.... They hoped, if not to deserve favor, to buy forgiveness by a demonstrative break with me."

It was clear to all that Trotskiy's association with his former adversaries (which Stalin employed very skillfully) had occurred on a platform of struggle against the general secretary. Stalin, in whom ambitious motives and a belief in his own particular destiny were strengthening increasingly, did not let slip this exceptionally favorable opportunity. Having begun with ideological struggle, he resolved to complete the rout of Trotskiy politically. His speech at a session of a joint plenum of the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee and Central Control Commission on 23 October 1927, which discussed items of the agenda for the upcoming 15th party congress, testifies to this, in particular. It was decided to raise at the congress the question of the Trotskiyite opposition also. There were during the plenum several shouts from the floor, as notes also, incidentally, that the Central Committee had concealed Lenin's testament and had not complied with his wishes. Stalin could remain silent on this issue no longer.

His hour-long speech was full of anger and unconcealed hatred towardTrotskiy. Stalin once again recalled by rote and divulged all the disgraced leader's sins as of 1904. Seeing that Trotskiy was conducting his strategic line of struggle against him by relying on Lenin's words concerning the general secretary's negative qualities, Stalin struck at Trotskiy precisely on this "axis".

"The opposition thinks to 'explain' its defeat by the personal factor, the coarseness of Stalin, the uncompromisingness of Bukharin and Rykov and so forth. Too cheap an explanation! This is quackery, not an explanation.... In the period from 1904 to the February revolution of 1917 Trotskiy was continually beating about the Menshevik bush, conducting a desperate struggle against the party of Lenin. In this period Trotskiy suffered a whole number of defeats from the party of Lenin. Why? Was, perhaps, Stalin's coarseness to blame here? But Stalin was not at that time Central Committee secretary, he was at that time far from foreign climes, conducting the struggle clandestinely, against tsarism, and the struggle between Trotskiy and Lenin was being played out abroad—what had Stalin's coarseness to do with this?"

The general secretary conducted the attack under the flag of defense of Lenin, whom Trotskiy had at the start of the century called "Maximilien Lenin," hinting at Robespierre's dictatorial ways. The general secretary literally finished off Trotskiy with mention of the fact that an early pamphlet of the member of the opposition, "Our Political Tasks," had been dedicated to the Menshevik P. Akselrod. Stalin read out the dedication to a buzz from the auditorium: "To my dear teacher Pavel Borisovich Akselrod".

"Well," Stalin ended his speech, "good riddance to the 'dear teacher Pavel Borisovich Akselrod'! Good riddance! Only make haste, worthy Trotskiy, since 'Pavel Borisovich,' in view of his decrepitude, could shortly pass on, and you might be too late for the 'teacher'."

Returning in his speech to the past Central Committee and TsKKA plenum in August of that year, Stalin regretted that he had at that time dissuaded the comrades from the immediate expulsion of Trotskiy and Zinovyev from the Central Committee. "I was, possibly, *overly kind* (our italics—D.V.) at that time and made a mistake." Yes, it was a very rare occasion when Stalin was "overly kind" and used the word "kind" in general! The short-term weakness of that time was an episode. Now, on the other hand, he would call for the support of "the comrades who are demanding the expulsion of Trotskiy and Zinovyev from the Central Committee." And as far as Lenin's "Letter to the Congress" was concerned, Stalin made his interpretation of it.

In his speech at the plenum the general secretary distorted the historical truth, declaring: "It has been proven and reproven that no one is concealing anything, that Lenin's 'testament' was addressed to the 13th party congress, that it, this 'testament,' was read out and that the congress decided *unanimously* not to publish it because, incidentally, Lenin himself did not want and did not demand this." The 'testament' *was not,* as we recall, read out at the congress but only to the delegations; the congress did not adopt a decision, *unanimous* even less, on nonpublication of the letter; regarding the fact that "Lenin himself did not want this," the assertion is entirely on Stalin's conscience.

Sensing his strengthening power, the general secretary resolved to give battle on the point on which he himself was most vulnerable, not stopping short at manifest falsification, the less so in that during his speech voices in his support were heard from the floor. On this occasion he took advantage of the fact of the publication in BOLSHEVIK at the insistence of the Politburo and, primarily, himself, Stalin, in September 1925 of a special statement by Trotskiy to the effect that Vladimir Ilich had left no "testament" and that his very attitude toward the party, as also the nature of the party itself, precluded the possibility of such a "testament". Having succumbed to Stalin's pressure, Trotskiy had written at that time that "since the time of his illness Vladimir Ilich had repeatedly addressed to the party's leading institutions

and its congress proposals, letters and such. All these letters and proposals were, it goes without saying, always delivered as intended, conveyed to the delegates to the 12th and 13th party congresses and always, of course, duly influenced party decisions.... All talk about a concealed or violated 'testament' are a malicious invention and are aimed entirely against Vladimir Ilich's actual wishes."

Could Trotskiy, in attempting to dissociate himself from the rumors circulating in the West that "secret documents of Lenin had ended up in the West via Trotskiy" have at that time known that he was conclusively painting himself into a corner in the struggle against Stalin? Eastman, author of the book "Since Lenin Died," which published reflections on Lenin's "testament," was very close to Trotskiy and had met him in Moscow repeatedly, which afforded grounds for the rumors.

Quoting from Trotskiy in BOLSHEVIK, Stalin forged straight ahead: "Trotskiy, and no one else, wrote this. On what grounds are Trotskiy, Zinovyev and Kamenev now letting their tongues wander, maintaining that the party and its Central Committee are 'concealing' Lenin's 'testament'?

"It is said (?!—D.V.) that in this 'testament' Comrade Lenin proposed that the congress, in view of Stalin's 'rudeness,' ponder the question of Stalin's replacement as general secretary by another comrade. This is absolutely right. Yes, I am rude, comrades, toward those who are crudely and impiously destroying and splitting the party. I have not concealed and do not conceal this. A certain softness is required here in respect of splitters, possibly. But this will not come from me. At the first session of the Central Committee plenum following the 13th congress I asked the Central Committee plenum to relieve me of my duties as general secretary. The congress itself discussed this matter.... All delegations, including Trotskiy, Kamenev and Zinovyev, unanimously bound Stalin to remain in office. What could I do? Run away? This is not in my nature, I have never run from any positions nor have I the right to do so since this would be desertion.... A year after this I once again tendered the plenum a statement concerning my release, but I was once again bound to remain in office.

"What could I have done further? It is significant that the 'testament' contains not one word, not a single hint as regards Stalin's mistakes. Mention is made there only of Stalin's rudeness. But rudeness is not nor can it be a shortcoming of Stalin's political line or position."

This scathing and exultant tirade of Stalin's meant the political end for Trotskiy. After the general secretary's speech, as Trotskiy would later write in Mexico, he physically felt above his neck the knife of the guillotine. He did not deny himself at that time the grim satisfaction of recalling 9 Thermidor and Robespierre's last words in the Convention: "The republic is lost! The kingdom of robbers begins!" Of course, by Robespierre Trotskiy could have meant only himself, the difference being merely that Trotskiy could not, like Robespierre, count on the sans-culottes of Paris, the plebeians of the capital. He was a "field marshal" without an army. The party was hostile toward him—it had tired of his intrigues. All was at an end.

The inner dialogue of the defeated candidate for dictator was probably self-demeaning; how could he, Trotskiy, the idol of the crowd, have underestimated this "moustached Ossetian"? He recalled the lines of Blok which had been quoted in his speech by this retard, the eternally dissembling Zinovyev, with whom he had become entangled against his will:

> Are we to blame if your skeleton
> Crunches in our heavy paws?

But what had Blok to do with things here? What had Zinovyev to do with all this when they were finishing off him, Trotskiy?! He had missed his opportunity, and gloomy thoughts swarmed in the brain of the defeated "Field Marshal Trotskiy," as Krasin had with irony called him at the time of the civil war.

Overseas Trotskiy would read a pamphlet of the emigre Assad Bey, which would portray the confrontation of the "two outstanding" leaders as follows. "Stalin and Trotskiy were two opposite poles in the Communist Party. They had no points of contact either in the personal sphere or politically. Trotskiy was a brilliant European, an experienced and vain journalist, and Stalin, a typical Asiatic, a man without any vanity, without personal requirements, with the cold, brooding mind of an oriental conspirator—these two individuals had to conceive a hatred for one another. Stalin could not endure Trotskiy physically even, in just the same way that merely the sight of Stalin and his pock-marked face inspired in Trotskiy profound revulsion." There was nothing for the emigre, now until the end of his life, to add.

That same October (1927) Plenum heard Trotskiy's last speech as a party politician (he was expelled here from the Central Committee). The speech was confused and unconvincing. Later Trotskiy wrote that he wanted, but was unable, to warn the "blind" to the full extent that "Stalin's triumph would not last long and that the collapse of his regime would be sudden. Victors for a day rely inordinately on violence. You may expell us, but you will not prevent our victory." Bent over the podium, Trotskiy rapidly read his whole speech from notes, yet he had frequently disdainfully called Stalin and other party leaders in his circle "cribbers," trying to shout down the noise in the hall. He was hard to hear, being interrupted by shouts of "slander," "lies," "prattler".... Trotskiy hastened to blurt out all that he had written: about the weakening of the revolutionary principle in the party, the domination of the apparat, the creation of a "ruling faction" which would lead the country and the party to Thermidoran degeneration.... The speech contained no

convincing arguments or clear propositions concerning socialism, although not everything therein should be deemed mistaken. The hatred of the Central Committee leadership and the malice toward Stalin were visible, but this was not echoed either among the members of the plenum or among the communists, who had an opportunity to familiarize themselves with this speech of Trotskiy's from the discussion sheet for the 15th party congress.

The attempt to hold a demonstration of Trotskiy's supporters on the 10th October anniversary was a challenge which put him outside of the party. Trotskiy's circle decided that they had to demonstrate. The slogans were such that only the initiated could have understood their opposition meaning. "Down With the Kulak, Nepman and Bureaucrat!" "Down With Opportunism!" "Fulfill Lenin's Testament!!" "Preserve Bolshevik Unity!" Attempts were made to carry portraits of Trotskiy and Zinovyev. Stalin had taken the "appropriate" measures in advance, and the police broke up the tiny groups of Trotskiyites. Zinvoyev, who had come from Leningrad specially, and Trotskiy, who toured Moscow's central streets and squares by automobile, were finally persuaded that there was only a handful of people behind them. Trotskiy might have permitted himself to recall how 10 years previously, to an ovation from the auditorium, he fired off after Martov and his supporters leaving the soviets: "Your place is in the garbage tip of history!" Now the same words were heard addressed to him; when Trotskiy attempted in Revolution Square to address a column of demonstrators coming from Red Square, stones were thrown at him. On 14 November Trotskiy was expelled from the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik).

Trotskiy tried once more to publicly appeal to the masses in connection with the death of his sympathizer A.A. Ioffe, who committed suicide. Formerly a Menshevik who had joined the party together with Trotskiy in 1917, he had been a Central Committee candidate and member of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and had since 1918 been involved in diplomacy. A convinced Trotskiy supporter, Ioffe had before he died written him an appeal. Formally the letter dealt with a grievance concerning the fact that on this occasion the party Central Committee had refused him money for treatment abroad, but the political essence of the letter was something else. Ioffe wrote that "Politburo censorship" prevented an opportunity of the truth being told in literature about quasi-leaders now "elevated to high office." I do not doubt, Ioffe wrote, that my death "is the protest of a fighter" convinced of the soundness of the way which you, Lev Davidovich, have chosen. "Politically you have always been right and are now more right than ever." Ioffe maintained in the letter that he had "heard with his own ears how Lenin had acknowledged that even in 1905 not he but you had been right. There is no lying before death, and I repeat this to you now once again.... The guarantee of the victory of your rightness is precisely the maximum unyieldingness, the strictest rectilinear approach and the complete absence of any compromise...." The letter came to pass from hand to hand, providing an excuse for false interpretations. At the decision of the Central Committee it was published in the journal BOLSHEVIK (Nos 23-24 for 1927) with an accompanying article by Yem. Yaroslavskiy, "Philosophy of Decadence," which, inter alia, provides the information that Ioffe regularly and repeatedly traveled abroad for treatment at the state's expense. The point of the letter was Ioffe's assertion that the expulsion of Zinovyev and Trotskiy could be that impetus which awoke the party and stopped it on the road to Thermidor.

Attending Ioffe's funeral were many Trotskiyites and young people, whom Trotskiy, Kamenev and other of their sympathizers addressed. This was Trotskiy's last public appearance in the USSR and the last public demonstration of the dissidents. But their speeches did not have the wide-ranging repercussions for which the routed members of the opposition were hoping. A veil of muteness fell for many years.

Trotskiy was bloodied but unbowed. Stalin sought ways and methods of isolating his most hated rival. He celebrated the victory, but sensed that the struggle was not over. At staff meetings Stalin gave theinstructions: "keep an eye on the Trotskiyites," "weaken their influence even further," "finish them off politically." Arrests and deportation began.

The members of both Trotskiy's families drank their fill of the cup of woe also. His first wife, Aleksandra Sokolovskaya, and her two daughters, Zina and Nina, like their husbands also, had been ardent disciples of Trotskiyism. Trotskiy had left the first family back in 1902, when the younger daughter was only 4 months old. Initially he had written to Aleksandra Lvovna from abroad, but subsequently time and a new family relegated Sokolovskaya and her daughters to, in his words, the "sphere of the irretrievable". True, Trotskiy had always been concerned about what would remain of him in history. Preempting the historians, he would write in 1929 in his reminiscences about his first wife: "Life separated us, preserving unbroken the ideological connection and friendship." Both daughters found themselves after the revolution reflected in their father's glory, then, several years later, in a position of profound ostracism. The fate of Trotskiy's first family was subsequently a sorry one. Stalin charged for everyone one dreadful pricenot only for political dissidence but also for belonging to "enemy stock" (it was written in the 1930's: "socially dangerous elements by origin").

Trotskiy's second wife, Natalya Sedova, also began as a "revolutionary". At one time she had lived in St Petersburg under the name of Vikentyeva. Subsequently Sedova was constantly with her husband, sharing with him the triumph of his upsurge at the time of the revolution and the civil war and the endless wanderings

in foreign parts. We would note in passing that prior to 1917 Trotskiy, as the son of very well-to-do parents, was not in need as the other Russian emigres were.

Trotskiy had two sons from his second marriage. The eldest, Lev, was always together with his father, became an active Trotskiyite and died while still very young under mysterious circumstances in Paris after his father's banishment. The younger, Sergey, left home when the Trotskiy's were living in the Kremlin, declaring that politics were "offensive" to him; he did not join the Komsomol and immersed himself in science. Having refused to go with his father into exile, Sergey, naturally, as Trotskiy's son, was subsequently doomed. An article appeared in PRAVDA in 1937 which reported: "Trotskiy's son, Sergey Sedov, attempted to poison the workers." In exile by this time in Krasnoyarsk, he was declared an "enemy of the people". At a meeting in the forge shop of the mechanical engineering plant foreman Lebedev said: "Trotskiy's son, Sergey Sedov, has been working here as an engineer. This worthy offspring of his father, who sold himself to fascism, attempted with generator gas to poison a large group of the plant's workers." The meeting also discussed Zinovyev's nephew Zaks and their "sponsor," Subbotin, director of the plant.... The fate of all basted by these "accusations" was predetermined.

The tragedy of Trotskiy's family, in which all the children perished as the result of the bloody maelstrom of Stalin's struggle with their father, lent the exile an aura of martyrdom. Natalya Sedova outlived Trotskiy and died the same year as Stalin, her husband's "inseparable enemy".

Initially the general secretary even gave orders publicly for "Trotskiy's relatives not to be touched," but theirs was all a bitter fate, and only some of his distant relatives survived. They are alive now in Moscow, and I managed to meet with them. They are living, naturally, under different names.

In his numerous books—and in exile Trotskiy wrote about a further 15 such approximately—he would frequently, particularly on the eve of his death, address his personal fate. The "History of the Russian Revolution" in three volumes, "What Next?" "Lenin's Hidden Testament," "Their Morality and Ours," "Diary in Exile," "My Life," "The Third International After Lenin" and many other books bear the stamp of tragic egocentrism. Trotskiy could no longer live without being spoken, written and argued about. Fame, popularity and glory would be for him more important than bread. This was felt not only in Moscow but also by those who lived with the exile in the backyards of European capitals. His former sympathizers, the Mensheviks, would quite often "tweak" the "leader" who had been laid low. One D. Dolin would write in SOTSIALISTICHESKIY VESTNIK following the expulsion of the former people's commissar for military and naval affairs:

"Trotskiy tries with might and main to ensure—God forbid—that he not be forgotten. He writes day and night heavy books and short articles, puts out family bulletins and modifies in all languages the same motifs concerning Stalin's perfidy, the betrayal of the Chinese revolution and Lenin's tender affection for Trotskiy. But mankind is ungrateful—and the further Trotskiy is away, the less he is remembered and spoken about."

Trotskiy would read these words on the Prinkipo Island....

The Politburo discussed several times the question of how to deal with Trotskiy, who was continuing to express not simply anti-party sentiments but, as Stalin believed, anti-Soviet sentiments now also. Ultimately the Politburo came to the conclusion concerning the need for Trotskiy's banishment from Moscow. Initially the leader of the opposition was requested to leave the Kremlin, where certain leaders had lived since the revolution. Zinovyev, Kamenev, Radek and other former "leaders" were evicted also. The "exodus" from the Kremlin was short-lived: Zinovyev and Kamenev immediately resolved to repent at the upcoming congress. "Lev Davidovich," they would say to Trotskiy over and over, "the time has come when we must have the courage to yield." The game had been finally lost, but they were attempting to cling on to the footboard of the train of history.

The decision was soon made to dispatch Trotskiy to Alma-Ata. Entrusted with directing the deportation was, according to certain information, N.I. Bukharin. At the time of the departure the supporters of the disgraced leader attempted to stage a political protest action. Trotskiy refused to emerge and take his seat in the automobile himself, and he was dragged out. In the same way he was carried into the train compartment. His elder son was shouting loudly all the while: "Comrades, see how they are carrying Trotskiy!" This is how this episode, recorded by his wife, with a manifest patina of melodrama, exaggeration and picturesqueness, is described in Trotskiy's memoirs. "At the station there was a huge demonstration. We waited. We shouted: 'Long live Trotskiy!' But Trotskiy was not in sight. Where was he? At the compartment appointed for us was a turbulent crowd. Young friends had posted on the roof of the compartment a large portrait of Lev Davidovich. It was greeted by rapturous 'hurrahs'. The train shuddered. One jolt, another... it moved forward and suddenly stopped. Demonstrators had run ahead of the locomotive, had clung to the compartments and had stopped the train, calling for Trotskiy. A rumor had passed through the crowd that GPU agents had conducted Lev Davidovich into the compartment unnoticed and were preventing him showing himself to those seeing him off. The excitement at the station was indescribable. There were clashes with the police and the GPU agents, there were casualties on both sides, and arrests were made."

Being in the Kremlin, Stalin kept a tense watch on the procedure of Trotskiy's deportation. He would often be called on the telephone, and the general secretary would listen in silence and at the end merely fire off angrily: "No sentimentality! No concessions! Cut off Trotskiy's aides. Quickly and without delay!" Having finished speaking, he would nervously pace up and down his office, intensively pondering something or other. Several years later, at table in his dacha with his associates, he would throw out, following a discussion of information received about Trotskiy's latest protest:

"We made two mistakes at that time. We should have left him for the time being in Alma-Ata.... But he should in no event have been let go abroad.... And, further: how did we allow him to take out so much paper?"

While in Alma-Ata, Trotskiy continued his political activity. He would send monthly from exile to various addresses, according to his information, hundreds of letters and telegrams, exchanging information and keeping up the dwindling fire of the anti-Stalin struggle. Trotskiy acknowledges in his memoirs that a secret correspondence with his supporters was established also. His elder son revealed in his notes the extent of the correspondence. "In April-October 1928 we sent from Alma-Ata 800 political letters; approximately 550 telegrams were dispatched. Over 1,000 political letters, long and short, and approximately 700 telegrams were received.... In addition, there was clandestine mail by special messengers." Trotskiy attempted to activate the opposition forces, and the role of disgraced leader afforded him, as usual, certain moral advantages. The deportation of the leader of the opposition did not change either his way of thinking or his desire to cause ferment in the party. Hatred of Stalin finally became established at the center of all his political interests. A year later, in January 1929, at the decision of the Politburo, following lengthy discussion of various options, Trotskiy and his wife and son, Lev, were deported via Odessa to Constantinople. Sailing on a cold morning in February 1929 on the steamship "Ilich" toward Constantinople, Trotskiy decided to call to himself the attention of world public opinion more quickly. His statement to Turkish President Kemal Pasha said:

"Dear Sir,

"At the gate of Constantinople I have the honor to inform you that I have arrived at the Turkish border by no means by my own choice and that I may cross this border only by submitting to constraint.

"L. Trotskiy, 12 February 1929."

The would-be "field marshal" of world revolution would shortly after begin his "travels" to a number of countries, the last stop of which was Mexico. For Trotskiy it had been a decade of the most active struggle, and not now merely against Stalin but frequently also against the socialist state, which he had initially actively helped build and defend.

A reason for Trotskiy's drama was the fact that he ultimately gave pride of place to personal ambitions. Trotskiy's "non-Bolshevism," about which Lenin had spoken, was ultimately manifested in full. The denouement was accelerated by the fratricidal clash of the "two outstanding leaders". Personal detestation, malice even, in respect of Stalin at times suppressed in Trotskiy his elementary decency in respect of the ideals and values which he himself was even recently extolling and gradually brought him to a profound ideological impasse. Barely having arrived in Constantinople, Trotskiy was handing to the bourgeois press a digest of six of his articles entitled "What Has Happened and How?" The central place in one article was occupied by an assertion which Trotskiy had just 12-18 months previously been attempting strongly to disguise: "The theory of the possibility of the building of socialism in one country is a reactionary invention and the principal and most criminal undermining of revolutionary internationalism. This 'theory' has an administrative, and not scientific, justification." Reading these lines 2 weeks later from the morning mail which an aide would hand him, Stalin was to say: "The rogue has finally ceased pretending."

Once overseas, Trotskiy tried in every possible way to look after the "reputation of revolutionary," gradually sinking lower and lower, however, into the anti-Soviet emigre bog. He continued the publication of his works overseas, not stopping short at times at falsifications, stretched interpretations and inventions with the sole purpose of wounding Stalin more painfully and presenting himself in the historical mirror as the "second genius," the man to whom Lenin wished to hand over power; Stalin, however, violating the leader's wishes, perfidiously prevented this. Trotskiy would frequently deem it possible in passing to insult the entire people also: in volume 20 of his works he permitted himself abusive passages about the Russian people. As he saw it, "no Russian statesman had ever risen higher than third-rate imitations of the Duke of Alba, Metternich or Bismarck," and as far as science, philosophy and sociology were concerned, "Russia has given the world precisely nothing." I believe that these Slavophobic pronouncements extend our understanding of the political character of a person who had decided a priori that he had been called upon to perform only leading roles in history.

For fairness' sake it should be said that until the end of his days Trotskiy treated Lenin's genius with profound respect and agonizingly sought the "protuberance" against which the "Russian revolution has stumbled." Stalin and Stalinism he rightly considered a "historical abnormality".

Trotskiy called himself overseas a person to whom the entire planet had become accessible without a visa. The following are his words: "Lenin was brought to the revolution in a sealed compartment across Germany. I was taken against my wishes on the steamer 'Ilich' to Constantinople. I therefore do not consider my banishment history's last word." He failed to take into account the fact that history is pleased to make its own dispositions in its own temple and that it sometimes utters its "last word" decades later.

The General Secretary's 'Personal Life'

Can there be such a thing as a "personal life" for a person who is in view to millions of his fellow tribesmen, fellow citizens and comrades? But Stalin was not "in view". Up to the end of the 1920's newspapers made infrequent mention of him, true, the provincial committees would every month receive more than one directive containing the laconic signature of "I. Stalin". At that time issue could still be taken with him, and he could still be criticized. Thus there appeared in the journal BOLSHEVIK Nos 11-12 for 1925 an article by M. Semich, who expressed disagreement with the the way in which Stalin interpreted his position on the nationality issue. In April 1926 it carried a rejoinder from Vl. Sorin which wrote about the general secretary's incorrect evaluation of his views on party-class relations. In a reply published in the same issue of the journal Stalin virtually apologized to Sorin.

Stalin seemed to all who did and who did not know him an *ordinary* individual. Such an ordinary individual had to have also his personal life, by which is implied all that "remains" to a person outside of the office, outside of work. These facets are not the main, determining ones for Stalin's political portrait but they enable us to understand him better.

I have had an opportunity to chat with many people who knew Stalin in, if we may so put it, a "domestic situation": doctors, guards, people working in his secretariat, writers, military leaders and other people in contact with him in one way or another. His daily routine changed little, whether this were Monday or Sunday. That at the end of his life, when the years, work and inhuman fame had begun to weigh the general secretary down, he would not always travel to Moscow but continued to work at his dacha is another matter. He would receive executives here, infrequent sessions of the Politburo and meetings with foreign guests were held here and from time to time he would walk out into the park here to feel the night freshness.

His habit of working without time off was born of the necessity of the difficult revolution years and then the functioning of the bureaucratic system of management which he himself created. We have before us a memo to V.I. Lenin from Comrades Rovno and Gyulling requesting a hearing on the Karelian business. It was conveyed from the Sovnarkom to Stalin, as people's commissar for nationalities. The decision on the memo is laconic: "I can receive them on Sunday for 3 hours 30 minutes in the People's Commissariat for Nationalities. Stalin. 4 February 1922." There is a multitude of other such testimony in the collection of the general secretary's papers. True, sometimes on Sundays Stalin and members of the Politburo and other invited people would sit up until after midnight at the dinner table. But this would be followed by the same, although ostensibly "free," discussion of urgent problems facing the party and the country.

Stalin, who had obtained a small apartment on Lenin's orders, lived there initially. There is extant a letter from A.V. Lunacharskiy of 18 November 1921 expressing the wish that I.V. Stalin be found a more comfortable apartment. Upon familiarization with it, V.I. Lenin forwarded the memo to A.Ya. Belenkiy, chief of the guard:

"Comrade Belenkiy. This is news to me. Can nothing else be found? Lenin. Return."

Besides this memo, there is a short letter from V.I. Lenin to A.S. Yenukidze, secretary of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, requesting that the granting of I.V. Stalin, people's commissar for nationalities, an apartment be speeded up and that this be notified by telephone. An apartment was soon selected for Stalin in the Kremlin, it having been servants' quarters in the old days. The tenant here was rarely seen; he would appear late in the evening or deep into the night and would leave for work early in the morning. Unsophisticated living: remnants of old furniture, a soiled floor and small windows. At the start of the 1920's, as we have said, Stalin moved to the dacha in Zubalovo, and later, in the 1930's, to Kuntsevo. At his orders the dacha was continually being redesigned. In his final years a small wooden house alongside the big house, to which he moved, was built.

A.N. Shelepin, formerly a well-known party figure and statesman, told me: "After Stalin's death, when the general secretary's property was being listed, this work turned out to be brief and simple. There were no valuables other than the official piano. There was not even one good 'real' picture. Paper reproductions in simple wood frames hung on the walls. In the hall, in a central location, hung an enlarged photograph of V.I. Lenin and I.V. Stalin which had been taken in September 1922 in Gorki by M.I. Ulyanova (the same one which people are now suddenly all together calling a forgery and montage. Such things happen when the truth is sought selectively. All that fits the concept is accepted; the rest, no, not rejected but also, deformed, fitted into the bed of the conceived pattern. Need it be said that such "consistency" has nothing in common with the truth—D.V.). Two rugs on the floor. The general secretary slept under a soldier's blanket. Aside from the marshal's uniform, there were of items of clothing a couple of ordinary suits (one of canvas), soled boots and a peasant sheepskin coat."

At the large writing desk was a revolving chair. The servants said that Stalin, tired from work, would swing round in the chair to face the window and gaze for a long time in silence at the park. The general secretary did not care for a dense wood and in spring would himself point out the trees which were to be sawn down. A photograph has been preserved of a stooping Stalin holding his little daughter by the hand and one of the "attendants" at the "master's" instructions, indicating with an ax the trees to be felled.

The general secretary did not like anything imported—he had carried over his dislike of things foreign into his domestic life also. The ascetic lifestyle was, perhaps, not a pose but a consequence of a sincere dislike of luxury which had been preserved from prerevolution years. However, Stalin's whole life testifies that there is no direct dependence between an individual's political and moral parameters and his attitude toward everyday life, values and property; everything is considerably more complex. It is simply that Stalin knew how to "separate" the main thing, and the main thing in his life was *power* as an end, a means and a permanent value. The domestic "setting" of this power was of no great significance for Stalin, although in 1938 a different Kremlin apartment was "chosen" for Stalin, in a magnificant building built by the Cossacks in the 18th century and intended for the senate. The apartment was on the second story and occupied almost the whole floor. There were guest, guard and reception rooms. The floor above was the servants' quarters. Magnificent windows, high ceilings and steep staircases. But Stalin barely lived in thisapartment, preferring to it his "close-by" dacha. He had a "distant" one also, at which he also did not live.

As a present for the leader's 70th birthday Beriya had built a magnificant dacha on the bank of a reservoir and had persuaded Stalin to view it. The aging leader gave in and went to see it. Without changing, he walked around the rooms, walked right around the house, glanced atthose escorting him, climbed into the car in silence and drove away. He never showed up there again.

The leader was attended by a large number of people, and "executive" people would subsequently quickly and firmly adopt this anti-Leninist tradition, and not simply adopt but also enrich it for a long time, persistently, inventively....

The general secretary had an unhealth lifestyle and had in the 1920's even cultivated the habit of night-time work. Stalin smoked a great deal. In the above-mentioned interview E. Luedwig asked the general secretary:

"You are smoking a cigarette. Where is your legendary pipe, Herr Stalin? You once said that words and legends pass away, deeds remain. But, believe me, millions of people abroad unaware of some of your words and deeds know of your legendary pipe."

Stalin:

"I have left my pipe at home."

Almost a year before his death Stalin quit smoking and was very proud of this—his pipe had become quite unnecessary.

Usually before dinner he would drink a little dry Georgian wine and take short walks; Stalin did not have, as he said, the "aristocratic habit" of spending many hours hunting or fishing.

People who were close to Stalin recall that at rare moments, when he appeared in the park, they saw how his stooping figure would describe one or two circles around the asphalt path and then freeze somewhere near a flowerbed or bunch of lilac. Stalin was, seemingly, admiring the eternal wonder of nature, but in reality thinking about his own business. Thoughts about existence are engendered for many people when they gaze into the abyss of the heavens and the clouds and the bewitching eyes of a forest camp fire or when they listen to the breathing of the sea. Visiting Sochi, Stalin loved to stand on the shore and listen to the noise of the breakers.... Yes, this lilac. Smiling, looking at the riot of green, he would once again correlate the eternal order in Great Nature with his affairs: "Vanity of vanities".

...He had just looked through a file of business from Voroshilov. With what did he not have to concern himself: tractor drivers and combine operators were seeking permission to be exempted from military dues, it was proposed building a new home for the Worker-Peasant Red Army, Pilsudski's action was reported, there was a report on the letter of the commander of the 26th Cavalry Regiment on a misunderstanding with representative Gostinets, here was a letter from Comrade Ilin on the need to undertake airship construction and material on new defense facilities which were being built.

He would think: this would not be the most important thing tomorrow. A telegram needed to be sent to the Russian Communist Party Central Asia Bureau—Khodzhayev, Lyubimov, Ryskulov and Svetlov and Pecherskiy, member of the Turkestan Front Military Council, with instructions not to arrest basmach crossing over to the side of the Soviet authorities and surrendering their weapons.... Do not forget either to reply to Magidov, secretary of the Poltava Provincial Committee, who raises the question of the inadequate information of local officials.... How many telegrams had he dictated today! He remembered the last one word for word:

"To the secretary of Sasovskiy Rayon, village of Prosyannyye Polyany, Ryazan.

"Telegram received from teacher Shirinskaya. Defend the teacher of the Tatar school against the unnecessary crude excesses of Ivanov, representative of the Kadomskiy Rayispolkom, who burst into her apartment on the pretext of liquidating her father's property and demanding that she give up a dresser which is of no use to anyone....

"I request that you intervene immediately and protect Shirinskaya against any violence whatever and report the results to the Central Committee.

"Central Committee Secretary I. Stalin."

And how many more such matters would Tovstukha throw in next day?

In time all this work would be assumed by aides, secretaries and the apparat, but until the end of his days Stalin frequently liked to himself decide petty matters and the fate of individual people, particularly those connected with appointments, "wilfulness," dissidence or someone's disobedience.

The more Stalin's importance in party and state business increased, the more zealously many people endeavored to rely when tackling a multitude of questions on the personal instructions of the general secretary. The tractor drivers, could not their appeal be decided by the people's commissar himself? And the building of a new home in the capital? Could the fate of the teacher Shirinskaya not have been dealt with by a secretary? But somewhere there had secretly strengthened in Stalin the exultant thought: they cannot manage without me, and I can do everything. Such is the lot, perhaps, of all top leaders?!

Stalin intuitively sensed that the growth of centralization framed by the most complex bureaucratic rituals was making him a prisoner of this system of management and impeding and even ruining things, perhaps. What was the point the people's commissariats, where was their flexibility; what did the numerous all-union departments and "offices" decide? He understood this, I believe, but wanted no other: absolute rule, if "shared," is no longer absolute rule.

We have already spoken of Stalin's love of the theater and the cinema; not one film about which the people had begun to talk bypassed the small motion picture hall in the Kremlin and, subsequently, his dacha projector. At a meeting with agitation and propaganda leaders he once fired off: "The cinema is nothing other than an illusion, but life dictates its own laws." Stalin always recognized in the cinema just one, educative, function, as, incidentally, in art in general.

As of the 1920's he began to be introduced to the theater by his wife Nadezhda Sergeyevna. After her death, the theater and, to be specific, the USSR Bolshoy Theater became a firm part of his life. I believe that he saw the majority of its productions many times. As A.T. Ryhin, a guard and superintendent of the Bolshoy Theater, told me, at the start of the 1950's, on the eve of the stroke, Stalin was watching "Swan Lake," and this was, possibly, the 20th or 30th performance that he had seen.... He usually visited the theater alone and took his seat when the lights in the auditorium were out. He would sit in a corner of the box, at the back. Following a premiere he would convey his gratitude and even attend general rehearsals. His spiritual education had evidently fostered in Stalin a need for contact with music.

Of course, personal life meant always his family. Nadezhda Sergeyevna Alliluyeva changed all at once, as we have already mentioned, from being a secondary school student to being the wife of a party leader. Documents and human testimony, including that of Stalin's daughter, Svetlana Alliluyeva, indicate that his wife, despite her youthfulness, was an integral character. In time she became a party member, worked in the People's Commissariat for Nationalities and studied. She was a secretary of Lenin's also, in Gorki. When the question of the transfer of the capital from Petrograd to Moscow arose, Stalin took his wife's parents with him also. His memo to Pestkovskiy, administrator of affairs, said:

"I request, Comrade Pestkovskiy, that you enter on the evacuation list of our commissariat in the column 'Stalin and members of his family' the following persons: Sergey Alliluyev and Olga Alliluyeva (his wife). Their address: Apt 9, House 17a, u. Rozhdestvenskaya. Entrance way telephone: 167-86.

"Stalin. 10 March 1918."

The old people lived with them for a long time in the small Kremlin apartment. Nadezhda Sergeyevna quickly became accustomed to the atmosphere of endless conferences, meetings, struggle and trips in which her husband lived. Familiarization with papers of Stalin's archives shows that many letters, orders, instructions and telegrams were written not only by the aides and members of Stalin's secretariat—Nazaretyan, Tovstukha, Kanner, Mekhlis and Dvinskiy—but by Nadezhda Sergeyevna also. She saw that her husband belonged to *work* and work alone and did not understand, at first, what small a place had been assigned her in his life. He would often rudely interrupt Nadezhda Sergeyevna's "You have no interest in the family and the children," sometimes with abuse. To a certain extent Allilyueva made good the lack of intercourse with work, study and frequent meetings with the wives of her husband's associates—Polina Semenovna Zhemchuzhina (Molotov's wife), Dora Moiseyevna Khazan (Andreyev's wife), Mariya Markovna Kaganovich and Esfiriya Gurvich (Bukharin's wife).

Two children were born to them in the 1920's: first Vasiliy and then Svetlana. Later Yakov, Stalin's son from his first wife, Yekaterina Svanidze, came to live

with them also. He was only 7 years younger than his mother in law, who, however, loved this stepson, who was not spoilt by paternal affection. Inasmuch as Alliluyeva worked, the children were looked after by a nurse.

There were always many people and relatives in the Kremlin apartment or at the dacha in Zubalovo. Apart from his wife's parents, N.S. Alliluyeva's brothers, Fedor and Pavel, and her sister, Anna, with her family were frequent visitors. Stalin's relatives along the lines of his first wife found themselves a place also. In the 1930's, following his wife's death, this noisy round dance of relatives, whom he had seeninfrequently, thinned out noticeably and disintegrated: only Alliluyeva's parents would die a natural death, while many of the people close to Stalin would lose their heads as "enemies of the people". Pavel, Nadezhda Sergeyevna's brother, tried on several occasions to start a conversation with the general secretary about the mistaken nature of many of the arrests and punitive measures, of people who were close included, but all to no avail. The leader had a blind faith in the chastising right hand of his security machine.

Stalin himself, as a great leader, was unable and did not wish, evidently, to really involve himself in his children's education.

He also saw them extremely rarely: on certain Sundays, when they were brought to the dacha or taken south, where the general secretary frequently used to relax before the war—to Sochi, Livadiya or Mukhalatka. It is not, unfortunately, that rare a thing for important historical figures to raise children who have been weakened merely by virtue of the fact that their parents were celebrities. The children knew little about their father. Vasiliy, according to Svetlana, once passed on to her a "secret": "Do you know that our father was a Georgian when he was young," directly expressing in a child's way the notion of their father's strong Russianization.

The fate of Stalin's elder son, Yakov, proved the most tragic. He had had difficult relations with his father, who considered him a weak individual and, as it transpired subsequently, was mistaken. Stalin was unhappy with Yakov's choice of his first and, indeed, of his second wife, Yuliya Isaakovna Meltser. He had two children from these marriages. Svetlana Alliluyeva recalls that Yakov, driven to despair by the cold attitude of his father, had even tried to shoot himself, but the bullet, fortunately, passed right through and he remained alive, although was ill for a long time. Seeing his son after this incident, Stalin merely threw at him mockingly:

"Ha, missed!"

Everyone, Nadezhda Sergeyevna, was stunned by Stalin's icy ruthlessness. Being a political despot, he remained the same at home also. That Stalin, when dealing with leaders, receiving delegations, addressing meetings and chatting with figures of culture could skillfully undergo a transformation is another matter. Having once called Stalin for this capacity the Great Actor, I wondered: was I not involuntarily insulting the representatives of this ancient and magnificent profession? Perhaps this capacity for rapid, deliberate transformation is reason to call Stalin the Great Hypocrite?

With his father's consent Yakov graduated from the Transport Institute in Moscow, worked at the power station of the Plant imeni Stalin (what does a person feel, working at an enterprise named after a father who is still living?) then expressed a desire to become a soldier. In accordance with the orders of Stalin's aides, Yakov Dzhugashvili was enrolled in the evening department of the Worker-Peasant Red Army Artillery Academy and then immediately switched to the fourth course of the first faculty of the same military-training institution.

Upon familiarization with the personal file of Sr Lt Ya.I. Dzhugashvili, I was involuntarily (for the umpteenth time!) struck by the questions which each officer had to answer when compiling his autobiography. There were several dozen of them, but in order to get a feeling for the "flavor" of those times I shall quote three or four questions of the standard autobiographical form:

"Have you been a member of Trotskiyite, rightist, national chauvinist and other counterrevolutionary organizations, in which year and where?"

"Have you had any differences with the general line of the party, doubts? If so, on what questions and for how long did these doubts last?"

"Did you take part in the anti-party Belorussian-Tolmachev grouping?"

"Did you serve in the White Army and the interventionist army, in anti-Soviet nationalist detachments (Uchredilovtsy, Petlyura people,Musavatists, Dashnaks, the Georgian Mensheviks, the Makhno and Antonov gangs and others), where, when and in what capacity, how did you come to be there, when, in what unit did you serve, for how long?"

Such was the era, turning everything inside out, anything could be picked on. But fault was not found with Yakov Dzhugashvili, although there were even at that time many people who had not bargained away their consciences. For example, academy officers Ivanov, Kobrya, Timofeyev, Sheremetov and Novikov (no initials in business) evidently wrote on the fitness reports and references pertaining to Stalin's son what he merited: "Political development satisfactory. Disciplined, but has mastered insufficiently knowledge of military regulations governing relations with superiors. Practical studies failed. Insufficiently familiar with small arms and tactical training. Big examination lag to be made up. Passed finals satisfactorily and well." This written about the son of the omnipotent leader! And although Ya. Dzhugashvili's immediate superiors recommended that

he be appointed commander of a battalion and immediately be given the rank of captain, Faculty Chief Sheremetov advised against haste: "I agree with the fitness report, but believe that the rank of 'captain' can only be conferred after a year's command of a battery."

On one point there was total unanimity: Yakov was an upstanding, honest and shy individual "scorched," as it were, by his father's hostility. He suffered in his own way the fact that, having "jumped" several courses, he had studied insufficiently and felt unsure in the role of commander. Perhaps this also at the decisive moment played a fatal part in his fate at the front?

From the first days of the war Yakov was at the front. According to available documentary evidence, he fought boldly and did his duty completely, until his unit was surrounded, and he was taken prisoner. There is a rare photograph from German archives showing a group of Hitler officers, having surrounded Capt Ya. Dzhugashvili, scrutinizing him with unconcealed curiosity. The most interesting thing in this shot is Yakov's facial expression and very bearing: facing his captors with clenched fists and a look of hatred. The fascists attempted to use their prisoner for propaganda purposes, scattering leaflets containing Yakov's photograph, but Soviet people treated them as forgeries.

Stalin suffered not so much for the life of his son as through a fear that Yakov's will could be broken in the concentration camp and that he could be forced to cooperate with the Germans. Dolores Ibarruri's memoirs, which appeared in a separate book in Barcelona in 1985, adduce a little-known fact subsequently neither confirmed nor denied. She writes that in 1942 a special group with the mission of springing Yakov Dzhugashvili, who was by that time in Sachsenhausen, was dropped behind the lines. The special group also included the Spaniard Jose Parro (Moyso) with papers making him out to be an officer of Franco's Blue Division. But the operation ended in the failure and the loss of the group.

Yakov also feared that by way of torture, special indoctrination and the use of special preparations he might be broken and become a traitor in the eyes of his father and the people. This very thought was hateful to him, it seemed more terrible than death. On 14 April 1943 Yakov Dzhugashvili rushed the barbed wire of the camp fence, and the sentry shot him dead.

Stalin was mistaken in his son, as in many other people also. He was never infallible, as he soon came to be portrayed. According to S. Alliluyeva, her father said to her by chance, as it were, after the victory at Stalingrad:

"The Germans offered to exchange Yasha for some of theirs.... As if I would bargain with them! No, war is war."

The lot of the leader's other son, Vasiliy, whom his father had been unable to raise as a strong, firm, clever individual, was a sorry one also. Following the death of his mother, Vlasik, chief of Stalin's guard, became the boy's mentor virtually. However, the atmosphere of flattery and permissiveness shaped a capricious, weak-natured individual. He fought, but not as well as to have started the war a captain and in 1947 to have become a lieutenant general. Vasiliy Iosifovich Stalin's personal file is very eloquent testimony to the personnel arbitariness which those close to Stalin set up with the omnipotent father's tacit consent. I shall cite simply a few extracts and facts from the lean papers of his personal file:

Jumping several levels, the rank of "colonel" was conferred on V.I. Stalin at the age of 20 (People's Commissariat for Defense Order 01192 of 19 February 1942).

At the age of 24 V.I. Stalin was a major general of aviation (USSR Sovnarkom decree of 2 March 1946), a year later, lieutenant general.

While a quite "green," middling airman, he was in 1941 appointed chief of the Worker-Peasant Red Army Air Force Inspectorate.

In January 1943 he was appointed commander of the 32d Guards Fighter Air Regiment; a year later, commander of the 3d and, subsequently, 286th Fighter Force. In 1946 V.I. Stalin was corps commander and then deputy and, later, commander of the Moscow Military District Air Force.

A fairytale rise, not, however, based on professional and moral qualities. During the war, as his superiors point out in his file, Vasiliy flew only 27 combat missions and shot down one FV-190 enemy aircraft; he was awarded two orders of the Red Banner, the Order of Aleksandr Nevskiy and the Order of Suvorov II class.

But this is what was written on V.I. Stalin's fitness report by Lieutenant General of Aviation Beletskiy and Colonel General of Aviation Papivin:

"By nature hot-tempered and irascible, loses composure: there have been instances of his striking subordinates.... In his personal life he indulges in conduct incompatible with his position of divisional commander, and there have been instances of tactless behavior at flight personnel parties and rudeness in respect of individual officers, and there was one instance of frivolous behavior—driving to Shyaulyay by tractor in a conflict and fight with an NKVD control post. His state of health is poor, particularly his nervous system, and he is extremely irritable; this has also influenced the fact that he has of late been insufficiently involved in personal training in flight work, which is leading to the inadequate workouts on certain questions. All these shortcomings are to a

considerable extent reducing his authority as a commander and are incompatible with the position of divisional commander which he holds."

Subsequent fitness reports were similar, but were crowned everywhere with the conclusion: "Desirable that he be sent to the academy fortraining". The illustrious generals Rudenko and Savitskiy (subsequently marshals) saw at that time no other way of ridding the formations under their command of the "dissolute prince".

Incidentally, the "dynastic," "hereditary," family promotion of one's progeny and relatives is with us today also. Of course, a person is not "to blame" for the fame, glory and position of his parents but this should not make for any "handicaps," social advantages and undeserved benefits for the children. Affiliation to a "name" should only *bind* a person to increased responsibility, duty, modesty and decency.

Pursuing their own ends, well-wishers showered benefits and rank on Stalin's son, who unnoticed by all became a chronic alcoholic. We can imagine how much grief this dissolute individual caused his numerous wives (no less than four). He is not, evidently, of interest in himselfbut we may in the example of this wild and unhappy destiny see for ourselves once again that the abuse of power maims all those around one, including one's own children. Thus has it been in history repeatedly: while reaching for the heights of dominion, caesars have frequently left behind them children puny in spirit and in the flesh and morally broken by the atmosphere of exultant immorality which has surrounded dictators.

While his father was still living V.I. Stalin lost the high position of commander of the air force of the capital district and slid downhill. It was not fortuitous that 3 weeks after the death of the "leader," Defense Ministry Order 0726 dishonorably discharged Lt Gen V.I. Stalin from the army aged 32.

Shortly after, Vasiliy ended up in prison for several years. His guilt is not that clear. His daughter would have people believe that he was not tried. But, evidently, what had been excused before was now remembered. And, what is most important, people wanted to conceal a little longer a person who knew a great deal. After all, Stalin's associates were still in their jobs....

Vasiliy's lot was told me by A.N. Shelepin. Khrushchev had asked him to go to Butyrka, whither Vasiliy had been taken from the 2d Vladimir Prison. He was being kept in prison under the name of Vasilyev (his father, the supreme commander during the war, had frequently signed himself "Vasilyev" in coded messages).

"They brought him to me, lame, with a stick," Aleksandr Nikolayevich said, "and he sank to his knees and began to weep: 'Forgive me, forgive me, I'll not let you down again.' I described the meeting to Khrushchev. He remained silent for a while and then said: 'Bring him to me.'"

The next day Vasiliy was taken to Khrushchev, and he again went down on his knees: he beseeched, wept, vowed. Khrushchev, embracing Vasiliy, wept also, and they had a long conversation about his father. After the meeting, it was decided to release Vasiliy early. The finding was prepared, and he was released. Numerous friends descended on Vasiliy the same day. It began all over again, as before.... A few days later he was once again behind the wheel, and once again there was an accident. Khrushchev swore long and loud and asked:

"What shall we do? If we put him away, that will be the end of him. If we do not put him away, likewise."

It was decided to deport him. A place was chosen—Kazan. Vasiliy left with a nurse, his latest wife. He was shrunken from long inebriation and had become like an adolescent. The cirrhosis of the liver was pitiless: he died in March 1962, leaving four children from his different wives and three adopted children. The memorial on his gravestone contains the inscription: "Vasiliy Iosifovich Dzhugashvili (1920-1962). Last of the Dzhugashvilis." Not V. Stalin, as in his lifetime, not V. Vasilyev, as the authorities wanted, but Dzhugashvili....

The dictator, one word from whom was sufficient for a vast canal to be dug, a palace to be built and millions of people put from "outside" behind barbed wire in the shortest possible time, was totally powerless in fatherhood. His wisdom, willpower, "perspicacity" and "warmth," about which so much has been written, were completely lacking when it came to raising a son useful to the fatherland. The same reproach will be thrown at him, evidently, by the chroniclers dealing with the fate of his daughter Svetlana also. While a most orthodox, dogmatic Marxist, Stalin was unable to raise his daughter as a patriot of her motherland. The evolution of her fate is well known to Soviet people and it has from the very outset brought only sorrow and perplexity. Whiling away, with a short interruption, her years in foreign parts, she could hardly have thought about the fact that her cruel, ruthless father with the "iron" name had nonetheless never in the grimmest years of his innumerable arrests thought about emigration.

When the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium edict on restoration of S.I. Alliluyeva's USSR citizenship and the granting of USSR citizenship to her daughter, O.V. Peters, was enacted on 1 November 1984, it seemed that the "prodigal daughter" had understood her errors, the more so in that she declared at a press conference:

"While in this same so-called 'free world,' I myself was not free in it for a single day. I fell there into the hands of businessmen, lawyers, political operators and publishers, which turned my father's name, my name and my life into a sensational commodity." But the daughter of the "iron" father confirmed once again the truth that character is not inherited, nor are beliefs. They are cultivated. Overseas ultimately proved dearer to her than the motherland.

Stalin's children may, possibly, have grown up differently had Nadezhda Sergeyevna Alliluyeva been alive. The evidence which we possess indicates that here also the leader's behavior was (indirectly?) the cause of his wife's death. In the night of 8-9 November 1932 Alliluyeva-Stalina ended her life by suicide. The reason for this fatal step, I believe, was a quarrel, barely perceptible to those around them, which occurred at a small holiday party on the 15th October anniversary attended by Molotov and Voroshilov and their wives and some other persons from the ranks of the general secretary's associates. Nadezhda Sergeyevna's brittle nature failed to withstand Stalin's latest crude outburst, and she went to her room and shot herself.

Arriving in the morning to awaken Alliluyeva, Karolina Vasilyevna Til, the family housekeeper, found her dead. A "Walter" lay on the floor. Stalin, Molotov and Voroshilov were summoned. The deceased would obviously have left a farewell letter, but of this we can only surmise: there always are and will remain in the world secrets large and small which will never be guessed.

Stalin was shaken when he learned of what had happened, but even here he remained true to his immoral credo: he saw Alliluyeva's act not as being his fault but as betrayal in respect of himself. It evidently never even occurred to him that his callousness and lack of warmth and attention had so cruelly wounded his wife that in a moment of profound emotional agitation and depression she had decided on the extreme step. Having bade farewell to his wife at a civil funeral, Stalin did not go to the cemetery. His associates were soon attempting to arrange for Stalin one further marriage with a relative of a person close to the leader. All was decided, seemingly, but for reasons known only to the widower, the marriage did not take place. Until the end of his days Stalin lived alone, entrusting domestic concern for himself to a steward from the ranks of the numerous "attendants". When Stalin died, his steward, V.V. Istomina, in the presence of members of the Politburo, fell on the deceased leader's chest and cried out at the top of her voice. He had been far closer to her, evidently, than his associates.

At the very end of his journey Stalin, summing up some results of his life, suddenly remembered his wife: photographs of Alliluyeva appeared in the dining room and his office at the dacha, as, incidentally, in the apartment in the Kremlin also.

There is no doubt that N.S. Alliluyeva loved Stalin and tried in every possible way to help him in his very difficult office. Her relatives testified that in its last years Alliluyeva's life had undergone a profound inner fracture. Stalin also loved here in his way, possibly, but his obsession with business, plans, work and power left no room in his heart for his wife, children and relatives, steel strings took the place of feelings. Stalin might pay attention to none of his relatives for weeks and never displayed an interest in the feelings and health of those near to him. He never saw his many grandchildren, and there were eight of them, and never aspired to do so. When Aleksandr Semenovich Svanidze, the brother of his first wife, to whom he had been very close, was arrested, it never even occurred to Stalin to wonder how a person whom he had known all his life, since childhood, could be an "enemy". There were in the very structure of the leader's moral character whole gaps and blanks. His conduct, behavior and attitude toward to those close to him and relatives testified that to Stalin good deeds, compassion, magnanimity, sympathy, tolerance, humanity, repentance, expiation were unknown....

Of course, these pages of the general secretary's political biography characterizing his "moral" traits, so to speak, are not, possibly, important. But it is highly symbolic that Stalin himself had a disdainful attitude toward morals and "moralizing"; for him politics was always the favorite in a correlation with morality. And for the researcher into so complex a personality as Stalin it is here that a "secret" of his character opens up just a little. His emotional miserliness, which grew into exceptional callousness and then ruthlessness, not only cost the life of his wife and the tortured fate of his children. The most dreadful thing is that Stalin found no fitting place for moral values in politics either. It was for him the height of nobility when Pavlik Morozov denounced his father as an "enemy of the people".

When Beriya arrested the wife of his very close aide A.N. Poskrebyshev, Bronislava Solomonovna, no requests from her hushand could save her. Stalin, Poskrebyshev's daughter, Galina Aleksandrovna said, had one answer: "This is nothing to do with me. I can do nothing. The NKVD will look into it." The ludicrous charge of espionage was standard. Having been kept in prison for 3 years, she was executed. Yet her husband continued for 14-16 hours a day to be near Stalin, hand him papers, prepare reports, summon people, give out the leader's orders.... "Even Beriya, on whose order the arrest was made, continued to visit our family at that time," Galina Aleksandrovna recounted. "Many other well-known people visited us also, incidentally: Shaposhnikov, Rokossovskiy, N.G. Kuznetsov, Khrulev, Meretskov. Stalin was personally acquainted with my mother and understood, of course, that the charge of espionage (the brother of Poskrebyshev's wife had gone abroad for medical equipment—the main argument of the indictment; later he also, of course, was executed—D.V.) was totally without foundation."

When I was familiarizing myself with such cases, the at first sight paradoxical thought once occurred to me that in arresting people who were close to him, relatives and the wives of people from his immediate circle Stalin... was testing their loyalty and checking their loyal-subject feelings. Kalinin, Molotov, Kaganovich, Poskrebyshev and many others did not give the appearance even of there having been a catastrophe in their home. Stalin observed their behavior and evidently derived satisfaction from their submissiveness. The tests, monstrous in their immorality and cruelty, which he set people—it is these which are the strokes of Stalin's exceedingly amoral biography, of his portrait. The guise of the Great Actor, who expertly played a multitude of parts in a life which had most resemblance to horror films, concealed nothing holy, noble and decent. After all, Poskrebyshev believed it when Stalin meekly told him that this was nothing to do with him and that he could do nothing. But what did Beriya say, he continued to visit Poskrebyshev's home, after all? He said the same.... These people lived in lies, cynicism and cruelty. And such a man had a "personal life"?! The saddest thing (and this is once again from the sphere of morality!) is that virtually no one took issue with Stalin. Yet there are *always opportunities of conscience!* Even under incredibly difficult conditions....

We have somehow become accustomed to the belief that humanism, morality and ethical standards common to all mankind are all from the sphere of moral admonition. But, after all, morality emerged earlier than political, legal and even religious consciousness. When there emerged in people the first requirement of aware communication, there arose morality, and without it man would never have become man. Bertolt Brecht once aptly observed: "In order for man to feel himself a man, someone has to call to him." And in this sense a specific "personal life" makes it possible to see in a person his true essence. Who knows, perhaps it is Stalin's "personal life" which contains a deep-lying source of the deformations and crimes which would in the 1930's be hallowed by his name?

Stalin was a "strong personality" of the type which inevitably aspires only to greatness and unlimited power, and such greatness, as N. Berdyayev correctly wrote, "is too much associated with lies, malice, cruelty, violence and blood." Stalin gradually, by degrees deified violence, displaying no concern for the moral substantiation of his policy. The cult of strength outside of moral values is a false valuable. Lenin saw as the purpose of revolution man's maximum attainment of the pinnacles of liberty within the framework of social necessity, but as essentially humanitarian. For Stalin the moral parameters of revolution and the building of the new world were nothing more than "bourgeois moralizing".

What is dreadful is that Stalin had no doubt as to his moral rightness. The general secretary once underlined in a short volume of M.A. Bakunin's the sentence: "Do not lose time doubting yourself because this is the most futile occupation of all those thought up by man." What can be said in this connection? Bakunin could permit himself no self-doubt—he was not the general secretary of a party.

* During the Italian campaign of 1796-1797 the young Bonaparte won one of his dazzling victories at the township of Lodi.

Chapter IV. Dictatorship or Dictator?

[Text]

O evil flattery—at the delightful roundup:
The catch of your nets is always abundant.

Euripides

Gods do not know of age. Who can say today how old Zeus, Aphrodite, Artemis, Pallas and Themis are? No one, evidently. But it is in people's conception that gods are eternal. But this is the same as allowing of the impossible—the "frozenness" of time. But perhaps it is because they are above the absolutely impossible—above time—that they are gods? Man has for his convenience broken it down into centuries, decades, years, months, days, hours, minutes, seconds.... But it, time, is passing, not noticing these ephemeral boundaries. In the realm of the everyday occurrence there sometimes arises, it is true, the illusion of the power of destiny over time. People most often make this mistake at moments of dates and anniversaries....

On 21 December 1929 Stalin was 50 years old. No, there were not yet the endless glorification, the prostration at the leader's altar of a multitude of lickspittles and the attribution of literally every merit to him alone. Hundreds of thousands of outfits were not yet sending letters of greetings to him, and all newspaper and journal editorials did not yet start and end with his name.

However, half the space of PRAVDA was even now devoted to the jubilee. There were here the articles by L. Kaganovich, "Stalin and the Party," G. Ordzhonikidze, "Rock-Hard Bolshevik," V. Kuybyshev, "Stalin and the Country's Industrialization," K. Voroshilov, "Stalin and the Red Army, M. Kalinin, "Helmsman of Bolshevism," A. Mikoyan, "Steel Soldier of the Bolshevik Party," and of other figures. The eulogizing had *started.* The greetings of the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee and Central Control Commission said, inter alia, that they greeted the *best Leninist* (my italics—D.V.). The newspaper's huge banner headline called Stalin the "loyal continuer of the cause of Marx and Lenin," the "organizer and leader of socialist industrialization and collectivization," "leader of the party of the proletariat" and so forth. The jubilee could not have been more timely for Stalin's fortune: it brought about increased attention to the man who had confidently seen off the latest opposition or, as people were now saying

even, "deviation". Shrewd people had noticed at that time even that by his 50th birthday Stalin had acquired increased confidence, imperiousness and high-handedness.

This day, his 50th birthday, accepting congratulations from members of the Politburo, the people's commissars and the leaders of numerous soviet and public organizations, Stalin palpably sensed that in these 12 years since the revolution he had learned or, as he said, "got the hang" of controlling time. No, not, of course, in the sense in which Herbert Wells writes about this but in the sense that he had begun to feel and understand at what moment it was necessary to speed up events, when to deliver a telling blow at factionalists and how to use the time factor in the race for industrialization and the collectivization which had just begun.

Molotov and Kaganovich had proposed that the 50th birthday of the leader who was now acknowledged by almost everyone be commemorated more ceremoniously. But it was not modesty which held Stalin back, it was simply that Lenin's same birthday was still very fresh in his memory. He repeatedly caught himself thinking that Lenin's words about him, Stalin, usually came into his mind when a fundamental choice had to be made. True choice presupposes the capacity of the subject to put himself in the position of those who are dependent on him. Lenin knew how mentally to assume the role of another, as did many of his associates, only not Stalin. It is hard even to imagine that Stalin could have put himself in, let us assume, the position of his victim—his rectilinear thinking did not allow of such collisions. But Stalin did know how to contain himself, particularly at the start of his ascent. For this reason now also, on the eve of his jubilee, Lenin as yet restrained him.

Vladimir Ilich's 50th birthday was commemorated in the Moscow Party Committee, without, it is true... the hero of the hour. The evening was opened by Myasnikov. A verbose, but vapid speech was delivered by Kamenev, who emphasized that Vladimir Ilich "has no need of praise, and the proletariat is not accustomed to venerating its leaders and its best comrades with words and solemn odes." He spoke at length about the war, which had "jerked the masses into resistance," and said that Lenin could rightly be called the commander in chief of the army of the proletariat, which would lead on to victory and the crushing of the old world. Gorkiy spoke, repeating for some reason Trotskiy's words to the effect that Russian history was poor in outstanding people. Lunacharskiy spoke, as always, originally and with emotion, showing with his hands how around Lenin there would always "blow the wind, the wind of the peaks." Lines were read by the proletarian poet Aleksandrovskiy, and Olminskiy spoke about Lenin's lofty democratism. His words: "One of Ilich's most characteristic traits is his democratism. Lenin is a democrat by his very nature" appeared to Stalin at that time wholly inappropriate. Stalin would recall that these words of Olminskiy's: the war was not yet over, yet it was already a question of democracy, grated on him. Was this the most important thing for a revolutionary?! And here he heard Myasnikov offering him, Stalin, his turn at the podium.

He had prepared for the speech and had sought something unusual and suddenly decided on the day of Lenin's jubilee to speak... about the leader's ability to recognize his mistakes. Stalin spoke about the fact that Lenin had been a supporter of participation in the elections of the Witte Duma, but subsequently publicly told everyone that he had made a mistake. So in 1917 also, Stalin read softly from his text, Lenin had been mistaken in respect of the "Preparliament," but had subsequently publicly acknowledged his mistake. "Sometimes on questions of tremendous importance Comrade Lenin has confessed his shortcomings. This simplicity has captivated us particularly," Stalin concluded his speech. "This, comrades, is all that I wanted to say to you." The audience was giving Stalin's 5-minute speech scant applause, somewhat puzzled by the noncelebratory words of the people's commissar for nationalities, when Lenin suddenly entered the hall.

His speech was brief, dynamic and memorable. "I first of all, naturally, wish to thank you for two things: first, for the greetings which have been addressed to me today and, second, even more, for the fact that I have been spared having to listen to jubilee speeches." Lenin then said that anniversaries needed to be commemorated differently and began to talk about the situation in the Bolshevik Party. The successes of the revolution and the victories won had temporarily pushed aside from us the tasks which we had to tackle today in the most diverse spheres. "A tremendous amount of work confronts us, and it will be necessary to apply much more labor than has been required hitherto. Permit me to end with the wish," V.I. Lenin said, "that we in no way put our party in the position of a conceited party."

Why at that time, during the celebration in honor of the leader, he had decided to mention his "mistakes," Stalin could not now say. To show that the people's commissar for nationalities was not a "tame" individual? To stand out? Or did he know that Lenin was not afraid of any truth? About all this we can only guess. In any event, mention of this speech the first time caused Stalin himself embarrassment. When V. Adoratskiy asked Stalin permission to include in the digest of articles "About Lenin" his speech at the jubilee evening, the latter refused. His resolution in the letter is eloquent:

"Comrade Adoratskiy,

"The speech was *essentially* correctly written, although it needs editing. But I would not want it publishing: it is not pleasant speaking of Ilich's mistakes. I. St."

Subsequently, however, his "edited" speech found its way into the collected works. The embarrassment, "false modesty" and sense of conscientiousness would leave

him quite quickly. At the start of 1925 he would be agreeing with Molotov's proposal concerning the first major perpetuation of his name. M. Kalinin, chairman of the USSR Central Executive Committee, and A. Yenukidze, secretary of the Central Executive Committee, signed a Central Executive Committee Presidium decree which said: "To rename the city of Tsaritsyn the city of Stalingrad; Tsaritsyn Province, Stalingrad Province; Tsaritsyn District, Stalingrad District; Tsaritsyn Volost, Stalingrad Volost and TsaritsynRailroad Station, the Stalingrad Railroad Station."

It was 10 April 1925. Little more than a year had elapsed since Lenin's death. It was one of Stalin's first salvoes against conscience. Incidentally, Stalin experienced no embarrassment from his "humble" consent to the mass renamings inasmuch as just 5 days later in his greetings to the First All-Union Proletarian Students Conference he was calling on the future young specialists to play their part "not from fear but from conscience." Hegel, whom he disliked for his fruitless attempts to master if only the "table of contents" of his philosophy, wrote that conscience is "the process of the inward definition of good." What people call conscience was for Stalin in inward seclusion.

Fate of the Peasantry

Herbert Wells, who portrayed Russia in his literary-advocacy reporting "in darkness," was not exaggerating—it made on him "an impression of the greatest and irreparable collapse." Over boundless, giant expanses, on an endless flat plain lay hundreds of thousands of villages which with the onset of night sank, like 100, 200, 300 years ago, into age-old darkness. All these villages had once been "princed" and "boyared" and had experienced the gloom of serfdom and the hope of liberation.

The manifesto signed on 19 February 1861 by Alexander II contained the words: "Make the sign of the cross, Orthodox people, and invoke with usGod's blessing on your free labor, a guarantee of your domestic well-being and the social weal." But the peasant community, which settled its affairs at the village gathering, was, as before, weighed down by taxes: poll tax, social dues, land tax, redemption payments, public house and salt dues.... Although subsequently some of these peasant cash and in-kind taxes were abolished, the position of the Russian peasantry was always difficult. Land shortage, high duties, the burdens of all the wars which the state fought and the almost total illiteracy persisted up to the October Revolution itself. In the first 30 years of the 20th century the social stratification of the peasantry increased markedly also.

We almost all have deep roots in the peasantry. When the sunspots of childhood surface in the memory, one feels, senses, as if waking, the smell of melted snow, one sees the darkened ice on the river and one hears the crunch of the sled runners on the village street. And the faces of people long departed....

Sometimes I would like if only in my thoughts to sit all my closest forebears at one long family table. The darkened icons would see peasants sitting on the benches. Bearded muzhiks in canvas shirts with the calloused hands of eternal toilers, the kind and submissive eyes of their wives who would become old women at the age of 40 and fair-haired children. Necessarily sitting at the table would be one or two old men with a "Georgiy" who had served in the Turkish, Japanese and German wars. Community morality, which revered above all else the Orthodox faith, labor, the family and the fatherland, guided these unlettered people. There might, perhaps, have been at the table also one person who could read and write and who subscribed to NIVA.

Muzhiks, peasant women, the peasants.... There remains of them today only what we have preserved in our memory and, perhaps, that of the peasant which has remained in some of us—zeal in work, thrift, trustfulness and a readiness to come to the "assistance" of all of society. The vast majority of our compatriots lived in this peasant world at the start of the 1930's even, and it was here that a real revolution, like a bloody battle sanctioned from above, would soon unfold.

True, the first brutal clashes in the countryside had occurred in the course of nationalization of manorial, imperial estate and monastery land. The committees of poor peasants formed in mid-1918 conducted an offensive against the kulaks. More than half the land which belonged to them was taken away, machinery was confiscated and livestock distributed among the middle and poor peasants. As a result the kulak stratum diminished sharply, and the countryside became a more middle-peasant countryside. The NEP brought to the countryside the possibility of trade following fulfillment of the "set tax". Even in Lenin's lifetime, at the end of 1923, Soviet Russia sold other countries approximately 130 million poods of wheat. The very thought of purchasing grain seemed wild and blasphemous at that time....

In the restoration period it had been possible to raise the country's grain farming somewhat, although it had still far from reached the prewar level. Whereas the volume of the production of grain had grown, on the whole, the state was manifestly short of commodity grain—this was explained by both the low procurement prices and the lack of commodities for the countryside, and the producer cooperative system had taken only the first steps. The support of the poor- and middle-peasant farms was ensured by the NEP in the countryside, although, naturally, there was a revival of kulak farms in this period also. But these well-to-do farms were not dangerous to the state given, political power in the form of a dictatorship of the proletariat. After all, socialist ideals cannot be understood as calls for poverty. Marxism is opposed merely to wealth created by the exploitation of another's labor. The majority of kulaks had created their prosperous farms by their own labor.

Lenin foresaw that the socialist transformations would be most difficult in the countryside, but he believed in propaganda by electricity, tractors and pamphlets! He believed that to secure the peasantry's broad participation in the cooperative system via the NEP "a whole historical era is required. We may bring this era to a good ending in one or two decades." In one of his last works V.I. Lenin formulates a proposition of exceptional importance: "We now have a right to say that the simple growth of the cooperative system is for us identical... to the growth of socialism...." "Given full cooperativization," V.I. Lenin dictated, "we would be standing with both feet on socialist ground." Of course, Lenin's ideas of the cooperativization of agriculture were not completely developed, many details of the realization of his guidelines had not been disclosed and the stages had not been determined, nor could this have been the case in 1923.

The lowering of taxation afforded the middle peasants and the kulaks an opportunity to increase farm product, primarily grain, surpluses, and simultaneously commodity starvation in the country intensified, and for this reason the peasants were in no hurry to sell grain—what they needed was not paper money but machinery and other industrial commodities. Difficulties in supplies to the cities arose. A grain crisis loomed on the horizon of 1927. The kulaks and the middle peasants even were holding on to the grain and waiting for more profitable prices and commodities.

The opposition attempted to take advantage of the growing difficulties for its own ends. Thus Kamenev, addressing the 15th party congress, accused the leadership of underestimating the capitalist elements in the countryside and essentially called for a toughening of policy against the kulak. Representatives of the opposition had proposed even earlier the forcible confiscation from the kulak and middle peasant of the 150-200 million poods of grain which were lacking for normal supply. Discussing the report which Stalin was preparing for the congress, the Politburo had sufficient wisdom to reject this path. In the political report to the congress Stalin, who shared Bukharin's views at that time, unequivocally said: "The comrades who think that it is possible and necessary to have done with the kulak by way of administrative measures, via the GPU: say the word, apply the seal, and that's it, are wrong. This is an easy means, but far from effective. The kulak needs to be taken by measures of an economic nature. And on the basis of Soviet legality. And Soviet legality is not an empty phrase." Who would not agree with such conclusions? Are these words not correct! And it was Stalin who spoke them!

But the whole point is that he was characterized not only by frequent gaps between word and deed but also a poor knowledge of the peasant question. In all his life he had in fact visited rural areas just once: this was in 1928, during his trip to Siberia in connection with the grain procurements. From that time through the end of his life Stalin put in no appearance in the countryside. The armchair knowledge of agriculture was expressed particularly strongly subsequently in the adoption of a whole number of individual crude erroneous decisions with far-reaching consequences.

Sensible proposals geared to the elimination of grain difficulties in the country were submitted at the 15th congress, which adopted the policy of collectivization of agriculture. The speech of A.I. Mikoyan, in particular, said that a mass of commodities was becoming bogged down in the cities and not reaching the countryside, where the demand for them was tremendous. "In order for a considerable breakthrough in grain procurement an emphatic change is needed. This breakthrough must consist of the transfer of commodities from the cities to the countryside even at the expense of a temporary (several months) emptying of urban markets in order to obtain grain from the peasantry. If we do not make this change, we will have extraordinary difficulties which will be echoed throughout the economy."

The emphasis in a strengthening of the alliance of the working class and the peasantry and the solution of problems of the countryside was now being put, seemingly, not only on political but also *economic* means. So Lenin believed also: it was a system of "civilized cooperative workers" which would make it possible to combine personal and public interest to the maximum extent. After all, this was the most difficult aspect of the socialist transformations! The main thing was not to put the emphasis merely on command, bureaucratic, directive methods of this combination, it was necessary to unfailingly take into consideration economic laws and use economic levers in the solution of the most important program, of historic significance, of cooperativization of the peasantry.

A special major report on the party's work in the countryside, which was delivered at the congress by V.M. Molotov, drew the correct conclusions, in the main. In particular, the emphasis was put on the fact that "the development of the individual farm along the path toward socialism is a slow path, a long path. It will take many years to switch from the individual to the public (collective) farm." It was mentioned that coercion in this process was impermissible. "Whoever," Molotov continued, "proposes to us a policy of the compulsory confiscation of 150-200 million poods of grain if only from 10 percent of peasant farms, that is, not only from the kulak but also from part of the middle-peasant stratum of the countryside, whatever the pious wishes with which this proposal is imbued, is an enemy of the workers and peasants, an enemy of the worker-peasant alliance." At this point in the report Stalin loudly articulated:

"Right!"

On several further occasions in the course of the report he encouraged Molotov with such exclamations.

The congress had, it seemed, formulated a policy of the extensive use of economic methods in the formation of cooperatives on the basis of observance of a voluntary approach and consistency. The resolution on Molotov's report said plainly that experience had confirmed "wholly and fully the soundness of Lenin's cooperative plan, by which precisely socialist industry would via the cooperative system lead the small peasant farm along the path toward socialism." The congress emphatically condemned attempts to impose command methods on the peasant issue.

All the odder was the decision of Stalin and Molotov, at that time secretary of the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee, for work in the countryside, to speed up the process not simply of the formation of cooperatives but primarily collectivization. Shortly after the congress Stalin began increasingly to voice the opinion concerning the need to "jack up the pace" in industrialization and collectivization also. He liked very much an article by Academician S.G. Strumilin, in which the latter formulated the credo of a "directive" economy: our task is not to study the economy but to refashion it... no laws bind us... there are no fortresses which the Bolsheviks could not take... the question of the tempo is decided by people. Stalin repeatedly quoted, borrowed and adjured audiences and readers with the phrases to which he had taken a liking. They expressed better than anything his own intentions.

Menacing directives demanding increased pressure on the kulak and the start of direct work on collectivization were sent to the provinces under Stalin's signature at the end of December 1927, immediately after the congress. It is possible that this decision was prompted by the grain difficulties also, but the attempt to tackle the food problem by way of the artificial acceleration of the socialization process was the first major deviation from Lenin's cooperative plan.

I believe that the far-reaching nature of the social revolution in the countryside, which the general secretary had decided to speed up from above, could not have failed to have won for him the sympathies of a majority in the party. Radical, leftist sentiments continued after the revolution to live on steadily in the mass of communists—many wished to solve "at a stroke" age-old problems which required a balanced and calm approach. After long reflection Stalin adopted a policy of the complete collectivization of millions of peasant farms, knowing that the majority of semi-literate muzhiks were not ready for this. Stalin's utopian-dogmatic view of the solution of the peasant question was essentially expressed in the intention to make the rural producer an unthinking "cog" in the agrarian machine. For this it was necessary to effect the alienation of the peasant from the means of production and distribution of the product. Stalin had essentially decided to change the social status of the peasant as a free producer, making him a workman without rights. Economic laws would come to be replaced by command-economy laws which gradually killed off the NEP, the peasants' material interest and their enterprise and diligence in work.

Some of the left who had been laid low and who had been close in the past to Trotskiyism adopted an approbatory attitude toward the "decisive measures" in the countryside and supported Stalin. Pyatakov, Krestinskiy, Antonov-Ovseyenko, Radek, Preobrazhenskiy and certain others made penitential statements and were restored to the party. Pyatakov became Gosbank chairman, then deputy people's commissar for heavy industry. However, both he and his "associates" drank fully in 1937 from the bitter cup—Stalin forgave no one his past "free-thinking".

The second major deviation from Lenin's ideas was the use of coercion as an instrument of economic rearrangement. The First Five-Year Plan provided for the cooperativization to have within the 5 years encompassed up to 85 percent of peasant farms, including up to 20 percent in the form of kolkhozes. However, under pressure from above decisions to reduce this timeframe to 1 year were adopted in the Ukraine, North Caucasus and Lower and Central Volga! The policy of the extensive use of coercion in respect of the kulak and on the collectivization question as a whole in fact signified the end of the NEP. This was how this was effected by Stalin himself.

Having journeyed to Siberia in January 1928, Stalin put particular emphasis in his speeches at meetings of party and economic activists on increased pressure on the kulak. The trip resembled a go-round of his garrison commanders. Upon his arrival at a post, local party and soviet officials would be summoned to Stalin and they would be attended briefly, followed by Stalin's invariable conclusion:

"You are working badly! You are doing nothing and indulging the kulak. Make sure there are no kulak agents amongst you.... We cannot tolerate this outrage much longer."

The irritated dressing down would be followed by specific recommendations:

"Inspect the kulak farms, the barns and granaries there are full of grain, there is grain in the sheds in view of the shortage of storage room, there are on the kulak farms grain surpluses of 50-60 poods per farm...."

Stalin concluded all his speeches identically, proposing:

a) demand of the kulaks the immediate surrender of all grain surpluses at state prices;

b) in the event of the kulaks' refusal to submit to the law, institute proceedings against them in accordance with article 107 of the RSFSR Criminal Code... and distribute 25 percent of the grain confiscated among the poor and weak middle peasants;

c) individual peasant farms, which are the least marketable farms, must unswervingly be united in collective farms, in kolkhozes.

This pressure style became widespread and was encouraged. The theoretical and political substantiation of the slogan fired off by some zealous administrators—"For a Fantastic Pace of Collectivization!"—was contained in Stalin's article "Year of the Great Change". Certain changes in people's mood and social consciousness in support of cooperativization (not necessarily of kolkhozes! This was just one form) were perceived by the general secretary as the universal readiness of the middle peasant to enter the kolkhozes. Decisive new directives and instructions followed....

A week after this 50th birthday Stalin addressed a conference of Marxist agrarian experts. His speech was notable for the fact that before the Central Committee decree had been adopted he declared: "We have switched from a policy of *limitation* of the exploiter tendencies of the kulaks to one of *elimination* of the kulaks as a class." This was an extraordinarily dreadful decision, which affected most tragically the fate of millions of people. The year of 1937 is considered in the public mind the apogee of violence and lawlessness in our country. It affected the intellectual stratum of society to a considerable extent, and it is not surprising that so much is being written about this, making precisely this year the culminating point of historical attention. At the end of the 1920's-start of the 1930's the "iron heel" had caught a greater number of people, among whom, possibly, were many real opponents of collectivization also, but immeasurably more innocents: middle peasants ascribed to the kulaks and simply "obstinate" peasants and their families.

Historians have still to investigate the details of this entire process. The socialization and cooperativization of small farms was, possibly, a historical necessity. However, was the mass violence in this economic revolution inevitable? It may be said without fear of error: no, there was no such need. The socialization process has to be voluntary!

At Stalin's insistence a document was drawn up to facilitate the de-kulakization "outlining" the parameters of the kulak: annual per capita income in excess of R300 (but not less than R1,500 per family), involvement in trade, renting of implements, machinery and premises, existence of a mill, creamery and so forth. The presence of just one of these indications made a peasant a kulak. As we can see, not the social but the property criterion was applied, which is insufficient for definition of a "class". Essentially, a broad opportunity for putting various social elements under the de-kulakization head was created. Violence had a field day, and the peasantry experienced the severest upheaval in the 20th century, and beyond, perhaps. The most diligent, skillful and enterprising workers suffered. Of course, there were among them many who had adopted a very guarded attitude toward the new authorities also, but Stalin and his assistants had long since attributed them to the enemies of socialism, who were to be liquidated.

A special commission had by January 1930 prepared the draft Central Committee decree "The Pace of Collectivization and the State's Measures To Assist Kolkhoz Building". The timeframe had been halved by Stalin (single-handedly!). Without any scientific substantiation and consideration of all the positive and negative factors the general secretary insistently would demand: faster, faster, faster! Summaries, reports and broadsheets in the provincial committees and volosts. Masses of agents. Some promised tractors, kerosene, salt, matches, soap: "You will have everything, the sooner you join the kolkhoz!" Others operated more decisively: "Whoever does not wish to join the kolkhoz is an enemy of Soviet power!" Passions, conflicts, sawed-off shotguns, the killing of party workers and kolkhoz activists, numerous letters of complaint to Moscow, petition-bearers seeking the truth.... Such was the outward environment of the initially dramatic and subsequently tragic change which the peasantry underwent. The objective need for cooperativization, which had gradually begun to materialize in various voluntary forms, was subsequently "buttressed" by a whole system of tough, ruthless measures of an administrative, political and legal nature.

According to some of our calculations, by the time of the start of the mass collectivization kulaks in the country constituted no more than 3 percent of the total mass of peasant farms. The word "de-kulakization," under which came approximately 3 million peasant farms, and not only kulak farms, entered the Russian language at that time. Many hundreds of thousands of families were evicted in full to remote parts following the confiscation from them of all means of production, valuables and real estate. Hardly anyone could give the precise figure of people caught up in this storm of lawlessness.

According to some figures, more than 150,000 kulak families were sent to Siberia and the North in 1929, some 240,000 in 1930 and more than 285,000 in 1931. But, after all, de-kulakization was carried out both in 1928 and after 1931.... According to our estimates, from 8.5 to 9 million men, women, old people and children came under de-kulakization, the bulk of whom were torn away from their familiar haunts, where remained the graves of their ancestors, their native parts, the entire unsophisticated peasant goods and chattels.... Many were shot for showing resistance, many perished on the roads of Siberia and the North. In a number of places in the grip of the inertial force of social violence and sometimes material interest also the middle peasants were subjected to de-kulakization also. Altogether, according to our calculations, approximately 6-8 percent of peasant farms were caught up in the gale of dispossession of the kulaks.

Of course, the kulak farms which did exist in agriculture by the start of collectivization represented a certain danger to this process. We know that at the time of the

grain requisitioning and the grain monopoly it was the kulaks who organized resistance to the authorities. The food requisition detachments, committees of poor peasants, the creation of special units—all this was brought about by the need to protect the poor peasants against the kulaks. It was evidently necessary to apply well-conceived administrative measures against the groups of kulaks which were conducting a direct anti-Soviet struggle. But, after all, the bulk of the kulak farms could have been enlisted in the socialization and cooperativization process by way of differentiated taxation and production quotas and commitments. This was not done. The denial to the kulak of the mere possibility of participating in the general process put him on the other side of the barrier, where he was left with a tragic choice: to fight or await his lot—dispossession and deportation.

It is of interest, perhaps, to quote in connection with the kulak question an extract from Stalin's conversation with Churchill on 14 August 1942. The negotiations were over. Stalin had invited the British prime minister to dine at his Kremlin apartment.

In Churchill's memoirs this appeared thus. The prime minister asked Stalin:

"Are the burdens of this war taking their toll on you personally as severely as the collectivization policy which you carried out?"

"This subject," Churchill wrote, "now enlivened the leader."

"The collectivization policy was a terrible struggle," Stalin said.

"I had thought that it was hard for you. After all, you were dealing not with several tens of thousands of aristocrats or major landowners but with millions of small people...."

"With 10 million," Stalin said, raising his hand. "It was a terrible business, it lasted 4 years. To spare itself periodic starvation it was essential that Russia plow the land by tractor. We were forced into this. Many peasants agreed to go along with us. To some of those who remained stubborn we gave land in the North for individual cultivation. But the bulk of them were highly unpopular and were done away with by the farm laborers themselves...."

It is well known that, Churchill having started the ball rolling, the figure of 10 million began to wander around the pages of the press. Our figures are somewhat less, although this by no means, of course, lessens the scale of the human tragedy. It was the first mass bloody terror unleashed by Stalin in his own country. This was the second period in Stalin's life since the 13th party congress in which he forged straight ahead.

And the collectivization continued. There were tens of thousands of letters to Moscow addressed to Stalin containing complaints, pain, bewilderment, fear and hatred. The machine of lawlessness which had been set in motion continued to grind human destinies. It was only in March 1930 that Stalin, whom the scale of the moral protest and social resistance of the peasantry could not have failed to have reached, wrote the not-unknown article "Dizzy With Success". The article's second paragraph reads today like a sinister ode to social violence: "It is a fact that on 20 February of this year 50 percent of peasant farms throughout the USSR had been collectivized. This means that we had *overfulfilled* the 5-year plan of collectivization by 20 February 1930 by a factor of more than two."

Percentages, plan figures, its double "overfulfillment".... Did it never occur to Stalin that behind all these (and a multitude of other!) figures were human destinies?! After all, he did not cite the other figures: how many people deported, depossessed, wiped out, perished....

It is sometimes said that the process of such a giant transformation could not have been carried out painlessly, smoothly, without mistakes. But who gave Stalin the right to preclude the ordinary individual's freedom of choice and decide everything for him? Where was the attention to Lenin's warnings "Do not dare to command!" and, finally, to his own statements and assurances: "The kulak must be taken by measures of an economic nature and on the basis of Soviet legality!"? It had for Stalin become the customary rule to treat as fiction any decisions, conclusions and propositions if they failed at this moment or the other to correspond to his plans.

The article unequivocally concludes (as if there had been a referendum in the country on this issue!) that neither an association for joint cultivation of the land nor a commune would today be suitable for the socialist transformation of the countryside. Only kolkhozes! This form of agricultural cooperative was the sole acceptable one, decided landowner Stalin, who would never again visit any village. Subsequently, as N.S. Khrushchev declared at the 20th congress, he "studied agriculture only from films." This, of course, was not entirely so, but it is difficult to imagine a leader who could make a correct judgment on any problem merely by staying in his office. The most lamentable thing characterizing Stalin as a whole was that he never admitted *his own mistakes,* never! Even in 1945, speaking at a reception in honor of army commanders, he would say: *"Our government* has made many mistakes." And here also, in the article, he wrote that those guilty of "excesses," "dizziness from success" and "bureaucratic rule by edict" were, it transpired, only in the localities: in the provinces, volosts and collectives! Stalin himself, of course, was "not guilty" in the least of the numerous distortions, excesses and lawlessness. But his direct instructions, directives, control figures and "coverage" competition?

Following "Dizzy With Success," a new stream of letters from the peasants to Stalin poured forth. He was forced once again to explain the party's position on the collectivization issue, wittingly or unwittingly at times discrediting by his generalizations the very idea of a restructuring of the countryside on the paths of gradual cooperativization. In his replies to the kolkhoz members the general secretary wrote:

"Some people think that the 'Dizzy With Success' article was the result of Stalin's personal initiative. This is, of course, rubbish. It was the *reconnaissance in depth* of the Central Committee" (my italics—D.V.).

And, further:

"It is difficult stopping in time the furious race of and turning onto the right path people rushing headlong toward the abyss."

Stalin preferred to respond to social, economic, cultural and spiritual questions with military terms: "reconnaissance," "front," "offensive," "retreat," "regrouping of forces," "bringing up the rear services," "bringing up reserves," "complete elimination of the enemy". It was a question, of course, of the "elimination of the kulaks as a class". And despite everything here, the acknowledgment that masses of people were "rushing headlong toward the abyss". As if summing up his understanding of the essence and methods of the transformation of the countryside, Stalin declared at the conference of Marxist agrarian experts in December 1929: in order for the small-peasant countryside to take the socialist road it is necessary to *"implant (Stalin's emphasis—D.V.) in the countryside large-scale socialist farms in the form of sovkhozes and kolkhozes." Incidentally, 10 years later an editorial article in BOLSHEVIK would say the following on this "agrarian" speech of Stalin's:*

"The Bolshevik Party under the leadership of Comrade Stalin set a stunning example of the solution of the peasant question.... The triumph of Stalin's program of the socialist recarving of the peasant farm is the complete collectivization and elimination on the basis thereof of the kulaks as a class. Comrade Stalin had set forth this combat program of the recarving of the peasant farm on a socialist basis in a document of the greatest theoretical force, in his speech at the conference of Marxist agrarians."

On the basis of the work of the special legal commission on the kulak the Central Committee decree "Measures To Eliminate Kulak Farms in Areas of Complete Collectivization" was adopted, at Stalin's insistence, in January 1930. This party directive increased tension in the countryside inasmuch as, in accordance with the decree, the way to the kolkhozes was closed to the kulaks. The position of this group of the peasantry was tragic and hopeless. The kulaks' protests against the Soviet authorities intensified, assuming great dimensions at times.

The methods of compulsion, violence and bureaucratic rule which had once been propounded by Trotskiy were seized upon by Stalin and used to the maximum extent, and all this signified a profound retreat from Lenin's policy in respect of the peasantry. Industry was only just developing tractor production. Grain farming thereupon began to "skid," as, immediately after, did animal husbandry. And, what is most important, the peasant's enterprise was immediately "hacked down," and productivity became lower than on the individual farm. The consequences were exceptionally difficult. The mass slaughter of livestock began in many areas: the numbers thereof had fallen by a factor two to three by 1933 compared with 1929. To prevent the salting of meat the sale of salt was sharply restricted. The areas of land sown to crops declined....

Once, at a rare moment when he was almost wavering in remaining true to his choice, Stalin recalled the words of the old rebel Bakunin, for whom somewhere in the recesses of his heart he nurtured respect: "The will is all-powerful; there is nothing it cannot do." Strength of will Stalin really valued in people, we repeat, higher than all intellectual "virtues". A lofty end always justified for him any means of achieving it. He believed that the peasants simply did not understand what was being prepared for and offered them. The general secretary had no thought that the program which he was accelerating frequently appeared as a "nightmare of good". People who opposed it seemed to him not simply half-wits but primarily political intriguers incapable of seeing all the advantages of the accelerated offensive in the countryside. That the "offensive" had to be conducted against a person in a homespun peasant shirt, frequently wearing bast sandals, illiterate, with his own traditions and concerns and attached by the umbilical cord of his whole life to his plot of land was of no concern to the general secretary. The muzhik was only a *means* of achieving lofty ends. Like both he himself and all his associates.

All this time, particularly as of the start of 1928 (Stalin's trip to Siberia), a muffled struggle was under way in the Politburo. Stalin's policy of radicalization was at first cautiously and then increasingly persistently opposed by Bukharin, who was supported by Rykov and Tomskiy. This was not a grouping of the "right," as it would shortly be called. It was simply that these leaders with their own views were propounding a more moderate, balanced approach to the problem of the peasantry. They also had a more composed attitude toward the so-called "Shakhtinskoye Affair," on the basis of which Stalin posed squarely the question of the "speediest replacement and control" of the experts bequeathed the country by the old system. Without mentioning names, the speeches of Stalin and Bukharin began to contain criticism (in Aesopian language) of one another. Thus on 28 May 1928 Stalin spoke in the Red Professors Institute, where Bukharin, who had recently been promoted here and who had become the sole academician among the top leaders, enjoyed particularly great popularity. He had resolved to question Bukharin's position on the

peasant issue and the solution of the grain problem, exaggerating it to "defense of the kulaks". In his big speech, for Stalin had prepared carefully, he made several attacks, whose addressee everyone knew.

"There are people," Stalin read out, "who see a way out of the situation in a return to the kulak farm and the development and spread of the kulak farm.... These people believe that Soviet power may be based simultaneously on two opposite classes—the class of kulaks, whose economic principle is exploitation of the working class, and the class of workers...."

Stalin went on:

"They sometimes counterpose the kolkhoz movement to the cooperative movement, obviously believing that the kolkhozes are one thing, and the cooperative system, another. This is, of course, wrong. Some people are even going so far as to counterpose the kolkhozes to the Lenin's cooperative plan. Such a counterpoise has nothing in common with the truth, of course."

Bukharin understood better than anyone why Stalin was speeding up kolkhoz building—confiscating grain from the collective farm was easier! Stalin knew that it was simpler compelling production incorporated in a command system to return once again virtually to the practice of "war communism". The fixed tax had come to be replaced by the obligatory "surrender," and not the sale, of grain. Here are some figures. In 1928, at the start of the collectivization, given a gross grain harvest of 4.5 billion poods, the peasants sold the state only 680 million poods. In 1932 the gross harvest constituted 4.3 billion, but the state was now obtaining 1.3 billion poods! Given a roughly identicalgross grain harvest, the state was able to double the commodity amount of grain obtained from the peasants. But at what a price!

From this moment the position of the peasantry became very difficult. Where all the grain was "pulled"—North Caucasus, the Volga region, the Ukraine and other regions—a period of cruel famine set in....

It was not only the kulak who was liquidated, the individual peasant generally was squeezed out also. At a meeting in the Central Committee in 1934 Stalin declared unequivocally:

"We need to create a situation whereby things are somewhat worse for the individual in the sense of the attached personal plot in order that he have fewer opportunities than the kolkhoz member.... We need to increase the press of taxation...."

And this press weighed down increasingly squarely not only on the "individuals" but also on the kolkhoz members, making them not masters on their own land but some group without rights. It was this that Bukharin feared most.

Having distorted Bukharin's position beyond recognition and having portrayed him as a "defender of the kulak" and a person who failed to understand the essence of Lenin's ideas of joint labor, Stalin for the first time brought his disagreements with Bukharin into the open.

In his public speeches Bukharin spoke of the impermissibility of bureaucratic rule in the economy. The Politburo's principal theoretician propounded in them the following idea: without a thriving agriculture a successful program of industrialization is impossible, and for this reason pressure, requisitions and coercion in kolkhoz building were impermissible. At the start of 1928 the outcome of the struggle was still unclear. Initially it was only Molotov and Voroshilov who supported Stalin unequivocally, and Rykov and Tomskiy, as already mentioned, Bukharin. Kuybyshev, Kalinin and Rudzutak were wavering and endeavoring to reconcile the two most influential members of the Politburo. But, as always, Stalin was in apparat, backstage dealings more skillful and subtle.

The All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee and Central Control Commission April and, subsequently, November plenums occupied a hardline position in respect of the alternative proposed on the peasant question by Bukharin. Essentially the line of Stalin and his sympathizers reanimated many methods of the civil war. Stalin not simply "urged on" the transformations but pulled down completely all that was old, and this implied the most wide-ranging violence. Bukharin, on the other hand, proposed an evolutionary path of transformation of the countryside, in the course of which the cooperative system and the public sector would gradually supplant the individual farm economically, by force of example. The "party's favorite" was not, I believe, right in all things, but Bukharin's struggle against the triumph of the evil force employed in respect of millions of citizens of the Soviet state was justified from both moral and political considerations. Bukharin undoubtedly had a more profound grasp of the essence of Lenin's concept of joint labor.

Given patient joint comradely work and discussion of the most acute problems in a spirit of party scrupulousness the terror and tragedy, which were no less, and in many cases, we repeat, greater in terms of scale and consequences than the terror of 1937-1938, could have been avoided. Of course, the violence in both cases was not simply deplorable but profoundly criminal. The "successful" operation involving the "elimination of the kulaks as a class" lent Stalin assurance as to his "rightness," and he sensed his dictatorial possibilities and did not stop short of conclusively eliminating all who had ever opposed the party course or *might have* opposed it.

Having accomplished a forcible revolution from above, Stalin condemned agriculture to vegetation for many decades, despite the multitude of subsequent reforms

and decrees. Free trade died out rapidly: the kolkhozes lacked commodity stocks. But Stalin continued to look for methods of tightening command control of the hushed villages.... At numerous meetings the general secretary would paint a picture of the victories of the kolkhoz system and adopt decisions pertaining to a "radical" improvement in the state of affairs in agriculture, but the "state" invariably deteriorated. Fear and indifference came to the village. Orders were given to the kolkhozes about everything, and no one even remembered their "cooperative" nature.

A Central Committee plenum which discussed measures for protection against the "squandering of kolkhoz land" was held 10 years after the start of the mass collectivization, in May 1939. Molotov chaired the plenum, Andreyev delivered the report. Stalin interjected incessantly. The participants sought agonizingly to prohibit, limit, bind, tax something else.... It was clear from Andreyev's report that the kolkhoz members' productivity was continuing to constantly decline. There were no earnings. The yield was falling. There was a crisis in agriculture. What measures did Stalin propose, given the yessing of people from the ranks of his associates? The following. An obligatory minimum of labor-days worked (otherwise the application of strict measures); the "paring down" of the personal plots (to take away the means of subsistance and compel more active work on the kolkhoz); a search for what further could be socialized or taxed (they went as far as personal gardens); increased concentration of the rural population (liquidation of homesteads); prohibiting the kolkhoz members from cutting the hay for their personal livestock....

When all these "new measures" for the further messing up of agriculture had been formulated, Stalin began to harbor doubts:

"If this thing (the decree—D.V.) is promulgated, will there not be some disarray in the kolkhoz business?"

Unanimous voices from the floor: no, on the contrary, they would smarten up.... The people have been waiting for it for a long time.

The habit of speaking for the people, completely alienated from having any say on their own fate, had already been cultivated in the unthinking servility which the leader expected. And this had been initiated at the end of the 1920's, when the first casualty of Stalin's Caesarism was the peasantry.

Thus died the NEP, thus was the moderate line in the Politburo leadership cut short. Thus was the withering away for many years of collective leadership initiated, thus did Stalin's avowed aspiration to decide all questions individually prevail. The tremendous magnetic force of socialism born in the world following the Great October Socialist Revolution began to weaken.

Wishing to strike as painfully as possible, the enemies of socialism still turn primarily to our peasant matters. There's no denying: Stalin provided abundant food and a wealth of arguments for the disparagement of once so attractive ideas. This, for example, is what R. Conquest declares in this connection in his book "Harvest of Sorrow": "In the period from 1929 through 1932 Stalin struck a double blow at the peasantry by the liquidation of the kulak and the forcible collectivization."

At the height of the Great French Revolution, when the majority of its leaders had no feeling of the approaching disaster, Saint-Just, sensing the subterranean currents of the approaching crisis, threw out: "The revolution has stiffened." Having decided on the unprecedented use of violence against his own people, Stalin cut the veins of a vast social group of the population of the country, which had obtained so much from the revolution, but which was unable on account of Caesarism to enjoy its fruits.

As of the end of 1928 a new stage begins in Stalin's biography characterized not only by the removal of all immediate rivals in the leadership but also by the start of all that we have become accustomed to call the "cult of personality". Bukharin's fall was a notable landmark in this process.

The Bukharin Drama

I understand that my attempts to paint Stalin's political portrait would be impossible without illustration of the people from the ranks of his associates, cofighters, opponents and unquestioning appeasers and yesmen. In order to show one further facet of Stalin let us dwell on the Bukharin drama in the 1920's—the tragedy would be later.

There were close amicable relations between Stalin and Bukharin for a long time. As of 1927 Bukharin, at Stalin's insistence, lived in the Kremlin, and after N.S. Alliluyeva's death, they swapped apartments. Stalin explained this by a desire to free himself from constant recollection of the fatal day of his wife's suicide. Of a refined nature, Nikolay Ivanovich Bukharin held sacred feelings of friendship, decency and sincerity in relations with Stalin. They were always on "thou" terms with each other. Stalin would address Bukharin simply as Nikolay, and the latter would usually call the general secretary Koba. From 1924 through 1928 Stalin would always listen to Bukharin attentively and emphasized repeatedly that his "theoretical mind was valued highly by Lenin" and that the party treasured this natural talent. For Nikolay Ivanovich personal friendship was a spiritually lofty, sacred feeling, and he could not have simply brushed it aside as Stalin quite unexpectedly did in public in April 1929 at the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee and Central Control Commission plenum.

Stalin began his speech precisely with his relations with Bukharin:

"Comrades! I shall not touch on the personal aspect (he already had!—D.V.), although the personal aspect

played quite a substantial part in the speeches of some comrades from the Bukharin group. I shall not since the personal aspect is a trifling matter, and it is not worth dwelling on trifling matters. Bukharin spoke about personal correspondence with me. He perused several letters, from which it can be seen that we, while yesterday even personal friends, *are now at odds with him in policy.* I believe that all these complaints and whining are not worth a plugged nickel. We are not a family circle, a cooperative of personal friends, but a political party of the working class."

Having gone on to employ K. Marx's words in respect of Danton, Stalin attempted to persuade the Politburo and the Central Committee that Bukharin, although at the top of the Mountain, was to a considerable extent the leader of the Swamp.

All was, seemingly, correct: the interests of the cause were higher than personal relations. But how much, nonetheless, there was in Stalin's words that was repellant and simply loathsome: recollections of friendship not being worth a "plugged nickel," we not being a "collective of personal friends". The naive idealist Bukharin had received from Stalin one further lesson in Machiavellianism. His friendship, counsel, opinions and relations were for Stalin merely a "trifling matter," apparently.

But it had not always been that way. This is what I was told by Aleksey Pavlovich Balashov, a member of the bureau of Stalin's secretariat, who was entrusted with polling the members of the Politburo. When the poll results were brought to Stalin, he would frequently, without raising his head from his papers, throw out:

"What about Bukharin, 'for'?"

Nikolay Ivanovich's opinion, a senior official of our party believed, was very important for Stalin for determining his own attitude toward the matter in hand.

So what kind of person was Bukharin? Why of all Lenin's associates remaining in party office after his death was it Bukharin for whom people had the warmest recollections with a smack of irreparable sorrow? Why did Lenin call him the "party's favorite," and Stalin ultimately do away with this outstanding figure, the centenary of whose birth we commemorated this year?

Well, N.I. Bukharin was born in 1888 in Moscow to the family of a schoolteacher who had risen to the level of government official seventh class (rank of councillor of the court). Bukharin's fate confirms once again that the majority of leaders of the October Revolution were not ofproletarian origins. And there is an objective explanation for this: it is difficult being a leader without a vast amount of assimilated intellectual culture. Those from the more or less well-to-do strata could chiefly at that time assimilate it and develop and devise a procedure of its use in social practice. Bukharin become a member of the party in 1906. There are interesting notes of his young friend of those years, Ilya Ehrenburg, about the future theoretician's early years. As a student of the economics department of the legal faculty, Bukharin participated most actively in propaganda activity among the workers and students. It is told how his short, agile, lean figure with sparse beard and red hair over his high forehead could often be seen in those years not only at student meetings at Moscow University but also at enterprises of Zamoskvoretskiy District. After his arrest in 1910, he managed to escape from Onega, a small township of Arkhangelsk Province, and was soon in foreign parts. Bukharin would return to Russia only after the revolution.

His 6 years as an exile were for him extraordinarily fruitful. He made the acquaintance there of Lenin, who always treated Bukharin not simply with feelings of warmth but also great liking, which did not, it is true, prevent Ilich conducting tough discussions with him. The theoretician beginner was always in libraries and quickly mastered German, French and English. Nikolay Ivanovich prepared overseas the manuscripts of his two important theoretical works: "The Political Economy of the Rentier" and "The World Economy and Imperialism". Describing a state which had fallen into the hands of a tyrant, Bukharin employed an artistic image borrowed from Jack London. He wrote prophetically at that time that such a dictator would tread with his "iron heel" on people's faces. This was an abstract, but prophetic warning against absolute rule and militarist power, for which nothing is sacred.

In New York Bukharin made Trotskiy's acquaintance. It was there that news of the February revolution reached him. The road to Russia was a long one; in Japan Bukharin was arrested and then was taken into custody in the motherland, Vladivostok, for propaganda among the soldiers and managed to reach Moscow only in May 1917. Shortly after, Bukharin became editor of PRAVDA and remained such with one short break for almost 12 years. As editor of the principal party newspaper, Bukharin participated actively in the formulation of party policy and propaganda thereof. He was a person who was unable either to dissemble, pretend or "cultivate diplomacy". Thus in the dramatic weeks of the struggle for the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany Bukharin, we recall, became virtually the leader of the opposition: for 2 months he headed various "left" groups which were opposed to the Brest peace and which preached revolutionary war. Bukharin's left-communist predilections were no accident—during the civil war he was the personification of the most radical "left," and it was Bukharin who was an ideologist of the so-called policy of "war communism" also.

In the work "The Economy of the Transitional Period" Bukharin undertook a defense of this theory and practice. Bukharin termed the elements of violence and rule

by decree in the economy "costs of the revolution". These "costs" were essentially "revolutionary law". When barricades were built in the civil war from streetcars and railcars, the economy suffered most. The proletarian revolution, according to Bukharin, initially destroys the economy, but then creates it rapidly. Whether Bukharin wished this subsequently or not, at the time of the revolution and the civil war he, we repeat, was a singer of "war communism".

These views of his were expressed most in the widely known work "The ABC of Communism," which Ye. Preobrazhenskiy, also a capable young theoretician, helped him prepare. The "ABC," like an encyclopedia, set forth the basic propositions concerning revolution, the class struggle, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the role of the working class, the communists' program and so forth. The "ABC" was very successful, was reprinted approximately 20 times and was disseminated overseas. Thanks to this popular booklet, his name in the party and the country became no less well known than the names of Trotskiy, Zinovyev and Kamenev.

On the strength of his book Bukharin was long judged in the West to be the "high priest of orthodox Marxism". And there were grounds for this. This, for example, is what Bukharin wrote in his digest of theoretical articles "Attack". The coming far-reaching world revolution would include "defensive and offensive wars on the part of the victorious proletariat: defensive, to beat off the attacking imperialists, offensive, to finish off the retreating bourgeoisie." World revolution would engulf one country after another. This would not be prevented by "all these leagues of nations and other rubbish, which social-treachery gangs are humming by ear." In the revolution and the civil war Bukharin represented a type of revolutionary radical prepared to accede to the most extreme measures. Should he be condemned for this? Evidently not, such were the times. At that time any suprastate, universal ideas appeared simply bourgeois. Much of what we are saying today would at that time have simply horrified not only the orthodox Marxist, as Bukharin seemed to all at that time.

All the more astonishing was the rapid change which occurred inBukharin's frame of mind several years later. It may be said correctly that the evolution in his views occurred under the influence of Lenin and his last works. During Lenin's illness Bukharin frequently called on the leader and often discussed at length alone with him urgent questions of the theory and practice of socialist building. We can only guess at all this and build assumptions, it is true, however, whatever the case, as of 1922-1923 Bukharin began to personify the moderate wing in the Bolshevik leadership.

There have in our history frequently been, unfortunately, in high party and state office people (Stalin is the most striking example) who have had an inadequate, primitive and vulgar knowledge of economics and its laws and "secrets". An ability to dictate directives, proclaim slogans of the "the economy must be economical" type and build today endless plans for tomorrow, and tomorrow, for the day after tomorrow, without taking real stock of what has been contemplated and done, was considered sufficient for ordering the fate of many millions of people. The lessons of Stalin's biography and the activity of his associates are an imperative reminder that it is not enough for a political leader to have merely ideological conviction as to the truth of this "platform" or the other and a sincere desire to materialize it in practice.

What is needed is not simply competence but something higher: if not genius, then necessarily talent. And today, upon familiarization with the numerous of works of N.I. Bukharin, on which for Soviet people a taboo was stamped for a whole 50 years, we see that he was the type of leader of Lenin's mold: a convinced, knowledgeable and gifted individual.

Whereas Trotskiy saw the NEP as the first sign of the "degeneration of Bolshevism," Bukharin, on the contrary, saw it as a magnificent historical opportunity to combine the new possibilities which socialism would afford the economy and society with the entrepreneurial element of the old, rejected structures. What one leader of the revolution considered the "Trojan horse of Thermidor," the other defined as "an additional lever in the process of social rearrangement." At the Fourth Comintern Congress Bukharin declared: "The NEP is not only a strategic retreat but also the solution of an important social-organizational problem, namely, that of the correlation between the sectors of production which we have to rationalize and those which we are not in a position to rationalize. Let us be frank: we have been attempting to assume the organization of everything—even the organization of the peasants and millions of petty producers.... From the viewpoint of economic rationality this was madness."

Once, somewhere around the start of 1925, there was a long "economic discussion" between Stalin and Bukharin. The essence thereof amounted to the general secretary's expression of doubts in connection with the NEP and Bukharin's "defense" of the essence of this concept. Bukharin recalls this discussion in his notes as follows: Stalin "harped" continually on the fact that long reliance on the NEP would "stifle socialist elements and revive capitalism." The general secretary failed to understand the essence of the effect of economic laws and relied more on "proletarian pressure," "party directives," the "line which had been worked out," "limitation of potential exploiters" and so forth. The discussion was, we repeat, lengthy, but even then Bukharin sensed that Stalin did not understand and did not trust the NEP and saw it, like Trotskiy, as a threat to the gains of the revolution. Disheartened by this dialogue, Bukharin resolved to set forth his understanding of the NEP in the press. There soon after appeared in BOLSHEVIK his profound article, which had not lost its relevance until our time, "The New Economic Policy

and Our Tasks," in which he employed also the conclusions of his report at the meeting of activists of the Moscow party organization on 17 April 1925. Let us quote two fragments from the article:

"The meaning of the new economic policy, which in the pamphlet on the food tax Lenin had called the correct economic policy, is that a whole number of economic factors, which previously could not have fertilized one another because they were under the lock and key of 'war communism,' are now capable of fertilizing one another and thereby contributing to economic growth....

"The NEP means this: less suppression, more freedom of circulation because this freedom is less dangerous to us. Less administrative pressure, more economic struggle, greater development of economic turnover. Struggling against the private trader not by way of stamping on him and closing down his stall but to trying to produce oneself and sell more cheaply, better and at a higher quality than him."

Stalin did not highlight these lines in the article, although it was marked all over with his notes. It was very difficult for the general secretary to understand how it was possible to afford the private sector freedom. Surely this would undermine the dictatorship? Stalin would listen to and read Bukharin, objecting little as yet, but somewhere deep down irritation with the theoretician's "economic truckling" was making itself felt increasingly strongly.

Bukharin did not cease to reiterate until the end of his days that his views were based on Lenin's works, primarily on the last five articles of the celebrated "Testament" of the period just prior to this death. Bukharin latched onto the new notes in Lenin in his 1921 article "The Food Tax" earlier than other of his associates. It was here that the original ideas of the NEP were set forth, and Bukharin warmly supported them. After Lenin's death, Bukharin was made a full member of the Politburo from having been a candidate. His authority was determined primarily by his reputation as the new theorist of Marxism, his striking human gentleness and his exceptional accessibility to people—in this he was the complete antipode of Stalin.

Bukharin remained for a long time aloof from the struggle of factions, groups and oppositions. It was not fortuitous that, following one of his unsuccessful attempts to win Bukharin's support in the struggle against Stalin, Zinovyev contemptuously called him a "peacemaker". The party theoretician was attempting to grasp the basic trends of the countyr's socioeconomic development and the paths of its profound reconstruction, and here he had to emphatically oppose the so-called "Preobrazhenskiy law" being foisted on the party leadership. Its essence was as follows: superindustrialization in such a country as Russia was possible only on the basis of the maximum squeezing of resources from the peasantry. True, for fairness' sake it should be said that Preobrazhenskiy himself rejected administrative coercion in respect of the peasantry, but considered it necessary to broadly "install" nonequivalent exchange in market relations between industry and agriculture.

Bukharin believed with conviction that "the town must not plunder the country" and that only political union multiplied by economic union could help accelerate the development of industry and agriculture. In other words, the theoretician of the new economic policy stood for more harmonious relations between town and country, allowing, true, of a certain distortion at the initial stage in the direction of a pumping of resources from the peasantry. He said plainly in one of his articles: "Comrades are for the inordinate transfer of resources, for intensified pressure on the peasantry which is economically irrational and politically impermissible. Our position is by no means that we reject this transfer; but we take account far more soberly of what is to be taken into account, what is economically and political expedient." These conclusions gave rise to no objections on Stalin's part initially.

Even the following proposition, which Bukharin formulated in 1925, failed to cause suspicions in the general secretary: "The network of our cooperative peasant organizations will consist of cooperative cells not of the kulak but of the 'working' type, cells growing into the system of our statewide authorities and becoming in this way links of the single chain of the socialist economy. There will, just the same, be nowhere for the kulak and kulak organizations to go for the general framework of development in our country has been set in advance by the system of proletarian dictatorship and to a considerable extent by the increasedpower of the economic organizations of this dictatorship." Bukharin saw on the path of the cooperativization of the peasantry, and this is worth emphasizing particularly, possible versions of a limitation of the influence of the kulak, but not administrative but economic limitations. This was essentially a specification of Lenin's ideas of the cooperativization of the peasantry, but without coercion, requisitions, pressure and threats.

But in 1928 and, particularly, in 1929 and subsequently the words "growth into socialism" and "kulak cooperatives" would be seen by Stalin not simply as a deviation from Leninism but as outright "hostile diversionary plans of the right deviation". All these ideas would unequivocally be seen by the general secretary as the opportunist heresy of "elements hostile to socialism".

Bukharin attempted to show that major organized hostile political forces which represented a serious danger to the socialist state no longer existed in Soviet Russia. Violence in respect of the peasantry would have far-reaching severe consequences, Bukharin prophetically warned. But Bukharin lost sight, possibly, of two things in his approach: on the one hand a slow rate of development, calculated in decades, threatened the very existence of socialism in Russia and, on the other, without a

great influx of resources, effecting the country's industrialization was impossible. The optimum solution, evidently, lay somewhere in between. But as far as the humane aspect of Bukharin's doctrine is concerned, it cannot fail to evoke respect for its author for its high ethical inspiration and correct, Leninist understanding of the constructive aspect of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In 1925-1927 Bukharin and Stalin were the most influential party figures. He helped Stalin show the political bankruptcy and danger of the opposition of Trotskiy, Zinovyev and Kamenev, although trying to maintain loyal relations with them. As a result of the removal from the Politburo of Trotskiy, Zinovyev and Kamenev the importance of Stalin and Bukharin in the accomplishment of current and strategic tasks increased markedly. Quite recently even, when the members of the opposition, deprived now of political influence, were attacking Bukharin, Stalin quick-temperedly replied to them:

"You demand Bukharin's blood?! We will not give you his blood, you had better believe it."

What is noteworthy is not only the mere fact of the defense of Bukharin but the content of the "blood" metaphor. This seemed to many people at that time fortuitous....

The two leading figures complemented one another in the Politburo in a certain sense. Stalin decided all the organizational, political questions, and Bukharin dealt with the exposition of the theoretical principles of activity. It may be said without exaggeration that up to the start of 1928 Stalin was largely guided by Bukharin's views on the solution of economic questions and "relied" on him, as it were. We note once again in this fact Stalin's characteristic borrowing of others' views, which he would subsequently transform into his own. After Trotskiy, Stalin "enriched" his philosophy at the expense of the ideas of Bukharin and his understanding of agrarian problems. But what could explain Stalin suddenly starting to turn his back on Bukharin? Why did the general secretary, who had hitherto shared his views, suddenly consider them "right deviation"? Why did their personal friendship quickly grow into steady dislike?

I believe that there are several reasons here. Primarily, Stalin was taken aback by the growing popularity among the people and in the party of Bukharin—theoretician, politician and charming leader. Bukharin's authority in the party at that time was only slightly inferior to that of Stalin. The general secretary had been put on his guard also by an article of Bukharin's dedicated to Lenin, in which he had written: "Because Lenin is not with us, there is no single authority either. We can only now have a *collective* authority. We do not have a person who could say: I am sinless and can interpret Lenin's teaching absolutely 100 percent. Everyone may try, but whoever would lay claim to 100 percent imparts too big a role to his own person." Stalin heard in these words an open attack on himself: after all, in the above-mentioned lectures on the fundamentals of Leninism which the general secretary had delivered at Sverdlovsk University he had interpreted *all* of Lenin's teaching.... Was this not clear? And, then: what about this "no single authority"? What about the authority of the general secretary? Stalin was alerted by the fact that many capable students had emerged under Bukharin: Astrov, Slepkov, Maretskiy, Tseytlin, Zaytsev, Goldenberg, Petrovskiy and others, who had begun to make their presence known in the press, the VUZ's and the party machinery. For example, Slepkov and Astrov had become the editors of the most influential journal BOLSHEVIK, Maretskiy and Tseytlin worked at PRAVDA, Goldenberg at LENINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA and Zaytsev in the Central Control Commission. Stalin was also worried by the increased political and theoretical influence of Bukharin himself on ideological processes in the party and the country.

Another reason was the voluntarist-arbitary character traits of the general secretary. The collectivization had begun successfully, on the whole, better than expected, than the guidance which Bukharin was giving. The information, communiques and reports from the localities and the information of the apparat had gradually convinced Stalin that, given the appropriate "pressure," the first outlines connected with the collectivization could be radically revised. Stalin would say increasingly often among those close to him:

"Without a decisive change in the countryside we will have no bread."

He was readily yessed by Molotov and Kaganovich. There matured by degrees in Stalin the idea of reducing the timeframe of the rearrangement of agriculture. When, however, the "pressure" brought about the confused, but extensive resistance of the peasantry, the kulak particularly, there suddenly came to him the "brilliant" solution—accelerating its "elimination as a class".

Bukharin was not against either industrialization or collectivization, he disagreed primarily with the methods of tackling these historic tasks, it was, after all, a question of human destinies. Ultimately, Bukharin reasoned, all transformations should serve *man, socialism,* and not the other way about! But the intellectual conscience of the Politburo members on whom the adoption of the optimum (and not necessarily radical!) solution depended was not as refined as Bukharin's. One further opportunity of conscience was let slip.

Even Trotskiy, now observing the struggle in the Politburo from the sidelines, told his assistants: "The right could bring Stalin to bay," meaning that in the possession of Bukharin's supporters were the position of head of state, the leadership of the trade unions and the theoretical leadership. There was an opportunity.... The unsteady balance did not last long, although for a time it

seemed that Bukharin's moderate line would gain the ascendancy. Stalin was even then a past master of apparat indoctrination and was famous for his ability to carry his decision through to the end.

Rykov, who had become Lenin's successor as Sovnarkom chairman, and Tomskiy (real name, Yefremov), the virtually permanent leader of the Soviet unions, did not see Stalin as the uncontested leader and supported Bukharin not from personal considerations but by conviction. Stalin's attempts to influence them was unsuccessful. Pyatakov had once called Rykov and Tomskiy "convinced NEPists". This corresponded with reality, I believe. But the whole trouble was that the struggle against Stalin was conducted within office walls, in the smallest group. Neither Bukharin nor his supporters ventured to appeal to public opinion and the party: the danger of becoming known as "factionalists" was at that time very real. While profoundly convinced of the disastrous nature of Stalin's agrarian policy, Bukharin failed, unfortunately, to find ways to obtain broad support among people to whom the violence, dictatorship and "emergency measures" were unacceptable. He tried to return to calm dialogue with Stalin, but the latter received him only on conditions of total surrender. The disgraced leader agonizingly reflected: "I sometimes wonder whether I have the right to remain silent? Is this not a lack of courage?" While holding Stalin in contempt, he would hope to the end of his days that prudence, decency and tolerance would be awoken in him....

The phase which caused an abrupt deterioration in their relations was Bukharin's publication in PRAVDA of 30 September 1928 of the celebrated article "Notes of an Economist". The obstinate Bukharin (Lenin had once called Bukharin "beeswax," and the latter had shown Stalin that tortoise-shell is so solid because it is soft) once again maintained the need for and possibility of the crisis-free development of both industry and agriculture. Any other approaches in the solution of the problem Bukharin called "reckless". "We should set in motion and make mobile the maximum in the way of economic factors working for socialism," Bukharin wrote. "This presupposes a most complex combination of personal, group, mass, public and state initiative. We have overcentralized everything *too much."*

A week later the Politburo condemned this article of Bukharin's, and Stalin switched to the decisive offensive. In the long angry discussions in the Politburo compromise could no longer be found. Many sessions were not minuted, merely the decisions were recorded, which testified that Stalin was increasingly gaining the upper hand. Bukharin was in a minority. Rykov conceded on a number of points, Tomskiy began to vacillate. Stalin began to demand that Bukharin "cease his policy of impeding collectivization." In a heated skirmish Bukharin in a fit of hot temper called Stalin a "petty oriental despot".

Seeing that the positions of the moderates were weakening, Bukharin ventured a precipitate step, calling unexpectedly on 11 July at Kamenev's apartment, attempting in fact to establish illegal relations with the former opposition, which he himself had earlier helped Stalin to smash. He subsequently called on Kamenev twice. The meetings were tete-a-tete. What the two former associates of Lenin were long in discussing we will evidently never know exactly. True, Kamenev's notes say, as Trotskiy maintained, that Bukharin was both furious and depressed. He repeated over and over that "the revolution is done for," that "Stalin is a petty intriguer of the first water" and that he no longer believed that anything could be changed. It is significant that the Trotskiyites disseminated the contents of this conversation in a clandestine leaflet dated 20 January 1929. There can be no swearing to the authenticity of this information, naturally.

Stalin, of course, was told about these contacts of Bukharin, and at the April (1929) Plenum they would be one of the most deadly arguments against Bukharin. The contacts with Kamenev had done for the moderates absolutely nothing, but Bukharin had "earned" Stalin's label of "factionalist". He then decided to appeal once again to public opinion. On the fifth anniversary of the death of V.I. Lenin there appeared in PRAVDA for 24 January 1929 the article by Bukharin, from under whose feet the ground was disappearing, "Lenin's Political Testament," representing an exposition of his report at the funeral session.

The article spoke of Lenin's concept of the building of socialism, the importance of the NEP policy, of the democratism of decisions. Bukharin wrote that Lenin's articles "develop a policy of the country's industrialization based on savings, based on an increase in the quality of work given the cooperativization of the peasantry, that is, the easiest and simplest method, without any *coercion* (my italics—D.V.), of enlisting the peasantry in socialist building." This formula was, perhaps, Bukharin's credo, but the most important thing was that the title of the article reminded the communists (who knew and who remembered) that the "Testament" presupposed also the removal of Stalin from the office of general secretary to another office. Bukharin went on sorrowfully to utter the profoundly prophetic words: "Conscience is not, as some people think, abolished in politics."

Bukharin sought his opportunity of conscience until the end; this required considerable courage and a readiness to sacrifice himself, his future.... Conscience is the subtlest intellectual and emotional tuning-fork measuring a man's morality and civicism. One may be young or old, a rank and file workman or an executive, in one respect it is all the same—there is for a display of true conscience no final Everest, no boundary or range....

Stalin, as always, took "stock" of the mistakes and blunders of his enemy, on this occasion Bukharin, who also had made many of them. The general secretary

believed that Bukharin's "Enrichissez-vous!" slogan expressed the essence of the kulak philosophy and that his aim of "soldering" the kulaks to socialism was simply hostile. Digging around in his memory and foraging through his papers, Stalin called to mind one further Bukharin lapse. At one Central Committee plenum, more precisely, 25-27 October 1924, when questions of work in the countryside were being discussed, Nikolay Ivanovich, as a surprise to everyone, proposed the "colonization" of the countryside. But by "colonization" Bukharin had intended the dispatch of 30,000 officials from the city to the countryside. And although the party would resort to this later, Stalin would throw several heavy stones at Bukharin for this idea. It was clear to everyone, Stalin also, that "colonization" was in this case simply an unfortunate term expressing the city's rendition of aid to the countryside. However, Stalin knew how to turn a trifling thing into a "political matter".

The Central Committee and Central Control Commission April and November plenums, which in 1929 examined the question of the right deviation in the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik), completed the smashing of the Bukharin group which the general secretary had started. In a 3-hour angry speech at the April Plenum Stalin fulminated against Bukharin for his refusal of the compromise offered him by the Politburo on 7 February. And this means, Stalin maintained, there is in the party now "the Central Committee line, and another line—that of the Bukharin group." Although prior to January 1928 the atmosphere of the work of Stalin and Bukharin was, as we recall, amicable, in the main, the general secretary would set forth a whole "four stages of disagreements" with him. Stalin spouted the words "rubbish," "nonsense," "Bukharin's booklet," "non-Marxist approach," "quackery," "sham Marxist," "verbiage," "Bukharin's semi-anarchic muddle".

Stalin delivered the main blow in his speech (not report!) at Bukharin as a theoretician. Inasmuch as after Lenin Bukharin had rightly been held to be the leading theoretician in the party, Stalin resolved to debunk him and declared: "He is not entirely a Marxist theoretician, he is a theoretician who still has some learning to do to become a Marxist theoretician." Stalin did not fail here, of course, to bring up Lenin's evaluation of Bukharin, putting particular emphasis on its second part: "There is something scholastic in him (he has never studied and, I believe, has never entirely understood dialectics)." Thus this was, according to Stalin, "a theoretician without dialectics. A scholastic theoretician." And he went on to list at length all the disagreements which Bukharin had had with Lenin, evaluating them as attempts to teach the leader revolution. Nor was this surprising if recently even the "scholastic theoretician" had been a "student of Trotksiy's and who even yesterday was seeking a bloc with Trotskiyites against Leninists and running to them through the back door!" Stalin's whole speech, which subjected Rykov and Tomskiy to withering criticism, was sustained in the same spirit. Incidentally, this speech was only made public many years later in a digest of Stalin's works.

Bukharin and Rykov were removed from their positions, but remained in the Politburo for the time being. Insofar as the Politburo resolution was sent out to all the local party organizations, criticism of the "right" began throughout the country. PRAVDA and other organs of the press regularly carried articles anathematizing the leader of the "right," and this served simultaneously also as a virtual signal for the acceleration of collectivization. There was no longer any talk of the voluntary nature of this process, but Bukharin continued to believe, as before, that a 20-percent increase in industrial output was the limit, after which agriculture would fail.

The "general line" of the Central Committee geared to general collectivization was confirmed in November at a Central Committee plenum. Bukharin was unwilling, for all that, to repent, as was demanded of him, and was then, on 17 November 1929, expelled from the Politburo. Bukharin's path from radical leftist to moderate leader was complete. True, a week later, tortured by pangs of conscience and ashamed of theirfaint-heartedness, Bukharin, Rykov and Tomskiy wrote a brief note to the Central Committee, in which they condemned their position:

"We consider it our duty to declare that in this dispute the party and its Central Committee were right. Our views were mistaken. Acknowledging these mistakes of ours, we, for our part, will struggle resolutely against all deviations from the party's general line and, primarily, against the right deviation." Stalin was displeased that the statement contained no direct indication of his, the general secretary's, rightness. But, so be it. Bukharin was done for.

I believe that at that time there were as yet very few who could have foreseen not only the impending tragedy of Bukharin but also the defeat as a whole of the moderate wing in the party leadership. It has to be acknowledged that Stalin's enemies sometimes managed to write in detached manner quite prophetically about our reality. On 25 April 1931 issue No 8 of the Menshevik SOTSIALISTICHESKIY VESTNIK, which had been founded abroad by L. Martov, carried an article which analyzed the NEP decade. Stalin, the anti-Soviet journal emphasized, had done everything to "put an end to dreams of a return of the NEP and put an end to hopes of evolution; the general secretary "has attempted repeatedly to make the right communists knuckle down—but for various domestic reasons reprisals have yet to be taken to the extreme, and the violent end of Rykov, Bukharin and Tomskiy has been deferred. The process of their final ouster not only from the apparat but from the party also is not yet complete. Supporters of the NEP, sensitive to the demands of the peasantry (although

powerless to break psychologically with the dictatorship), have already been removed from office, but have not yet been declared enemies of the people. But the dictator is getting there and will soon show them what for."

While noting the gloating tone of the publication of social democrats driven out of the Soviet Union, they cannot in this case be denied insight: when these lines were published, it was only April 1931.... Perhaps Stalin took this prophesy as a "prompt"? Files of this scant little journal were always lying on the bookshelf in Stalin's office.

Stalin had made room for himself on the pedestal—one further associate of Lenin's fallen by the wayside. The general secretary felt that he could, had the right, was in a position to individually adopt the biggest decisions. And did this, he would think, contradict the principles of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the role of leader in a revolution?!

Dictatorship and Democracy

The small volumes of the works of V.I. Lenin in Stalin's library were heavily marked in the owner's hand. But here is a detail: in studying, familiarizing himself with and, perhaps, simply seeking out the right quotation or idea of Lenin's the general secretary showed little interest, to judge by the markings, in Lenin's ideas on democracy, but where it was a question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, he had made many markings.

...It was the start of 1917. Far away from Russia at that time, Lenin was utterly engrossed in theoretical work. The entries in the notebook, which have gone down in history as the celebrated "Blue Notebook," were headed "Marxism on the State". In the anxious July days, when the Provisional Government was attempting to smash the Bolshevik Party and physically exterminate the leader of the revolution, Lenin continued his work on the book, in Razliv by now. On the basis of the wealth of the author's notes assembled in the "notebook" and the propositions and ideas expressed by the founders of scientific socialism Lenin wrote in a few weeks in August and September his outstanding work "The State and Revolution". A multitude of works has been written about this book, and Lenin's ideas on the state of the transitional period, which would exist in the form of a dictatorship of the proletariat, of are interest to us now. Lenin inquired:

"*What* is the attitude of this dictatorship toward democracy?" and answered in the words of the "Communist Manifesto": "conversion of the proletariat into the ruling class and the achievement of democracy". Yes, let us emphasize this particularly: Lenin saw dictatorship as an instrument for suppressing the exploiters and oppressors. Without it there could have been no starting on the social rearrangement of society and fighting for the materialization of the ideals of socialism. But dictatorship was a historically transitory phenomenon. Let us quote one further extract from Lenin's work. The dictatorship of the proletariat, Lenin wrote, is directly connected "with the *full* development of democracy, that is, the truly equal and truly general participation of the *entire* mass of the population in all *state* affairs."

Stalin never understood, never wished to understand the essence of proletarian democracy, the very essence of the power of the people. Familiarization with his archives testifies that democracy was for him nothing more than the *freedom to support*—only support!—the decisions of the party and the leader. And inasmuch, as Stalin believed, the party was personified by him, the leader, the general secretary, true democratism amounted to *agreement with and approval* of his conclusions, decisions and intentions. It was not noticed immediately that in dealing with Trotskiy, Zinovyev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Pyatakov, Rykov and others who thought differently to him, Stalin emphasized here their disagreements not with him but with... Leninism. This was one of Stalin's most insidious, anti-democratic methods, and this was why no one could at that time be right in an argument and clashes with Stalin—for this it was essentially necessary to debunk Lenin.

Yes, of course, there were issues on which Stalin spoke from Lenin's standpoints (the possibility of building socialism in the USSR, for example). But ultimately Stalin would portray everything such that his mistakes on the nationality issue, negative attitude toward the "late" NEP, wrong idea concerning the class struggle and differentiated understanding of the essence of collectivization and the role of the apparat in the political structure of the state were nothing other than the true interpretation of genuine Leninism! Once, clashing with Bukharin on the eve of his removal from the Politburo, Stalin angrily fired off:

"Your whole crowd are not Marxists but quacks. None of you understood Lenin!"

"You alone understood him, then?!"

"I repeat that you did not understand Lenin! Have you forgotten how many times Lenin hit at you for leftism, opportunism and confusion?"

In the usurpation of the monopoly on interpretation of Lenin's propositions there is, we repeat, a source of many of the tragedies of future years. No one could seriously at that time have shown the profound bankruptcy of Stalin's dogmatic claims to be the sole interpretor of Lenin's inheritance.

In the dictatorship of the proletariat born in the October days of 1917 violence occupied the leading place. A struggle was under way to conquer, hold out and survive. But it somehow came about that merely this facet of the dictatorship was studied not only in bourgeois literature

but in Marxist literature also at times, particularly in the 1920's and 1930's. At the same time, however, Lenin anticipated in the dictatorship of the proletariat the creative, democratic function, which from the very outset had a tendency to become the main and sole function.

Stalin was always inclined to consider the axioms formulated by the founders of scientific socialism eternal, frozen and permanent, as it were. No, in words he would frequently agree with the changes in the fabric of social reality and, naturally, in the social consciousness. But as far as the dictatorship of the proletariat as the form of the power of the working people was concerned, the forcible element always remained the most important thing for him.

Summing up the First Five-Year Plan, Stalin incorporated in the report a special section on the results and tasks of the struggle "against the remnants of hostile classes". Although they were "remnants," Stalin nonetheless called for "implacable struggle" to be conducted against them. Not a word about the reeducation and incorporation of many of the "ci-devants," members of their families and the experts in the new life, which could have changed their frame of mind and "class instincts" more rapidly and effectively. Painting the social picture of society, Stalin said: "Remnants of the dying classes: private industrialists and their servants, private traders and their stooges, ex-gentry and priests, kulaks and their henchmen, former white officers and Cossack sergeants, former police and gendarmes... have crawled into our plants and factories, our institutions and trading organizations, railroad and water transport enterprises and, mainly, into the kolkhozes and sovkhozes. They have crawled and hidden there, throwing on the mask of 'workers' and 'peasants,' and some of them have even wormed their way into the party, what is more.

"What have they brought with them here?" Stalin continued. "A feeling of loathing of Soviet power, of course, a feeling of rabid hostility toward the new forms of farming, social life, culture.... The only thing they can do is mess up and harm the workers and kolkhoz members, Soviet power and the party. And they are messing things up as much as they can, acting on the sly. They are setting fire to storehouses and breaking up machines. They are organizing sabotage. They are organizing acts of sabotage on the kolkhozes and sovkhozes, and some of them, what is more, among whom there are some professors, are going so far in their fits of sabotage as to inoculate the livestock on the kolkhozes and sovkhozes with plague and malignant anthrax, are contributing to the spread of meningitis among horses and so forth."

Following such a gloomy picture illustrating the situation in the country at the end of 1933, honest people were simply dumbfounded. All around were enemies, wreckers and "remnants of the exploiter classes," who for some reason or other were just as dangerous as in the first years of Soviet power. Of course, there were many people who had not accepted Soviet power, and this was natural, but they by no means represented the formidable danger which Stalin portrayed. And he painted this terrible picture merely to sum up: "A strong and powerful dictatorship of the proletariat—this what we need now to completely smash the last remnants of the dying classes and crush their thievish machinations."

There were many such Stalin speeches at the end of the 1920's-start of the 1930's. The real insanity of 1937-1938 would not have arisen had people's consciousness and the entire system and its institutions *little by little not been prepared for this,* if people had not become accustomed to thinking that among them everywhere—at work, in the VUZ, in the military unit and artistic group—there were, "keeping quiet," people biding their time.... The appeal, slogan and directive were able to throw many citizens into, as Stalin said, "finishing off the last remnants of capitalism". Whence it was but one step to terror or, at least, readiness for it. It is understandable why in making notes on the text of V.I. Lenin's speech at the session of the Petrograd Soviet on 17 November 1917 Stalin left unmarked the following lines of the leader: "Terror such as the French revolutionaries, who guillotined unarmed people, employed, we are not using and, I hope, will never use." He himself thought differently. "Punitive measures in the sphere of social building," Stalin declared at the 16th party congress, "are an essential element of the offensive."

The consignment to oblivion of the democratic facet of the dictatorship of the proletariat threatened sooner or later to "excommunicate" the masses from social creativity and turn people into simple doers and "cogs" of the giant state machine. There was no one, perhaps, to remind the general secretary, the "best Leninist," that socialism "is impossible," Lenin said, "without democracy in two senses: (1) the proletariat cannot accomplish a socialist revolution if it is not prepared for it by a struggle for democracy; (2) victorious socialism cannot hold on to its victory." Lenin uttered words just after October which were pertinent in 1917, which we greatly needed at the time of the transition from the 1920's to the next decade and which should not be forgotten now either: "We must afford the people's masses full freedom of creativity."

Stalin had no doubt—after all, the classics had written about this!—that dictatorship took precedence over democracy. And if he was at rare moments visited by a perturbation of thought, those around him could hardly have noticed it: a face, not expressing emotions, seemingly created for a multitude of marble copies which would shortly appear in hundreds, thousands of cities and places and in the squares. How narrowly, dogmatically Bukharin's crowd interpreted dictatorship and democracy! For example, was it not clear that the role of the working class needed to be enhanced, uplifted? Each peasant had to see the worker as his leader! In October 1930 Stalin proposed "firmly attaching" the workers to their enterprises, and here also signs of muffled discontent reached him. And he, the practical man, dictated: "Prohibit for the next 2 years the promotion of skilled workmen to all managerial staffs (other than shopfloor

and trade union)." But 6 months later he felt the reaction to this decision of the counterrevolutionary exiles also. One S. Shvarts, a fugitive Menshevik, had published in SOTSIALISTICHESKIY VESTNIK the article "The Working Class and Dictatorship". In it he wrote that, thanks to Stalin, "a tendency toward the ouster of the workers from the management machinery, a tendency toward the conversion of the workers into a laboring class, whose duty was the maximum exertion of its labor powers and unconditional subordination to a dictatorship which was socially isolated from it," had emerged. Even the terms were invented: "duty class of the dictatorship," "laboring class". Gravediggers of the revolution! Had they not been routed back in those far-off days, he, Stalin, would not have been here, in the Kremlin, and everything generally would have been reduced to the bourgeois miscarriage of February.

He simply could not understand why the social democratic press, like Trotskiy, who was at loggerheads with it, also, were so fiercely attacking his party machinery and the dictatorship. Surely it was clear that this was the most important instrument of power? The general secretary once again convinced himself of his historical rightness: the machinery was the tool of the dictatorship, and without the dictatorship, talk about socialism and democracy even was inconceivable.

Stalin had much to say about equality and public interests as initial premises of socialist democracy. Conversing in 1936 with a group of Central Committee officials responsible for the preparation of textbooks, Stalin emphasized:

"Our democracy must always give pride of place to common interests. The personal before the public—this is almost nothing. As long as there are slackers, enemies and embezzlers of socialist property, there are, consequently, people to whom socialism is alien, and, consequently, struggle is needed...."

"The personal before the public—this is almost nothing." Not noticing the profound flaws in such a maxim, we gradually raised people in the understanding that we were all the owners of public property. And what belongs to everyone, belongs, as is known, to no one—the feeling of proprietor disappears. Leveling principles gradually triumphed, and there was formed the type of indifferent workman afraid to "overwork," a person looking on serenely at figure padding and unconcealed theft: "What, this will make the state poorer?"

Stalin did not "act" against democracy only because he understood it as might a despot. After all, these also are not averse to creating obedient parliaments and having the traditional set of attributes involving elections, oaths of allegiance and vows. In conversation with H. Wells Stalin placed at the center of all his arguments *power* "as the lever of transformations," the lever of the new legality and new order. But not once (!) did he put power in the plane of the power of the people! The general secretary loved nothing so much as power—full, unlimited and consecrated by the "love" of millions. And here he was successful: no other person in the world had managed and never would again, evidently, manage to accomplish the fantastic feat of wiping out millions of his own fellow citizens and obtaining in exchange the blind love of an even greater number of people.

In time sacrifice became for Stalin an inalienable attribute of socialism. When a new construction project in Siberia or in the North was undertaken, the need to cover "natural losses" was determined in "planned manner". As of the end of the 1920's there was no shortage of cheap and impotent (frequently doomed) manpower. Stalin supported all proposals pertaining to the use of vast masses of prisoners. He would either throw out at his aide: "Agreed" or briefly sign off on a document.

For realization of its power this dictatorship of the proletariat involuntarily demanded the creation of a machinery of compulsion and a large-scale punitive apparatus.

The lack of power of the people quickly began to lead to the emergence of the first strong shoots of exaggeration of the role of one personality and the endowment of Stalin with some mythical, messianic role.

The attitude of Stalin himself toward this is interesting.

Let us quote one further extract from the general secretary's conversation with E. Luedwig.

Luedwig: "In other countries it is on the one hand known that the USSR is a country in which everything has to be decided collegially, on the other, it is known that everything is decided individually. Who in fact decides?"

Stalin: "Individual decisions are always are nearly always one-sided decisions. On any board, in any group there are people whose opinion needs to be considered.... Our workers would never, under no circumstances tolerate now the power of one person."

Luedwig asked how Stalin regarded the methods of the Jesuits.

Stalin replied that "their main method is surveillance, espionage, insinuation into the heart and mockery—what can there be that's positive in this?"

Luedwig: "You have been subjected to risk and danger repeatedly, you have been persecuted. You have taking part in fighting. A number of your close friends died. You survived.... Do you believe in fate?"

Stalin: "No, I do not.... Prejudice, nonsense, vestiges of mythology.... Another person could have been in my place for *someone had* to be here.... I do not believe in mysticism."

As we can see, Stalin knew how to answer "correctly," as it were. But this by no means signified that these words were his beliefs.

A deep-lying source of many human troubles, of a cult nature included, is the dualism (split nature) of the personality, as with Moliere's Tartuffe. For Stalin this became the rule: condemning chiefism and strengthening it; criticizing jesuitry and encouraging it in practice; speaking about collective leadership and reducing it to total sole responsibility.

At the start of the 1930's even Stalin cut back sharply on his already extremely infrequent journeys to enterprises, to the oblasts, to military units. On the one hand he had an inadequate knowledge of production and he had no wish to delve into "mundane" matters connected with technology, productivity and profitability. On the other, he had a constant presentiment that an attempt on his life was being prepared. He knew that he had enemies and believed that Trotskiy or some "ci-devant" might organize an assassination attempt. This is what Ulrikh reported on such an attempt:

"Comrade I.V. Stalin, secretary of the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee.

"On 16 December, following a 2-day investigation in closed session, the USSR Supreme Soviet Military Collegium passed sentence in the case of a group of spies and terrorists who had been preparing per an assignment of a German subject an act of terror in Red Square on 7 November 1935. Sentenced to execution: G.I. Shur, V.G. Freyman, S.M. Pevzner, V.O. Levinskiy...."

Yes, they were being hunted down, but he would pull out the very roots of these remnants, pull them out.

Few knew that Stalin liked to meditate while standing at a map, surveying, like a sovereign, the giant outline of the country. While lacking a rich imagination, he would, however, imagine millions of people toiling at this very moment on the embodiment of his, the leader's, instructions. He would sometimes run his finger over the map: the Turkestan-Siberian Railroad, Magnitka, the Dneproges, the White Sea-Baltic Canal, the Kuzbass and gaze for a long time at the Kolyma regions. Even to make them out, these "regions," several paces had to be taken to the right....

Once following such regular musings in front of the map he suddenly called Voroshilov and asked: does the Red Army study geography? Do Red Army men know the map well? After all, use of the map of the motherland, Stalin summed up, fosters pride in it and devotion to our cause and idea. Voroshilov was not prepared for so, to be frank, noncliche aquestion and answered something irrelevant, promising to investigate. In accordance with his instructions, the Revolutionary Military Council Political Directorate had the next day prepared the memorandum:

"Comrade Stalin,

"To your inquiry concerning study of geography by Red Army personnel I have to inform you that geography is compulsorily studied by all Red Army men in accordance with special programs. In addition to study of geography by way of general training, it is studied at political classes also. Special attention here is paid to map study.

"Supplementary to what the units have had, this year the Political Directorate is sending out 220,000 maps, 10,000 atlases, 8,000 maps in the national languages and 10,000 globes.

"K. Voroshilov."

Stalin could look at the map for a long time and with satisfaction, finding thereon Stalingrad, Stalinsk, Stalinabad.

It is to him that we are obliged for the establishment of the extremely dubious chiefist practice of attributing the names of party, state and artistic figures to cities, rayons, enterprises, VUZ's, theaters.... Zinovyevsk, Voroshilov, Kalinin, Kuybyshev, Molotov, Gorkiy appeared on the map of the fatherland. It became customary for newspapers to report early fulfillment of the plan by Weaving Factory imeni Voroshilov (Kalinin), the first and third paper factories imeni Zinovyev (Leningrad) and the Plant imeni Bukharin (Gus-Khrustalnyy). There remained practically no oblasts in the country by the end of the 1920's even in which the name of Stalin had not been attributed to some production, administrative or cultural facility. Glorification of the chief was to become customary in any official report, in which the leader of a "local" scale also was now in passing putting on airs.

This is how the opening remarks of N.S. Khrushchev, secretary of the Moscow Gorkom, were to sound at a gorkom plenum in June 1932: "The correct Bolshevist leadership of the Moscow Obkom and the gorkom, the instructions which we receive in our day-to-day work from Comrade Kaganovich and the tremendous activity of the workers will guarantee that we accomplish the tasks confronting the Moscow party organization." These prayer-like incantations became the rule of life under Stalin and were so tenacious that they lasted for decades after his death even. This attribute of chiefism, aside from all else, insults the entire people, who, as the creator of all that exists on earth, are put in the position of "thanker," and not master.

Molotov, Voroshilov and Kaganovich were the most active in creation of the cult of the leader. Their voices were heard loudest of all. But, however strange, the voices of Zinovyev, Kamenev, Bukharin and certain other disgraced leaders also were heard in this choir. It is sometimes simply embarrassing reading their speeches and articles, particularly of Zinovyev, penitently flagellating himself for past mistakes and glorifying the "perspicacity and wisdom of the leader of the party, Comrade Stalin." Even N.I. Bukharin did not refrain from words of flattery about the person whom in 1928 he had called "Genghis Khan". Who knows, perhaps they really had lost their faith in that for which they had fought, or was it simply that the instinct of self-preservation weighed down on the intellect? The greatest efforts were made by Karl Radek, whom Stalin had once among those close to him called "a shallow Trotskiyite, and without convictions, what is more."

In 1934 Radek put out a pamphlet on Stalin entitled "Architect of the Socialist Society" written in the form of a lecture in a mythical course in the history of the victory of socialism which, the author dreamed, would be delivered in 1967, on the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution, at a school of interplanetary communication. Radek was expressing merely by this (1967!) the wish that Stalin, who had by that time been general secretary for a whole 12 years, would still be at the helm of party and state 33 (!) years on. The whole pamphlet is written in roughly the same style as the fragment which we quote: "Political leaders occupy their place in the party and in history not on the basis of elections and not on the basis of appointments, although in a democratic party such as is the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) these elections and appointments are necessary in order to take the place of a leader. The leader of the proletariat is determined in the struggle for the party's militant line, for the organization of its coming battles. And Stalin, who was in Lenin's time also among the first in the party leadership, has become its recognized and beloved leader."

The pamphlet was issued in a colossal edition for those times—225,000 copies—and was reprinted repeatedly. It is said that when Radek, a recent Trotskiyite, was venomously reminded by some "intransigent" that surely it was not that long since that he had been speaking about Stalin quite differently, and what name was to be given to this now, Radek replied: "If members of the opposition such as I had lived in Robespierre's time, each of us would have been a head shorter." Here he was simply anticipating what awaited him and many others 3 years later: the glorification of Stalin helped neither him nor Zinovyev, nor Kamenev, no one who, having confessed in words his ideological defeat, was prepared to carry out any wish of the "beloved leader".

Digests of articles of Stalin's associates about him slowly began to appear, and even recent history began imperceptibly to be revised. In the foreword to Lenin's "Collected Works" V. Adoratskiy maintained that Lenin's works needed to be studied together with Stalin's and that a concentrated exposition of Lenin's ideas had been set forth in the "Fundamentals of Leninism".

Long before the apogee of the cult attempts were being made to perpetuate Stalin's political biography also. There is in his collection a letter from Ye. Yaroslavskiy to the general secretary. It says, in part:

"Sergo called me today, upon leaving, to say that he had spoken with you in connection with my intended book 'Stalin'."

Written on the letter in pencil was the decision:

"Comrade Yaroslavskiy. I am opposed. I do not believe that it is yet the time for a biography.

"1 August 1931.

"I. Stalin."

Very eloquent: "It is not yet the time." The triumph of a single personality was only just beginning. The main thing was gradualness, consistency, irreversibility.... It was important to maintain in public the devotion to a modest style of conduct. Even today he would notice, seated not in the first but in the second (!) row of the meeting presidium, how the applause would erupt with new force and people would stand on tiptoe to scrutinize him.

The practice of sending loyal work report-letters to one's leader was born. On 7 April 1931 Commune imeni Stalin of the village of Tsasuchey of the East Siberian Region's Olovyannikovskiy Rayon sent to Moscow its labor report, which was published in PRAVDA and which contained the following lines: "Putting forward a counterplan to expand the sown area, the commune is sowing, instead of the instructed figure of 262.5 hectares, 320 hectares.... We support the general line of the party under the leadership of the Bolshevik Central Committee and the best Leninist—Comrade Stalin! We support the full implementation of the 5-year plan in 4 years and the elimination of the kulaks based on complete collectivization! On behalf of the members of the Commune imeni Stalin,

"Klimov, Tokmakov."

Such letters would soon be adopted at every meeting of every enterprise, kolkhoz, sovkhoz, VUZ, military unit and establishment. The deformation of the public consciousness, which would henceforward be nurtured not by truth but increasingly by cult myths, began. Propaganda would increasingly put the emphasis on faith: all that was said, expressed, formulated by Stalin was indisputable, true and required no proof. As a result of this propaganda the general secretary seemed a demigod who never made mistakes and was capable of the highest revelation, all-seeingness and omniscience.

Ultimately the myths, constituting the spiritual basis of the cult of an individual, amounted to two most simple postulates:

The leader of party and people is a *wise man* in the highest degree. The power of his intellect is capable of answering all questions of the past, understanding the present and looking into the near and distant future. "Stalin is today's Lenin".

The leader of party and people is the profound personification of absolute good and concern for each individual negating evil, ignorance, perfidy and cruelty. A smiling moustached person holding a little girl carrying a red flag.

The system of myths, without which a cult of personality is impossible, came to be reinforced by rituals (the obligatory reference to the guiding instructions, the adoption of counterplans, the dispatch of letters of gratitude, implantation of outward symbols). The higher people extolled Stalin, creating their god on earth, they more they objectively demeaned themselves. Lichtenberg was right: "The fame of the most celebrated people is always partly explained by the short-sightedness of their admirers."

Did Stalin himself see the amorality of this course? Did the general secretary take deliberate steps to intensify the Caesarism? All questions have to be answered unequivocally: yes, he saw, knew, did. Even the individual gestures of "humility" which Stalin sometimes permitted himself served, as we recall, the same purpose. He could not have failed to have understood the deformity of a situation where over the heads of the demonstrators floated thousands of identical portraits of him and where in each issue of PRAVDA one could count dozens of mentions of his "steel" name and where any matter that had been resolved positively was always associated with his wisdom, concern and foresight.

Stalin knew that, besides the cults of leaders, gods and emperors, there had in history been attempts to create other cults also. Robespierre and other deputies of the Convention even had attempted to establish in the public mind a cult of the "supreme being". A Convention decree said that "the cult worthy of the supreme being is man's performance of his civic duties." This, essentially, was the republic's new official religion. Carrying flowers and ears of rye, Robespierre appeared at a majestic celebration in honor of the "cult of the supreme being". He hoped that with its help the citizens of the republic would become knights of duty and honor. Robespierre was cruely mistaken. Reading a book on Robespierre, Stalin could not understand how such a leader had failed to understand the main thing: he had to strengthen his own power and create his own cult, and not engender ephemeral specters of universal morality.

Lest there be any misfires, in accordance with Stalin's instructions Tovstukha, Dvinskiy, Kanner and Mekhlis and subsequently Poskrebyshev were obliged to scrutinize and visa all more or less important articles about him and his photographs intended for the press and to report to him personally on the most important of them. Stalin himself had long understood that the attractiveness of the character of the chief (the leader's "image," as they say now) depended most on outward calm, imperturbability and stately slowness. Was this not rare and unique even in the great confusion of the seething world?

People sometimes attempt to determine the moment the cult of Stalin's personality began. Who was the first to "call" for the glorification of the general secretary? This is not, I believe, the point: had, let us assume, Voroshilov not begun to enthusiastically praise Stalin, someone else would have begun to do so—under those conditions this was virtually inevitable. The almost total lack of openness in the affairs of the top leaders, the particular importance given to "secrecy," the elimination of all control by the working people of the activity of the top echelons of power—all this engendered the conditions for the deification of the leader.

The "secrets" of the cult do not lie in personalities but in the process which began to develop rapidly after Lenin's death. The experience of socialist statehood was very negligible: the weakening of general electivity at all levels, the absence of the replaceability and renewal of the leadership, the creation of "listed" officials, the strengthening of the role of the apparat, the promotion of violence as a universal means of solving social questions—all this and much else created the prerequisites for serious deformations in the sphere of the public and individual consciousness.

Of course, the main causes of the absolute rule, which continued to grow, lay in the depths of the state itself and its history and traditions and the particular features of the system which was being formed. Stalin's main ideological "contribution" here was the fact that he was able by his subtle mind to achieve a situation where ultimately his name personified socialism. And subsequently the logic was simple: the glorification, defense and strengthening of socialism was simultaneously the glorification, defense and strengthening of Stalin's positions. And, further: after the death of Lenin, the true leader, the party was in virtually no doubt that there had to be a leader after him also. The Caesarist mood in the masses and the tremendous significance of the apparat in the business of usurpation of power were understood by the general secretary earlier than anyone else.

In the organizational respect Stalin's "contribution" was even more evident: he was able to make the party an instrument and machine of personal power. The soviets, having occupied as of the end of the 1920's a subordinate and then auxiliary and, at times, simply sham position,

lost real power. The party, which should have been exercising political and ideological leadership of society, fully assumed the functions of state.

International influence on the process of the shaping of despotic absolute rule in the country cannot be denied either. The existence of a real threat of imperialist attack placed in the party's hands a permanent and virtually indefinite argument for the need for centralization, limitation of democracy and the conversion of the country into a "fortress under siege" and paramilitary camp, which, naturally required a political commander. The Comintern, which had increasingly lost its independence, sanctified by the authority of the communist parties Stalin's chiefism. And the rare bourgeois figures who had ventured to have dealings with the USSR preferred to deal directly with Stalin than with his statized party.

Thus everything or almost everything (apart from *"conscience"*) was "working" at that time for Stalin to a greater or lesser extent. Nor can we disregard here such points as his plebeian origins, the thirst for "wise" leadership and the traditional historical consciousness which had been "sanctified" by the autocracy and which had preserved its "enclaves" among considerable numbers of the population. The most dreadful thing was that the vast majority of the people and the party sincerely believed that Stalin's policy of absolute rule was real socialism.

As we can see, many of the features which we connect directly with the future troubles had begun to show through more clearly in the portrait of Stalin, who had strengthened even further his position in the party and the state. Lenin's words concerning the little things in Stalin's character which could assume decisive significance proved prophetic.

'Congress of Victors'

The smashing of the "right" in the party promised, seemingly, a tranquil atmosphere. The former members of the opposition sought pretexts to emphasize their loyalty to Stalin, the "recovery" of their sight and their "complete agreement with the party's general line". Kamenev and Zinovyev, for example, attempted on several occasions to estahlish the former "good" relations with Stalin and went to see him at his dacha once again on a "peace mission". Many people view their fall from high office as a personal tragedy, nor were these "political twins" any exception. At just over 40 years of age Kamenev somehow went into immediate decline, turned gray and looked a "youngish old man". In the unhappy conversations with Stalin which he managed to have by telephone or in person Kamenev would invariably find an excuse for cautious reminiscences about their joint vegetation in exile and about common discussions with Lenin and would touch on the dramatic events at the time Stalin was being confirmed as general secretary at the 13th congress and later. Zinovyev and, particularly, Kamenev, had not lost hope of a return to the old political cooperation and, naturally, to a place in the upper echelons of the party hierarchy.

Stalin understood full well what the game was. His reaction was condescendingly patronising and he would sometimes even hold out some hope for the disgraced politicians. But in his heart the general secretary understood that the people to whom he was to a considerable extent obliged for his present position were not only not necessary to him but could prove dangerous also.

Stalin concentrated all his attention at the start of the 1930's on the "revolution" in agriculture, a spurt in industrialization and consolidation of the forces of his supporters. Industry grew rapidly, and the collectivization was brought to a forcible conclusion. In 1932-1933 a whole numbers of areas of the country were once again in the grip of harvest failure and, consequently, famine. This famine, we would note, was caused not only by innate, natural factors but also by the imbalance of the economy: the population of the cities was increasing annually by almost 2.5 million persons—the number of "mouths" was growing.

In many areas, the Ukraine particularly, the grain was taken up completely. Stalin pressed on and insisted: the contracts for overseas equipment which had been concluded demanded payment. The price of industrialization was a bitter, tragic one: there was not only the self-sacrifice of the working class here but also the incalculable casualties among the peasants, who down the ages of Old Rus had shared the harshest fate. And in the new, Soviet times they knew starvation and lack of rights and long hopelessness.

The disarray concerning the organization of agricultural production and the low productivity produced no high increases in commodity grain. Labor discipline was low and the embezzlement of grain began to flourish on many farms. The special USSR Sovnarkom and Central Executive Committee decree "Protection of the Property of State Enterprises, Kolkhozes and the Cooperatives and a Strengthening of Public (Socialist) Ownership" was adopted on Stalin's initiative in August 1932. The special sentence: "People encroaching on public property should be regarded as enemies of the people" was written into it in Stalin's version.

The famine encompassed an area with a total population of 25-30 million people. The consequences were particularly severe, as is known, in the Ukraine and the Volga area. The harvest failure was great, but supplies to the state remained as before. A serious cause of the famine was, we repeat, not only the drought but also the disorder on the peasant farm in the course of the collectivization and the forcible confiscation of agricultural products. The new collective farms, which were not yet standing

their own two feet, received increased grain-surrender quotas, and nonfulfillment of the plans was regarded as sabotage and the "undermining of party policy in the countryside".

In many cases the kolkhoz members did not receive even the minimum payment. This led to people who had joined the kolkhoz as yesterday's petty proprietors committing various offenses to ensure their subsistence. The illustration of these processes in the newspapers was roughly as follows: "Reports are being received from areas of the North Caucasus about grabbing, kulak tendencies being displayed by individual kolkhozes and sovkhozes in grain procurement. Despite nonfulfillment of the plan by 1,000 quintals, the board on the Khutonskiy Kolkhoz ordered the grain to be threshed for distribution to the kolkhoz members."

Speaking at the First All-Russian Shock Worker-Kolkhoz Member Congress in February 1933, Stalin said nothing about the famine but merely vaguely mentioned existing "difficulties and deprivations" in the countryside. The main task which the general secretary set the kolkhoz members was as clear as could be: "Only one thing is required of you—that you work honestly, share kolkhoz income according to labor, preserve kolkhoz property, preserve the tractors and machinery, take good care of the horses, fulfill the quotas of your worker-peasant state, strengthen the kolkhozes and kick out the kulaks and their henchmen who have stolen their way into the kolkhozes." The state was not in a position to render the poverty-stricken areas effective assistance. Nothing was written about the famine in the country—Stalin forbade the publication of any information on it whatever, the more so in that the 17th party congress was approaching.

This congress, which took place in January-February 1934, has been called by our propaganda the "congress of victors" inasmuch as Stalin called the successes of party and country in the Central Committee report "great and exceptional". Undoubtedly, the country had by 1934 made an important spurt ahead in its development. When I looked at the rough copy of the report on which Stalin worked, I noticed that, in carefully editing each page, each paragraph thereof, the general secretary was endeavoring to show primarily the achievements in greater relief. He believed that the tremendous sacrifices which the people had made should produce a result. Let the people and the party know how his leadership was fruitfully, successfully and victoriously advancing along the entire socialist "front".

The speaker emphasized particularly the fact that in the 3 years 6 months since the 16th party congress industry in the country had doubled output of the manufactured product. New sectors of production had been created: machine-tool building, automotive industry, tractor industry and the chemical sector; synthetic rubber, nitrogen and man-made fibers had come to be produced. Stalin said proudly that thousands of new industrial enterprises, including such giants as the Dneproges, the Magnitogorsk Works, the Kuznetsk giant, the Uralmash, the Chelyabinsk Tractor Plant and the Kramatorskiy Machine-Building Plant, had been commissioned. Stalin's report contained more figures, tables and charts than ever. It had something to tell the congress about.

We are now accustomed to measuring the 1930's only by the tragic scale, yet these were, after all, years of the unprecedented enthusiasm, selfless devotion and mass labor heroism of the long-suffering people. It is, after all, sometimes hard for us to even imagine now how millions of people, frequently with the minimum necessary for human existence, believed that they were the true creators of the communist future and that it was on their selflessness that not only their fate but that of the world proletariat depended.

Here are several reports from PRAVDA of those years. Stalin always read the party newspaper in full, and not selectively, underscoring some material. The feeling of "individual boss" overwhelmed him.

Here is the "collective report of Baku oil workers discussed at 40 meetings by 20,000 oil workers supplemented by 53 local work reports and 254 workers' letters," which says: "By the efforts of workers and specialists and under the proven leadership of the Lenin Party the 5-year plan for oil was completed in 2 years 6 months."

Report from the Magnitostroy:

"An entirely new type of team—an all-around financially autonomous excavator team—has emerged in the construction bay of the blast-furnace plant. The transition to the excavator operators' financial autonomy has produced excellent results.... The financially autonomous excavator operators have set a world machine load record."

A note from Tataria:

"The harvesting and grain delivery are taking place under the slogan of preparation for the Second All-Tatar Kolkhoz Members Congress and the earning of the right to include one's representative in the delegation which will take the labor report to Comrade Stalin. Occupying first place on the All-Union Red Honor Board is the most popular slogan on Tataria's kolkhozes."

We can from the heights of the present day speak about the naivete, starry-eyed idealism and tremendous faith in Stalin of the ordinary people of our fatherland, who built for us all that on which we now stand. But it is impossible not to admire their indomitable enthusiasm, pride in what they accomplished and certainty that the future was in their hands. High civicism of unprecedented power, frequently framed by cult rituals—it was this which was the tremendous social charge born of October and a belief in justice and a better future. The

ordinary workers were extremely undemanding and were at time content with a minimum of benefits which would today seem simply catastrophic. And we must always remember these people, builders, creators, whom the leader would more often than not call the "masses" and, less frequently, "cogs".

To be encountered in PRAVDA at this time were reports which today, when we know a good deal, not only simply alert us but evoke profound understanding of their entire tragic underlying meaning.

PRAVDA reported in mid-July 1933:

"Comrades Stalin and Voroshilov went to Leningrad and together with Comrade Kirov drove the same day to the White Sea-Baltic Canal. Having familiarized themselves with the work of the canal and the state of the hydraulic engineering works, they drove through the White Sea port of Soroka to Murmansk."

A USSR Sovnarkom decree on the opening of the White Sea-Baltic Canal imeni Comrade Stalin and a USSR Central Executive Committee decree on the conferment of awards on those who had distinguished themselves during its construction were published two weeks later. Orders of Lenin were conferred on eight persons: G.G. Yagoda, deputy chairman of the USSR OGPU, L.I. Kogan, chief of the Belmorstroy, M.D. Berman chief of the OGPU Labor Camps Main Administration, S.G. Firin, deputy chief of the Corrective-Labor Camps Administration, Ya.D. Rapoport, deputy chief of the Corrective-Labor Camps Main Administration, S.Ya. Zhuk, deputy chief engineer of the Belmorstroy, and other persons from the USSR OGPU.

S.M. Kirov would say in his speech at the 17th congress:

"To have built such a canal in so short a time and in such a place is truly heroic work, and justice must be done to our Chekists, who directed this work and who literally achieved miracles."

It would have been more accurate to have said that the miracles were achieved by hundreds of thousands of prisoners, of whom there was no shortage. Following the "de-kulakization" and the stepping up of the struggle against "remnants of the exploiter classes," the OGPU had at its disposal a tremendous force, which would build more than just the White Sea-Baltic Canal. The offices of those awarded orders of Lenin are an eloquent indication of how the Canal imeni Stalin was built.

The extensive use of the labor of prisoners (and in the 1930's there was no greater concern than to provide them with a front of work) was not a new idea. Developing the idea of the militarization of labor, back in the mid-1920's Trotskiy had said that "elements hostile to the state should be sent en masse to construction facilities of the proletarian state." The advice of the apologist for forcible methods did not, as we can see, go unheeded.

It was more difficult for Stalin to speak in the report about achievements in agriculture. Yes, over 200,000 kolkhozes and 5,000 sovkhozes had been created, but the development of this sector of the economy, he acknowledged, had been "many times slower than in industry." The general secretary confirmed that the period in question had been for agriculture "not so much a period of rapid upturn and powerful takeoff as one of the creation of the prerequisites for such an upturn and such a takeoff in the immediate future" and noted the difficult situation in the sphere of animal husbandry.

One notes that, having for 10 years been fulminating against numerous oppositions, Stalin ultimately found himself without such "work". The general secretary even spoke about this directly: whereas at the 16th congress we had to finish off the followers of all kinds of groupings, at this congress there is "no one to fight". Although he hereupon, contradicting himself, said, lest, God forbid, there be a slackening of vigilance, "vestiges of their ideology are still alive in the minds of certain members of the party," and we must be prepared to smash them. But Stalin rarely "fought" ideology, more its exponents. Having declared that the country was moving toward the creation of a "classless, socialist society," he hereupon concluded that classlessness could beachieved only "by way of a strengthening of the organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat and by way of the development of class struggle."

Among the congress' 1,225 delegates there were many persons who had once belonged to various groupings, factions, oppositions, deviations—Stalin had advised Kaganovich specially to ensure the representativeness of this substantial group of persons, who would by their penitential speeches increase even more the grandeur of the leader, now alone at the summit of power. Having been "smashed," they had all in varying form confessed and were seeking an opportunity to once again merit the favor of Stalin, who was now immeasurably more powerful and authoritative. Not all of them were, it has to be said, unscrupulous people and timeservers. Many of these former members of the opposition were sincerely repentant, frequently of insignificant "sins," being weighed down in their guilt by the "hugeness" of what had been accomplished.

Reading the speeches of these people at this congress decades later, one can imagine their humiliation: as if in religious confession, they flagellated themselves merely to satisfy the feeling of vanity and vengeance of one man. All this, of course, had far-reaching consequences for the fatal years of 1937-1938. I shall quote several extracts from the speeches of former members of the opposition, who, as Kirov put it, had all this time been "in the cart". It was also Kirov who said that these people were now "attempting... to edge their way into this common triumph and trying to march in step and in tune and support this upsurge of ours.... Take Bukharin, for example. In my opinion, he was seemingly singing in tune, but the voice was wrong. I make no mention of Comrade Rykov, Comrade Tomskiy."

This is what was said at the "congress of victors" by Bukharin, the former "favorite of the party" and its theoretician: "Stalin was entirely right when he routed, brilliantly employing Marx-Leninist dialectics, a whole number of theoretical premises of the right deviation formulated primarily by me.... The duty of every party member is... cohesion around Comrade Stalin, as the personal embodiment of the mind and will of the party, its leader, its theoretical and practical chief."

It is hard for us also to believe that this was said by a person whose intellectual conscience had always been so crystal pure....

Let us now quote the words of Rykov, the first person to replace V.I. Lenin as Sovnarkom chairman: "I would like to describe the role of Comrade Stalin in the initial period following the death of Vladimir Ilich.... The fact that he showed himself to be the organizer of our victories right from the start. I wish to describe what at that time simultaneously and immediately distinguished Comrade Stalin from the whole composition of the then leadership."

And this was said by a person who also had been famous for his straightforwardness, incorruptibility and great civic courage....

Tomskiy, the leader of the country's trade unions, said the following: "I am obliged before the party to state that only because Comrade Stalin was the most consistent and brightest of Lenin's students, only because Comrade Stalin was most perspicacious and most far-seeing and led the party the most unswervingly along the correct, Leninist path, because he struck us with the heaviest hand, because he was theoretically and practically better grounded in the struggle against the oppositions—this explains the attacks on Comrade Stalin."

Yet earlier he had loved so much to talk about party high-mindedness and the ability to uphold it to the end....

Now let us quote a fragment of the broken and rebroken Zinovyev, who had once again been accepted as a member of the party and who was the first to put together the four names of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. "We all now know," he said at the congress, "that the struggle which Comrade Stalin conducted at an exceptionally scrupulous elevation, at an exceptionally high theoretical level, that this struggle contained not the least hint of any personal aspects." Zinovyev called Stalin's report a "masterpiece report" and spoke long and ingratiatingly about "the triumph of the leadership, the triumph of *him* (my italics—D.V.) who headed this leadership." When he had for the first time been restored to the party, the contrite Zinovyev said, Stalin had made to him the following observation: "You were and are harmed in the eyes of the party not so much by fundamental mistakes even as by the deviousness in respect of the party which had been forming in you over a number of years." Numerous shouts of "right, correctly said!" were heard in the auditorium. The former claimant to party leadership went on to say: "We are now seeing how the best people of the foremost kolkhoz peasantry are heading for Moscow, for the Kremlin, aspiring to catch a sight of Comrade Stalin, touch him with their eyes and, perhaps, with their hands also, aspiring to receive from his lips direct instructions which they wish to take to the masses."

Yes, this was said by a person who had for many years known Lenin personally, learned from him and considered himself his comrade in arms. Fear of finding himself finally dumped on the political sidelines of history was compelling Zinovyev to speak all these humiliating words. Scorning dignity and conscience in the same way, the leader's praises were sung by Kamenev, Radek, Preobrazhenskiy, Lominadze and other party figures defeated by Stalin in the opposition struggle.

Seated, as usual, in the second row, with an air of outward indifference and eyes half-closed, the general secretary was looking at the speaking Kamenev. Perhaps he was recalling the time when Kamenev had earlier chaired congresses and Politburo sessions, trying with impatient retorts to turn the speeches in the right direction. Once, when their relations had already been damaged, Kamenev throw out at Stalin, who had been enumerating the mistakes of the opposition:

"Comrade Stalin! Why are you counting, like a sheep: one, two, three.... Your arguments are no cleverer than these sheep...."

"If it is considered," the general secretary swiftly parried, "that you are one of these sheep...."

What would Kamenev say now?

He repented, hastily, unbecomingly and humiliatingly, grinding it out:

"The era in which we are living, in which this congress is taking place, is a new era... it will go down in history—and there is no doubt about this—as Stalin's era, just as the preceding era has gone down in history under the name of the Lenin era, and it is the duty of each of us, of us particularly, to counter by all measures, all forces, all energy the least shaking of this authority.... I wish to say from this platform that I consider the Kamenev who from 1925 through 1933 fought against the party and its leader a political corpse and that I wish to go forward without dragging behind me, in the Biblical (excuse me) expression, this old skin.... Long live our, *our* leader and commander, Comrade Stalin!"

I believe that not even Stalin knew at that time that 3 years later he would be making Kamenev and Zinovyev and many others not simply "political corpses": he

would physically eliminate them at the hands of his "oprichnina". But that this was Kamenev's last speech at such a forum Stalin even then knew precisely: enough of playing the liberal!

Yes, listening to all these panegyrics, he could enjoy the whole gamut of feelings of victor. After all, he knew that in conversation with Trotskiy Kamenev had called him a "ferocious savage," and in his circle Zinovyev called him a "bloody Ossetian"; Bukharin had repeatedly wounded Stalin for his ignorance of foreign languages; Radek, it is recalled, had not in the first edition of his book "Portraits and Pamphlets" found even a few words for him, the future general secretary (!), and Preobrazhenskiy, who was considered an important theoretician, called the general secretary in a 1922 speech an "ignoramus"....

Vengeance? No, this would be small-minded! Let the whole party see for itself that on all contentious issues, in all debates at all pivotal stages only he, Stalin, had been right. And this was said not by him, but by them, his former opponents. Let everyone henceforward know that he possessed not only political will and an organizer's capabilities—this had long been acknowledged in the party—but also that he had particular wisdom, perspicacity, a capacity for anticipation and a *firm hand*.... Congress of victors? *Congress of theVictor,* perhaps?

Had Stalin been well versed in national history, he might have recalled a highly eloquent episode. Following the rout of Napoleon, the Senate resolved to bestow on Aleksander I in commemoration of his particular services in the salvation of the fatherland the title "Blessed". However, the tsar politely, but firmly declined:

"When we are with God, God also is with us...."

But Stalin was forever expecting new epithets and comparisons, new puffs of incense. No one, it is true, for all that, hit upon the idea of saying that a congress of the Victor was under way, but there was much then that was heard for the first time. Khrushchev, like Zhdanov also, for example, was the first to call Stalin a "brilliant leader," Zinvoyev, as we have already mentioned, canonized him as a classic of scientific socialism, Kirov defined the general secretary as "the greatest strategist of the liberation of the working people of our country and the whole world" and Voroshilov said that Stalin, the "student and friend" of Lenin, was also his... "sword-bearer".

Perhaps Stalin thought that the dictatorship of the proletariat had to have a personal embodiment? Democracy, after all, did not need persons invested with particular authority in order to express it, but the dictatorship of a class.... Everything indicates that Stalin considered it normal for the leader of the world's first socialist state to possess unlimited rights, which, as is known, only dictators possess.

Weary of the avalanche of enthusiastic epithets, Stalin listenedparticularly closely to the speeches of the military. After the unrestrained glorification, which he now expected from each speaker, he was unpleasantly struck by Tukhachevskiy's speech, which was sparing in its praise. The latter had once again taken up his own particular preoccupation—setting forth "projects" for the technical reconstruction of the army. He had been told that he was indulging unduly in fantasies, but no, he would not be pacified. Stalin recalled a long letter of Tukhachevskiy's which the latter had sent the general secretary at the start of the 1930's. Tukhachevskiy had expressed in it his unhappiness with the attitude of Stalin and Voroshilov toward his proposals for modernization of the technical basis of the army.

"At an enlarged session of the USSR Revolutionary Military Council," the commander of the Leningrad Military District wrote, "Comrade Voroshilov read out your letter on the question of my memorandum on the reconstruction of the Worker-Peasant Red Army. I was completely unacquainted with the report of the Worker-Peasant Red Army Staff attached to which my memorandum was forwarded to you.... At the present time, having acquainted myself with the above-mentioned report, I understand entirely your indignation at the fantastic nature of 'my' calculations. However, I have to state that there is absolutely nothing of mine in the Worker-Peasant Red Army Staff report. My proposals were presented not even in caricature form but in the direct meaning in the form of the 'notes of a madman'."

Even then Stalin had understood from the letter that Tukhachevskiy, whose relations with Voroshilov were strained, was arguing not with the people's commissar but with him, the general secretary. He was astounded also by the independence of opinion of this military leader, who, seemingly, was looking much further than the people's commissar, who was frozen at the level of civil war experience.

When Voroshilov mounted the platform, Stalin knew in advance what would be said by the person who had become a legend and adornment of the heroic past—the people's commissar had on the eve of the congress brought him his speech to show him. Voroshilov continually contrived to find in the great and mighty Russian language new epithets. And, of course, there had to be a toast in honor of the general secretary: "With so proven, wise and great a leader as Comrade Stalin" we will not be frightened by "any pig's or even fouler snout, wherever it appear." The people's commissar's arbitrary vulgarity: "wise," "great leader," and alongside some "snouts" or other, most likely grated on Stalin somewhat....

Although he knew that this would be the case, Stalin was also satisfied by the speeches of Dolores Ibarruri, Belyavskiy, Bela Kun, Knorin and other leaders of the international communist movement, who extolled him now not only as leader of the Bolsheviks but also as "leader of the world proletariat". If 20 years previously

in Kureyka, in the howling of the blizzard, he had dreamed all this, he would most likely have thought that he had lost his senses. "Leader of the world proletariat"....

How fragile and ephemeral everything is in our rapidly changing world Stalin sensed on the last day of the congress. There was left, seemingly, just a simple formality: electing the Central Committee members and determining the composition of the two new commissions (in place of the Central Committee)—party and soviet control. The personal composition of the executive bodies had, of course, been "agreed" in advance in the Politburo, and everything was, seemingly, proceeding tranquilly toward the conclusion of the triumphal celebrations in honor of the leader. The Accounts Commission elected by the congress had completed its work. But something unexpected suddenly happened—an excited and extremely agitated Kaganovich and Accounts Commission Chairman Zatonskiy came into the room to speak to Stalin.

What happened subsequently was described in his memoirs, which were published posthumously, by A.I. Mikoyan, member of the Politburo from 1926 through 1966 and a delegate to all party congresses from 1920 through 1966. A.I. Mikoyan had, in turn, been told this story by many people—old Bolsheviks A. Snegov, O. Shatunovskaya and I. Andreasyan, former member of the Accounts Commission.

Thus Kaganovich uneasily notified Stalin of the surprise results of the voting: of the 1,225 delegates who had taken part in the election of the party's executive bodies, 3 had voted against Kirov, and approximately 300 (!), almost one-fourth of those who had voted, against Stalin. This was incredible!

No one can now say precisely what Stalin replied to such shattering news. But, once again as A.I. Mikoyan maintained, it was swiftly decided to "leave" the same number of votes against Stalin as against Kirov, that is, three, and to destroy the rest of the slips. The practice of elections which has taken shape, and which continues 50 (!) years on, unfortunately, implies that there usually remained on the voting lists exactly the number of candidates necessary for election. Generally, these are "elections" without a "choice". A fiction of free expression. Even if the 300 votes against had been taken into consideration, Stalin would still have been a member of the Central Committee and, evidently, would, in any event, have been elected general secretary. But if the true results of the voting had been made public, everyone would have sensed immediately how transparent was the leader's greatness.

The "History of the CPSU," which appeared in 1962, observes that the "abnormal situation which had taken shape in the party was causing concern among some communists, particularly among the old Leninist cadres. Many of the congress' delegates, primarily those who were familiar with V.I. Lenin's testament, believed that the time had come to move Stalin from the office of general secretary to other work."

Having learned of the results of the voting prior to their official announcement, a group of old Bolsheviks, the authors of various memoirs attest, proposed to Kirov that he agree to his nomination as general secretary. Kirov declined and, seemingly, told Stalin everything.

There are in this dramatic story several objective circumstances lending it quite a high degree of plausibility. First of all, there were at the congress many former members of the opposition; many delegates were party officials who had already experienced against themselves Stalin's high-handedness, rudeness and dictatorial ways. The atmosphere in theparty was already such that no one could openly criticize Stalin or, even less, propose that he be moved from high office, although these people could undoubtedly have expressed their true attitude toward Stalin with the aid of a secret ballot. The authenticity of this confused business is supported also by the fact of Stalin's abrupt change in his attitude toward Kirov, who had now in his eyes become a real rival.

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[Text]

Stalin and Kirov

The following words were heard in Yenukidze's speech at the 17th Congress: "Comrade Stalin has been able to surround himself with the best people in our party and together with them has been able to discuss and resolve all problems, and has been able to create from this group the kind of powerful force that no one has ever known in the history of a single revolutionary party." There is some truth in this: in fact, particularly in the Twenties through to the late Thirties there were many interesting people in Stalin's entourage. They included S.M. Kirov, although he could scarcely be called a member of the "entourage" because we worked in the Transcaucasus and later in Leningrad; he was, nevertheless, a man close to Stalin. Yenukidze, also a personal friend of the General Secretary, exaggerates, however, when he asserts that Stalin always had "the best people in our party" around him. He had various people around him—clever theoreticians and talented politicians, lickspittles, whose main concern was to guess and carry out the wishes of their leader, and, to the great misfortune of the people, alongside them there were (particularly during the late Thirties and Forties) those who can be described in no other way except as criminals.

Stalin was not a stupid man. He wanted to have loyal people around him, devoted friends and companions-in-arms, and above all, unquestioning executives who could catch the meaning of his wishes, intentions and

gestures. Even though, in order to look good in the eyes of the public, the General Secretary always emphasized that relations based on personal loyalty were not worthy of high principles.

In his letter replying to Shatunovskiy, Stalin wrote as follows: "You talk about your 'loyalty' to me. Perhaps this is a phrase taken at random. Perhaps... But if it is not a random phrase I would advise you to cast aside the 'principle' of loyalty to individuals. This is not Bolshevist. Have loyalty to the working class, to its party and its state. This is necessary and fine. But do not dare to confuse it with loyalty to individuals, with this empty and unnecessary trinket of the intelligentsia."

But in fact Stalin was guided by other things and he ultimately gathered about himself people who did not cause him any particular trouble. This applies primarily to the aides. He had many of them around: Nazaretyan, Tovstukha, Bazhanov, Kanner, Maryin, Dvinskiy, Poskrebyshev. To two in particular he was much attached: Tovstukha and Poskrebyshev.

I.P. Tovstukha was a man with a not bad theoretical training, capable of shaping an idea and catching a major error in a text. Stalin loved him for his exceptional selflessness in work; he could quickly catch the meaning of what the General Secretary might say.

The archives contain notes from Stalin to Zinovyev, Kamenev and Bukharin in which he writes that "Tovstukha does not want to take a vacation. In fact, when I proposed that comrade Tovstukha depart immediately for a vacation he would not allow it to be put to the vote." And here Stalin reprimanded his aide for telling Kamenev about the vacation that never happened. Finally, the confused Tovstukha wrote an official note to the General Secretary:

"To Stalin.

"Copy to Kamenev.

"I hereby state that I never told comrade Kamenev nor anyone else that I wanted to take a vacation but that comrade Stalin would not allow it.

"Tovstukha."

As a kind of joke, Kamenev wrote in pencil a resolution "of local significance" on this piece of paper: "I confirm that Tovstukha has never in any place or in any form talked to me about a vacation, but only that he would be able to do more on his work on Lenin if he had started his work in the Central Committee earlier. I beg that you do not accuse me of Tovstukha' death.

L. Kamenev."

We see that it was not only the serious and "great" matters that reached the top in Stalin's apparatus.

B. Bazhanov worked by Stalin for a short time.

The General Secretary quickly gained respect for this intelligent and highly educated man. Soon it was he, not Mekhlis, who became the stenographer at meetings of the Politburo. In 1928, however, this man, who skillfully concealed his true views, was able to flee to Persia and thence to England. For decades he labored in the cornfields of the anti-Soviet movement, at first earning his living by commenting on what he knew, and then by producing various fabrications about our country and its leadership.

For many years Stalin kept Mekhlis close to him; later Mekhlis held a number of major posts. A man not devoid of ability but with the brains of a policeman, he was one of those who regularly brought Stalin confidential information about people in the highest echelon of power. But he was hardly a man of ideas. In 1924, however, he made a request of Stalin, asking the General Secretary to write an inscription on the book "On Lenin and Leninism," which had just been published. Stalin quickly inscribed the following on the title page: "To my young work friend comrade Mekhlis from the author. 23 May 1924."

It is most interesting that after obtaining the autograph Mekhlis never again opened the book: all the pages of this now shriveled and yellowed volume remained uncut!

But perhaps the man enjoying Stalin's greatest trust was A.N. Poskrebyshev, whom at the 20th Party Congress Khrushchev called "the loyal sword bearer" of the General Secretary. This former surgeon's assistant from Vyatka was distinguished by his amazing capacity for work and his diligence. His elder daughter told me that her father was always at work for at least 16 hours. Although shortly before Stalin's death Beriya was able to remove Poskrebyshev from his post, he remained a loyal servant of the leader to the end of his days. Poskrebyshev's first wife was a distant relative of Trotskiy, which ultimately played a tragic role.

All information of any nature reached Stalin via Poskrebyshev. He knew about all the processes taking place in the party and the country no less than Stalin. He was the ideal executive: obedient, never raising objections, always at his post. The former people's commissar of railways, I.V. Kovalev, who throughout the war reported to Stalin daily, sometimes three or four times a day, about the movements of military trains, describing Poskrebyshev, told me: "He was a work horse. You could be summoned to Stalin at any time, and his balding head was always there bent over a pile of papers, He was a man with a computer for a memory. He could give you accurate information on any matter. In short, he was an encyclopedia."

All these were the close people from among the "staff," as Stalin sometimes said. But others around Stalin, his closest companions-in-arms—Malenkov, Kaganovich,

Voroshilov—were distinguished primarily by their absolute agreement with him. In everything. We shall be speaking against of some of these people. One of this troika—K.Ye. Voroshilov—when any matter was being resolved—the most trivial or the most crucial—used to try above all to support the leader in everything. Way back in 1923 for some reason one of the female workers in the Yessentuki sanatorium, where at that time Voroshilov used to rest along with the General Secretary, needed the following strange reference, written by the hand of Stalin himself:

"For the information of soviet and party establishments.

"I certify that this person, Mariya Geperova, an employee at the mud therapy treatment center in Yessentuki, is completely trustworthy and a worker loyal to the Soviet Republic.

"I. Stalin. 15 November 1923."

And beneath was written: "Fully concur. K. Voroshilov."

When the well known military leader Yakir was arrested and sentenced to be shot he wrote a letter to Stalin, assuring him that he was totally innocent of the crimes attributed to him. Stalin reacted laconically: "A scoundrel and a prostitute," and Voroshilov, who was accustomed to agreeing in everything, not only in form but also content, wrote: "A quite accurate description. K. Voroshilov."

But there were also other people who were considered Stalin's companions-in-arms but who nevertheless succeeded in preserving their good name. One such was Sergey Mironovich Kirov. Everywhere he worked people loved this convivial and sympathetic man. When at Lenin's recommendation Kirov was sent to work in Azerbaijan, his party reference read as follows: "Stable in all regards. An energetic worker... More than persistent in carrying out decisions. Even-tempered and possesses great political tact... A splendid journalist. A first-rate and splendid speaker." Kirov's years of work in the Transcaucasus remained an exceptionally warm memory for him.

After the 14th Congress, when the "new opposition" was trying to make the Leningrad party organization its bulwark, and the party central committee sent Kirov to Leningrad, where he was elected gorkom and obkom secretary, Yu. Pompeyev testifies that when Kirov arrived in Leningrad one of his closest friends, Sergo Ordzhonikidze, sent the following curious note to the provincial committee:

"Dear Friends,

"Your boza [a beverage made from millet—ed] pleased us greatly: they have taken comrade Kirov from us. For us this is a very great loss, but in return you will be reinforced, as is proper. I do not have the slightest doubt that you will cope and that everything will be done after a month or two. Kirov is peerless but apart from you he knows no one. I am sure that you will surround him with friendly trust. I wish you all success from the bottom of my heart."

And right beneath this Sergo added a postscript:

"Lads, you must settle our Kirov as you must, but he will be unsteady without an apartment and without food."

Stalin had known Kirov for a long time, since the October days of the revolution. It is difficult to say why Stalin's dry and hardened and sometimes simply icy nature drew him to this always smiling and energetic fellow. They spent their leisure time together more than once and were on friendly family terms, even though they had usually been far apart. In one of Stalin's notes to G. Ordzhonikidze, written in Sochi, Kirov and his treatment are mentioned (this is simply astonishing—Stalin never showed any interest in anyone's else's health!):

"Dear Sergo,

"...And what is Kirov doing there? Is he being treated with narzan for his stomach ulcer? That might just finish him. Which quack is 'benefiting' him?...

"Greetings to Zina.
"Greetings from Nadya to all of you.

"Yours Stalin."
"Sochi, 30 June 1925."

Perhaps Stalin never showed such attention and even "love" for any other political worker. Wherever Kirov was, people immediately gathered. He was what might be called in the now half-forgotten expression "the life and soul of society"—party society, working society, student society, Red Army society. Against the backdrop of Molotov's stiff, impenetrable mask and Kaganovich's obsequious expression, and the figure of Voroshilov, whose entire appearance embodied his absolute readiness to carry out the will of the General Secretary, the open and simple nature of Kirov stood out noticeably and advantageously.

Almost every dictator has his "weakness," and in Stalin it was expressed in an intuitive trust of a very small circle of people: Mekhlis, Molotov, Poskrebyshev, Kirov, and perhaps one or two others. Feelings of sympathy are difficult to "substantiate" using rational means, and sometimes simply impossible since they lie wholly outside the field of psychology. Stalin loved Kirov's smile and his open Russian face, and he respected him for his ingenuousness and obsession with work.

Once during a Sunday visit by the Leningrad leader they played at the dacha in the cantonment. Stalin took as his partner Khorkovskiy, a kitchen worker, while Kirov chose Vlasik.

"What do you like most of all, Sergey?" the host asked his guest.

Kirov looked at Stalin in surprise, and answered with a laugh "For a Bolshevik to love work more than his wife."

"And what else?"

"Probably, an idea," Kirov answered, striking a new pose.

Stalin waved his arm vaguely but did not pursue it: he did not understand: how was it possible "to love an idea?" Perhaps he had said it just be witty? But the General Secretary knew that his guest could not dissemble, just as he knew that Kirov, perhaps like no one else, could influence him, Stalin.

The affair of M.N. Ryutin, a former warrant officer in the old army, whom Stalin knew way back in the early twenties, comes to mind. In 1918 he was the commander of the Irkutsk Military District and in 1920 chairman of the Irkutsk Provincial Committee Presidium, and then, in the latter half of the Twenties, secretary of the Krasnopresenskiy party raykom in Moscow, deputy editor of KRASNAYA ZVEZDA and candidate member of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee. Then this Bolshevik was "reviled." It was reported to Stalin that Ryutin had become one of the authors of an illegally circulated document that was being passed round by hand—"To All Members of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks)." The main blow in this appeal was directed against the General Secretary, who in the document was called a "dictator," no less, with an anti-Leninist "muzzle" in his hands. At a meeting of the Politburo Stalin not only insisted on Ryutin's expulsion from the party but also proposed that the death sentence be imposed on him. This was evidently the first case in which the General Secretary tried to decide someone's fate before any legal trial. The members of the Politburo remained silent. On the one hand, it had become known that Ryutin was trying to create a "counterrevolutionary organization," while on the other hand—a "death sentence" immediately?! The "Party Leadership," as Stalin sometimes called it, was in confusion. And then Kirov spoke up:

"This cannot be done. Ryutin is not a hopeless case, but a man who has been in error... devil take it, he only took a hand in composing this letter... people will not understand us..."

Stalin then agreed quickly with this. Ryutin was given 10 years and he finally disappeared in 1938. Yes, the General Secretary remembered: Kirov boldly states his opinion without even considering if he, Stalin, even wants it.

Stalin gave an inscribed copy of his book to very few people. And Kirov was honored with the warmest autograph of the leader, with words that it seemed the leader was absolutely incapable of saying. On the title page of the book "On Lenin and Leninism" there in the leader's neat and firm handwriting is written: "To S.M. Kirov. My friend and dear brother, from the author. 23 May 1924. Stalin."

When the session chairman at the 17th Party Congress, P.P. Postyshev, announced that Kirov was to speak the hall burst into applause and everyone stood. Stalin also rose. The hall was applauding yet another "favorite of the party" for along time—perhaps only the General Secretary himself was given a similar reception by the congress delegates. Kirov's speech was brilliant, rich, and filled with information. Yes, of all the delegate speeches at that congress, without exception, it was thickly strewn with eulogistic epithets referring to the General Secretary. It is possible that even Kirov somehow "swamped" many of the other speakers. We can only regret this, but it should be understood that even if there is chance that conscience exists it can sometimes be used just by overstepping the usual bounds of conduct, and this is already at the boundary of a civic exploit. Neither Kirov nor anyone else at the congress, where before their very eyes and with their help the cult of personality had been asseverated, took that step. Nothing can be added to or taken from history, otherwise it is no longer history but a false copy of it.

On the marble statues of ancient Greece and Rome the faces are inscrutable, like a lizard, and their feelings have frozen over the centuries and the millennia. Stalin, surprisingly for one with a Southern temperament, also managed to maintain a stony mask of imperturbability in the most critical situations. Thus it was after the signal at the congress giving the news that by no means everyone shared the joy of making him the personal leader. Everything else went off as planned. At a central committee plenum Kirov was elected member of the Politburo and Organizational Buro and secretary of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee, and he also remained secretary in Leningrad. Stalin had initially wanted to transfer Kirov from Leningrad to Moscow immediately after the congress, but he changed his mind.

Kirov's work load grew. As party secretary Sergey Mironovich dealt with matters concerning heavy industry and forestry and he had to make frequent trips to Moscow. Stalin appeared to be the same toward him as previously: he often telephoned Kirov "on the direct line" when he was in Moscow, and met him many times to discuss current matters. It seemed that nothing had

changed toward his "friend and dear brother." True, some historians believe that the General Secretary became more official and cold with Kirov, and that the Leningrad secretary was even caught out by the leader in some trifling slips. It is possible, but my interlocutors, who knew those persons at the time, could not tell me about anything definite on this plane, like, incidentally, the documents of the period.

But on 1 December 1934 S.M. Kirov was murdered in the Smolnyy. A report on the tragedy stated as follows: "According to information from a preliminary investigation it has been established that the name of the murderer of comrade Kirov is Nikolayev (Leonid Vasilyevich), born 1904, former employee of the Leningrad Workers" and Peasants" Inspection Department. The investigation continues."

Two days before his murder, along with other Leningrad members of the central committee Kirov had returned from Moscow from the plenum at which an important and happy decision had been reached to abolish ration cards for bread and other foodstuffs. On the train there had been lively discussion of this long-awaited step, and opinions were also exchanged on Bulgakov's production of "Days of the Turbines" which they had seen, and they talked about the party meeting of the Leningrad aktiv scheduled for 1 December. In general, Kirov arrived in an elated and businesslike mood.

On the day of the aktiv meeting, after finishing the preparations on his report, Kirov went to the Smolnyy at half past four. We walked along the corridor greeting people and exchanging business talk briefly with many people. A man approached him, unnoticed. At the door of the office two shots rang out. Those running up saw Kirov lying face down with his document case and the murderer struggling hysterically with a revolver in his hand...

Two hours after the tragedy Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov, Yezhov, Yagoda, Zhdanov, Agranov, Kosarev, Zakokskiy and several others journeyed to Leningrad by special train. At the station Stalin cursed those meeting him, using unprintable language, and he struck Medvedev, chief of the Leningrad department of the NKVD, across the face. Medvedev, and his deputy Zaporozhets, were then transferred to work in the Far East, and in 1937, when the machinery of terror was running at top speed, they were destroyed.

According to some reports, the first interrogation of Nikolayev was conducted by Stalin personally in the presence of those who had arrived with him. Right from the start a whole series of circumstances associated with S.M. Kirov's murder were mysterious. N.S. Khrushchev reported this at the 20th Party Congress. "It must be stated," he said, "that the circumstances surrounding the murder of Kirov are to this day largely incomprehensible and mysterious and require a most careful investigation. There are reasons for suspecting that Kirov's murderer—Nikolayev—was helped by someone from among those whose duties included the protection of Kirov's person. Six weeks before the murder Nikolayev was arrested because of his suspicious behavior but was released and not even searched. The circumstance that when the Chekist who was a member of Kirov's personal bodyguard was being brought in for questioning on 2 December 1934 he died in a automobile 'accident' while none of the other passengers in the vehicle was injured, is also extremely suspicious. After Kirov's murder," N.S. Khrushchev continued, "leading workers in the Leningrad NKVD were given very light sentences, but in 1937 they were shot. It is assumed that they were shot in order to conceal any traces of the real organizers of Kirov's murder." And the man who died in the accident—NKVD worker Borisov—headed Kirov's bodyguard and, according to some data, it was precisely he who warned Sergey Mironovich about a possible attempt on his life. In any event, Borisov, who had twice detained Nikolayev with a weapon along the road that Kirov used to take and then on someone's instructions released him, had to be removed by someone."

In the archives to which this author had access there is no material making it possible to say anything about the "Kirov case" with any great degree of accuracy. One thing is clear: it was not done on orders from Trotskiy, Zinovyev or Kamenev, as the official version was soon put out. Knowing Stalin today and his exceptional cruelty, cunning and perfidy, it is quite realistic to suggest that he had a hand in the affair. One indirect proof is the elimination of two or three "layers" of potential witnesses; this was Stalin's "handwriting." There is an extensive literature on this question abroad but it is very tendentious in nature and as a rule is based only on conjecture and deduction. They include, for example, the conclusions of an old emigre, B. Nikolayevskiy, who lived out his life in the United States.

Nikolayev's trial was a hurried affair. After only 3 weeks it was confirmed in the published indictment that Nikolayev had been an active member of Zinovyev's underground terrorist organization. The indictment was signed by the country's deputy procurator, A.Ya. Vyshinskiy, whose name was to be associated with many tragic and dark pages in the near future, and by the investigator for major cases, L. Sheynin. As was to be expected, like Nikolayev, all those accused in this matter were shot.

But why "as was to be expected"? The fact is that already on the day after the murder, at Stalin's initiative and without discussion in the Politburo, a document was adopted expressing the credo of lawlessness. The secretary of the Central Executive Committee Presidium, A. Yenukidze, was forced to sign a document that introduced changes in the existing penal and legal code. It stated as follows:

"1. The investigating departments are directed to hasten cases in which there are charges of making preparations for or carrying out acts of terrorism;

"2. The agencies of the court are directed not to delay in carrying out the death sentence imposed in cases involving crimes in this category in order to review cases for the possibility of a pardon since the USSR Central Executive Committee Presidium considers pardons to be unacceptable in such cases.

"3. Organs of the Commissariat of Internal Affairs are directed to carry out death sentences imposed on criminals in this category immediately after sentence has been passed."

A number of cases dealt with in Moscow and other cities were hurried through in accordance with the new instructions. Since as far as the Kirov murder was concerned, the investigation had been linked with the Zinovyev people, and already in December 1934 a large group of figures—Yevdokimov, Bakoyev, Kuklin, Gessen and others—led by G.Ye. Zinovyev and L.B. Kamenev were put on trial. It was not possible to produce any direct evidence or proofs showing their involvement in the tragedy.

After the 17th Congress, although not elected to the central committee, Zinovyev brightened up somewhat and reckoned that the threat had passed and that better times were coming for him. After the congress he even wrote and published his last article in BOLSHEVIK—"The International Significance of This Past Decade." But after he read the newspaper commentaries about Kirov's murder, in which it was stated that "Trotskiyite-Zinovyev scoundrels" were involved in the matter, he understood that the worst was yet to come. Under the pressure of the investigation and then of the procurator, Zinovyev was forced to "admit" that "on the general plane" the former antiparty group might carry "political responsibility" for what had occurred. This was enough—arguments and proofs of "justice" were no longer necessary. Zinovyev got 10 years in prison, Kamenev 5, and all the rest were also convicted. This was perhaps the first occasion when ideological views differing from those officially proclaimed were publicly given the status of crimes.

The sentences were first agreed with Stalin. Kirov's murder signified the arrival of evil times. At thousands of meetings people demanded revolutionary and decisive action against terrorists and class enemies. Within the country an atmosphere was formed which, in the words of V. Okulov, who was also a victim during the Thirties, "could at any moment erupt into mass terror, and in which the main victims would be innocent people." The press constantly heated up the situation, always reporting new "hostile centers," "plots" and "terrorist groups."

On 1 December 1934 the "importance" of the "punitive organs," as Stalin liked to call them, was sharply raised. The numerical strength of the NKVD started to grow rapidly and the powers of the "organs" were extended, and gradually they stood on an equal footing with the party committees, and then overshadowed them, getting completely out of control. The most popular theme in the press became vigilance, which, being hypertrophied, quickly generously started to sow its seeds of suspicion and mistrust of everyone. Many leaders were to be placed under surveillance. Stalin, fearful of an attempt on his own person, sharply increased measures to improve his bodyguard. Each failure, catastrophe, breakage and accident would be associated with the wreckers. Gradually an atmosphere would form in the country in which Stalin would carry out his bloody purges by counting on the "support" of the uninformed masses.

Even before Kirov's death, with Stalin's personal permission people who were to play a sinister role in the lawlessness of the years ahead had been assigned to a number of posts of great importance in the mechanism of the struggle against "enemies of the people" and the party. They included first and foremost N.I. Yezhov, a member of the Organizational Committee (he was to become a central committee secretary early in 1935), and one of the leading member of the party purge, A.Ya. Vyshinskiy, a former Menshevik who had become deputy procurator of the USSR and then the country's procurator; at about that time A.N. Poskrebyshev, whose role was much more important than his official status because of the General Secretary's special regard for him, became the chief of Stalin's personal secretariat, chief of a special section in the central committee, and the General Secretary's aide. A great deal often depended on the nature and content of his reports to Stalin.

The directives, the circulars and the press simply demanded that enemies be sought out and unmasked. And it became clear that there "it turned out" that there were many such enemies—numerous reports arrived at the center about them. Here are a few of those documents from the archives of the USSR Supreme Court.

"To the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks), Comrade I.V. Stalin. "The USSR Council of People's Commissars, Comrade V.M. Molotov.

"The NKVD Department Administration for State Security for the Northern Section has completed its investigation of the case of a counterrevolutionary terrorist grouping that was preparing to carry out an act of terrorism against central committee member and secretary of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Northern Section Raykom and member of the Central Executive Committee comrade V. Ivanov.

"Seven persons have been indicted in this case and handed over to the courts: N.G. Rakitin, P.V. Zaostrovskiy, P.N. Popov, G.N. Levinov, N.I. Ivlev, A.V. Zaostrovskiy and N.A. Koposov. Of the accused, only P.N. Popov has admitted his full guilt.

"It is assumed that the case of Rakitin and the others will be heard by the circuit session of the USSR Supreme Court Military Collegium in Arkhangelsk city using the law of 1 December 1934.

"We consider that the main accused, Rakitin, Zaostrovskiy, P.V. and Levinov, must be sentenced to be shot while the other accused should be given prison sentences of various terms. We request your instructions.

"23 January 1935.

"A. Vyshinskiy, V. Ulrikh.

"

Another document.

"To Secretary of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks I.V. Stalin.

"In the matter of the review of the case of the sentencing of L.I. Belozir to be shot for being a member of a counterrevolutionary underground terrorist organization of Ukrainian nationalists and enlisting into that organization Shcherbin and Tereshchenko, who during the 1934 October celebrations in Kiev were to commit an act of terror against comrades Postyshev and Balitskiy:

"Belozir stubbornly refuses at all interrogations to give any testimony at all and has also stated that she is refusing any pardon. In light of this I request instructions on the possibility of carrying out the sentence on convicted person L.I. Belozir.

"Comrades A.Ya. Vyshinskiy and A.V. Balitskiy think that the sentence can be carried out.

"3 February 1935.
"V. Ulrikh."

And let us cite one more report from many similar ones.

"To Secretary of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) comrade I.V. Stalin.

"On 9 March this year a circuit session of the USSR Supreme Court Military Collegium under my chairmanship considered at a closed session of the court in Leningrad the case of the accomplices of Leonid Nikolayev, namely, Milda Draule, Olga Draule and Roman Kuliner.

"In answer to my question of what her purpose was in trying to obtain admission to the meeting of the Leningrad party aktiv on 1 December last year, at which comrade Kirov was to have presented a report, Milda Draule responded that "she wanted to help Leonid Nikolayev." Help him do what? "That would be obvious from the circumstances." Thus, we have established that the accused wanted to help Nikolayev in the commission of an act of terrorism.

"All three were sentenced to death by firing squad. The sentence was carried out on the night of 10 March.

"I request instructions: should a report of this be given to the press?

"11 March 1935.
"V. Ulrikh."

Swift justice: in court on 9 March, shot on the night of 10 March, and reported to the High Priest on 11 March. Even from just one or two of the phrases in Ulrikh's report we can see how superficial the examination in the court was.

Stalin himself maintained the tension. In mid-1935 his interview with Herbert Wells was published, the one Wells had had in mid-1934. And evidently this was not by chance; Stalin again recalled the main thing in the dictatorship of the proletariat—revolutionary violence. In response to Wells' question "Is not your propaganda old-fashioned since it is the propaganda of violent actions?" Stalin replied as follows: "Communists in no way idealize the method of violence. But they, communists, do not want to be caught unawares and they cannot count on the old world disappearing from the scene, and they see that the old order is defended by force, and therefore communists say to the working class: be ready to answer violence with violence... Who needs a general who allows the vigilance of his army to be blunted, not understanding that the enemy will not surrender, that he must be finished off?"

While the brake of the decisions of the 13th Party Congress was still applied (the desire of the delegates who were familiar with Lenin's letter), and while Lenin's warning was still fresh in Stalin memory, his attitude toward the opposition was as toward ideological opponents. The "capitulators" (who repented) were usually quickly reinstated in the party and given responsible posts, and they published their articles. For example, Zinovyev and Kamenev, reinstated in the party in June 1928 in all probability had their eyes on leading posts. Bukharin, Rykov and Tomskiy, still referred to in the press as "accomplices of the kulaks," were nevertheless elected to the central committee at the 16th Party Congress. But then Stalin would begin to "finish them off" with gusto.

Even Stalin's "love" for Kirov did not apparently stop the General Secretary from eliminating this very popular man, his potential opponent. Suspicion, cruelty and imperiousness always came out on top in Stalin when it came to a choice between elementary probity and what embodied his power.

Kirov's death was a "good excuse" for hardening the entire domestic political course in the country. The General Secretary could not forget that one-fourth of the delegates at the 17th Congress had voted against him, and how many such people were there throughout the country? But there were still few who would suggest that of the 1,225 delegates with the right to deciding and advisory vote, 1,108 would soon be arrested and that most of them would perish in the cellars of the NKVD and in the camps. Of the 139 party central committee members and candidate members elected at that congress, 98 would be arrested and shot, and indeed the overwhelming majority of those people were the most active participants in the October Socialist Revolution and in the restoration of the country after the devastation. It was deliberate liquidation of the old Leninist guard, which knew too much. What Stalin needed was selfless executors, functionaries of the younger generation who did not know about his past.

It was hardly happenstance that in mid-1935 Stalin supported a proposal to liquidate the Association of Old Bolsheviks and the Society of Former Political Prisoners. The archives of these associations were taken over by a commission whose members included Yezhov, Shkiryatov and Malenkov. In the terrible years of lawlessness in the late Thirties many of the old Bolsheviks were accused of their "crimes" of a quarter of a century before. Surely use was made here of documents taken from the archives?

It was at about this time L.P. Beriya, then a former first secretary in Georgia, began his rise. In mid-1935 Beriya's "work" "On the Question of the History of Bolshevik Organizations in the Transcaucasus" was published in the party publication of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks). Printed on good paper and in a hard binding, which was a rarity at that time, half of the small book consisted of quotations from Stalin and unrestrained praise of the General Secretary. But the main thing that I would like to note in Beriya's "work" was the direct political denunciation of two eminent Bolsheviks—Yenukidze and Orakhelashvili. And even though the former was a member of the central committee and the Central Executive Committee and a longtime personal friend of Stalin, the fates of both of them were sealed. Stalin always believed denunciations, and Beriya was quick to grasp this. True, Orakhelashvili tried to protest. He wrote Stalin a personal letter with the draft of a refutation for PRAVDA. In his reply the General Secretary essentially rejected the statement of the old Bolshevik:

"To comrade Orakhelashvili.

"I have received your letter.

"1) The central committee is not considering raising (there is no basis for raising!) the question of your work in the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute. You have been hasty and have evidently decided to raise it. This is for nothing. Stay at the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute and work.

"2) The letter to the PRAVDA editorial office should be printed but the text of your 'letter' is in my opinion unsatisfactory. In your place I would remove all 'polemic embellishment' from the 'letter' and all 'excursions' into history, plus the 'decisive protest,' and would say simply and briefly that errors (and say which errors) were actually permitted, but the categorization of the errors provided by Comrade Beriya is too, let us say, sharp and is not justified by the nature of the errors. Or something like that.

Regards.

"8 August 1935.
"I. Stalin."

The country and the party faced terrible trials. A man who idolized only the violence in the dictatorship of the proletariat had become dictator. On this tragic note 1934 came to an end: the "congress of the victors," and then the signal for the start of the terror. Perhaps in fact the year 1937 started on 1 December 1934, despite the astronomical calendar? The seeds of the future tragedy had already put forth their ill-omened shoots.

Chapter V. In the Toga of a Leader

False gods must be denied,
but this is not all: beneath their masks
we must seek out the reason for their existence.

A. Herzen.

By the mid-Thirties Stalin's views on the role of the leader in the social process had undergone a marked evolution. He was evidently aware of the views of G.V. Plekhanov on the role of the individual in history. At one time, when Stalin had created his library, he set Plekhanov fifth in the list of thinkers, after Lenin, Marx, Engels and Kautsky; Plekhanov's works were dotted with his handwriting. Perhaps the General Secretary had leafed through a volume of Plekhanov before traveling in 1930 to meet with the party cell buro in the department of philosophy and the natural sciences at the Institute of the Red Professorate? It is known only that when giving instructions "to turn upside-down and dig over all the manure that has been accumulated in philosophy," among other principles Stalin offered the following: "Plekhanov must be unmasked. He always looked down on Lenin."

So I think that Stalin knew these words of Plekhanov: "A great man is an initiator precisely because he sees further than others and wants to be stronger than others." This conclusion, drawn by a man who had to be "unmasked" pleased him. And here, the words of Plekhanov that follow this—a leader cannot "halt or change the natural course of things"—could scarcely have impressed Stalin, who now considered himself to be the country's sole leader.

Whereas in the Twenties the word leader [vozhd] was used as an epithet in combination with other things ("leader of the Red Army, Trotskiy," "leaders of the revolution, Zinovyev and Kamenev," "the leader of the Red Trade Unions, Tomskiy," "leaders of the International," "leaders of the Communist Youth Alliance") now it was used only for Stalin. It is thought that Lenin used the word "leader" to signify the political rather than the personal quality of a revolutionary leader [rukovoditel]. Analysis of Lenin's works shows that for him a leader was first and foremost a leading representative of a class or social group. Lenin allowed of nothing of the culture, the mythical or association with the personification of power.

In his work "The Immediate Tasks of Our Movement," written as long ago as 1900, he emphasized that "no class in history has achieved domination unless it promoted its political leaders [vozhd] and its leading representatives capable of organizing a movement and leading it." A year earlier, when studying the reversal trend in the activity of the Russian social democrats, V.I. Lenin had noted the special role of the "workers' intelligentsia," which is possessed of a passionate desire for knowledge and socialism. It was precisely from this medium, he wrote, that the "leading workers" come. Another quote of Lenin: "Any viable workers' movement has advanced the workers' leaders like the Proudhons and Valyans, the Weitlings and the Bebels. And our Russian workers' movement promises not to lag behind the European movement in this respect." Lenin thus talks about many leaders as advanced leaders of the proletariat.

The logic of Stalin's actions and those of his entourage led to a situation in which the kind of system of political and social relations in the party and the country that would confirm the position of a "dominant personality" was created; we have borrowed this expression from the critical analysis of the work of historian (I. Ten).

"The Dominant Personality."

The steady ascendancy of one personality to the heights of leader worship [vozhdizm] also became possible because the party, bitter as it is to say it, permitted and agreed to this modern-day Caesarism. For decades we have been talking about "restoring" the role of the party in the most varied spheres of our activity, but I have not heard or read, either in N.S. Khrushchev's report "On Personality Cult and Its Consequences" delivered at the 20th Party Congress or in the well-known central committee decree on this issue, or in other documents, that the party was in any degree to blame for the abnormalities of the cult. But among the causes giving rise to it, this cause is by no means the least. The servile attitude toward their own leaders, lack of control, and the assumption of posts for life created a situation in which a man with an evil, sophisticated and cunning mind, a man who had no use of compromise, such as was Dzhugashvili-Stalin, became the "dominant personality" in everything. The party was unable to find those defensive measures that would have safeguarded it and the people from autocracy.

In "The Holy Family" a profound and true thought is expressed, taken from the newspaper LUSTALO: "The great seem great to us because we are on our knees." To this, Marx adds: "Stand up!"

There are many statements attributed to Stalin in which he correctly interprets the relationship of "the leader and the masses," the role of the individual in history, and the significance of collective leadership in the party. Thus, in December 1931 Stalin said: "Individual decisions are always, or almost always, one-sided decisions. In any collegium, in any collective there are people whose opinions have to be reckoned with. In any collegium and any collective there are also people capable of expressing erroneous opinions... In our leading organ, in our party central committee, which leads all our soviet and party organizations, there are about 70 members. Among those 70 members of the central committee we have our best industrialists, our best cooperative people, our best suppliers, our best military people, our best propagandists, our best agitators, our best qualified sovkhoz people, our best qualified kolkhoz people, our best qualified people in individual peasant farms, our best scholars on the nations of the Soviet Union and on national policy. In this Areopagus," Stalin continued, "is concentrated the wisdom of our party. Each has the opportunity to correct any personal opinion or proposal. Each has the opportunity to contribute his experience. If it were not so, if decisions were taken by one person, we would have very serious errors in our work."

Whether he wanted it or not, Stalin's final words involuntarily confirmed the thought the many of the "very serious" errors allowed in the process of collectivization, party and state building, and the cultural sphere became possible precisely because of individual decisions made by one man.

This was expressed primarily in the steady trend toward curtailing collegiality in the work of the central committee, to which V.I. Lenin had attached such enormous importance. It is common knowledge that during the first 6 years following the October, in line with party norms and out of political necessity, 6 congresses were convened, along with 5 conferences and 43 central committee plenums. At all those party forums there was thorough discussion, there was no pressure from those in authority, and communists had an opportunity freely to set forth their own viewpoint and formulate their position on any particular issue.

But when Stalin was "crowned" at the 17th Party Congress and the outlines of cult idolization of his person began to take clear shape, the "leader" took steps to limit collegiality sharply in decisionmaking because he no longer needed other opinions. From 1934, after the 17th

Party Congress, through to 1953 (the year of Stalin's death), that is, for 20 years, only two party congresses, one conference and 22 central committee plenums took place, and the interval between the 18th and 19th party congresses was 13 years. There were entire years—1941, 1942, 1943, 1945, 1946, 1948, 1950, 1951—when the central committee did not convene even once! It becomes clear from his decisions and line of conduct that in time Stalin no longer regarded the central committee as "an Areopagus of wisdom" but simply a party office, a convenient apparatus for implementing his decisions. And indeed, when making preparations for the 14th Party Congress in 1925 and editing the draft Rules of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) as part of the Communist International, Stalin had emphasized as a point of special importance the words "Regular congresses will be convened annually. The central committee will hold at least one plenary session every 2 months."

Life, of course, made its own corrections to these lines, and the war, which transformed the country into a military camp, also made it impossible scrupulously to maintain the norms that had been adopted; this is understandable, but virtually to ignore them... The autocratic leader appropriated everything—thinking, political will, social arbitration—and this became the same as political autocracy.

Even back at the 3rd Party Congress in 1905, in his report "On the Participation of the Social Democrats in a Transitional Revolutionary Government" V.I. Lenin said: "A revolutionary people strives for the autocracy of the people, and all reactionary elements defend the autocracy of the tsar. Successful overthrow must therefore be democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry." Even at the dawn of the century, long before the victory of the socialist revolution, Lenin allowed only of "the autocracy of the people" in the form of "democratic dictatorship," but for Stalin, all these old speeches about democracy, popular representation and collective wisdom were now now longer urgent, even naive.

Stalin's particular understanding of party unity promoted the consolidation of bureaucratic trends in the party. It is common knowledge that during the Twenties, in pursuing its policy the party had to deal with extremely active opposition from particular groups of communists. They were by no means always "enemies." Often the special "courses" and "platforms" came into being because of erroneous assessments of a situation, a unique understanding of the prospects for movement, and sometimes they were born out of personal grounds. Today, analyzing the entire spectrum of the struggle by the oppositions and groupings, one becomes increasingly convinced that one of the decisive points of disagreement and fierce skirmishes were problems of democracy, the relationship "between the leader and the party," and the role of the masses in revolutionary creativity, although sometimes it was hidden by other phrases. In many cases the opposition was people unprepared for conformity of ideas as a spiritual uniform. We, the dialecticians, even knowing that life moves forward through contradictions, have nevertheless often regarded different thinking as a hostile manifestation, but perhaps this expresses a desire to find a better alternative? Does not thoughtless conformity of ideas engender dogmatists and faceless, indifferent people?

Of course, there were also many such people who deliberately set themselves goals that were not inscribed in the program lines of the party. As a rule they professed other priorities for social values. In the face of the devastation, the foreign imperialist danger, and the growth of various opposition groupings, at V.I. Lenin's initiative, at the 10th Party Congress in March 1921 a famous resolution was adopted. After his report the congress decreed that all factional groupings would be immediately disbanded. The resolution clearly stated that the unity and cohesion of the party ranks and "insuring complete trust between party members and work that is truly friendly and really does embody the unity of the will in the vanguard of the proletariat is particularly important at this time." This provision, which played a major role in making the party cohesive, was directed not against differences in thinking and clash of opinions but, I repeat, against the factional groups with political platforms incompatible with the program and charter aims of the party.

Stalin frequently made reference to this resolution when he was dealing "blows" against factions, oppositions and deviations. From his lips the words "opposition" and "oppositionist" gradually acquired a quite specific meaning identical to the concepts "enemy" and "foe." Subsequently, any disagreement, no matter how trivial, with party policy by individual party leaders, and even more with its position, was regarded by the General Secretary as "struggle against the party" and "hostile activity." While advocating unity but understanding it in a dogmatic rather than a dialectical way, Stalin gradually achieved the total liquidation of the healthy clash of opinions and free expression of their own views by communists or criticism of higher party organs. Within the party there was "insouciant conformity of thinking."

As Stalin understood it the main elements of unity are diligence, unquestioning obedience to directives, and a readiness to support any decision by higher organs. Often, the slightest retreat from the dogmas proclaimed by the leader was not simply condemned but was also dangerous for the life of "the doubters." For example, speaking at the January (1938) central committee plenum, G.M. Malenkov cited the example in which in the Kalmyk area communist Kushchev of the Sarychinsk party organization had been expelled from the party. "At the political literacy classes," he said, "they asked Kushchev a question:

" 'Can we build socialism in one country?'

" 'It is possible to build socialism on one country, and we are building it,' Kushchev replied.

" 'And are we building communism in one country?'

" 'We are building communism in one country.'

" 'Full communism?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'And are we building final communism?'

" 'Final? Hardly,' Kushchev pondered, 'not without world revolution. However, I shall look in "Problems of Leninism" and see what comrade Stalin writes on this score.'"

And for that final answer Kushchev was expelled from the party and dismissed from his job. But Malenkov is considering here not the manifestation of dogmatism or a cult deformity that demands a religious, political conformity of thought but is searching for the "intrigues of enemies" who have become entrenched "at every enterprise, kolkhoz and sovkhoz." Kushchev permitted the slightest of doubts, a "misfire" in conformity of thinking, and "enemies" would make use of this.

A similar interpretation distorts the democratic understanding of unity, which assumes a synthesis of the collective will with the simultaneous possibility of setting forth one's own views and positions. For the 10th Party Congress on unity perceived that the party would tirelessly continue, while testing new methods, to fight, using any means, against bureaucracy and for the extension of democracy and independence. Gradually, any communist who risked making a new proposal or initiative or who disagreed with particular aspects of policy and everyday practice, risked public disgrace and simply being added to the canon of "enemies." Little by little it was demanded with increasing insistence that communists merely "support" and "approve" and take less and less real part in the discussion of major problems in party and state life.

At the 17th Party Congress, at Stalin's proposal the Central Control Committee, which enjoyed prerogatives of control over the work of the central committee and Politburo, was liquidated. The functions of the Party Control Commission that was set up were redirected toward control over compliance by party organizations with the decisions of the central organs. The control organs set up by Lenin had observed the activity of the whole party, from the top leadership down to the lowest organizations, and now this same apparatus of control watched over compliance with directives and primarily the instructions of the "dominant personality."

Gradually Stalin's decisions became party decisions. The General Secretary would adopt a decision that would then usually be "formulated" as a decision of the Politburo or central committee. For example, during the Forties, when the "night vigils" had become a regular thing in the offices of the leaders, Stalin often invited several members of the Politburo "to supper" with him at the dacha in Kuntsevo. Those who made the visits most frequently were Molotov, Kaganovich, Khrushchev, Beriya and Zhdanov; Andreyev, Kalinin, Mikoyan, Shvernik and Voznesenskiy were invited to these night meals less often. As they dined they made decisions on various political and military questions and state and party matters. Stalin usually summed up the results of the "discussions" and Malenkov often formulated them as "meetings" of the Politburo.

There were no disputes or discussions; Stalin's companions-in-arms tried most often to guess the leader's opinion and make sure they said yes promptly. This sometimes bothered even the "autocrat" himself.

Let me relate one instance of this. When during supper on the eve of the 18th Party Congress the talk moved to the report prepared by Stalin and everyone started in chorus to praise it simultaneously, Stalin suddenly burst out harshly with "What I gave you was a version that I have rejected, but you are making alleluias to the poet... In the version that I shall present everything has been changed!"

Everyone stopped short. An awkward silence ensued, but Beriya quickly recovered himself: "But already, even in this version we can see your hand. And if you have reworked it then we can imagine how strong a report it will be."

The Politburo elected after the 17th Party Congress—A.A. Andreyev, K.Ye. Voroshilov, L.M. Kaganovich, M.I. Kalinin, S.M. Kirov, S.V. Kosior, V.V. Kuybyshev, V.M. Molotov, G.K. Ordzhonikidze, and I.V. Stalin—was still meeting quite regularly but not always with its full complement. Issues were usually resolved by a narrow group made up of Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich and Voroshilov, and later also Zhdanov or Beriya. In time Stalin was to create within the Politburo various commissions, the so-called "groups of five" [pyaterki], "groups of six" [shesterki], "groups of seven" [semerki] and "groups of nine" [devyatki]. As N.S. Khrushchev stated in his report to the 20th Party Congress, this system, rather reminiscent of the terminology of card playing, was reinforced by a special decision of the Politburo.

Of course, life is complex and there are many problems, and always, even during Lenin's lifetime, it was possible to set up various commissions to resolve particular questions. But despite the importance of the work of the commissions, all the basic decisions had to be made by a full meeting of the Politburo and Central Committee. And reducing the party management function to the "group of five," in which, of course, there was also "one opinion," cheapened any kind of collegiality.

On most of the documents that he examined Stalin usually wrote "Agreed" or "In favor" or "Possible," and sometimes "papers" were sent to his coworkers to clarify their opinion, even though he often attached no significance to this.

In April 1936 Pyatakov sent a letter to Stalin requesting permission for the flight of the SO-35-1 high-altitude balloon "given favorable weather conditions."

As if seeking advice, Stalin wrote on the letter:

"To comrade Voroshilov.

"What do you think?

"I. St."

Voroshilov responded as follows:

"To comrade Stalin. I think that it can be permitted."

"K. Voroshilov. 7 April 1936."

And further down on the same document was the categorical "I oppose it. I. St."

This kind of lack of appeal in decisions that without argument rejected other opinions and left only one in force gradually created an atmosphere in which the Politburo members and candidate members tried primarily to anticipate Stalin's decisions. Some of them were very successful in this, particularly Beriya when he became a member of the Politburo.

When I was familiarizing myself with many of the problems mentioned and the votes that Stalin held on particular issues, I did not find a single case in which anyone even indirectly cast doubt on obviously erroneous and sometimes even criminal proposals. No one was willing to raise a serious objection even in the most tactful kind of way. We know how that was likely to end, but often even people positioned at the boundary that separates life from nonexistence submissively agreed with the opinion of the leader even if it meant a death sentence for them.

Yes, discussion of any matter took place on the basis of the "instructions" and "directions" of the leader. Even when formulating what were often properly speaking economic, social or technical questions and ways to resolve them, those present at the conferences, meetings and plenums were necessarily forced to elucidate them with the "ideas," "propositions" and "conclusions" expressed at some time by Stalin. After the 17th Congress until the death of the leader no one could even publicly "add to" or "enrich" any thesis formulated by Stalin. In fact, within the party the principle of dogmatic one-man command was affirmed. It is common knowledge that this postulate was essential for the military systems because of the specific nature of their function, but not for the party.

Stalin thought that the relationship between the party and the leader should be secured in mass publications available to all communists and to the people. The "Short Course on the History of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks)" published in 1938 and the "Concise Biography" of the leader, published a decade later [the second edition of 1947—ed] were such. In BOLSHEVIK No 9, 1937 Stalin published his "Letter to the Compilers of the Textbook on the History of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks)." The main emphasis in "The History," Stalin wrote, should be placed on the struggle by the party against factions and groupings and anti-Bolshevik trends. And this was not fortuitous because in this case the center of that struggle was he, Stalin himself, who had "smashed" Trotskiy, Zinovyev, Kamenev and Bukharin. There is no doubt that there were at that time various groupings, but not many anti-Leninist groupings, but of course the history of the party was not reduced just to that struggle, nor should it have been.

Stalin was not slow in coming forward (he had practiced this for a long time) to give "instructions" to those compiling the textbook to make frequent reference to his ideas. For example, he suggested that they make use of "the letter sent by Engels to Bernstein in 1882, cited in the first chapter of my report to the 7th Expanded Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International 'On the Social Democratic Deviation' in the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) and my commentary on it." Without those commentaries, Stalin went on to write, "the struggle of the factions and trends in the history of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) will seem like an incomprehensible squabble, and the Bolsheviks will appear as incorrigible and restless troublemakers and pugnacious fellows." On assignment from the central committee the group of authors quickly prepared the "Short Course," which was for a long time the main, and often the only textbook on ideological-theoretical training for millions of Soviet people. The book, which was published in our country with a print run of more than 40 million (!) was permeated with apologetics for Stalin's "genius" and his "wisdom" and "perspicacity."

Initially, in the proofs of the work and in its first edition there was a note: "A commission of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee led by comrade Stalin and with his active personal participation composed the 'Short Course on the History of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks).'" This formulation, however, did not please Stalin. In Stalin's "Short Course" published subsequently and carefully edited by him personally, a new phrase, augmented and refined, was written in: "The book 'Short Course on the

History of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks)" written by comrade Stalin and approved by a commission of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee, was published in 1938." Stalin was in no way embarrassed by the fact the a book that praised him so much turned out to have been written... by himself. The ideological foundation was thus laid for the absolute role of the leader and his control over party and state. Having by that time eliminated virtually all of Lenin's companions-in-arms, Stalin "deleted" them from history, and in the "Short Course," apart from Lenin and Stalin there were virtually no specific creators of socialism, only "enemies."

The book, which was mandatory for communists, VUZ students and the entire system of party enlightenment and political education, laid out unambiguously several of Stalin's "axioms": there were two leaders in the revolution—Lenin and Stalin; the main merit in the building of socialism in the USSR belongs to Stalin; after Lenin the party has only one leader—"wise," "farsighted," "bold," "decisive"... Stalin's concept of the "leader—party" relationship was thus in this mass publication brought to all the people. The simplicity of exposition and its elementary schematism made the "Short Course" a textbook very accessible to everyone.

After publication of the book on 1 October 1938 a conference of propagandists from Moscow and Leningrad was held, at which Stalin spoke. It is worth quoting several extracts from his speech. "One of the tasks of the book," Stalin stated, "is to close the gap between Marxism and Leninism." The General Secretary went on to make it clear that up to that point there had been only one book that considered Marxism-Leninism as a single whole, namely, the work "The Foundations of Leninism," also written by him, Stalin. This book, the speaker continued, without the slightest trace of embarrassment, "sets forth what is new and special in what Lenin brought to Marxism. I do not say that everything is set forth there, but Stalin's book does provide the entire foundation of what Lenin brought to Marxism." That was how Stalin gave this "highest" of assessments to his own work.

In describing the life of Tiberius, Gaius Suetonius assures us that the dictator knew his own future beforehand and that "he had foreseen for a long time the hatred and infamy that awaited him ahead." Stalin never even permitted such a thought; his archives, notes, resolutions, letters, photographs, movie footage, and the stenographic records of speeches all testify to the absolute conviction of the leader in his own immortality in the memory of the people. From the 17th Congress to the end of his days, not being as perspicacious as Tiberius, he secured his "glory" for the millennium.

Gradually the "autocratic" motives for the place of the leader in the party and people were reinforced in many cult acts and "ceremonies." Thus, for example, Stalin scholarships and Stalin prizes were instituted, even though as early as August 1925, with Stalin's involvement, a government decision was adopted on establishing a V.I. Lenin prize; but given the absolute rule of the leader, this decree was simply forgotten. Even the national anthem, whose creation and editing he personally supervised, reflected his role in the destiny of the motherland:

> "Stalin reared us in loyalty to the people
> He inspired us to labor and exploits."

Sergey Mikhalkov and El-Registan, who wrote the words of the anthem on instructions from the leader, presented them to Stalin. And he sat for a while and then with his own hand proofed the copy that was stored in Stalin's archives.

Instead of "Free peoples in noble alliance" Stalin wrote "A union of free and indestructible republics."

The second quatrain was worked more. Initially it was thus:

> "Through the storm the sun of freedom shone on us
> Lenin illuminated our path into the future,
> Stalin—the Chosen of the people—reared us,
> And inspired us to labor and to exploits."

After Stalin had worked on the text with his pencil, the second and third lines started to look quite different:

> "And the great Lenin illuminated our path
> And Stalin reared us to loyalty to the people..."

For some reason the words "Chosen of the people" did not please the General Secretary, although, if one thinks about, the people really had not chosen him. He became the leader, dictator and ruler of an enormous people not by being chosen by them! Not only Mikhalkov and El-Registan, but also those who spent the evening of 28 October 1943 with Stalin—Molotov, Voroshilov, Beriya, Malenkov and Shcherbakov—immediately agreed to this very substantial change. Stalin did not simply "approve" the words of the anthem, he personally edited them, and the refrain proposed by the authors

> "Living through the ages, country of socialism,
> Let our banner bring peace to the world.
> Live and grow strong, glorious motherland!
> Our great people will cherish you..."

he immediately discarded without even explaining why he was not pleased with it. Was it, perhaps, that he did not like "peace to the world"?

The anthem contained not a single word about the party, but words about the leader were essential... The thought was gradually confirmed in the consciousness of Soviet people that Stalin was not only leader of the party but also leader of the entire nation. In concentrated form this

idea was expressed publicly in the press in December 1944 by All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee Politburo member N.S. Khrushchev:

"All the peoples of the Soviet Union see in Stalin their own friend, father and leader.

"Stalin—friend of the people in his simplicity.

"Stalin—father of the people in his love for the people.

"Stalin—leader of the peoples in his wisdom as leader of the struggle of the peoples."

Yem. Yaroslavskiy, one of the court commentators of Stalinism, in his book "Comrade Stalin" sets out a special chapter entitled "Leader of the Peoples." His main idea is this: "together with Lenin, from the late 1890's, and always together with Lenin, always on the same road, always unswerving, this has where comrade Stalin has marched." In this little book of panegyric, however, there are also true thoughts that the author expressed against his will. Thus, in several places he dwells on "Stalin's mercilessness toward his enemies." What is true is true: the leader was merciless toward all whom he considered his enemies.

When reading "works" similar to Yem. Yaroslavskiy's little book Stalin increasingly came to be of the opinion that he would soon reach the highest point on the parabola of his destiny—the "Ascension," it seemed, would be endless. No Russian emperor had been glorified the way he had! Ultimately he believed in his messianic role on earth: the roots of national tragedy were thus thrust down more deeply into the social soil the more victoriously the triumph of the leader was sounded.

While noting all these cult deformities, at the same time it should be stated that they played a stabilizing role on the foundation of dogma. We know today that the cohesion of the people and attainment of their moral and political unity are also possible on another foundation, but at a time when the country had not attained socialist democracy, reliance on the indoctrination of faith in a leader and in his wisdom and infallibility quickly yielded results. Despite the terrible repressions in the late Thirties, the totalitarian trends in the development of the state and the dictatorial role of the leader, the society and its social bastions were sound.

Decades after Stalin's death, when numerous materials have been published on the deeds and crimes of the time of Stalin, there are still very many people who through spiritual and social inertia still consider him a great transformer, a wise leader with a "firm hand." I think that the "secret" of the persistence of this devotion is associated not only with circumstances of time and age (people's "own" fate, their "own" times, their "own "idols) but primarily with the fact that through the entire system of propaganda, indoctrination, and social life it was asserted that "socialism is Stalin." Accordingly, to a large extent "loyalty" to Stalin is loyalty to an old idea elucidated in their youth.

It was not, we repeat, only a matter of Stalin's personal qualities: through the force of his influence alone he would not have been able to so alter spiritual and social structures. Social practice itself and the methods and policy of glorifying the role of a single personality gradually created a certain system of relations. Only in such a system could the Authority of the Leader generate the processes that we have for long called "personality cult"; only in such a system of relations did everything, or almost everything, work to strengthen the Authority of the Leader. But of course, the direct entourage, which itself became an integral component of the Authority, was very actively "at work" here. Yes, it was not only one personality that was to blame for the distortion of "leader—party" relations.

If everything had been limited only to the man, then after his departure and the demise of the system, it would not have been necessary to alter anything in that mechanism; for the bearer of the cult phenomena was no more! But the essence of this is rather more complex. The cult of the "dominant personality" and the deification of the Authority of the Leader is fed by the "juices" of the social environment, the system in which there is no reliable mechanism of guarantees or safeguards against this. Personality deformations can be manifest either, as in history, in the form of "subjectivism" or "voluntarism," or in a caricatural self-glorification and ostentation that lead to social, economic and spiritual stagnation.

Since too often (and this is also fair!) people point to the major role of Stalin's personal qualities in the cult distortions, let us try again at a new level to find in his portrait those features that characterize the intellect of the General Secretary.

Stalin's Intellect

Each normal person inherently possesses certain intellectual qualities to some degree or other. K. Marx wrote that "a human life devoid of its intellectual aspect is reduced to a simple material force." Perhaps it could be said that the intellect is nothing more than the predominantly rational level of consciousness expressing a person's abilities for creative assimilation of reality. "Assimilation" of the surrounding world is done by the intellect at the level of rational thinking ("common sense"), reason (higher thinking ability), and intuitive operations. While the main features are common, each intellect is unique, inimitable, singular.

In recent years, evidently under the influence of the more and more new information about the negative aspect of Stalin and his life and deeds, the impression has started to be created that the mental abilities of this

man were nothing out of the ordinary. It is sometimes asserted even more categorically that compared to Trotskiy, the description of Stalin as an "outstanding mediocrity" is essentially accurate. We can hardly agree with this since it is then difficult to understand how a man devoid of any intellectual abilities could from 1912 have moved up to the leading organs of the party, or how he could have had Lenin call him "an outstanding leader"; which is what Stalin did in the very complex entanglement of contradictions and political labyrinths in the merciless struggle in the Twenties, and emerged as victor in the struggle against people who in many respects were better than he was.

The fact of the matter is that when assessing Stalin's personality (and this is natural), deliberately or involuntarily his crimes, perfidy, cruelty, and ruthlessness toward those whom he considered his enemies move to the forefront. But all of this does indirectly characterize his intellect and more—the man's moral facets. In this sense, Stalin's out-of-the-ordinary intellect—and I think it was—was, as it were, "framed" by many attributes of antihumanism and is therefore profoundly devalued. If it were possible to summarize Stalin's intellect briefly, then evidently the formula "an out-of-the-ordinary evil mind" would be nearer the truth. For example, given all the antihumanistic moral views of E. Teller, the "father" of the American atom bomb, no one denies that he has a powerful (possibly diabolical) intellect. In and of itself moral defilement is an enormous flaw in the intellect, its moral twilight, without the stars or summer lightning of good. Moral defects in the structure of personality can devalue even a strong intellect to the function of an adding machine, a logic mechanism, to the level of a rational, desiccated kind of calculation.

Stalin, who even before the revolution had experienced in intellectual dispute with opponents many distressing and sometimes humiliating moments, would not reconcile himself to the role of supernumerary in these disputes but attempted to the maximum degree possible to cover the range of political issues being discussed. Given this enormous load (this has been accurately established), Stalin worked a very great deal to raise his own intellectual level.

In Stalin's personal archives a curious document is stored. In May 1925 Stalin assigned his aide Tovstukha the task of setting up for him a good personal library. Tovstukha, somewhat taken aback by the General Secretary's unexpected task, asked him "what books should be in the library?"

Stalin started to dictate and then suddenly stopped, sat down at his desk in the presence of his aide and over the course of the next 20 minutes wrote on both sides of a single sheet of paper a list for the librarian, which, despite its length, we cite in full:

"List for librarian. My advice (and request)

1) Classify books not by author but by subject:

a) philosophy

b) psychology

c) sociology

d) political economy

e) finance

f) industry

g) agriculture

h) the cooperative system

i) Russian history

j) history of other countries

k) diplomacy

l) domestic and foreign trade

m) military affairs

n) the national question

o) congresses and conferences (and resolutions) of party, Comintern and others (without decrees and codes of law)

p) the position of the workers

q) the position of the peasants

r) the Komsomol (everything available in individual publications on the Komsomol)

s) the history of revolution in other countries

t) the year 1905

u) the February 1917 revolution

v) the October 1917 revolution

w) Lenin and Leninism

x) the history of the Russian Communist Party and the International

y) discussions within the Russian Communist Party (articles, brochures)

z^1) the trade unions

z^2) fiction

z^3) literary criticism

z[4]) political journals

z[5]) journals of the natural sciences

z[6]) all kinds of dictionaries

z[7]) memoirs

"2) From this classification separate out books by (place separately)

a) Lenin (separately)

b) Marx (separately)

c) Engels (separately)

d) Kautsky (separately)

e) Plekhanov (separately)

f) Trotskiy (separately)

g) Bukharin (separately)

h) Zinovyev (separately)

i) Kamenev (separately)

j) La Farge (separately)

k) R. Luxemburg (separately)

l) Radek (separately)

"3) Classify all others by author (excluding from the classification and setting aside the following: all textbooks, small journals, antireligious pulp literature and so forth).

"29 May 1925.

"I. Stalin."

Considering that this was virtually an off-the-cuff draft, and also the level of "bibliothecal civilization" at the time, a certain breadth of view on Stalin's part must be recognized. If we take the method used by Stalin as a test then we can be assured of its "encyclopedic nature" and degree of universality and specialization. We see that Stalin regarded as of paramount importance the integral parts of scientific socialism, history, and particular fields of knowledge associated with political activity and the struggle against the opposition. We note that apart from Lenin the list contains few of the originators of scientific socialism, or of those with whom has was polemicizing or would polemicize. Coryphaeia of thinking such as Hegel, Kant, Feuerbach, Rousseau, Descartes and Diderot and many of the contemporary social theoreticians were also missing from the list.

Some of his books contain a book plate stating "Library No.... of I.V. Stalin." We have already mentioned that all volumes of the first edition of the collected works of V.I. Lenin are peppered with underscorings, check marks and exclamation marks on the margins. Stalin evidently turned repeatedly to some works: some lines in articles are underlined in red or blue and even just simple black pencil marks. We repeat: more than anything Stalin was interested in Lenin's thoughts on the dictatorship of the proletariat, the struggle against the Mensheviks and social revolutionaries, and the congress speeches.

Of his contemporaries, Stalin turned most often to Bukharin and Trotskiy. For example, to judge from the underlining in red pencil, Academician Bukharin's book "The Technology and Economy of Modern Capitalism," published in 1932, was read carefully by Stalin, and he had a particular interest in Bukharin's conclusions on production forces and production relations. M. Smolenskiy's book "Trotskiy," published in 1921 in Berlin, is underscored in all the places critically assessing Stalin's uncompromising opponent: "Trotskiy is prickly and impatient," "of an imperious nature that loves to give orders," "loves political power," "Trotskiy is a political adventurist of genius." Stalin sought out arguments against his rival everywhere he could. Evidently Stalin took many of the arguments used in his struggle against him from one of Trotskiy's own pamphlets—"Terrorism and Communism," published in 1920. Zinovyev's book "The War and the Crisis of Socialism," Kamenev's "Chernyshevskiy," Budnov's "Main Factors in the Development of the Communist Party in Russia," Narvskiy's "History of the Struggle of Bolshevism against the Luxemburg People," and Stan's "The Question of the Stabilization of Capitalism" were also "studied" just as carefully. Everything concerning the "struggle " came within Stalin's purview.

There is more. Stalin maintained throughout his life an abiding and dogged consistent interest in historical literature, first and foremost biographies of the emperors and tsars. Bellyaminov's book "A Course in Russian History," Vipper's "Notes on the Roman Empire" and "Ivan the Terrible" and others were carefully studied. He always had to hand all the history textbooks for secondary schools and VUZ's on which he had made notes. It is not difficult to guess that he also saw one of the most important levers of autocracy in the appropriate elucidation of Russian history.

Aides used to inform Stalin of materials in the periodical press and from the "fat" journals that in their opinion merited interest. In the intervals between work on official papers he sometimes diverted himself for thirty or forty minutes by looking at the latest in fiction and leafing through journal articles. Sometimes when he had finished reading he would press the button of the bell, in would come an aide, and Stalin would ask him to telephone a particular writer or leader of a creative union and inform him of the wishes and opinion of the General Secretary. There were occasions when he himself took up his pen.

Thus, after leafing through Korneychuk's book "In the Steppes of the Ukraine," he immediately tossed of a short letter on a note pad:

"Dear Aleksandr Yevdokimovich,

"I have read your 'In the Steppes of the Ukraine.' A remarkable joke, artistically integrated, jolly, merry. I fear only that it is too jolly; there is a danger that a debauch of jollity in a comedy may distract the attention of the reader or audience from its content.

"Meanwhile I have added a few words on page 68. This is for greater clarity.

"Regards.

"I. Stalin."

And Stalin's "insertions" were as follows:

"1) the tax now will be not the number of cattle but the number of hectares of kolkhoz land.

"2) take away as many kolkhoz cattle as you like, the tax remains the same."

Stalin's pragmatic mind was at work even here; he did not let slip the chance to quote Korneychuk's words to explain one of the central committee's latest instructions.

After he read Erdman's poem "The Suicide," Stalin wrote to Stanislavskiy:

"Dear Konstantin Sergeyevich,

"I do not have a very high opinion of the poem 'Suicide' (sic—author). My closest comrades think that it is a little empty and even harmful... I do not exclude that the theater will be able to achieve its aim. The department of culture and propaganda (comrade Stetskiy) will help you in this matter. There will be comrades who know the artistic business. I am just an amateur in this.

"Regards.

"I. Stalin. 9 November 1931."

As he tries to gain a reputation as a "liberal" in creative circles, Stalin plays coy with his "amateur status." But we know how categorical his opinions were not only on poems, but also books, films, music and architecture! The position taken by the First Person in the state, pledged to know, if not everything then a very great deal, in fact made Stalin a "universal amateur," and he sometimes allowed himself to flaunt that.

Stalin also followed attentively the literature coming from abroad. Almost everything that came from the pens of Trotskiy was passed to him (one copy). Stalin also examined emigre publications.

In December 1935 the chief of the central committee department for the press and publishing, B. Tal, made a request of the members of the Politburo.

"I ask you to report for which of the White Emigre publications listed below a subscription should be taken for 1936:

1. POSLEDNIYE NOVOSTI

2. VOZROZHDENIYE

3. SOTS. VESTNIK

4. ZNAMYA ROSSII

5. BYULLETEN EKONOMICHESKOGO KABINETA PROKOPOVICHA

6. KHARBINSKOYE VREMYA

7. NOVOYE RUSSKOYE SLOVO

8. SOVREMENNYYE ZAPISKI

9. ILLYUSTRIROVANNAYA ROSSIYA "

When Stalin had familiarized himself with the list he ordered an aide to subscribe to all of them.

Stalin's attitude toward antireligious literature, which he called "pulp literature," is obvious. Whatever he may have said his religious education affected him throughout his life. Echoes of religious elements crept into Stalin's written and oral speech. Remember his dramatic radio statement on 3 July 1941 when he appealed to the people using words unusual for the Soviet reality: "Brothers and Sisters!" After the celebration of his fiftieth birthday, in his own hand Stalin wrote for PRAVDA his thanks for the congratulations on a sheet from a note pad, in biblical strain: "Your congratulations and greetings I carry to the great party of the working class that bore me and reared me in its own image and likeness." In August 1942 in Moscow, during their conversation Stalin and Churchill recalled Lloyd George, one of the initiators of the intervention against Soviet Russia during the civil war. Stalin was silent for a while and then sighed, as if summing up the results of a remembrance of many years ago: "All of that relates to the past, and the past belongs to god."

Of course, we by no means intend to assert that religious elements played any significant role in Stalin's world outlook. But it seems very probable that the clearly expressed dogmatism of intellect had its sources in religion. Stalin was an apologist of formula and tight

definitions. He could search for hours for the right word, some expression from the classics, to "teach" his opponents "irrefutably," as he put it, and strike them down.

Thus, at the Central Committee and Central Control Committee April (1929) Plenum, Stalin caught out Bukharin, as he expressed it, for "not knowing Lenin." For him this was especially important since Bukharin's reputation as a talented theoretician was known to all. Speaking at one of the meetings before the plenum Bukharin uttered the resounding idea that an extraordinary switch of assets from agriculture to industry would be a "tribute beyond our power." Stalin immediately noted the words about "military-feudal exploitation of the peasants" and "tribute" and together with Tovstukha scoured the library looking at Lenin's works. He scoured and he found and he immediately built up a series of what seemed to him to be "devastating" arguments.

Speaking at the plenum, Stalin announced that "Bukharin 'has ruined himself' here" because the Marxist literature could supposedly not tolerate the word "tribute." He was outraged and astonished that the party central committee and Marxists in general could permit themselves to use the word "tribute." "But how surprising it would be," said Stalin, solemnly looking round the hall, "if it were shown this word was long ago given right of citizenship in the articles of a Marxist such as comrade Lenin?" He was silent for a moment and then in the tone of a victor, he added: "Or perhaps Lenin does not satisfy the requirements of a Marxist with Bukharin's viewpoint?" And here Stalin brought out Lenin's works "On 'Leftist' Infantilism and the Petty Bourgeoisie," "Tax in Kind," and "The Immediate Tasks of Soviet Authorities," where Vladimir Ilich uses the word "tribute" in a quite different context. A voice from the hall was heard to say "Nevertheless, with respect to the middle peasants the word 'tribute' was never used." Stalin parried immediately with "do you think that the middle peasant is closer to the party than the working working class? Well then, you are a sham Marxist (general laughter). If it is possible to speak the word 'tribute' with reference to the working class, to the working class, whose party we are, why is it impossible to say the same thing about the middle peasant, who is only our ally?"

Here, Stalin, satisfied that he had caught out the "theoretician" and shown him impotent, added that he, Bukharin, "was very wide of the mark." It was of little concern to Stalin that he had moved the dispute onto a banal plane—did Lenin say the word "tribute" or did he not?—for the essential aspect remained for him on a secondary plane.

We have already recalled that in many discussions Stalin also resorted to the same method, which always brought his opponents to an impasse: he would "present" himself as a "defender" of Lenin, proceeding a priori from the premise that only he could interpret Lenin correctly and faithfully. To almost any argument from the opposing side Stalin quickly found a quote or expression of Lenin, sometimes spoken in a quite different context,; he had noted long before that the armor of a quote from Lenin made him practically invulnerable.

Once when discussing Comintern affairs with Zinovyev, at a time when their relationship had already basically gone bad, Zinovyev tossed a quite successful phrase at Stalin: "For you a quote from Lenin is like a charter of immunity. But you must see its essence!"

Stalin came right back with "And is it a bad idea to have a 'charter of immunity' for socialism?"

In the end Stalin's directness, aggressiveness, bellicosity and rudeness helped him to bring down his opponents. The strange thing is that often the more refined and even graceful arguments of Trotskiy, Zinovyev, Kamenev and Bukharin found no support among the audience, while Stalin's somewhat coarse, flat and often quite primitive philippics, linked closely to the "defense" of Lenin, the general course of the party, the unity of the central committee and so forth, more easily reached people's consciousness. In his numerous disputes and polemic with them Stalin mainly overpowered them with the argument that they wanted "to revise Leninism," while he "defended" it. Already from the early Thirties this interpretation became official.

Stalin's thinking was very schematic and he loved to "chew everything over" and popularize it down to its rudimentary elements. And if opponents presented their ideas otherwise, the General Secretary categorized them very strictly: "a non-Marxist approach," "a petty bourgeois manifestation," "anarchistic scholasticism."

Stalin's dogmatic intellect was incapable of comprehending the relative depths of philosophy. We know that the General Secretary felt that himself since he tried long and persistently to extend his own knowledge in the field of philosophy. At the recommendation of the leadership at the Institute of the Red Professorate Stalin invited the well-known Soviet philosopher of the times, Jan Stan from the pleiad of the old Bolsheviks, for unique "lessons in dialectic." Stan worked as deputy director of the Marx and Engels Institute and later as an official in the central committee apparatus; he was elected as deputy to a number of party congresses and was a member of the Central Control Committee. Like Karev and Luppol, in time we would be accused of being a "Menshevik idealist" and a theoretical "servant of Trotskiyism." But that would be later. Meanwhile Stan acted as a "teacher of philosophy" while Stalin played the role of "pupil."

Stan drew up a special program of lessons that included study of the works of the German classics of Hegel, Kant, Feuerbach, Fichte and Schelling, and also Plekhanov, Kautsky and Bradley. Twice a week he went to Stalin at the appointed hour and patiently tried to explain to his

high-place student Hegel's concepts on substance, alienation, identity of existence and thought—understanding the real world as the manifestation of ideas. The high degree of abstraction irritated Stalin but he overcame himself and continued to listen to Stan's monotonous voice, from time to interrupting with rejoinders: "What does all this mean for the class struggle?" "Who uses all this rubbish in practice?" "What meaning does this have for the theory of Marxism?"

Stalin was able only to understand in a fragmentary way the law of transition from quantitative change into qualitative change, but he did not master the essence of dialectical negation and the unity of opposites, nor, despite all of Stan's contrivances, was he able to master the thesis on unity of dialectic, logic and the theory of knowledge. Analysis of Stalin's "philosophical works" and fragments shows that they all border on primitivism and elementalism. In fact Stan's lessons could not help the General Secretary to impart a more philosophical character to his intellect. Perhaps this is why the "student" finally felt nothing but dislike for his "teacher." Stan, like a number of other philosophers and students of Deborin, was arrested in 1937 and perished.

It seemed that the same fate also awaited Academician A.M. Deborin, who was very close to Bukharin in the late Twenties. But for a long time Stalin limited himself to pinning on this major scholar the label of "militant Menshevik idealist," and isolating him from active public and scientific work. In October 1930 there was a meeting of the presidium of the Communist Academy where the question "Disagreements on the Philosophical Front" was discussed. The meeting was essentially reduced to a long "criticism" of Academician Abram Moiseyevich Deborin for his "underestimation of the Leninist stage in the development of Marxist philosophy." Deborin defended himself desperately, but those speaking—Milyutin, Mitin, Melonov, Yaroslavskiy—"caught him out," and at the same time, Stan, Karev and Luppol, in "underestimating" materialist dialectic. After the presidium meeting the passions in the academy continued to rage: the scholars were unable to reconcile themselves to the introduction of police methods in science. Perhaps philosophy was the first casualty of Stalinist "epistemology of science." The General Secretary gave it to be clearly understood that in the social sciences the leader should be the one who is the political leader.

In December of the same year Stalin presented a report on the situation on the "philosophical front." Formally this was a speech in the party cell buro at the Institute of the Red Professorate led by Deborin. Stalin's speech was categorical and it testifies eloquently to the level of his philosophical thinking, rationality and intellect:

"We must turn over and dig over all the manure that has piled up in philosophy and the natural sciences. Everything written by the Deborin group must be smashed. Perhaps Stan and Karev should be kicked out. Stan is a swaggerer and and student of Karev. Stan is a desperately lazy person. He knows only how to talk. Karev gives himself airs and goes about like a swollen bladder. In my opinion, Deborin is a hopeless case but he must be left on the editorial board (Stalin was talking about the journal POD ZNAMENEM MARKSIZMA—author's note) so as to have someone to beat. You will have two fronts in the editorial board but most of you..."

After the speech the speaker was asked questions:

"Is it necessary to link the struggle in theory with political deviations?"

"Not only can but absolutely must," Stalin replied.

"And what about the 'leftists'? The 'rightists' have already been affected..."

"Formalism acts under leftist screens," the General Secretary reasoned, "and presents its material with a leftist sauce. But young people are susceptible to leftism. And these masters are fine cooks."

"On what should the institute focus its attention in the philosophical field?" was the next question.

"It must strike, this is the main problem. Strike in all directions and wherever it has not struck before. For the Deborin people Hegel is an icon. Plekhanov must be unmasked. He always looked down on Lenin. And not everything is right with Marx. There is somewhere in the Erfurt Program something about growing into socialism. Bukharin tried to use this. It does not matter if we offend Engels somewhere in our work..."

This was how Stalin "admonished" philosophy, in his primitive understanding of it. The main thing is "to strike out"... And what Marxist philosophy should be he showed in a special section of the "Short Course on the History of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks." His confused phrases divide all of philosophy into three main features, nothing more! This is typical of the metaphysics that Stalin called dialectic. Along with other works this "ABC of philosophy" could have still passed among others as one to eliminate illiteracy, but after Stalin's work no scholar dared to write on that subject; it was possible only to provide commentaries and explain and praise. Stalin's time was a period of profound stagnation and degradation in philosophical thinking. And not only in philosophy.

Stalin's mind did not, of course, reflect the world and the reality like a mirror, in contemplative mood, but purposefully, "selectively" if we may use the word. Stalin studied and analyzed all public and social processes through the prism of the class approach in political positions, and adopted programs. The intellect of the General Secretary was highly pragmatic. There are indications that when discussing films or theater performances he had seen or a book that he had read Stalin

often moved directly from talking about the achievements of shortcomings of the work directly to some practical conclusions that were sometimes quite remote from what had been seen or read.

Let us turn once again to his speech to the philosophers. When he was responding to questions after his report Stalin had already decided that his instructions to these philosophers should be underpinned with a special decision. And already during the next month a special central committee decree was adopted on the journal POD ZNAMENEM MARKSIZMA. Deborin's supporters, who were united around the publication, were described as "a Menshevik idealist group."

In time Stalin's thinking acquired a "directive" nature, if we may put it this way. Obviously the General Secretary had learned well the truth that the mind grows weak not from "exhaustion" but only from lazy thinking and inactivity.

A.P. Balashov told me that during the course of day Stalin worked through a colossal amount of information—reports, applications, telegrams, ciphers, letters—marking up instructions on almost every document. On some days Stalin "dealt with" a hundred or two hundred documents. His mind was always working "at full load."

After reading the pile of letters addressed to him personally and writing on them laconic dispositions such as "Send thanks for the good attitude," "Help the man," "Nonsense," he often selected one or two from the pile and answered them thoroughly. This is what he did, for example, with a letter from an old Bolshevik, Shneer, from Leningrad, who had asked the General Secretary about the danger from the restoration of capitalism and whether there were any deviations in the Politburo.

On a sheet of paper from a note pad Stalin wrote in a precise, legible hand the following:

"Comrade Shneer,

"The danger of restoration does exist here. The right deviation underestimates the strength of capitalism, while the left denies the possibility of the building of socialism in our country. It intends to carry out its fantastic plan for industrialization at the price of splitting with the peasantry.

"In the Politburo we have neither left nor right deviations.

"With communist regards,

I. Stalin. 27 October 1928."

Aleksey Stakhanov and Grant raised for the government the question of "training for engineers and technicians." by means of freeing up stakhanovites from production for one or two days every six-day week. Many supported this proposal and it seemed new and revolutionary.

Stalin read the document and wrote briefly:

"Comrade Ordzhonikidze. Not a serious matter. I. St."

As a rule, on current "petty" matters Stalin reached decisions without taking advice. In time his intellect adapted to the switching rapidly when resolving the most diverse kinds of questions—economic, international, ideological—and in this it is not easy for us to follow Stalin's ability for reaching creative decisions on the problems that arose. Remember that he tried to do everything in accordance with a scheme, a postulate, an ingrained idea. At the same time the General Secretary was also capable of intuitive thinking, when conclusions and decisions come, as it were, by "leaping over" the stages and degrees of cognition.

Stalin's morbid suspiciousness cannot be regarded as a manifestation of his intuitive thinking (conjecture, suspicion). It was the consequence of his profound sense of inadequacy—seeing everyone as a potential enemy. Groundless suspicion usually occurs in a deficit of some moral element in the consciousness, and that is exactly how it was with Stalin. He could look at any one of his companions-in-arms and say: "Why are you not looking directly at me today?" or "Why are you avoiding looking me in the eye?"

One more feature of Stalin's intellect should be mentioned—his will. The presence of a strong will makes the intellect active, busy, purposeful. This kind of intellect is usually encountered in military leaders. It was not fortuitous that it was precisely such people who noted that Stalin had a strong intellect.

We shall be looking again at Stalin in his role as Supreme Commander in Chief, but for now, as we characterize his thinking, let us cite testimony from the eminent Soviet military leader Zhukov, who worked side by side with him a great deal during the war years. Marshal Zhukov noted in Stalin "the ability to formulate a thought precisely, a natural analytical mind, great erudition and a rare memory." In another place in his memoirs he writes that Stalin "read a great deal and was a widely informed person in the most diverse fields of knowledge. An astonishing capacity for work and the ability to grasp the essence of an issue quickly enabled him to examine and master.... the kind of amount of the most varied materials that would be possible only for an out-of-the-ordinary kind of person... He was possessed of a strong will and a character that was reserved and impetuous. He was usually calm and reasonable but at times he would become very angry. Then he lost his objectivity, his eyes changed and he became even paler, and his gaze was severe and cruel."

Noting many of Stalin's character features, Marshal Vasilyevskiy singles out his "astonishingly good memory. I never met anyone who could remember as much as he did. Stalin knew not only about all the commanders of the fronts and armies—and there were more than 100 of them—but even about some of the corps and division commanders... Throughout the entire war I.V. Stalin always remembered the composition of the strategic reserves and could at any time name any particular formation."

Let is cite one more piece of evidence characterizing Stalin's intellect; this time it is W. Churchill. When he, Churchill, reported on operation "Torch" Stalin quickly assessed its strategic advantages. "This remarkable statement made a profound impression on me," the British premier wrote. "It showed that the Russian dictator had quickly and completed mastered a problem that had been a new one for him. Very few people alive today could have grasped in just a few minutes the ideas that we had been working on so persistently for several months. He assessed it quick as lightning."

It is difficult to say that Stalin did not have considerable "powers of apprehension" and a highly purposeful and strong will. I think that it was not only the game of chance and the various kinds of concurrence of circumstances that made him one of Lenin's companions-in-arms during the years of the revolution and civil war. It is important to emphasize that Stalin was usually able to display his strongest qualities, namely his purposefulness and will, when they were especially needed. Perhaps this is why they were noticed? perhaps this was why Stalin believed in himself? perhaps this was why he succeeded in doing much that seemed impossible for others?

Since it was out of the ordinary but by no means one of "genius" or remarkable, Stalin's intellect did not have rational "brakes" when he assessed his own capabilities. Stalin would offer categorical opinions in almost all spheres of knowledge, from political economy to linguistics, admonish specialists in the field of cinematography or agriculture, or draw decisive conclusions in the field of military affairs and history. In an overwhelming majority of cases this omnivorousness sprung from his amateur opinions, which in the chorus of "praise-singers" were immediately elevated to the rank of the highest revelations.

Let us cite an example from the story of the destruction of one of the greatest Russian cultural monuments, the church of Christ the Savior. As is known, at the proposal of a group of architects with the mind of a Herostratus, Kaganovich and Molotov suggested to Stalin that (in compliance with a decision adopted in 1922) the Palace of the Soviets be built precisely on the site where that splendid church had been raised.

Even before the report to Stalin the site for the construction of the Palace of the Soviets had been determined by a secret vote in the Construction Soviet. Three sites had been suggested: Chinatown, Hunter's Row, and the place where the splendid church stood—the pride of Russia. Those involved in the voting were Kryukov the chief of construction, Iofan, Krasin, Lavrov, Popov, Beseda, Krutikov, Mordvinov and Orlov, and the invited persons—Shchuyev, Lyudvig, Barkhin and Pozharlitskiy. No one asked the people, who had taken centuries to create that wonderful edifice, about the fate of the church, and no one was about to.

Stalin quickly approved the removal of the church and his intellectual deficit over this was shown in full measure: he was unable to evaluate the priceless historical importance of this monument, built from donations form the people. And the church, which took a century and a half to build, was torn down on 5 December 1931. When the explosions roared out, Stalin, who was working in his office in the Kremlin, flinched.

"What is that cannonade? Where are they making the explosions?" he asked an aide in alarm.

Poskrebyshev reported that in compliance with the July decision on determining the site for the construction of the Palace of the Soviets, which he had approved, they were pulling down the church of Christ the Savior.

And Stalin was reassured, and he paid no more attention to the explosions, which continued for an hour, and went back to examining reports sent in on the course of the collectivization.

Stalin was hardly aware that the people had built this national shrine with their own kopecks and that Vereshchagin, Makovskiy, Surikov, Pryanishnikov, Klodt and Ramazanov and other renowned masters had worked on the interior and decoration of the cathedral. The church, created to endure for centuries, was destroyed "for atheistic and architectural reasons." For rare and unique people the blowing up of the church reverberated with a sharp pain in the heart. What they were blowing up was not simply a church; they were blowing up a culture, they were blowing up the past, they were blowing up the thankfulness of the people.

Academician of architecture B. Iofan, author of the project for the Palace, described the outward signs of the church being made ready for removal as follows: "The year 1931 passed. The church of Christ the Savior still stood in the middle of an enormous area by the Moskva River. Large and massive, its golden dome sparkling, like an Easter cake and a samovar at the same time, it pressed down on the surrounding houses and on people's consciousness with its formal, cold, soulless architecture, reflecting the worthless system of Russian autocracy and its 'high-ranking' builders who created this merchant's

manor house, this pagan temple... The proletarian revolution will boldly raise its hand above this massive architectural edifice that, as it were, symbolizes the strength and tastes of the masters of old Moscow."

The academician goes on to describe with rapture the "comments of genius" made by Stalin about the project when he saw a model of the Palace. His "daring" proposals envisaged that the height of the Palace would be more than 400 meters; Stalin proposed that a statue of Lenin set atop the edifice would be 100 meters high. Stalin always had a proclivity toward the colossal: a large hall to seat up to 21,000 people. Why such a low dais for the presidium, for it will be seating the leader? Higher, higher! No chandeliers, lighting only by reflected light. The main motifs of the Palace should reflect the six parts of Stalin's oath after the death of Lenin. Stalin gave it to be clearly understood that this would not simply be the Palace of the Soviets but a palace glorifying the leader for centuries. That is, of course, himself.

The entire grandiose public building was to be the apotheosis of "the ideas of the triumph of multimillion-strong Soviet democracy." A "democracy" in which the silhouette of the Palace and its facing and its high pylons, the content of the sculptural groups and the mosaics and other purely specialist matters were determined by a man who in his "genius" thought it normal to make the decisive conclusions also in the field of architecture. And B. Iofan, with a sense of delicacy that was magnified by his criminal attitude toward one of the pearls of Russian culture, called this "art" particular to the "antiscientific society of the Renaissance."

The primacy of the political always came out on top when it was a question of history, culture or art. The strong pragmatism of Stalin's intellect was unable to compare specific historical and cultural values with eternity, with an era, with time. For example, Khrushchev's statement at the February-March Plenum (1937) that "as we rebuild Moscow we must not shrink from removing demolishing a tree or a little church, or even a cathedral" was met with the tacit approval of the General Secretary.

We note that the intellect is manifest primarily in the sphere of rational consciousness, but it also inherently possesses certain complex feelings—curiosity, the sense of wonder, confidence, doubt. These feelings, which we might arbitrarily call "intellectual," accompany the process by which a person's creative thinking is manifest. It was precisely this role of the feelings to which Lenin referred when he noted that there had never been, nor were, nor could be an human search for truth without emotions. Stalin was able to "hide" his direct feelings and sentimentality was alien to him.

Attributes of Caesarism.

Early in 1937 the German writer Lion Feuchtwanger visited Moscow. The result of his trip was the book of apologetics "Moscow 1937." In this "account of the trip for my friends" Feuchtwanger made no secret of the fact that he had set out on the trip as a "sympathizer." During his stay in the USSR his sympathies for the country grew even more. But one thing that Feuchtwanger had to note, and to which he devoted a rather large part of his book was Stalin's place in the life of Soviet people. "The worship and the boundless cult with which the population surrounds Stalin is the first thing that a foreigner notices as he journeys around the Soviet Union. On all the corners and crossroads, in suitable and unsuitable places, are to be seen gigantic busts and portraits of Stalin. The speeches that one hears, not only political speeches but also reports on any scientific or artistic subject, are interspersed with the praises of Stalin, and this adulation often assumes tasteless forms."

When Feuchtwanger talked about this personally to Stalin when he met him, Stalin just shrugged his shoulders and responded that the workers and peasants were too busy with other matters and were unable to develop good taste, and he joked lightly about the hundreds of thousands of monstrously large portraits of the man with the mustaches—the portraits that he saw with his own eyes. That was how Stalin explained the mass idolatry: the people did not have "good taste."

In trying the understand the sources of this idolatry of the leader, Feuchtwanger did not go much beyond Stalin. Worship of the leader, he asserted, "grew organically, along with the successes in economic development. The people are grateful to Stalin for the bread and meat and the system and education and the creation of an army that guarantees this new prosperity. The people must have someone to whom they can express their gratitude for the undoubted improvement in their living conditions, and for this purpose they have chosen not some abstract concept or 'communism' in the abstract but a specific person—Stalin. Hence, the boundless esteem is not for Stalin the man but Stalin as the representative of a clearly successful economic development." This ingenuous explanation, in Feuchtwanger's little book, published in Amsterdam, so pleased Stalin that already by late the same year, 1937, it had been quickly translated and published in Moscow with a large print run.

Perhaps this was the only publication in our country to have seen the light under Stalin in which the presence of a personality cult, leader worship and Caesarism was admitted and given some basis. It turns out that it is not the people themselves who grow their own grain and meat, who maintain their own army, who support "the system," but that everything is the result of the activity of one man. A very convenient formula and one that has survived down to our times: "worship," it turns out, relates not only to Stalin as a man but as the "representative" of the increasing successes. Essentially, Feuchtwanger embodied socialist ideals and reality in Stalin and for this the people should express their "gratitude" to him. This leader-worship concept of loyalty is also very much alive even now.

Following publication of the articles on Stalin in LITERATURNAYA GAZETA and PRAVDA I received several thousand letters. And some readers, perhaps one-tenth of them, operated on the conclusions such as "Stalin built socialism and so the people honored the leader"; "Even though people were just 'cogs in the wheel' they got order in return"; "Stalin did not order anyone to sing his praises, the people did this out of gratitude for what the leader had done for them"; "Under Stalin prices fell so how could they not be grateful?" These quotes are taken from the letters without alteration. True, reservations are sometimes expressed: "Where there are great matters, error is also great, and it was not only Stalin who was to blame for that"; "Stalin was forced to resort to repression"; "Stalin was betrayed by Beriya and Yezhov, it was not he who created the lawlessness"; "It is easy now to blame Stalin for everything when he cannot defend himself." These are also word for word. I do not want to offend the people who wrote these lines; they can be explained in the main by absence of the truth, ignorance about the true picture of the acts of that man and his entourage, and the baggage of ideas cultivated for many years. I would like to say sometimes else: the concept of cult leader worship is insulting to the people.

Cult leader worship might be called the Caesarism of the 20th century. I recall that Caesarism as a political system derived from the dominion exercised by Julius Caesar. While he was only a magistrate, a servant of the people, which was and should have been the sole sovereign, Julius Caesar nevertheless concentrated all the highest power in his own hands. While preserving the old republican forms of government and recognizing in words its democratic prerogatives, Caesar transformed the Senate into an obedient instrument that approved his will. Caesar created a new stratum in society—the patrician stratum, a variety of ancient bureaucracy—which became the main instrument of his power.

Of course, I have no intention of drawing a direct analogy, but possibly an indirect one. Caesarism under the conditions of the 20th century is the dictatorship of autocracy with preservation of all the outward attributes of state democracy. Of course, it is not a legitimate (monarchical) power given "by the grace of God." Any modern "Caesar" would be excoriated if even a hint of it got out. But the term "Caesarism" is appropriate as an expression describing the usurpation of power by a particularly individual while preserving the formal signs of the political power of the people. In other words, it is a question not of analogies but of a political principle.

How did the Caesarist, leader-worship concept take shape and what were the prerequisites for it? Without elucidating these sources it is difficult to understand how Stalin with all his cruelty and disregard for elementary human standards was popular among the people. There are now many older people, even those who in their lives have endured the adversities connected with the cult of personality, who entertain a certain sympathy for the long-dead leader. We have already said earlier that the country, which lived for centuries under the protection of the tsar's crown, was unfortunately unable for several years following the revolution to cast off so easily the weight of the old thinking and the other impedimenta of the autocracy. The tsar and the dynasty and tsarist attributes had been destroyed within the country, but a mode of thinking that was inclined toward idolization of a strong and powerful personality remained.

The lack of democracy started to be felt strongly from the late Twenties. The early Twenties seem very attractive in this regard: numerous journals were being published, a large number of voluntary societies existed, the most diverse viewpoints could be expressed in the press, and criticism was a natural element of everyday life. For example, PRAVDA considered it normal to report that, for example, at the 14th Russian Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Congress 559 delegates had voted for the reports of Stalin and Molotov while 65 had voted against them; it was reported that there had been considerable support for the idea of a loan to effect industrialization, and the amount of such a loan was mentioned; it was possible to find out that on 1 September 1926 1.026 million people were registered as unemployed.

In time the truth would start to be severely "rationed" and there would be a strict determination of how much of it should be "given," and when, and in what form. Under such conditions it was a complicated matter for people to draw conclusions about those who were leading the people and about who was capable of being a leader. Way back at the turn of the century V.I. Lenin had written that the party must conduct its affairs in such a way that "all the activity of each candidate for this high post would be spread before the eyes, and that it should be aware of their individual peculiarities and their strong and weak aspects, their victories and their 'defeats.'" Openness and publicity, everything in the light; so Lenin called for and demanded "Light, more light!" Indeed, truth could not be a luxury. In time, however, both Stalin himself and his entourage, and many of their decisions seemed to have been shut off by an impenetrable curtain, away from the people and public opinion. Take the acts of lawlessness and the repressions against innocent people. Who knew about them? They knew only about major figures, eminent scholars, outstanding military leaders, but the main mass of poor wretches disappeared mutely in the middle of the night, often forever. The monstrous nature of the very form used against many of those arrested—"without the right of correspondence"—was the apotheosis of lack of publicity.

Gradually people learned to use just part of the truth while having no idea about the other half of it. On 20 February 1938 millions of people learned that way off in the Sea of Greenland the icebreakers Taymyr and Murman had snatched four courageous persons from drifting ice—I.D. Papanin, P.P. Shirshov, E.T. Krenkel and

Ye.K. Fedorov. But it was reported to no one that simultaneously the final preparations were being completed for the show trial of N.I. Bukharin, which was to start in 2 weeks.

Under the conditions of general prohibitions, censorship and restrictions, any careless word, action or deed could be assessed as an encroachment on the monopoly on truth. Speaking at the Central Committee February-March 91937) Plenum, its "vigilant" participant Bogushevskiy saw a dangerous act in... the work of Minsk radio. He saw a danger where no one else had seen it: "Anti-Soviet broadcasts have been made from Minsk radio. On 23 January the indictments in the case of the Trotskiyite center were relayed. After the broadcast of the indictments and the report on the morning court session, they started to broadcast a concert that included Chopin's well-known B flat sonata. This was not by chance. It was done in a very sophisticated way: it was not simply a funeral march that was broadcast, that would be too obvious; it was the B flat sonata. Not everyone knows that this is the sonata that contains the funeral march. And this is no accident."

For those who now depended on Stalin, glorifying him and showing this kind of "vigilance" was one way of moving to the top. The secretary of the Sverdlovsk party obkom, Kabakov, saw encroachment on the truth in sometimes else. "We found," he said at the plenum, "that at one stall purchases were being wrapped in the report of Tomskiy (who by then had committed suicide and been declared "an enemy of the people"—author's note). We checked this and found that traders in the organization had purchased a good amount of this kind of literature." "Who can say," Kabakov, himself soon to be a victim, "astutely" inquired, "whether this literature is being used only as wrapping?"

"Adjusting" the truth to fit the procrustean bed of Stalin's schemes created the spiritual conditions necessary to assert the concept of leader worship. The darker aspects, the darker spots, the gloomy designs and the crafty plans could belong only to the Trotskiyites, Zinovyev's people, Bukharin's people, all who spoke out against the people. A person who recognized and saw and smashed all this "evil" possesses insight and acumen and wisdom. And this person—Stalin—understood that it was easy to stimulate enthusiasm, propagandize successes more widely, and explain the failures mainly as "plots by the wreckers."

He could not don the toga of the leader, not the purple, it is true, but a modest Red Army greatcoat, without extensive control over people's frames of mind. Power over the consciousness shaped the essential spiritual condition: the enthusiasm was genuine, the devotion was often sacrificial, people sincerely demand death and severe penalties for the traitors. Even that pioneer of labor heroism Aleksey Stakhanov, whose name was on millions of lips, wrote: "When the Zinovyev-Kamenev trial was going on in Moscow, and then the trial of Pyatakov and his gang, we immediately demanded that they be shot. In our settlement even the women, who it seemed never got involved in politics, even they clenched their fists when they heard what they were writing in the newspapers. Young and old demanded that the gangsters be destroyed."

New generations grew up and the basis of their convictions was a profound faith in the correctness of all the steps taken by the "great leader." Few considered that faith was very short of complete truth. Now, when almost all of Stalin's political enemies have been rehabilitated, that is, recognized as being innocent of the charges leveled against them, the entire past struggle in the party seems quite different. Many were in error, but, we repeat, very few were enemies as Stalin depicted them. The slightest suspicion, mere suspicion, could grow into an accusation that led to a tragic ending.

On 4 August 1938, Voroshilov, for example, sent Stalin an article by M. Koltsov, with the following note:

"To Comrade Stalin.

"I am sending you an article by comrade Koltsov that he promised long ago. I would ask you to take a look and say whether or not it can and should be printed. I do not like the article.

"K. Voroshilov."

Stalin left no instructions on this memorandum, but we did establish that he gave instructions for a careful "investigation of Koltsov," who was already under surveillance. This was enough for suspicion to end in tragedy for the writer. Even Caesar did not show such bellicose intolerance and ruthlessness.

In general Stalin very often managed without written instructions. I examined probably more than a thousand documents addressed to him personally—documents on the course of the sowing, the fulfillment of construction plans, removals of leading officials, the construction of military factories, the decoding of telegrams from the intelligence services, translations of articles from the bourgeois press, various kinds of "projects" submitted to him by inventors and people simply obsessed by maniacal ideas. In most cases he simply wrote "I. St." or "I. Stalin."

Poskrebyshev used to attach a "flap"—a little square of paper with a possible suggestion for resolving a matter and to whom it should be forwarded. When he agreed with the plan for resolution Stalin often signed this small piece of paper, and for many people this signified their further fate. When passing the pieces of paper to his aide Stalin also gave him separately the accumulated pile of documents without his written instructions and briefly said "Agreed."

Once during a regular session with Mekhlis, at the end of the conversation Mekhlis gave Stalin several sheets of printed text.

"What is this?" Stalin asked.

"A historian told me how General Dragomirov evaluated his subordinates. It seemed amusing. To relax the tension. Iosif Vissarionovich, for the sake of relaxation just take a look," was Mekhlis' smiling retort.

As soon as his "favorite" had left Stalin leafed through two or three pages and then did something he never did—he burst out laughing. Alone in the office. When he came in with Stalin's next case of documents Poskrebyshev was was confused and could not understand why "the boss" did not give him those papers.

General Dragomirov, a brilliant and educated man, a major scholar, had at one time late in the previous century commanded the Kiev Military District. Each year he was given certification reports on about 30 generals under his command, for his approval. Dragomirov, who had written many of his own books in aphoristic and rich language, also remained true to himself in this routine matter. These are some of the conclusions from the certifications that he himself wrote. For Lt General Donatovich: "He was a horse, and has galloped off." For Lt General Plaksin: "An outstanding division commander, will make a good corps commander if God gives him a century to live." For Lt General Zass: "Soft rather than weak. Modest mental powers." For Maj General Otfinovskiy: "Long since senile, should be retired." For Maj General Voinov: "Dogged, soft, sympathetic, tactful. Diligent with regard to the fair sex." For Lt General Sulin: "Painstaking, energetic, knows his business. Not passionate because of his age." For Maj General Berger: "Useless in peacetime, will be harmful in wartime."

The concept of Stalinist Caesarism took shape on the basis of a growing centralization of power. As we analyze Stalin's written instructions we become convinced that even before the decisions of the highest state and governmental organs of power everything had often been predetermined. At the same time, a deep division was formed in the social criteria for social development: everything that was resolved successfully, creatively, in an innovative way, was ascribed to the "wise leadership of comrade Stalin," while everything associated with lagging, failure to fulfill plans, stupid bungling, bureaucracy, stagnation, or shortages was explained by the "plots" of Trotskiyites, double-dealers, saboteurs, spies and wreckers.

Of course, it would be naive to regard Stalin as a leader who made only wrong decisions, committed crimes and did everything deliberately to weaken society. This would be a great oversimplification. Stalin acted in accordance with his own largely profoundly erroneous ideas about socialism and the ways to build it. The ideal, the model, the shape of socialism that he saw was largely, possibly mainly different from those of Lenin and his companions-in-arms. And he saw things otherwise not because he failed to understand the Leninist concept but because at the center of this concept he had long since set aside a place for himself as "leader for all time."

Periodically Stalin would give "signs" or make "gestures" with which he wanted to assure the party and the masses that he was against his own glorification and idolatry. It can be said quite confidently that these "protests" were, as they say, subtly designed "for the public." In his archives, for example, we find the following letter:

"To comrade Andreyev (the Komsomol Central Committee Children's Publishing House) and comrade Smirnova (author of 'Tales of Stalin's Childhood').

"I am decisively against publication of 'Tales of Stalin's Childhood.' The book abounds in factual inaccuracies... But this is not the main thing. The main thing is that the book tends to instill in the consciousness of Soviet children (and people in general) the cult of personalities, leaders and infallible heroes. This is dangerous and harmful. The theory of 'heroes' and 'crowds' is not a Bolshevist but a social revolutionary theory. The people make heroes, Bolsheviks respond...

"I advise you to burn the book.

"I. Stalin. 16 February 1938."

This letter in clear handwriting was calculated more to glorify Stalin. Who could now say that he was not modest? But there is another aspect to this: the leader never liked to be reminded of his childhood, which for him was associated with such profound depths compared to the dizzying heights on which he now found himself. And then, was it not to let people know that he was just like them?

At the Central Committee February-March (1937) Plenum Mekhlis told of the following event: "Back in 1930 comrade Stalin sent the following letter to me at PRAVDA. I am going to read it without his permission.

"To comrade Mekhlis.

"I request that you publish the enclosed cautionary tale of a kolkhoz. In the letter I have scored out the words about 'Stalin' as the 'leader of the party,' 'guide of the party' and so forth. I think that these panegyric embellishment will do nothing (and indeed can do nothing) but harm. The letter should be published without these epithets.

"With communist greetings,

"I. Stalin."

These kinds of "remarks" about the leader served merely to exaggerate the living legends about the "exceptional modesty of comrade Stalin," for whom any kind of vainglory was supposedly alien. Stalin knew that Mekhlis would take his letter "as intended" and use it appropriately.

The concept of cult leader worship was also nourished by the fact that, for example, as the tragic year of 1937 approached Stalin had been at his post for a whole 15 years! This had happened because Lenin had not spelled out in detail a mechanism for rotation and periodic replacement of some leaders by others. Even though, as we have mentioned previously, Lenin's later works did contain profound ideas on constant renewal of the central organs of state power and party leadership. Stalin simply failed to "replace" them and by the mid-Thirties had achieved autocracy and, naturally, had no intention of creating and setting im motion a democratic mechanism for the transfer of power from one leader to another. And of course, no one could raise the issue of the General Secretary's long sojourn in his post.

Now many people argue and write about how the story of our motherland might have developed if the 13th Party Congress had complied with Lenin's will. In this connection I would like to make one observation. History is not programmed. We may make a scientific prediction for the year 2000 and we may try to make an even longer forecast, but no one can say fully how foresight will be realized. What has happened often seems to us to have been inevitable and therefore natural. But in reality this is only one of the possibilities that might have been realized. The fact that Stalin remained in power is historical reality but it was not inevitable.

Why guess at what did not happen, what did not occur? But for some reason people turn to the past and try to find, as Klyuchevskiy once put it, the place where "they went wrong." We want to understand the roots of former mistakes, miscalculations, omissions, for which in history too high a price is usually paid. This is why today it can be asserted that if Stalin in the post of General Secretary had been determined by a specific term, the cult of abnormality would probably never have occurred, even though, of course, the term in office for the first person of the party and state in the highest post is not the only condition for the guarantee of rule by the people.

In many of the readers' letters that I have received there are those that say "If Stalin had never been, who knows whether or not we would have survived?" "Who can say how the war would have turned out without Stalin?" "At that difficult time the survival of socialism needed a strong person like Stalin." I shall not name these particular people out of a deep conviction that in time there may be answers to these questions. But one name may be mentioned—P.A. Molodtsov from Cherepovets. He addressed his letter to "citizen Volkogonov," and in it he writes that under Stalin he also served a term for hooliganism but did not see people who had been imprisoned without cause: "No innocent person was imprisoned. In our barracks the barracks chief was one of the political prisoners, by the name of Papkin. He had been sentenced to a term because he had broken a window in an election department—10 years. Now you say that many were imprisoned, and sometimes because the country was swarming with enemies. And they are still here... But Stalin was the real father of the nation, a real military leader, a real guide and leader."

There you have it—the letter. I have no intention of entering into polemic with him, but one thought must be expressed in this connection. The appeal of these people to Stalin and to his times, to "order in society," is not fortuitous. The main reason for the revival of interest in and glorification of a leader long since dead is people's unique reaction to the period of stagnation with its corruption, decay, soullessness and sualism. This "Brezhnevism" is nothing but the historical product of the system that Stalin created for so long. The present difficulties in renewal are associated in particular with the marked declarative nature of things and the obviously inadequate concrete results. Given the poor democratic standards of many people, glasnost and other real freedoms and rights are only poorly linked with obligations, causes and the active side of perestroyka. The theme of renewal and "order" is not the conservative theme that some understand it to be. Without a high level of organization, discipline, responsibility and legality even democratic gains will quickly be devalued.

Our people have never lacked talent and bright minds. Given a democratic method for determining their own leaders, the people worthy of historical recognition can always end up in the most responsible posts. Without fear of error it can be said that everything that we modestly call manifestations of "subjectivism" and the "period of stagnation" is in the grand reckoning nothing but the result of the cult of leader worship, the consequences of modern-day caesarism. The prerequisites for Stalin's autocratic rule were able to promote the birth of personality cult only under conditions of pro forma democracy. It was precisely this—pro forma democracy—that already by the Thirties had led to the creation of a system of administrative relations in which party organs by and large started to replace state power.

The party, fulfilling the role of ideological, political and collective leader, imperceptibly lost its way in the extensive replacement of all the institutions of Soviet power and became the main instrument of Stalin's autocratic rule. And when in February 1937 Zhdanov raised in guarded form the question of "the undesirability of replacing" economic organs with party organs, concluding the discussion on the report "On Preparations by the Party Organs for the Elections to the USSR Supreme Soviet" Stalin did not fail to emphasize unambiguously and harshly, that "policy cannot be separated from

economic activity. As before the party organs must deal fully with economic matters." The role of the soviets was "directly" downgraded to a secondary appendage of party power.

For Caesarism it was always necessary to level everyone down to the poverty, like-thinking and lack of thinking that was exceptionally important for its readiness to have recourse to slogans and appeals and the ability to inform and "report" to higher organs. In my archives there are several dozen letters (no, not addressed to me) to higher organs requesting that I be "prohibited" from writing about Stalin, and that I be "punished," "cut short" and "reduced to the ranks." Apart from complaints, today these people are calling for nothing. But this is a dangerous psychology, and in the past it was thanks to this that thousands of honest people were sent to their graves. Without the practice of informing Caesarism could also not have existed.

Caesarism created a guarantee not of popular power but of a "dominant personality." This is precisely why in neither the Constitution nor the party Rules were there any stipulations, for example, about the prerogatives of the General Secretary or his mutual relations with the institutions of state. As Stalin wanted, all of this helped in producing party statism and the conversion of the party into an apparatus, a mechanism of power rather than a public amalgamation of people devoted to a particular system of values and ideas. True democracy as the chief guarantee for preventing autocratic rule lies on the plane of the development of Soviet parliamentarianism and enhancing the role of the soviets, and in the accountability of executive organs and rotation of personnel in the top posts.

Today, under conditions in which here in the country positive transformations, although difficult, are taking place, many people think that personality cult is simply impossible after all we have learned about Stalin. I do not think that this is so: personality cult may have the most diverse forms and manifestations. And it is not necessary to fear only the forms of Caesarism and dictatorship. In my opinion, it—this form—can be quite different, even coming in a "humanistic" packaging, if we do not create a well-defined system of legal, political and moral guarantees. From the big steps—enabling people to exercise maximum influence on the process of elections and the promotion of leaders—down to the small things—extensive glasnost in the appointment of aides and consultants who notwithstanding play just as large a part during the course of decisionmaking. And every decision should have specific sponsors and people should know who they are. I think, for example, that whoever at one time was the first to propose the renaming of the city with the poetic and beautiful name of Naberezhnyye Chelny as "Brezhnev" deserves to be able to express his opinion to the people. And how many similar soulless and dizzying proposals have been put into practice? However, their true authors remain in the shadows.

Yes, it is difficult to measure the harm done to society by the creation of the myths cultivated at that time. And the chief of those myths was the "infallibility, wisdom and perspicacity of the all-conquering leader," as he was named in official publications. People believed it when they read, for example, the following lines: "At the Lenin Mausoleum, surrounded by his closest companions-in-arms—Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov, Kalinin, Ordzhonikidze—stood Stalin in the gray greatcoat of a soldier. His calm eyes reflectively surveyed the hundreds of thousands of proletariats who moving past Lenin's sarcophagus with the confident step of the frontal detachment of the future conquerors of the capitalist world... Waves of love and trust rolled over the figure of our leader, calm and firmm as a rock, waves of confidence that there at the Mausoleum had gathered the headquarters of the future victorious world revolution." These lines, written in 1934, belong to K. Radek.

From his school days it was instilled in the individual that "Stalin is thinking of us"; and this was not simply to "indoctrinate" young people. The constant psychological "massaging" of the consciousness led to the degeneration of the cadres. Henceforth the only thing valued was those workers who were prepared to agree with the most absurd postulates, conclusions and decisions, as long as they were dedicated to the will of Stalin. Delivering his report on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Cheka-OGPU-NKVD, A.I. Mikoyan could hardly have believed his own words: "Learn from comrade Yezhov the Stalinist style of work that he has learned and learns from comrade Stalin!" published in PRAVDA on 21 December 1937. But everyone who occupied even the most minor of posts had to speak this way, and not just them. Most people believed these incantations, and those who did not said them just the same. Very few in those difficult times, when the voice of conscience was almost inaudible, expressed any fundamental disagreement with the cult of leader worship and Caesarism or tried to use their conscience. As the poet Ye. Yevtushenko has written

> "They tamed people secretly
> And left their mark on everything.
> Where they should have been silent they were trained to cry out
> Where they should have cried out they were silent."

It is not a simple matter to draw portraits of people now gone. The recollections of people who had known Stalin personally were a great help to me. Listening to their quiet voices one, as it were, saw things through the wrong end of binoculars... Everything seems not simply reduced in size but made remote by the growing temporal distance of history. Each such story about the "great leader" is necessarily also accompanied by an incidental description of those who as it were hid themselves in his shadow. Few of them were known in life. And not just because some of them merely appeared only for a

moment against the backdrop of Stalin and disappeared—G.Ya. Sokolnikov, N.A. Uglanov, S.I. Syrtsov, V.Ya. Chubar, K.Ya. Bauman, R.I. Eykhe—but also because the leader loved a secret. Apart from the dozen or so meager words in the encyclopedias nothing was said about the people who were in Stalin's closest entourage.

In the Shadow of the "Leader."

After the 17th Party Congress, of those companions-in-arms who had made up the nucleus of the party leadership 10 years previously at the 13th Congress and the members of the Politburo, only Stalin remained. The storms of internecine war had swept from the political arena everyone with whom he had been close but uncomfortable. Those people knew Koba, everyone of them—the firm and the wavering, the impetuous and the perplexed, the attractive and pitiful.

After the 17th Party Congress new faces appeared alongside Stalin on the tribune of the Mausoleum, in the presidiums of the meetings and in the Politburo, and from these a new nucleus was quickly formed: Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov. Yawning gaps had soon appeared again among the candidate members of the Politburo: Kirov fell at the hand of an assassin, Kuybyshev was gone, Ordzhonikidze had killed himself; Kosior, Postyshev, Rudzutak and Chubar were removed from the Politburo and became victims of the repressions... What was perhaps the most terrible scene in our history was played out before the very eyes of the Politburo members and candidate members. Those people were not simply the witnesses and beholders of what was happening; everyone in the entourage of the closest "troika" was involved in the tragedy, and no one tried to stop the lawlessness created by the leader. Who were these people who surrounded Stalin?

Before November 1986 it was possible to meet in Zhukovka, near Moscow, an old man, short and with a high forehead and invariably sporting a pince-nez, moving slowly along the road there. Tapping along with a cane, the old man would carefully peer about with his dull brown eyes at the rare passersby. The ratine overcoat, down-at-heel boots and dimmed gaze made him look like a very old man. But not many could say that he had passed his 97th year and that he was none other than the former chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, former member of the Politburo, former People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs and one of Stalin's closest companions-in-arms—Vyacheslav Mikhaylovich Molotov. Even way back in Lenin's time this long-lived man had been a party central committee secretary and the first candidate member of the Politburo. And although history has preserved a number of uncomplimentary remarks made by Vladimir Ilich about the style of Molotov's work in the secretariat (for example, that we are propagating "under own own noses the most disgraceful kind of bureaucracy and the most stupid"), he was precisely one of those Mohicans who many decades ago had worked side by side with Lenin. A unique thing in and of itself: to meet in the mid-Eighties a man who was a member of the central committee led by Lenin! The poet F. Chuyev, who met Molotov many times, has documentary testament of this very close companion-in-arms to Stalin. "He was unassuming, correct and thrifty. He followed up on things to insure that nothing was wasted and that the light was not burning uselessly in another room. When he died on 8 November 1986," Chuyev wrote, "and his will was opened, there in an envelope was a bank savings book with R500 for his funeral."

Yes, this man was on speaking terms with Trotskiy and Bukharin, with Rykov and Zinovyev; he spent many an hour at the negotiating table with Hitler and Ribbentrop; he knew Churchill and Roosevelt and Truman. He was one of the main "architects" of the nonaggression pact with Germany and the treaty with Germany on friendship and the borders. Soviet people remember Molotov's dramatic words (not Stalin's!) at midday on 22 June 1941: "Our cause is just. The enemy will be smashed. Victory will be ours." Today we know for sure that Stalin was exposed to public dishonor by the catastrophic start to the war. Right up to the last moment deep in his heart he nurtured a spark of hope that war might be averted, or at least the start of war put off. The General Secretary, believing not in facts but intuition, became the prisoner of an ephemeral assumption, or, more accurately, desire. The shock was so great that no matter what the members of the Politburo might arrange, he refused to address the nation, and the task was entrusted to Molotov.

For many decades Molotov became the leader's real shadow. They went everywhere together: to meetings of the Politburo, on the dais of the Mausoleum, in the lines printed in the newspapers, at international conferences... Even in the Molotov speech, published 23 June 1941 in PRAVDA, the newspaper as usual printed a large photograph of Stalin next to it.

What did he think about, this denizen of an apartment on Granov Street and the public dacha in Zhukovka? What did this relic of a former power remember? His reports to the congresses perhaps? Molotov "specialized" in organizational matters. Perhaps he thought about how, when they removed Rykov from the post of chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, Stalin himself had nominated him? At that time, at a meeting of the central committee in December 1930, Molotov said that for a number of years he had been going through a "school of Bolshevist work under the direct guidance of Lenin's best student, under the leadership of the great Stalin," and that he was proud of that. It should be said that the decades following Stalin's death did nothing to change him. But he did remember that at the end of his leader's life, his, Molotov's, life hung by a thread; disgrace came suddenly. But shortly before his demise he still said to F. Chuyev of Stalin: "If it had not been for him I do not know what would have happened to us." To his last days he regarded Stalin as a genius and

was convinced the Tukhachevskiy was a military force of the rightists—Rykov and Bukharin, who had supposedly plotted together. Right to the end he asserted that "1937 made it possible to eliminate the 'fifth column' among us in the war that followed." Of course, Molotov agreed, "mistakes were made and many honest communists died, but it was impossible to preserve what had been gained with soft measures." The thinking of the man fanned by the winds of history was, as it were, paralyzed. But perhaps it was moral mimicry: to try to use every last opportunity to justify himself to those who followed? This dutiful, zealous, constant, pedantic, refined executor of Stalin's will bear a special and great personal responsibility for the deformation of legality and for making force the decisive instrument of power.

At the notorious All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee February-March Plenum in 1937 Molotov presented a report entitled "Lessons from Wrecking, Sabotage and Espionage by Nippo-German-Trotskiyite Agents." The entire content of the report was like a call for social pogrom: "Yesterday's vacillations by communists lacking persistence have become acts of wrecking, sabotage and espionage in conspiracy with the fascists, to please them. We are obliged to respond blow for blow, and everywhere to smash on our path the detachments of these scouts and subversives from the camp of fascism... We must make haste to complete this matter, without delay and without wavering."

And he did not "waver." In June of the same year one of the informers (for the call had been "to complete this matter," and it had not been made in vain) wrote to Stalin saying that an official of the Council of People's Commissars, the old Bolshevik G.I. Lomov, was allegedly close to Rykov and Bukharin. Stalin wrote obliquely: "To comrade Molotov. What is to be done?"

The answer could not wait and it was brief: "Immediate arrest of this scum Lomov. V. Molotov."

The man's fate was decided. Arrest, brutal interrogation, quick sentence, execution. Party member since 1903, delegate to the historical April Conference, member of the USSR Central Executive Committee; like many thousands of honest Bolsheviks, with a stroke of the pen he was numbered among the "enemies of the people." It was Molotov himself who directly sanctioned the arrest of the first secretary of the Sverdlovsk obkom, Kabakov, the people's commissar of light industry Ukhanov, the chairman of the Far Eastern Kray executive committee Krutov and many, many other comrades. With Molotov's direct involvement, of the 28 people's commissars of the Council of People's Commissars, which he headed, more than half were repressed.

For Stalin he was a very convenient person who understood just from a hint the intention of the leader and possessed a colossal capacity for work. One more than one occasion Stalin noted Molotov's diligence in the presence of other members of the Politburo, something he otherwise rarely did. When in March 1940 Molotov's 50th birthday was approaching, Stalin gave orders that Perm should be renamed as Molotov, even though on the map of the motherland there were already dozens of small towns, villages, kolkhozes and sovkhozes bearing that name...

During the Thirties no theoreticians remained in Stalin's circle. Naturally, he himself, the General Secretary, was the great "theoretician." But sometimes he condescended to allow some of his own associates, primarily Molotov, to display themselves in theoretical investigations. In one letter to Stalin, Adoratskiy asked the leader to write for the "Encyclopedia of Philosophy" being prepared by the Communist Academy an article dealing with the strategy and tactics of Leninism and Lenin's teaching on the building of socialism. Stalin wrote the following on the letter:

"To comrade Adoratskiy,

"I am terribly busy with practical matters and an totally unable to meet your request. Try asking Molotov: he is on vacation and perhaps he will be able to find the time.

"With communist greetings,

I. Stalin."

Of course, Molotov was no theoretician, but against the background of Stalin's companions-in-arms Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Andreyev and the others he seemed preferable.

Behind the outward imperturbability, exceptional self-control, impenetrability and official correctness lay hidden a strong and evil will. Churchill, who met Molotov one more than one occasion, described his as follows in his memoirs: "His head, round as a cannonball, the black mustache and bright eyes, his stony face, his adroit speech and imperturbable manner of holding himself were like expressions of his qualities and adroitness... His smile, like a Siberian winter, his carefully weighed and often judicious words, his affable manner made him a perfect instrument of Soviet policy in a world fighting for its life." With this same obsession Molotov supported Stalin in everything in domestic policy. In the shadow of the leader he was perhaps the most influential and unreserved executor of his will. Without such executors the cult of leader worship would hardly have been possible.

Scarcely behind Molotov in zeal was another of Stalin's companions-in-arms, Lazar Moiseyevich Kaganovich.

Sergey Ilich Semen, who after the war worked with Voznesenskiy, told me: "I remember that I went to Kaganovich with some papers (at that time he was heading a military industrial commission) wearing new boots. Kaganovich took the papers, looked at me, and then his gaze rested on my boots.

" 'Take them off!' commanded Stalin's people's commissar.

" 'Why?' I stuttered, understanding nothing.

" 'Take them off quickly.' Kaganovich did not want to explain.

"Then taking my still unworn boots in his hands, the people's commissar slowly turned them round and round, ran a hand across the top of a boot and finally tossed them to me on the floor and said with satisfaction 'Good boots.' Then he added: 'I used to be a shoemaker...'"

Who knows, if he had remained a shoemaker perhaps he would have preserved his good name? True, almost no one knew him then. But Kaganovich made his choice—political not professional—way back in 1911 when he joined the Bolshevik party, in which his older brother was already a member. Finding himself in Moscow in 1918, Kaganovich, an associate of the All-Russian Collegium to organize the Red Army, got to know Stalin. In 1920 he was sent to Turkestan. But when Stalin became General Secretary he recalled Kaganovich from Central Asia and appointed him head of the organizational and instruction department of the central committee. Thus, this semiliterate but exceptionally assertive and executive functionary of the highest order quickly started to move up the party and service ladder.

He was also long-lived. In any event he marked his 90th birthday in November 1988 in his apartment on the Frunze Naberezhnaya in Moscow, and perhaps he thinks to make 100, something that Molotov failed to do.

Stalin loved Kaganovich for his inhuman capacity for work and his absolute lack of any opinion of his own in political matters (without waiting for an elucidation of the issue under discussion, he would say: "I agree fully with comrade Stalin") and for his uncomplaining industriousness. And this was expressed in his constant readiness to carry out any task for the leader, even if it were outrageous. On one occasion before a meeting Stalin asked Kaganovich "Lazar, you know that your Mikhail (his brother, the minister of the aviation industry and a Bolshevik since 1905) has keeping company with the 'rightists,' don't you? There are accurate data..." Stalin looked at the people's commissar searchingly.

"He must be dealt with according to the law" Kaganovich vouchsafed in a quavering voice.

By reporting this conversation on the telephone to his brother after the meeting Kaganovich hastened the outcome: on the same day, without even waiting to be arrested, his brother shot himself.

Stalin valued such people. For loyalty to himself, the leader, had to be constantly proved, and proved not in small things, not with mere words of praise. Was this not what Kaganovich did, for example, at the interminable central committee plenum in February and March 1937? The machinery of punition was still only being set up and aimed at "thinning out" the party ranks, the intelligentsia, the working class, the peasantry and the military, but Kaganovich had already distinguished himself. In a 2-hour report "Stalin's people's commissar" of railroads has set forth the first "detailed" reports:

"We in the political apparatus of the People's Commissariat of Railroads have unmasked 220 people. Some 485 former gendarmes, 220 social revolutionaries and Mensheviks, 572 Trotskiyites, 1,415 White officers, 282 wreckers and 449 spies have been dismissed from transport facilities. They were all connected with a counter-revolutionary movement."

It is not hard to imagine what Kaganovich's words about "dismissal" of "spies and wreckers" from the railroads really meant! The General Secretary might well have been really satisfied with Kaganovich's analysis when he heatedly reported to the plenum: "We are dealing with a gang of frantic intelligence agents and spies. With regard to the railroads their entry is especially contrived. Serebryakov, Arnoldov and Lifshits cultivated low norms for throughput capacity, organized wrecks, and opposed the stakhanovite movement. The harm done by Kudrevatyye, Vasilyev, Bratin, Neyshtedt, Morshchikhin, Bekker, Kronts and Breus was particularly bad: they interfered with the introduction of the FD steam engine. The Moscow—Donbass line was built using wreckers; Pyatov built the Turkestan-Siberian line with wreckers; Mrachkovskiy built the Karaganda-Petropavlovsk line using wreckers; Barskiy and Eydelman built the Eykhe-Sokur line using wreckers." Even though the newspapers were writing about overfulfillment of the freight plan, the innovation plan and the plan for the movement of the new streamlined trains, Kaganovich continued to build up an atmosphere of psychosis:

"Shermergon, chief of the railroad construction administration, was a wrecker. Comrade Stalin told us more than once 'he is a bad man, a hostile man.' Comrade Stalin warned us directly about him and suggested that he be looked at closely and checked."

"A suspicious man." Mikoyan came in on cue.

"Merzavets Serebryakov," Kaganovich continued, "marked all the defense junctions very precisely and defined his own wrecking aims..."

Everything in Kaganovich's report was in the same spirit: numerous names, abuse, whole herds of wreckers who did nothing but engage in blowing things up, produce traffic snarls, plan badly, and interrupt freight movements. How could Stalin not value this kind of humor from Kaganovich during his report to the plenum: "Yemshanov, a scoundrel, since 1934 chief of the Moscow-Donetsk rail line. After he was fired he could find no other work and he went to stay with comrade

Yezhov, in the NKVD. He had his say with Arnoldov, he made his pronouncements... everyone said they had not looked after him. Well now comrade Yezhov is looking after him very well."

Since he was profoundly ignorant, Kaganovich, like all of Stalin's companions-in-arms, also tried to create for himself a certain theoretical reputation. In Kaganovich's article "The Great Engineer at the Locomotive of History," prepared by his aides, the people's commissar vied, as far as he could, with Stalin's other companions-in-arms in glorifying the leader.

One of the central committee resolutions obliged the leaders of institutions, enterprises and departments personally to conduct Marxist-Leninist studies with cadres. The people's commissar of railroads during the war, I.V. Kovalev, told me how once Kaganovich gathered a group of leaders and opened a seminar. Kaganovich soon turned things over to Kovalev.

"In my statement," Kovalev said, "I dealt with the fact that because of its position the proletariat, acting spontaneously, is capable only of developing a trade-union awareness... Kaganovich looked at me crazily and suddenly said 'what nonsense are you taking; only a "trade-union" consciousness! The proletariat can develop anything!'

"Everyone exchanged glances. No matter how I tried, relying on Lenin, to explain to Kaganovich the need to introduce scientific theory into the consciousness of the proletariat, I could not get through to the people's commissar. Looking at me suspiciously, Kaganovich soon wound up the seminar and never again got involved in such things, which were beyond his powers."

Kaganovich increased his authority with Stalin by his frequent trips (on assignment for the General Secretary) to "restore order" in particular oblasts. His visits to Chelyabinsk, Ivanov, Yaroslavl and other oblast party organizations were accompanied by real pogroms: local workers were removed and "cases" were filed against them, often ending in tragedy for many honest people. This, for example, was the result of one of his trips. Speaking at the Central Committee January (1938) Plenum, Kaganovich announced the following:

"I know comrade Postyshev well. On commission from the central committee I traveled last year to Kiev when gross errors by comrade Postyshev were revealed. He showed himself to be a worker who had in practice broken with party directives. Ilin, Radkov, Sapov and Leybman are very evil enemies of the people whom at one time Postyshev took for himself by appealing directly to Stalin: give me these people. And these were enemies of the people... " Turning to Postyshev, Kaganovich continued: "Observing you in the lobbies and listening to your statement at the plenum, I assert that you are equivocating with the party central committee... What Postyshev has said here is a repetition of the hostile statements."

Postyshev's fate was sealed. Stalin was satisfied with the "iron" Lazar, as he had called him on more than one occasion. And he needed such "companions-in-arms"—unquestioning, fanatically loyal, understanding the intent of the leader just from a hint.

And when Kaganovich was deciding people's fate at the local level he never took counsel with anyone but simply carried out Stalin's instructions: "Take a careful look there at the local level and make a decision... Do not sentimentalize." The archives confirm dispassionately that at the end of an investigation Kaganovich often used personally to compile and "edit" drafts of the sentences and add to the material that had been prepared random changes of a kind showing that preparations had supposedly been made to carry out "acts of terrorism" against him, the people's commissar. It is now clear how all this finally ended.

As he moved at his whim from Moscow to Turkestan and the back again to Moscow, he became chief of the central committee department through which the main appointments to important posts were made. Kaganovich had already become a candidate member of the central committee in 1926, when he was little more than 30. Because of the complicated situation in the Ukraine, at the recommendation of the General Secretary Kaganovich was in charge of the party organization in the republic; he was the first secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee. He had a complicated relationship with the chairman of the Ukrainian Council of People's Commissars, V. Chubar, and in 1939 that had a fatal effect on the fate of Chubar. Kaganovich's conflicts with other leading officials in the central committee never ceased. In 1928 he returned to Moscow and was appointed first secretary of the Moscow party city and oblast committees. He become a member of the Politburo at the 16th Party Congress.

During the early Thirties Kaganovich;s influence was especially strong. The people's commissar traveled repeatedly to regions where the collectivization was encountering difficulties, and as soon as his "flying visits" were over, matters started to move more quickly. Stalin had little interest in the methods used by "iron Lazar." Cruel by nature and excessively coarse and ignorant, Kaganovich was a typical, even classic representative of the administrative-bureaucratic apparatus, and he set about his business with total lack of ceremony. Party members also long remembered his trips to the North Caucasus, after which the stream of "dispossessed kulaks" transported to the North increased; in Moscow Oblast he unwaveringly removed anyone who failed to follow his directives; in line with his ignorant conclusions, certain songs were banned on the stage in Moscow;

since he was chairman of the Central Commission carrying out the Party Purge, "iron Lazar" led it mercilessly; it was precisely his name that also figured in the mysterious incident concerning the elections to the Central Committee at the 17th Party Congress. He was one of the chief sponsors of the destruction of many of Moscow' historical monuments under pretext of reconstruction, including the destruction of the church of Christ the Savior. In short, Kaganovich was everywhere.

Stalin gave credit where credit was due to the boundless zeal of his companion-in-arms, making him one of the first to be awarded with the recently instituted Order of Lenin. This man, along with Stalin and his companions-in-arms, carries full responsibility for the extensive introduction of the bureaucratic, administrative and, I would say, power methods in the building of socialism and in unleashing bloody terror in the country.

Longevity provides an opportunity to prolong the feast of memory. And Kaganovich has many thing to remember: his cruel leadership in the Ukraine, his "victories" over Postyshev and Chubar, the exceptional favor of Stalin, whom he replaced on more than one occasion during the Thirties when the leader had traveled south, his friendship with Khrushchev, his "contribution" to the reconstruction of Moscow, accompanied by the demolition of the Sukharev tower and the destruction of the Starstnyy monastery and the blowing up of the church of Christ the Savior, and the removal of the Iverskiy gates and many other buildings "of the old regime."... If he recovers his conscience perhaps he will experience what he did anew, suffering. But if his conscience was frozen decades ago, then his memory will restore in his consciousness only the frames of a silent black-and-white movie film of past flashing by him. For people like him longevity is like a prison term. Nothing can be changed. Everything is eternal in its immutability. Apart from the evaluations that people have made and will make about the past.

During the Thirties another of the closest companions-in-arms was also Kliment Yefremovich Voroshilov, a renowned hero of the civil war. His name had become legend even in his lifetime. In those now far distant years the pioneers and the young members of the Komsomol used to sing with enthusiasm

> "When Comrade Stalin
> Sends us into battle
> And the first marshal leads
> We shall be victorious..."

Voroshilov joined the revolutionary movement early. Way back in 1906, when a delegate to the 4th Russian Social Democratic Workers Party Congress, he had became acquainted with Lenin, Stalin and a number of other well-known revolutionaries. After being exiled and arrested several times, Voroshilov was present during the February Revolution in Petrograd. Defense of the gains of the October threw Voroshilov into various fronts, and he was noticed particularly in the battle for Tsaritsyn; it was there that he cemented his friendship with Stalin. The future people's commissar fought bravely but unimaginatively, paying tribute to the partisans. Speaking at the 8th Party Congress, V.I. Lenin said the following in particular:

"Voroshilov has cited facts that show the terrible traces of the partisans. This is an indisputable fact. Comrade Voroshilov says 'we had no military specialists and we sustained 60,000 casualties.' This is terrible... The heroism of the army at Tsaritsyn spread to the masses, but to say that we managed without military specialists—how can this be a defense of the party line... Comrade Voroshilov is to blame because he is reluctant to thrown off this old sense of partisan fighting."

Voroshilov's combat path was impressive: The 1st Cavalry Army, where he was a member of the Revolutionary Military Council, the fighting in the North Caucasus and in the Crimea, against the detachments of Makhno; participation in the defeat of the Kronstadt mutiny. Voroshilov was twice awarded the Order of the Red Banner for heroism and bravery during the civil war. From the 10th Party Congress on he was a permanent member of the party central committee, and from the 14th Party Congress (1925) also a member of the Politburo. Following Frunze as people's commissar for military and naval affairs, Voroshilov did make some contribution to the development of the Red Army. His success in this matter is explained to some extent by the fact that in the people's commissariat, the military academies and a number of military districts there were by that time a number of interesting, creative military leaders and military theoreticians, both from among those who had risen after the revolution, and from among officers of the old army. Among these, mention should be made of B.M. Shaposhnikov, author of the profound work "The Brain of the Army," M.N. Tukhachevskiy, who wrote "Questions of Modern Strategy," K.B. Kalinovskiy, V.I. Velichko, A.P. Verkhovskiy, A.M. Zayonchkovskiy, V.F. Novitskiy, A.A. Svechin, R.P. Eydeman, I.E. Yakir and many others.

It should be said that Voroshilov was always a consistent supporter of Stalin, often simply in an insouciant manner. During the Thirties Voroshilov's fame was truly national and he was, I repeat, a legendary personality for the people. Even back in the Twenties biographies, books and numerous articles about him had been published. For example, "The Leader of the Army of World Revolution," "We Listen to Your Story, Comrade Voroshilov," "The Bolshevist Captain," "The Commander in Chief from the Lathe." It was an honor in the country to be awarded a "Voroshilov marksman" badge; a heavy tank was named in Voroshilov's honor—the "KV"—(true, a more modern and more powerful tank had already be named the "IS"—the "Iosif Stalin."

How did Stalin regard the national fame of his companion-in-arms? Calmly. He paid not the slightest attention to how Voroshilov was exalted, and the people's commissar was talked about only as a man who was "carrying

out the will of the leader"—"the Red marshal under the leadership of comrade Stalin," "Stalin's people's commissar." Stalin knew Voroshilov better than anyone else. Everyone regarded them as friends. But in a true friendship no one should be a debtor, and Voroshilov always considered himself "beholden" to the General Secretary: for his fame, his honor, his posts, his awards, his position. There are numerous photographs of Voroshilov with the leader: at a congress, in the south, at Stalin's dacha, inspecting new military equipment, at Gorkiy...

Yes, Stalin knew Voroshilov's "worth"... Already during the Thirties he was an absolutely obedient executor who on the most important issues had no opinion at all that differed from the views of the General Secretary. He did not have Kaganovich's inhuman capacity for work, or the mind and cunning of Molotov, or the guardedness and circumspection of Mikoyan, and in many respects he also ran second to other members of the Politburo. But Stalin needed Voroshilov because of the legendary aura that surrounded the "leader of the Red Army." The General Secretary was convinced that at a decisive moment the people's commissar would support him without wavering. And Stalin was not wrong: when the hour of bloody purgatory came Voroshilov stood alongside the leader without any shadow of doubt and lit the bonfire of repressions of military cadres. Voroshilov offered no defense for the three marshals of the Soviet Union who were shot, nor did he defend the hundreds and thousands of commanders who became the victims of repression. In his speech at the notorious Central Committee February-March Plenum in 1937, after listing by name many "enemies of the people" who had managed to penetrate the Workers and Peasants Red Army, Voroshilov decided to illustrate what he had said by an example that supposedly showed that the "Trotskiyite wreckers" were not only "at the top." The people's commissar read a letter from one Major Kuzmichev who had been arrested.

"To the People's Commissar of Defense Comrade K.Ye. Voroshilov.

"I am accused of being a member of a counterrevolutionary terrorist group that was making preparations to kill you. Yes, during the period 1926-1928 I did join a Trotskiyite organization. From 1929 I tried to expatiate my guilt. In your person I had always seen not only the leader of the Red Army but also an extraordinarily sympathetic man. I have twice been awarded an Order of the Red Banner. How could they number me among a gang of fascist murderers?

"Obviously they are going to shoot me. Perhaps after a few years the Trotskiyites will say why they have slandered an honest man, and when the real truth is discovered I ask you to restore my good name to my family. Forgive me for the scribbling but they will give me no more paper.

"Kuzmichev. 21 August 1936."

Voroshilov looked around the hall and then finished, effectively: "And after another 10 days he confessed that they wanted to carry out an act of terrorism in the region of Belaya Tserkov during maneuvers."

Voroshilov knew how to get these confessions. When he was reporting to the plenum, he spoke, of course, addressing Stalin, saying that he often "speaks with Yezhov with regard to persons expelled from the ranks of the army." Another time he would defend individual persons: "True, it is now possible to go into an unpleasant story: you defend him and he turns out to be a dyed-in-the-wool enemy, a fascist." Obviously these were the considerations that guided Voroshilov when he expressed his attitude toward Yakir's letter, sent on the day before he was shot.

"To K.Ye. Voroshilov. In memory of my many years of honest work in the Red Army I ask you to look out for my family and help it because it is powerless and totally innocent. I have made the same request of N.I. Yezhov.

"Yakir, 9 June 1937."

Voroshilov read the note and wrote in a bold hand:

"I have doubts about the honor of a dishonorable man in general.

"K. Voroshilov, 10 June 1937."

I have before me several volumes of documents written by Voroshilov or with his dispositions written on them. I pick up a volume containing letters from those commanders who before they were tried and shot managed successfully to appeal to the people's commissar with appeals, supplications and cries for help. Letters from Goryachev, Krivosheyev, Sidorov, Khakhanyan, Bukshtynovich, Prokofyev, Krasovskiy. Here is the letter from M. Yefremov, former commander of troops in the Transbaykal Military District (the same letter was sent to Stalin and to Molotov):

"Comrades, while having access to all data refuting the slander made against me by the fascists Dydenko and Levandovskiy, to my shame and chagrin, I was nevertheless absent-minded and on 18 April 1938 I forgot to show proof to the Politburo of my innocence and loyalty to the party of Lenin and Stalin... Troop commander Dydenko is saying something about me that cannot be believed. After his training he undoubtedly went mad, there is no other way for me to understand it—and that was in 1934! According to Dydenko he "enlisted" me... and he assigned me the task of enlisting the command personnel...

"All my brothers are communists, four commanders in the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army. My son is 17, a member of the Komsomol. My mother and sisters with their 12 children are at the "Put sotsializma" kolkhoz in

Orel Oblast. My uncle was hanged in 1905 for involvement in the rebellion in the navy, and my father was killed by kulaks. I myself am a Moscow worker. I took part in the war in China. I have been wounded. I have been awarded an order of Lenin, three orders of the Red banner and an Order of the Labor Red Banner... I beg you to make haste to stop my suffering and torture.

"Yours always, Yefremov, Mikhail."

This letter, like thousands of others, was not followed up, that is, there was no intervention from Voroshilov. No one could put the brakes on the machinery of repression or restrain it. Essentially this attitude was also an element of that merciless machinery. And so Voroshilov responded laconically to requests from the local level. Let me quote the text of several telegrams from many others like them (from 1937 and 1938):

"Khabarovsk. To Bluekher. Reference number 88. Try him. K. Voroshilov." "Sverdlovsk. To Gorbachev. Reference number 39. Arrest authorized. K. Voroshilov." "Polar Command of the North Polar Fleet. Reference number 212. Try and punish as fitting. Voroshilov." "Sverdlovsk. To Gaylita. Find, arrest and punish severely. Voroshilov." "Smolensk. To Belov and Mezis. Reference number 475. Arrest. K. Voroshilov." "Leningrad. To Dydenko and Meger. Reference number 16758. Authorization given to arrest and try. Voroshilov." "Tbilisi. To Kuybyshev and Apse. Reference number 344. Try and execute. Voroshilov."

In April and May of 1937 Voroshilov sent Stalin one list after another with the following kind of content:

"The All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee Politburo.

"To Comrade Stalin.

"I request that the following be excluded from the composition of the Military Council under the USSR People's Commissar of Defense:

"Tukhachevskiy, M.N. Eydeman, R.P. Longva, R.V. Yefimov, N.A. Annog, E.F.

"as persons expelled from the tanks of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army.

"K. Voroshilov. 25 May 1937."

After he had signed, Voroshilov struck out the word "expelled" and substituted the word "retired," even though he knew quite well where they would be "retired" to. Later those lists were issued under Stalin's name, but with other names: Gorbachev, Kazanskiy, Kork, Kutyakov, Feldman, Lapin, Yakir, Uboryevich, Germanovich, Sangurskiy, Ogiley and others... The people's commissar was evidently not upset by the fact that virtually the entire Military Council under the USSR People's Commissariat of Defense had turned out to be "spies," "fascists," and "Trotskiyite-Bukharinites." And here too, no attempt was made to use the rare chance of conscience: the main thing was not to contradict but to agree, "to support the line of Comrade Stalin."

So there we have another of Stalin's closest troika. True, in contrast to others the shadow of the leader did not cover him completely; Voroshilov's life more than others was in sight of the people but this had no effect on the independence of the judgements. The companions-in-arms were well matched with their leader.

Of course, all these people, particularly Beriya, bear responsibility for all the distortions and crimes committed by Stalin. But this responsibility must also be shared by those who simply said yes and agreed and voted and praised Stalin's "wise" decisions. Their degree of culpability varies and history will judge who was the more guilty, and who less. A.A. Andreyev, A.A. Zhdanov, M.I. Kalinin, A.I. Mikoyan, N.S. Khrushchev, G.A. Malenkov and others from the top political and state leadership also did virtually nothing to limit the autocratic rule of the dictator.

Other people in the shadow of the leader included those who although not occupying high official posts nevertheless exerted a very strong influence on policy and decisions and the execution of Stalin's will. Thus, during the early Thirties Stalin's in the secretariat, which included about 90 people led by A.N. Poskrebyshev, a number of deputy chiefs and consultants and report writers were working, including Dvinskiy, Gertsenberg, Ivanov, Selitskiy, Loginov and others. Aleksandr Nikolayevich Poskrebyshev was, as we have already said, the loyal man who understood Stalin just from a hint and knew all his secrets, and he died in 1963. Members of his family told me that their father was always sorry that he had not kept a diary, he knew so much. True, after thinking about it, he concluded that if such a diary existed he himself would have left the land of the living long ago. His unhurried movement in the dark shadow of the leader gave Stalin the opportunity always to be au fait with the business in hand and to influence the resolution of any problem. Although Poskrebyshev was by nature not a cruel man, they used to curry favor with him; so much depended on when and how he would present a "paper" and what the top aide would suggest be done.

Yet another person who played a special and most evil role and who was an aide to Stalin for some time also stood in the shadow of the leader. But way back on 1 December 1926 the Organizational Buro of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee had decreed that "In compliance with comrade Mekhlis' request he has been released from his duties as chief of the Central Committee Secretariat Buro and aide to the Central Committee Secretary...."; this was signed by Central Committee Secretary Stalin.

And so, Lev Zakharovich Mekhlis. He was born in Odessa and started his revolutionary activities with the Mensheviks. He joined the party in 1918 and he spent the civil war with Stalin. He occupied a number of posts in the Central Committee apparatus and in PRAVDA, and he was USSR People's Commissar of State Control and chief of the Main Political Directorate in the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army. But his influence on the General Secretary stemmed not so much from his duties as from his relationship with Stalin himself. Mekhlis was often with him and for a long time been on intimate terms with him. Stalin used to give him the most delicate assignments. I have before me a whole volume of personal reports from Mekhlis from various places, from where he sent his reports to the General Secretary. Hundreds of ciphers, telegrams, written reports, about one and the same thing: "enemies are active," "there is lack of concern everywhere," "complacency is spoiling everything," "harsher methods are needed." Stalin believed Mekhlis perhaps more than any other. He was able to find "enemies" where even to suspect them would have been laughable. In July 1937, when the Red Banner Song and Dance Ensemble was in the East, the following encoded telegram was sent to Stalin.

"I have to report that in the Red Banner Song and Dance Ensemble the situation is serious. I conclude that an espionage-and-terrorist group is operating in the ensemble. I have dismissed 19 people on the spot. I am conducting an investigation. The makeup of the ensemble includes former officers, children of kulaks and anti-Soviet elements. I have recruited the chief of the special department for the work. Should the ensemble be permitted to visit the units? Mekhlis."

I think that the question posed in the telegram was superfluous: half the ensemble had been arrested, so who was there to make the "visits"? Stalin's suspiciousness found in Mekhlis an ideal source to maintain it.

We have by no means dealt with the entire entourage but only those closest. We shall talk about persons who "carried out Stalin's will" in other chapters. These people were, as it were, in his shadow, but there was one man whose ghost often visited Stalin, and he, of course, was Trotskiy.

The Ghost of Trotskiy.

After Trotskiy's exile Stalin hated him even more than when had been alongside him. The General Secretary cursed the moment when he had agreed to the proposal to turn him out. He was reluctant to admit that he feared Trotskiy even more, now that he had become a political ghost. And he also feared the feeling of helplessness that he could in no way resolve the "problem" of Leyba Davydovich, that he had previously turned to Trotskiy—and the malice grew even more. On one occasion Stalin lost control of himself and almost talked about it in public.

In the interview with E. Lyudvig that we have already mentioned, when speaking about authorities, Stalin suddenly said: "Trotskiy also enjoyed great authority. And so what? As soon as he moved away from the workers they forgot him."

"Completely forgot him," Lyudvig asked.

"They remember him sometimes—with malice."

"Always with malice?"

"As far as our workers are concerned they remember Trotskiy with malice, with anger and with hatred."

Stalin was not being candid: perhaps even the workers had no good word for Trotskiy when they remembered him, but first and foremost it was he, the General Secretary, who remembered him primarily "with malice, with anger and with hatred," and, I think, for a number of reasons: when he listened to Molotov, Kaganovich and Khrushchev, and even Zhdanov, he must have often thought: how high above all these functionaries Trotskiy's intellect was! By a whole order of magnitude! He would recall in his mind others of his companions-in-arms and in his confusion was convinced that they could not have compared him with Trotskiy either in terms of thinking, or organizational scope, or oratorical talent, of eloquence as a political commentator. How could he have set free such an enemy? He once admitted to his own circle that this had been perhaps one of the greatest mistakes of his life.

Another circumstance that constantly fired his hatred for Trotskiy (and this he would not admit even to himself) was that in his practical work Stalin often followed the recipes of his exiled enemy. The General Secretary remembered that when the struggle over NEP was going on Trotskiy had once said in the Politburo: "The working class can come close to socialism only through great sacrifice, straining with all its strength and giving up its own blood and nerves." He uttered this same thought later at the Komsomol congress in 1922. The defeated rival never tired then of repeating that without "workers' armies," "the militarization of labor" and "total self-control" the revolution risked never breaking out of "the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom."

Almost all the 15 volumes of Trotskiy's works deal with the idea of the "militarization of labor." Speaking at a meeting of the faction of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions, Trotskiy had called for the production rayons to be transformed into millions of divisions; the military districts should merge with the production units and "shock battalions" should be dispatched to important projects "to improve productivity by personal example and repressions." What was needed was "coercive measures, essential for establishing a military situation in the shock oblasts... It is necessary to use

labor conscription with military methods." These calculations represent the classic ABC of "barracks communism," whose praise singer in the early Twenties, let us recall, was Trotskiy. Even later he never fully abandoned these ideas.

Stalin was always impressed with the idea of presenting the issue in a way that people would be ready voluntarily "to give their blood and nerves." While in exile (on the island of Prinkipo, in France and in Norway) Trotskiy wrote many times about Stalin's "feeble imitation," evidently meaning by this not only his proclivity toward compilation but also his borrowing in social methodology.

But the main reason why Stalin was constantly worried by the ghost of Trotskiy was that his exile had created his own political organization—the Fourth International—and at the first opportunity placed the General Secretary on the same level as Hitler. This was insufferable. The fearful specter was taking its revenge on him for its defeat in the kind of painful and insidious manner that even Stalin himself would have been unable to dream up. The leader often had the feeling that their struggle, which it seemed had ended in 1929 when the steamship "Ilich" quietly sailed from Odessa with Trotskiy on board, was in reality just beginning.

Since they were divided by many borders, the two "eminent leaders" waged the unequal struggle each in his own way. The one, the "winning leader," who had achieved an autocracy of rare strength, before which absolutist regimes paled into insignificance, strove to form in the party and the people a steadfast hatred of Trotskiy as a traitor and accomplice of the fascists. The other, the "defeated leader," did not spare his rich eloquence to prove that Stalin and Hitler "stand side by side." Even though exiled and maintained by small groups of like-thinkers in a number of countries, Trotskiy was able to influence public opinion. His speeches, verbal and written, were still effective, and as before his main target was Stalin, whom Trotskiy called "the grave digger of the revolution."

Yes, Trotskiy knew a great deal. During the years of the revolution and civil war the future exile was closer to Lenin than was Stalin. Judging from the published war correspondence, Lenin 78 times sent Trotskiy telegrams and letters while the number for Stalin was 62. Lenin defended Trotskiy on more than one occasion and he valued his organizational and propaganda talent. Stalin remembered that at the time when their relations had been tolerable and he basically approved some of Trotskiy's leftist ideas, for example, to move to Poland so as to accelerate the revolutionary fire in Europe, he had not objected to the idea of moving into Asia. Once during conversation Trotskiy claimed confidently that Asia was more revolutionary than Europe. That, he said, if a revolutionary base were to be created in the southern Urals, then the approach to Asia in order to hasten revolution would be realistic, and that revolutions in China and India would then necessarily emerge victorious. The people engaged in the conversation were evasive on the idea. Stalin raised no objection. Trotskiy had many dislocations and brainstorms: he tried to rush things and was already thinking not on the scale of Russia, but of world revolution. But Stalin understood that speaking publicly about these "faults" of Trotskiy would mean to cast a shadow over himself, for today he was the "heir" to the revolutionary causes of the October...

Stalin was particularly offended by Trotskiy's words to the effect that he was not only speaking for himself but was also expressing the views of his silenced supporters and all those mute members of the opposition in the USSR. Reading the translated books and article of Trotskiy—"The Stalin School of Falsification," "The Stalinist Thermidor," and "Open Letter to the Members of the Bolshevik Party"—the General Secretary literally lost his self-control. How blind he was! Could it be that his assessment made in November 1924 to Trotskiy was incorrect? At that time, speaking to the communist faction of the AUCCTU he had described Trotskiy as a man who was acting well when the revolutionary cause was on the upsurge but was now losing and "drifting" in his defeat. And now Trotskiy had apparently suffered total catastrophe but would not yield! Again and again Stalin suffers torments thinking about the mistake: why had he sent Trotskiy packing beyond the cordon? And now he has to pay for that thoughtless act. His, Trotskiy's, assistants were plotting against him, organizing sabotage, engaging in espionage, knocking together an underground while he, Stalin, has done nothing for several years!

In his report to the CPSU Central Committee February-March (1937) Plenum "On Shortcomings in Party Work and Measures To Liquidate Trotskiyite and Other Double-Dealers," Stalin as usual singled out the "main element." This was a section entitled "Present-Day Trotskiyism." As always the General Secretary first posed for his audience, as before a seminar, a question: what is Trotskiyism? And he answered thus: "Present-day Trotskiyism is shameless gang of wreckers. Even 7 or 8 years ago it was an erroneous anti-Leninist political trend. But now it is a gang of fascist wreckers." And he continued: "Kamenev and Zinovyev denied that they had a political platform. They lied. But in the trial in 1937 Pyatakov, Radek and Sokolnikov did not deny the presence of such a platform. The restoration of capitalism and terrorist dismemberment of the Soviet Union (the Ukraine for the Germans and the Maritime area for the Japanese); in the event of invasion by enemies—wrecking and terror. That is the entire platform of Trotskiyism." This was the way that Stalin tied the cord around all his defeated and potential enemies.

Across these decades our view of Trotskiy should evidently be changed. We have already talked about his intellectual and moral qualities, which were extremely contradictory and complex. Trotskiy's ambitious and in

a certain sense adventurist nature had one incurable weakness: the demon of the revolution believed, was convinced that he was a genius, and he did little to hide this. Hence his excessive ambition, Bonapartist manners and dictatorial tricks. And who knows, had Trotskiy conquered Stalin, whether the people would not have had to deal with a dictator of no less a markedly Caesarist type?

But with everything, the truth should be supreme: during the years of the revolution and the civil war, after Lenin the most important leader was Trotskiy. We recall Lenin's assessment of this "outstanding leader." It was not happenstance that Lenin emphasized that he was "perhaps the most capable man in our present central committee." No one knows what Trotskiy would have been later, had Lenin lived. Of course, I am now expressing the suggestions overmuch, remembering that the researcher does have the right to hypothesize. But one thing can be said unambiguously: during the years of his vigorous activity in the party (1917 through 1925 in particular) Trotskiy was not an enemy of the revolution or of socialism. He was an enemy of Stalin. I in no way want to close my eyes to those anti-Soviet passages to which Trotskiy resorted at the end of his tragic life. It was the logic of the struggle against Stalin that led him into that ideological and political impasse.

Perhaps Trotskiy's prerevolutionary activity, like his efforts of an anti-Soviet character after his deportation, did harm our common cause. But Trotskiy must be given his due: he was not smashed, as many were, in the face of Stalin's dictatorship. Earlier than the others he saw the dictatorial essence of the General Secretary and those future misfortunes that he would bring to the people and the party. There is yet another objective circumstance that enables us to say that at least during the October and the early half of the Twenties Trotskiy marched with the revolution. To the end of his days he respected Lenin. As Lunacharskiy wrote: "Trotskiy was prickly and imperious. Only in his relations with Lenin after their association did he show a touching and affectionate and deferential attitude, and with the modesty typical of a truly great man Trotskiy recognized Lenin's superiority." But, as we have already said, Trotskiy loved himself in the revolution more than the revolution itself. The sources of his personal tragedy lay not so much in the struggle against Stalinism as in the struggle against Stalin and the struggle for power. The eternal bitterness of his unsuccessful flight toward the apex of the pyramid of power finally shifted the scale of historical and social priorities for Trotskiy to priorities of personal interest. Perhaps my reflections will provoke a "righteous" anger in some people. I think that time will judge us.

What was the real danger from Trotskiyism in the Thirties? Did Trotskiy really exert any influence on political and social processes in the USSR? It is important to clarify these questions since some of the motifs of the "Trotskiyite danger" were to serve as a pretext for the terrible tragedy of the party and the people.

While Stalin consolidated his autocratic rule Trotskiy was roaming the world. Prinkipo Island in the Sea of Marmara, France, Norway and finally Mexico marked the path of the deported leader of the opposition. At first Trotskiy hoped for a quick return to the USSR and he believed that Stalin would would not hold out for long. It seemed to him that Stalin's intellectual defects, lack of culture, blunders, coarseness and slyness were so obvious that they alone would generate a regular opposition and give birth constantly to new enemies of the General Secretary. Again—how many times now?—Trotskiy was wrong. The "defeated genius" believed that given his great popularity and reputation he would be the center of attraction for all forces hostile to Stalin.

As he wandered among the brown boulders of the tiny island of Buyukada, almost lost in the Sea of Marmara, Trotskiy thought about the oddity of human destiny. At one time the island had been a place of incarceration for distinguished individuals from Byzantium, and now here was one of the "architects of the Russian revolution," as the exile called himself. These words from Trotskiy's diary, written at an isolated villa on the island, confirm once again the exceptionally high opinion that Stalin's main opponent had of himself.

At first the bourgeois press was careful in making references to Trotskiy's exile. At one time a version was carried on its pages to the effect that Stalin had deliberately exiled one of the former leaders of the Russian revolution so as to promote an upsurge in the workers' movement in the capitalist countries. In Germany and England the bourgeois newspapers even described the "details" of this "diabolical" plan of Stalin, who had not given up hope of lighting the fire of world revolution. They wrote about Trotskiy as a "revolutionary explosive charge" and so the bourgeois governments refrained from steps to offer him political asylum. But gradually it was felt in the political world of the West that although through Trotskiy was still abusing fascism, bourgeois philistinism and the imperialist policy of plunder, the vector of his malice was being re-aimed at Stalin and his regime and his former motherland.

With the help of like-thinking Trotskiyites, who started to make the pilgrimage from various countries to Prinkipo, the disgraced leader established quite extensive contacts with many small groups inclined to oppose the Comintern and the Bolshevik Party, and Stalin personally. With their help Trotskiy soon started to publish a small journal entitled BYULLETEN OPPOZITSII, published in several languages. Sometimes, particularly in 1935, Trotskiy even managed to send some copies of BYULLETEN OPPOZITSII into the Soviet Union. Stalin's archives contain several copies of the Trotskiyite journal annotated by the General Secretary.

It became clear that Trotskiy was trying to establish links with former companions-in-arms and like-thinkers in the Soviet Union. Isaac Deutscher reports this in his three-volume biography of Trotskiy. He writes, for example,

that through a German correspondent in Moscow, one Sobolevichikus, Trotskiy obtained important information from Russia and reference material and statistics for his books and articles. A significant proportion of Trotskiy's letters to his correspondents in the USSR passed through the hands of Sobolevichikus and his brother, and figures, letters written in secret ink and the addresses of post office boxes were passed on. And even though these links between Trotskiy and his supporters were, it must be said, weak, nevertheless up to 1935 he did manage to obtain certain information from the USSR and pass it back there in his letters via illegal channels. It is also known that Trotskiy brought out about 30 boxes of his own archives and books. Stalin wrote later ascribed this to "criminal shortsightedness" by the agencies entrusted with the deportation.

The four long years that the exile spent in the Prinkipo islands were a time for waiting and selecting and defining further ways for the struggle . Trotskiy gradually lost his conviction that he would be "recalled" to Moscow; more often he concluded that the only way to remain afloat was to continue the struggle against Stalin. But the ways and methods to be used in that struggle were still unclear to him. He had not yet understood once and for all that his third emigration was his last and that he would never again set foot on his native soil.

Sitting in the evenings in his room, fitted out as an office, with the windows facing the sea, Trotskiy would leaf through the pages of his own works to the accompaniment of the sound of the surf. In general the best book that he had written was "The History of the Russian Revolution," which had created the rift with Stalin. But its main weakness is the naked egocentrism of the author. It is difficult to believe that by 1927 Trotskiy published 21 volumes of his own works! As he leafed through the pages he was himself amazed at his own writing. Here is the eighth volume of his works—"Political Silhouettes." Who had he not written about! Adler, Kautsky, Bebel, Zhores, Valyan, Plekhanov, Martov, Rakovskiy, Kolarova, Liebknecht, Luxembourg, Witte, Azefe, Nicholas II, Sukhomlinov, Milyukov, Pirogov, Herzen, Struve, Sverdlov, Litkens, Nogina, Myasnikov, Sklyanskiy, Frunze and many, many others... There is no essay on Lenin but he often mentioned him when talking about others. Or here: an entire volume devoted mainly to the Peace of Brest. Ones eyes scan the lines: "The party congress, the highest institution of the party, has indirectly rejected the policy that I among others pursued... and I decline all official posts, no matter what they may be, that the party has entrusted to me up to now." How long ago that had been—the 7th Party Congress...

The pages rustle... There is no place for Stalin there. Perhaps the volume on culture was closer to him than the others. The volume "Bureaucracy and Acquiescence" opens at random. This is what he wrote some years ago: "Everything that is directed against the interests of revolutionary dictatorship should be mercilessly disavowed. But that does not mean that we should not have our own democracy—proletarian, full-blooded, a vigorous spring. We must create it. The building of socialism is possible only if real democracy for the working masses grows... But where bureaucracy is born it is born from acquiescence... The chief principle of acquiescence: to please. To please whom? A boss." It is difficult not to agree with that opinion. Given all his love for himself, Trotskiy could now think to himself that none of it was urgent... Stalin would have other concerns, other motives, other priorities. All he had left was the struggle—the struggle against Stalin. Not the system, but Stalin personally...

I. Deutscher, who following Stalin's death was given access to his closed personal archives, shows that even before their final defeat and exile, Trotskiy and Zinovyev, and even Shlyapinkov, made an attempt to organize their supporters in foreign communist parties. Insignificant groups of Trotskiyites were to be found in accordance with number of communist and workers' parties. In France they were headed by Alfred Rosmer, Boris Suvarin and Pierre Monet, in Germany by Arkadiy Maslov and Ruth Fischer (former associates of Zinovyev); in Spain Andres Nin sympathized with Trotskiy, in Belgium, van Overstaatten and Le Soyl supported Trotskiyism. Small groups of Trotskiyites emerged in Shanghai, Rome, Stockholm and a number of other cities.

Trotskiy hoped that one of these splinter groups would create a new movement with an anti-Stalinist leaning, but he had no serious social base or solid program. He again tried to revive the motif of "permanent revolution," showing that "the doctrine of socialism in one country is a national-socialist perversion of Marxism." Another element of his "program" was feral anti-Stalinism, in which manifestations of his personal hatred of Stalin and his resentment over the failure of his own ambitious hopes and the pain of loss of those near and dear to him in Russia could be clearly seen.

Trotskiy hoped that his malicious anti-Stalinism would evoke a broad response in the communist parties, but this did not happen. In the eyes of communists in the West, the achievements of the USSR in industrialization and in the fields of culture and education were linked with the name of Stalin. Over there they still did not know about the character of the General Secretary, the noisy political trials had not yet started in Moscow, and the colors in which the true portrait of Stalin should be painted had not yet been mixed. Trotskiy's attempt to put political pressure on the Soviet Union and Stalin and his policy from the outside was clearly doomed to failure.

Trotskiy had even less chance of "raising up" former supporters directly against Stalin. But through his articles, bulletins, speeches and interviews in the West, whether he wanted it or not, Trotskiy provoked things

endlessly and created the impression that the opposition was growing, that the numbers of his supporters were increasing, that "there was a consolidation of anti-Stalinist forces." It was a bluff, and an extremely suspicious and nervous Stalin took many of these bombastic statements for the truth, and one of them perhaps played a tragic role. The General Secretary oozed malice, but he could do nothing; Trotskiy had already addressed the titles of some of his books against him: "The Stalin School of Falsification," "The Crimes of Stalin," "A Political Biography of Stalin." A final work, which remained unfinished at Trotskiy's death, was eloquently entitled "Stalin..."

Trotskiy's works were published in dozens of countries. The image of Stalin in the eyes of world public opinion was shaped—and this really was so—under the influence of Feuchtwanger and Barbusse, and first and foremost thanks to the works of Trotskiy, who depicted the General Secretary as a dark Asiatic despot, cunning, cruel, fanatical, dimwitted, vengeful. The exile did not lack for eloquence. And for Stalin just the thought of Trotskiy evoked total implacability, and in any Trotskiyite he saw a piece of their leader and demanded that "no mercy be shown him."

When he was in Norway in 1936 Trotskiy wrote the book "The Revolution Betrayed." In it he actually appealed to the communists of his former motherland to carry out a state coup. True, he called this coup "political revolution," which his supporters, the members of former smashed oppositions, former Mensheviks and social revolutionaries and those from other parties should, were obliged to make. Blind hatred for Stalin and the irreparable nature of and lack of prospects for his own position deprived Trotskiy of any opportunity of soberly assessing the political situation in the USSR. However, as we have already noted, Trotskiy was never a strong politician.

"The Revolution Betrayed" was written not only about "what was" and "how it was," in Trotskiy's opinion, but also contained his long-term prognosis for social development in the USSR. Since he was a mediocre politician, in this matter, also, he was an unsuccessful futurologist because his certainty about "political revolution" against Stalin was based on his passionate desire to defeat the "leader." In particular, he predicted that idea that in the event that Germany would go to war against the USSR, Stalin would be unable to avoid defeat. It is difficult to assert unambiguously whether this is what Trotskiy wanted or whether here too, personal hatred distorted his epistemological view of the world.

But Trotskiy did achieve one result with his book. Stalin, who greatly regretted that in 1929 he had made a wrong and largely one-man decision that was only later approved by the Politburo, namely to exile Trotskiy abroad, read a translation of this book at one sitting. He seethed with bile. Two "points" in the mature decision had long since come about. Indeed they had; Stalin rarely resorted to measures that he had not considered for a long time. Now, he believed, the decision had matured. First, it was essential by any means to remove Trotskiy from the political arena. He understood that any kind of "disguise" of the murder of his own sworn enemy would be useless. Everyone would understand who had inspired it. Second, he was even more convinced of the "correctness" of the decision taken to eliminate once and for all all those who could potentially be an enemy of his dictatorship. Perhaps even Stalin himself did not contemplate at that time how far-reaching his decision would be.

Trotskiy's book "The Revolution Betrayed," which was delivered to him early in 1937, was one of the final drops that filled to overflowing his cup of endurance of all his "failures." A sense of vengeance for the moments of profound lack of confidence that he had experienced in the past and almost "humiliation" in front of "intellectuals," "companions-in-arms" and "opponents" swept over him. He understood that the hour would soon come when it would be impossible to slow down or vacillate, the more so since Yezhov was all the time submitting reports about the "activation of former members of the opposition."

The people's commissar had recently brought a long list showing Trotskiy's "scheme of links" with like-thinkers in the USSR. Stalin remembered the half-forgotten affair of Blyumkin. Yes, it was precisely that social revolutionary who had killed the German ambassador Mirbach so as to upset the peace. He had then been condemned to be shot but thanks to the intervention of Trotskiy the death sentence had been commuted to "expiation in the battle to defend the revolution," Blyumkin had served for quite a long time in Trotskiy's headquarters and grown close to him, and then he went to work in organs of the State Political Administration. When returning from India via Constantinople in the summer of 1929 he met with Trotskiy. To do this he had to travel specially on a small steamer to the Prinkipo Islands. Isaac Deutscher writes that after long conversations the "exile" wrote a message for his supporters in Moscow and offered Blyumkin advice on how to fight Stalin. When Blyumkin returned to the Soviet Union he was quickly arrested: perhaps he had been followed in Turkey and was seen embarking on the steamer for the trip to Prinkipo; then he carelessly told someone in Moscow about his meeting with Trotskiy. The most likely explanation was this, according to I.S. Sats, a former secretary of Lunacharskiy: Blyumkin brought Radek a handwritten letter from Trotskiy. But Radek, who had already disowned his former comrade, passed the package unopened to Yagoda. And Yagoda in turn gave it to Stalin. The reaction was quick: after a short trial Blyumkin was shot—fate did not smile on the condemned man a second time.

Stalin's recollection of Blyumkin was unclear. But perhaps such "Blyumkins," instructed by Trotskiy, were all about him? For they had indeed killed Mirbach... How

many of them had there been? Who were they? Who could know the scope of the real danger? How far had Trotskiy put out his tentacles? Doubts, fears, malice, fright, irritation, and hatred for Trotskiy filled Stalin. Although Blyumkin's death had frightened many Trotskiyites who could guarantee that fear that deprived all of the supporters of the fallen leader of the will to fight? And here Stalin's personal qualities, his worst features, and there were many of them, once again played an ominous role.

In a number of his speeches Stalin had announced that Trotskiyism was a main hostile platform on which all the enemies of the Soviet state were forming themselves into blocs. The ghost of Trotskiy, who would not kneel before him, Stalin, the master, grew enlarged to the scale of a threat against the state. In any failure, lack of success, setback or catastrophe Stalin saw the hand of Trotskiy and his instructions. Incidentally, during the political trials in 1937 and 1938 one of the main lines of the accusations against the defendants was the assertion that they had direct "links" with and "directives" from Trotskiy, and had even met with him, now in Berlin, now in Oslo, now on other places. In the political reports at the February-March and other Central Committee plenums, of which there were four in 1937, the words most often heard were "Trotskiy," "Trotskiyism," and "Trotskiyite spies and murderers." It was not important what issue was being discussed; the shadow of Trotskiyism wandered in the hall. But that shadow lay even more heavily over the well-known "political" trials. Trotskiy had become for Stalin the personification of universal evil.

In reality, however, this was not so. Even in the time of his greatest influence in the mid-Twenties Trotskiy had no more than two or three percent of active supporters in the party. After his exile individual Trotskiyites remained loyal to him but there were not many, perhaps a few dozen or even a few hundred. Many felt that Trotskiy had long been fighting not for ideals but was waging a personal struggle that was manifestly without prospects. Others moved away from active political activity or condemned Trotskiyism and started to labor honestly in the cornfield of creativity. Those whom Stalin "forgave" and allowed to return to Moscow (Rakovskiy, Preobrazhenskiy, Muralov, Sosnovskiy, Smirnov, Boguslavskiy, Radek and others) were put into third-rank posts. Stalin allowed former opposition Trotskiyites to be employed in the economy and in education but not one of them returned to any significant political post. The overwhelming majority of them recanted publicly, in the press. None of them was able to present any kind of "threat" to the system or society's inner stability.

Of course, Stalin understood that he had ideologically "castrated" all of them by forcing them to abandon their "leftist course," condemn "permanent revolution" and accept his own interpretation of democracy as their own, but the leader also understood that deep in the souls of these people they still did not agree with him and this, in his opinion, made them for him a great potential danger.

The facts indicate that Trotskiyism during the Thirties presented no serious danger. After 1935 Trotskiy virtually (and this can be seen from his his published pieces of the time and from his letters) lost all links with the USSR. The newspapers and the radio were his main sources. Sifting through and "squeezing out" the information he needed Trotskiy continued to picture himself as a man who could influence social, political and ideological processes in the Soviet Union. Stalin forced himself to believe this. He had to have grounds for finishing "once and for all" with all those who at some time had not shared his views. Or who might potentially, in the future, act in a manner hostile to him. For he could not permit the realization of Trotskiy's prophecies whose remembrance put Stalin beside himself. Trotskiy's last book had especially maddened him because Trotskiy had "rolled it out" two or three months after the January 1937 political trial in Moscow of Pyatakov, Radek, Sokolnikov, Serebryakov and others. One could draw anything one wanted from the title alone—"The Crimes of Stalin."

Trotskiy, again asserting (and in fact inciting it) that the Soviet Union would hardly withstand a clash with the Western countries, at the same time regarded Stalin's position as hopeless in the long term. Trotskiy's words rang out like an evil omen: "Tomorrow Stalin will become burdensome for the ruling strata... Stalin stands on the threshold of completing his tragic mission. The more strongly it seems that he needs no one else, the closer the hour when no one will need him. Here, Stalin will scarcely hear words of gratitude for work done. Stalin will depart from the scene, weighed down by all the crimes that he has committed." As often happened with him, Trotskiy was mistaken about the time period of his predictions. As he tried to liquidate the splinter groups of former oppositions, Stalin thus wanted to deal a mortal blow also at Trotskiy, and to deprive him of even the slightest hope that his prophecies would come true.

Reading Trotskiy, Stalin saw not only the political and inflammatory appeals of the exile. Trotskiy said all the time that the figure of Stalin on an Olympus of power was a chance event, a quirk of history. In the "History of the Russian Revolution" Trotskiy wrote the following: "Because of the colossal importance that Lenin's arrival acquired one can only conclude that leaders are not created by chance, that they are chosen gradually and prepare themselves for decades, that they cannot be replaced at whim, and that their mechanical elimination from the struggle will inflict a gaping wound on the party and in many cases may paralyze it for a long period." Trotskiy made no secret of the fact that the "removal," the death of the chosen leader Lenin did not promote

Stalin but precisely him, Trotskiy, to the role of leader: "Now there is no one, except for me, who can fulfill the mission of arming the new generation with the revolutionary method."

The ghost was always near the man wearing the toga of the leader, even though this ghost was still a living man and was far from Moscow. For Stalin, Trotskiy and Trotskiyism became the embodiment of "permanent" evil. And perhaps as he thought about the ghost Stalin remembered the turn of the century and the party congress in London? It was then that he saw Trotskiy for the first time: wavy hair, energetic movements, the pince-nez, the eloquent speech, the theatrical gestures. He attracted general attention. Trotskiy several times turned his glance to the gloomy Caucasian, who at that time still went by the name of Dzhugashvili. Did the young Leyba know at that time that this enigmatic representative of the combat militia in the Caucasus would become his fellow traveler and enemy to the end of his life, which was cut off, not without Stalin's involvement, on 21 August 1940?

The Popularity of the Victor

Even during the Thirties it seemed as if Stalin's glorification had reached the "human limit." As Leon Feuchtwanger wrote in his book, even the exhibition of Rembrandt pictures was adorned with a "colossal and unpretty bust of Stalin." But it should be said that, strange as it may sound today, at that time Stalin was truly popular among the people. The man who at that time had committed so many crimes against his own people on his "obverse side" was at that time judged by the overwhelming majority of the people only from his outward appearance, and the people often did not have either the opportunity or the desire to look into the essential nature of what was going on. From kindergarten children were taught to propose toasts to the "great leader." That was the time when no one could allow himself "not to love Stalin."

But what were the "secrets" of Stalin's popularity among the people? I think that this phenomenon can be explained by a whole set of reasons. One is that despite the enormous number of moral failures and physical victims, society as a whole was not degraded and many results were being achieved in the economic, social and cultural spheres. I think that if another leader had occupied the post of general secretary, a leader of Lenin's type, these successes would probably have been greater. Nevertheless, the mutilations of the cult did not totally freeze social development.

In the industrial field a leap forward was made from profound backwardness to an industrial state. People who had lived through the imperialist war and then the civil war, and the devastation and restoration could not help but be astonished at the enormous potential of energy and creativity to be found in a people liberated from exploitation. Of course, the novel nature of things and the mistakes and extremes associated with the cult of leader worship also had a profound effect here. Notwithstanding, in the national and popular awareness a proud thought persistently pulsed: "We can do much! We shall make a five-year plan in 4 years!" Stalin's words "To live better and live more happily" were affirmed by the changing panorama. In the late Thirties hundreds of new plants and factories, roads, cities, palaces of culture, rest homes, hospitals, schools and laboratories appeared in the motherland.

Things were much worse in agriculture. Major blunders in defining the ways and methods of the cooperative system, multiplied by criminal acts in the dispossession of the kulaks, predetermined the unhappy picture here for many decades. Whereas on the even of collectivization there were 25 million small, one-man peasant farms in the country, by the mid-Thirties more than 90 percent of the peasant farms had become part of the collective farms, but this did not, however, provide the expected increase in agricultural output.

The strategic blunders associated with the use of force as the main instrument for resolving problems in agriculture not only gave birth to prolonged social tension in society but also "took their revenge" historically by the chronic backwardness in this sphere of activity. No matter what Stalin might say in his speeches about major successes in kolkhoz development, there was no basis for talking about "decisive gains" here. Yes, equipment and specialists and education and culture were sent to the kolkhozes but the now destroyed centuries-old structure could not be simply replaced by another.

Achievements in the field of training for specialists seemed immeasurably more impressive. Universal literacy, which was a great achievement for the people, made it possible to exert through the press and radio and cinema an active influence on millions of people who had gained access to the building of a socialist society. The overwhelming majority of simple people believed that this was just the beginning, and that soon—tomorrow or the day after—new horizons would open up for improving their lives and labor and social security. Following the abolition of ration cards and the setting of standards for foodstuffs, not only more industrial goods but also agricultural goods began to appear in the store windows. And although by today's standards life was difficult, crowded and uncomfortable, the general atmosphere in society was quite optimistic. The propaganda constantly instilled the idea that all successes, present and future, were linked first and foremost with the "wise leadership of the leader." The thought was that were it not for Stalin we would not be an industrial power, we would not have a roof over our heads, and there would be no guarantee of anything to eat. Despite the blunders and defects and outright crimes of Stalin and those around him, the people were building and creating and meeting a challenge. The most paradoxical and dramatic thing was that in the days when many honest sons of the

motherland were giving their lives and being calumniated, many avoided this bitter cup and through their deeds amazing the country, and often the world.

Almost on the same days of June 1937 when M.N. Tukhachevskiy and a group of other military leaders were being given a quick and illegal trial, PRAVDA reported that the heroic crew of a Soviet-build ANT-25 aircraft—V. Chkalov, G. Baydukov and A. Belyakov—had completed the world's first nonstop flight along the route from Moscow over the North Pole to North America. It was a triumph for Soviet equipment and the Soviet people. PRAVDA related how Aleksey Stakhanov had set a new labor record, but he was necessarily linked to the name of Stalin. In his book "The Story of My Life," published soon after he had set his record, A. Stakhanov wrote: "When I remember everything and all my thoughts come together, every time I want to say the same thing: 'Thank you, Comrade Stalin!' Comrade Stalin raised me up, a simple worker, to something that I could never even of thought of. Now I am used to the words 'stakhanovite movement,' and I often see my own name in the newspapers and hear it at meetings. Frankly, at first it was all incomprehensible to me. But now I believe that our movement can justly be called Stalinist because it was the working class moving in a Stalinist way to master equipment that gave birth to my record and the records of my comrades."

Paninin, Chkalov and Busygin, the weavers the Vinogradovs, Krivonos and Dyukanov and many other pioneers of their causes, and the patriots and innovators and enthusiasts were propagandized not for themselves but through the prism of Stalin's "leadership," "involvement" and "concern" for each of them, for each worker, for each person in the country. The real successes, records, inventions and achievements linked in the context of Stalin's role created for the leader a stable popularity. Often this was expressed in the most unusual forms.

I recently received a letter from party member S.Ye. Plost. He writes that after the birth of his son, his father, a major political worker in the Red Army, at the unanimous request of his friends and students at the Military Political Academy imeni V.I. Lenin named his son in honor of the leader Stalin. Staliy Yefimovich writes me that his father's subsequent fate, however, was tragic: on 15 May 1937 he was arrested as an enemy of the people and on 4 November, the eve of the next anniversary of the Great October, was shot. And here all his life Plost carries a name associated with the name of the despot who killed his father...

Even the campaign to seek out and destroy "enemies" was associated with the prestige and popularity of Stalin. The though was constantly exaggerated in the press that Trotskiyite-Zinovyevite wreckers had as their goal terrorist acts against party and state leaders, first and foremost "they wanted to kill Comrade Stalin." And at the same time "Comrade Stalin, in constant danger, pays attention to each person who had erred if he wants to set out on the road of improvement." At the Central Committee February-March Plenum Molotov cited an example of this kind of "solicitous attitude by comrade Stalin to cadres" by reading one of the letters to the General Secretary:

"Perm, to the gorkom secretary comrade Golyshev:

"The Central Committee has received information about the persecution and badgering of Poberezhskiy, the director of the motor plant, and his main workers because of past transgressions with regard to Trotskiyism. In view of the fact that Poberezhskiy and his workers are now working honestly and enjoy the full trust of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee we ask you to protect comrade Poberezhskiy and his workers against badgering and create an atmosphere of complete trust around him.

"Report to the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee immediately on steps taken.

"26 December 1936.

Central Committee Secretary Stalin."

"That is how we must treat comrades from among the former Trotskiyites who are now working honestly at their posts," Molotov concluded. Even at the height of the repressions Stalin and his entourage tried to create for the leader the reputation of being a fair and attentive person to the utmost degree. It must be admitted that the country, not yet cold from the storms of the revolution, actively accepted and absorbed the appeals to increase vigilance and the need to intensify the struggle against "enemies of the people," and responded in a lively fashion to instances of "unmasking," failing to notice the mystification and falsification in them.

Since he was an extraordinarily cunning man, Stalin concerned himself even with trivial matters if they were connected with his "appearance to the people." His manner of dressing simply and speaking simply commanded people's great respect. Leon Feuchtwanger noted that "Stalin cannot be called a great orator. He speaks rather slowly, without any kind of wit, in a soft, rather muffled voice, and with difficulty. He develops his arguments slowly, appealing to people's common sense, and they are understood not quickly but soundly... When Stalin speaks with his sly pleasant smile and his characteristic gesture of the extended hand he does not create, as other orators do, a gap between himself and his audience."

He used to make careful preparations for his rare speeches. Tovstukha, and then Poskrebyshev, were assigned to select a dozen interesting quotations from the works of the founders of scientific socialism, the literary classics, and folklore. Antonov, a worker in Voroshilov's apparatus, reports that "Stalin's reference reports help

him to select material with figures on appropriate matters. These figures are often ordered from the appropriate people's commissariats. Comrade Stalin takes what he needs from these figures. The reference works do not provide any text." They were sometimes used during the course of Stalin's speeches. When this was done the General Secretary always maintained the certain liturgical flavor that he had mastered in the seminary. I have already mentioned above that he loved a catechismal structure for his speeches: question—answer, question—explanation. He often resorted to a refrain and deliberate repetition, which in his opinion produced a hypnotic effect. And it must be said that this quiet but well-considered maneuver did produce some effect on those attending the various sessions and meetings. The main thing is that he attuned people to a belief in his wisdom. For it was remarked long ago that nothing could promote popularity as much as people's belief in the intellectual achievements of their leader.

Stalin loved iconographic images of his personality: photographs of the leader in a soldier's greatcoat—the embodiment of "proletarian austerity"—or kneeling with a child or holding its hand—as "the father of his people"—or in the uniform of the generalissimo—"the great captain and victor." Perhaps this is why the numerous sculptures and portraits and photographs that inhabit our lives depress us with their sameness and lack of expression. During my work on this book I managed to find a great number of photographs of Stalin but all of them, made in the official mold, give only an iconographic representation of the leader. The ones with the greatest meaning are those that were taken "by chance," without any posing. In this sense the photographs of N.S. Vlasik and N.S. Alliluyeva are the most interesting.

As he concerned himself with his one-man rule Stalin gradually helped to form in the country a whole hierarchy of leaders who held lower degrees of power than he himself. It was possible even in the early Thirties, say, to take the file of a central newspaper and find an unofficial table of ranks. Of course, at the apex of the pyramid stood "Lenin's best student." In the reports they write that the hall stood to greet the leader. Applause becomes ovation, with the mandatory "Hurrah." The top man is not allowed to speak for long. The ecstasy of the masses is genuine. A state of exaltation. Real idolatry. The limit of excellence, beyond all epithets of praise.

And now how does the newspaper read for Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov?: "Stalin's renowned companion-in-arms was in the presidium." Stormy, prolonged applause. He may even be named with his patronymic. Here too, the mandatory epithets: "steadfast Bolshevist-Leninist," "Stalinist people's commissar," "leader of the Stalinist school."

Then we move on to the leaders a rank lower (people's commissars, obkom secretaries, leaders of major departments), and now the epithets are well-weighed: "loyal Bolsheviks," "outstanding Chekists," "selfless leaders." But even though these people stand much lower on the hierarchical ladder they manage entire oblasts or people's commissariats, and up to 1934 they were often called "leaders" [vozhdi] (regional scale).

Those even lower down work directly to put life into the plan "of genius" for industrialization and collectivization, organize subscriptions for the air flotilla, hold meetings and processions, dispossess kulaks and fill the Roll of Honor with their own images. At the end of the decade many of them will be very lucky still to be alive: those who are will probably be elevated to the next degree—there will be many vacancies.

By its very nature Caesarism cannot exist without an extensive and ramified system of leaders, managers and heads. And a great many chiefs. They are strictly differentiated, hold on firmly to their places and look mainly upward, never below or round about. And to this day, unfortunately, the fear of the authorities is still maintained. During the time of Stalin's one-man rule the table of ranks made up one of the most important foundations of Caesarism. The less the popular power, the greater, always, the number of chiefs.

Since he was a clever man, Stalin understood that among simple folk, particularly among the peasants, the latent "tsarist" traditions had not been eradicated. The centuries of oppression and ignorance had to leave deep traces and that kind of irrational faith in the omnipotence of any ruler, particularly if he were in the capital. This cult attitude existed not only in connection with Stalin but also with the authorities in general.

Many simply folk wrote to Stalin. Answers were prepared in his large secretariat and local organs were assigned the task of dealing with applicants' requests. Sometimes Stalin answered some letters in his own hand. I found dozens of photocopies of these answers in the General Secretary's archives. Here is one of them:

"Leningrad. The Klimkin family.

"Dear Comrades,

"Because of my large work load I have been delayed in answering and for this I beg your pardon. I have already carried out your wishes. the bonds have been sent: for R100 for use by the Central Committee of the International Association for Aid to Fighters for Revolution and R300 for use by the 'Plamya Revolyutsii' kolkhoz in Khoperskiy rayon—one of the pioneers in the mass collectivization of the countryside.

"I am sending a photograph for the children as they asked.

"Greetings.

"I. Stalin. 7 April 1930."

Later, each such letter would become the subject of a propaganda campaign in the rayon, oblast or kray as an example of the "leader's simplicity and concern for the people."

It has been possible to establish that Stalin paid much attention not only to management problems, as we would say now, but also directly to the "technique of autocracy." He carefully studied V. Vorovskiy's work "On the Nature of Absolutism," M. Aleksandrov's "The State, the Bureaucracy and Absolutism in the History of Russia," Yu. Kazmin's "The Destiny of the Sovereign Master" and other similar works. It can be concluded that Stalin's attraction to historical literature was not a disinterested, simple reader's interest. His mind looked for analogies and "recipes" and he studied the "technique" of power and its psychological nuances. Thus, for example, the General Secretary worked to make his speeches at the various ceremonial and large meetings in the Kremlin produce a great effect on people's consciousness and feelings.

After the "congress of the victors" during 1935 Stalin spoke in the Kremlin at a meeting of railroad workers (30 July), of peasant shock workers from the sugar beet fields (10 November), a meeting of leading combine harvester operators (1 December), a reception for leading kolkhoz farmers, men and women, from Tajikistan and Turkmenistan (4 December), and a meeting of tractor drivers (20 December). Each such meeting was covered extensively in the press and shown in movie newsreels. Stalin was photographed a great deal and was able to "show" himself to advantage. As his popularity grew he concluded, however, that he should speak to and "be" of the people less often—in this case in the same proportion that the significance of his dealings with people grew. Stalin sensed that "seclusion" and privacy offer greater opportunities for the spread of official legends, myths and sugary cliches about the leader.

A country where an autocrat had ruled for centuries could not easily and simply "shake off" the psychological stratifications with a few incantations; time was needed. And so, in order to maintain and build up his own popularity Stalin placed special emphasis on shaping in people "a belief in the leader," and a belief in his "concern" for them, a "belief in Stalin's fairness." He always explained all the mistakes and miscalculations and crimes that accompanied his path as "wrecking," "bungling" and "stupidity" by new officials and local leaders who either did not understand his instructions or distorted them. Periodically Stalin offered a sacrifice, even before the mass purges, of a particular republic or oblast leader or people's commissar, thus indicating who was "to blame" for the failures, shortages and lagging. This line worked without a hitch. And even now there are people who think that the tragedy of Stalin lay in the fact that he "trusted" Yezhov and then Beriya, and that Stalin "was unaware of much" and that "he did not know" about the repressions. This is all an echo of that sophisticated ideological campaign that Stalin waged for many years.

As soon as the General Secretary sensed (and it was in 1927 that he first had any foundation for this, and finally after the 17th Party Congress in 1935) that he might become a "long-term" leader, he started to show special concern to make this symbol attractive for the people. Movies and books and studies of the strong personality, dictators and "progressive" tsars were set in train. Works that virtually absolutized the role of the individual personality were gradually engrafted in the arts. For example, Stalin personally consulted with S. Eyzenshteyn and N. Cherkasov about how Ivan the Terrible should appear on film.

We know that Stalin was extremely suspicious, and in each careless gesture or word or idea he saw a "sign," a meaning, an intent. There is proof that he even carefully analyzed the routine, trivial, apologist articles written by his companions-in-arms in honor of his 60th birthday and his 70th birthday. Being a very secretive person he examined piles of journals and books that wrote about him. His conceit was insatiable but he was able to hide in from people, supporting the legend about his "exceptional reticence." True, despite the different headlines they—these articles—were very similar, one to another. For example, Molotov prepared an article entitled "Stalin as the Continuer of the Cause of Lenin" while Mikoyan's was called "Stalin: Lenin Today."

Those in his entourage knew about this idiosyncrasy of the General Secretary and "competed" among themselves in the search for epithets, lofty comparisons and historical analogues that could exalt the "great leader" even more. Quite often the "praise givers" were moved not by any feeling for these measures but simply by common sense. In 1939, when the bloody results from the eradication of "enemies of the people" were not yet apparent, the General Secretary's aides A. Poskrebyshev and B. Dvinskiy wrote about him as a man in whom "the greatest humanity and humaneness" were inborn. In an article entitled "Teacher and Friend of Mankind" these sword bearers of the leader stated that "Stalin came to the revolution with the image of Lenin in his mind and heart. He thinks always of Lenin, and even when his thoughts are taken up with the load of problems that have to be resolved his hand absent-mindedly and automatically writes on a sheet of paper: 'Lenin... teacher... friend.' How often after the working day we have removed from his desk the sheets of paper covered with those words."

In the opinion of the authors this kind of tinsel should act on people's feelings rather than their reason. That this was deliberate tinsel may be judged from the following fact. In I.V. Stalin's archives are stored various papers and documents, from those having historical significance down to the most insignificant pieces of paper. The archives include the reports that Stalin presented at the congresses, and at the same time notes of the kind "To comrades Andreyev, Molotov and Voroshilov: It is time to finish up. Round of your speeches. We must end the plenum by the fourth. I. Stalin." And so the

archives also contain pieces of paper on which Stalin absent-mindedly doodled. But they are nothing like the ones that Poskrebyshev and Dvinskiy described. At one Politburo meeting Stalin happened to have a pamphlet entitled "On the Legal Danger in Our Party." He was absent-mindedly listening to the speeches and all the time he was distractedly running his pencil over the cover of the pamphlet. I copied the following words from it:

"Stalin. Recognize. Teacher. The legal danger. The legal danger in our party. Mukhalatka. Private meeting. Tokyo. Sokolnikov. Workers' publication PRIBOY. Fire. Discussion. Molotov."

At the end he had added:

"1. Not a general document but one from the Politburo. "2. Do not yield on any point."

Only one definite conclusion can be drawn from the doodles made in the late Twenties: Stalin lived in a struggle . The assertions made by Poskrebyshev and Dvinskiy that Lenin was in Stalin's "mind and heart," with the references to similar notes are alas! not confirmed. As proof of this I could cite many pieces of gibberish similar to the one above.

At the same time Stalin's popularity assumed in people a deformed kind of social self-protection. A person who did not want to draw suspicion to himself could not permit any slips about Stalin in his public statements and conversations. Any "animadversion" toward the leader's role, no matter how indirect, would end in tragedy for the careless person.

A. Fedorov told me that in the late Forties the following incident occurred at one of the machine and tractor stations in the Vitebsk region. After the buildings had been whitewashed they were preparing to hang the portraits back on the walls. A young tractor driver who came in from the street accidentally tripped on a portrait of Stalin that was leaning against a wall, and, trying to stop himself from falling over, trod on the leader's face. Several people were in the room. There was a painful silence. Then the foreman made a sharp remark about the tractor driver. No one knew what happened next, but three days later the young man was taken away and he did not return until after the 20th Party Congress. A typist in the editorial office of a rayon newspaper had to type "Stalinist gaze" [vzor] but mistakenly inserted an extra letter, making it read "Stalinist nonsense" [vzdor]. She made no more mistakes, she just disappeared.

If we look closely, somewhere in the invisible layer of "popularity" in terms of the relations existing between people there was always a sense of fear. This was not felt by everyone or all the time, but people who knew about the repressions, and those whose relations and acquaintances had been victims, praised Stalin while being aware of these facts in their consciousness. And so the leader's popularity was maintained not only in the definite achievements that the people had made, and through the propaganda and manipulation of the public awareness in favor of the "greatest of leaders," but also on an understanding (not always really conscious) of the possibility of real penalties for expressing doubt about the General Secretary. It is not surprising that the very burgeoning of the leader's popularity coincided with the burgeoning of informers as an ineluctable consequence of the policy of implanting universal suspiciousness and spy mania.

It would, of course, be incorrect to think that absolutely all the citizens of our country entertained a fanatical love for the leader, or that they all unconditionally enjoyed his popularity. It should not be forgotten that within the party there was a large stratum of communists with seniority stretching back to before the revolution, who were often called "the Leninist guard." These people knew the history of the party and the true role of all the leaders in the October Revolution, and not just from the "Short Course" that Stalin had edited. The old communists, at least most of them, learned about Stalin considerably later because during the days of the October and even during the civil war the future General Secretary played secondary, or even tertiary roles. It was not by chance that Stalin had a special interest in the fate of the old Bolsheviks. As an exceptionally ambitious man possessed of an out-of-the-ordinary practical mind, he understood that even if they did not speak out openly against him, these people potentially regarded the General Secretary in a way different from what public opinion thought. People with that kind of past he did not need, and as a result the old "guard" suffered the most serious harm.

Stalin saw that despite the movement forward, much had happened not as he had foreseen it; so many years had passed since the revolution but he could still only appeal for restrictions for the sake of the future. There had been no major results in improving the life of the people. If he, Stalin, were to say that wreckers were to blame for these difficulties, would the people not believe him? The more so since all these people were former opposition people with damaged reputations. Everyone must be able to see it: there were cases of wrecking there for all to see in the national economy, in industry, in the apparatus. And were they not trying from abroad to use the former opposition people? Here, for example, the White emigre newspaper RUSSKOYE SLOVO was saying directly that Stalin had opposition not only in the party but also in the army...

Only total elimination of potential evil-wishers could unconditionally strengthen his position. Firm action was needed. And it was a good thing that he had warned earlier that "enemies have not laid down their arms."

It seemed to Stalin that he was just biding his time. Henceforth, even potentially, even in thought, no one would be able to encroach on his Caesarist autocracy.

The hour of tragedy was approaching. The decision matured and was finally formulated when he was far away from Moscow, in Sochi, where he quietly considered ways to further strengthen his personal power.

On 25 September 1936, along with Zhdanov, who at the 17th Party Congress had become a central committee secretary and quickly gained the trust of the General Secretary, he sent from Sochi a telegram addressed to Molotov, Kaganovich and other members of the Politburo:

"We think it absolutely essential and urgent that comrade Yezhov be appointed to the post of people's commissar of internal affairs. Yagoda has definitely shown himself to be obviously incapable of unmasking the Trotskiyite-Zinovyev bloc. The OGPU has been working on this matter for 4 years. This has been remarked upon by all party workers and most representatives of the NKVD."

The signal had been given. A monstrous and terrible signal. No one could imagine how many "spies" and "wreckers" and "saboteurs" and "terrorists" and simply "double-dealers" would afterwards be found in our motherland. One might even think that it was not they who lived among us, but we who lived among them! And people sang "I know no other country where man breathes so free."

Stalin had also recently approved the trial of Zinovyev and Kamenev: the people warmly supported the accusations leveled by the state. The court had not yet convened, the circumstances of the case were unknown, but the press and the radio spelled it out in unison: "Destroy the Vile Creatures!" "Death to the Enemies!" "No Mercy for Double-Dealers!" The General Secretary sensed that he had achieved a great deal: he had kept the truth from the people and made them into a mob, for which he would now do the thinking. Perhaps this crime of Stalin—and the list is long—was one of his most serious.

Remember, even back in 1933 the leader had predicted that "counterrevolutionary elements" might "begin to stir," had he not? Well, it had happened! Now it was not simply a question of humbling the people with a cult deformity but something bigger and more terrible. The tragedy was upon them.

Chapter VI. The Culmination of the Tragedy

"To understand all does not in any way mean to forgive all"

Kaestner

The new year came, 1937. In Moscow and in other cities of the motherland, and in thousands of villages and hamlets the usual New Year celebrations were taking place: the New Year trees had been set in the clubs and cramped apartments, the children wore home-made garlands, and the final preparations were being made in the amateur dramatic circles that at that time existed at every enterprise, kolkhoz and school. Over the past year or two a limited choice of foods had been appearing on the shelves and in the store windows. The New Year PRAVDA for 1937, for example, reported under a small column entitled "Holiday Purchases": "Various kinds of wines from Soviet champagne to Muscat, hundreds of kinds of sausage and fish products, cakes, pastries, fruits—all these were bought in great quantities yesterday in the stores of Moscow. Thousands of agents from 'Gastronom,' 'Bakaley' and other food stores were busy making home deliveries for purchasers of various products for the New Year table...

"According to a report from comrade Epshteyn, the chief of the Moscow city department of domestic trade, the capital's stores have sold R4 million of various kinds of decorations for New Year trees and toys."

The men had stocked up with a bottle or two of "Moskovskaya" and in the stores in the major cities it was possible to buy good wine "for the ladies." In the party committees and the kraykoms, obkoms and raykoms the final touches were being put on the results for the year: the "reports" would be due. And there certainly was something to report to the people: last year the Kharkov Machine-Building Plant had been commissioned, the Kansk Pulp and Paper Combine had been ceremonially opened, the Solikamsk Magnesium Plant had gone into operation, in Armenia the Konakarskiy power station was on line, producing power for industry, and the commissioning of the Murmansk Fishing Combine and hundreds of other production projects, large and small, had been completed.

The quantitative indicators (but not the qualitative indicators) had been impressive. There were things to report to Stalin. Even the People's Commissariat of the Defense Industry, formed only in 1936, and which had failed to meet many of its indicators while its plants had failed to complete plans, had sent Stalin a letter: "The defense industry will be the best in the country." The reports from people's commissars Kaganovich, Mikoyan and Lyubimov pleased the leader: not only railroad transport but even light industry and local industry had finally made a large increase. Everyone knew that Stalin never wasted his breath. And on his instructions a decision had been reached to make 1936 a year of shock labor: a 22-percent increase had been envisaged in production of the means of production, and a 23-percent increase in the production of consumer goods. On his instructions PRAVDA had ran a special article entitled "The Plan for an Upsurge in the People's Well-Being," in which it wrote that the words of the leader "to live better and live more happily" had never diverged from his deeds. And let everyone be convinced of the correctness of this slogan.

The pulse of the country was beating quickly and powerfully. The years had rolled by and the revolutionary enthusiasm, charged by the October generator, had not run low. People still lived poorly, dressed simply and modestly. The 10-day periods of "shock labor" came round without end, production records were set, the press was dotted with the names of heroes of labor. The socialist lineament of the country was ascetic, forward-looking. When talking about the relationship between the public and the personal it was even considered blasphemous to mention the interests of particular individuals; the common cause completely absorbed the individual person. The motives of state did not even make it possible to talk aloud about questions concerning the all-around and harmonious development of the individual. Socialist values, at whose center the individual should stand, and the entire system by which relations were shaped were set decisively under the will and reason of a single person. Prostration on the ideological alter of the "dominant personality" had become mandatory.

The PRAVDA editorial for 1 January 1937 was entitled "The Great Helmsman Leads Us." The article ended with an eloquent panegyric: "The Soviet ship is well equipped and well armed. She fears no storms. She is on course. Her hull was laid down by a builder of genius to fight the hostile elements in an age of wars and proletarian revolution. She is steered by a helmsman of genius—Stalin." And there alongside was an enormous portrait of the leader lifting people up above the sea. And someone in that "sea" carries a small portrait of Lenin...

The Soviet newspapers in the early days of 1937 transmitted not only the heavy breathing of a laboring people and pages filled with warnings about the danger threatening from outside the cordon. They carried the latest reports from M. Koltsov in Spain, details of the sinking of the Soviet steamer "Komsomol" by the fascists, and a resolution passed by the USSR Central Executive Committee conferring the title of Hero of the Soviet Union on a group of commanders in the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army "for model execution of special and very difficult government tasks." Everyone understands—these are the "Spanish" heroes.

And here is an article by Ya. Rudzutak, who had little more than a year to live: "Through their agents, Trotskiy and his gangs and the fascists have tried to disrupt our economy by wrecking activities and with their hands they would like to smash the best people of our country, and the brain and heart of our country—comrade Stalin..."

Only a week before the 8th Extraordinary Congress of Soviets had adopted the new USSR Constitution, which proclaimed an expansion of basic democratic rights and freedoms for Soviet people, including freedom of conscience, of speech, of the press, of assembly and meeting, and the inviolability of the person and his home, and the confidentiality of correspondence. Akulov, Bubnov, Bukharin, Gamarnik, Krylenko, Yegorov, Tukhachevskiy, Eydeman, Uborevich, Yakir and other eminent state, military and public figures had worked on it. As they created the Fundamental Law for the state that proclaimed socialist popular power in words they did not yet know that the proclaimed right notwithstanding, they would quite soon be ruthlessly destroyed. Under the conditions of the autocracy of the "dominant personality" no constitution could protect them.

And at almost exactly the same time the USSR procurator, A.Ya. Vishinskiy, had already "polished" his enormously long accusatory speech for the second open trial now being prepared for the "Trotskiyite conspirators"—a speech that he delivered with the pathos of an artist on 28 January 1937.

Millions of Soviet people filled with sincere pride in the continuing "leap forward" in the country's economic and defensive might, and congratulating each other on that New Year's night and offering wishes of mutual happiness, they could not have even imagined how bloody the year was to be. The 20th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution would become the culmination of the tragedy of the Soviet people, the epicenter of social cynicism and, as it turned out, the inexplicable schemes of the leader. But paradoxical as it may sound, people (most people!) learned of this tragedy only almost two decades later, and then by no means in full. Meanwhile, along with everyone else they had to be indignant and angry, and had to damn the "fascist monsters" and the "spies" and the "terrorists." Even people like A. Fadeyev, A. Tolstoy, P. Pavlenko, N. Tikhonov, B. Yasenskiy and L. Nikulin in the article "Spies and Murderers" were to proclaim anathema all those who became the victims and actors in this shameful and criminal January spectacle.

And the Chief Director of this drama once again drew the people's attention: you see, he said, way back in January 1933 I said that under certain conditions "the defeated groups of the old counterrevolutionary parties of the social revolutionaries, Mensheviks, and bourgeois nationalists at the center and in the outlying districts might be revived and begin to stir up the fragments of the counterrevolutionary elements among the Trotskiyites and rightwing deviationists." The greater our successes the stronger the opposition to them.... And here you have it—a fierce class struggle, drawing the bowstring of resistance to its limit!

An unusual book was published for the 17th Party Congress. It was called "The Stalin Canal." Some 36 Soviet writers led by M. Gorkiy, L. Averbakh and S. Firin wrote a panegyric to the first experience in history of the change effected in "making enemies of the people their friends." It was, the book stated, "a wonderful experiment in mass conversion of former enemies of the proletariat... into skilled associates of the working class and even into enthusiasts of essential state labor." The

authors wrote that "the human raw material is immeasurably more difficult to work than wood or stone or metal"; "the book describes how socially sick people have been treated and brought back to health: how enemies of the proletariat have been re-educated as its associates and companions-in-arms. It is a subject of the most enormous and most profound importance." In the thick volume there were portraits of "former wreckers"—engineers, professors, the teachers N.I. Khrustalev, K.M. Zubrik, A.G. Ananyev; thousands of other intellectuals (not just kulaks and thieves and recidivists) have been transformed into "associates of the proletariat." For many their crime had been merely that they thought in a different way from Iosif Stalin, in whom are inherent, the authors wrote, "an exceptionally organized will, the penetrating mind of a great theoretician, the boldness of a talented manager, and the intuition of a true revolutionary who understands the finer points in the complexities of people's qualities and, while instilling the best of those qualities deals without mercy with those who interfere with the top man in his development to the utmost heights." And it was not only those qualities that interfered with Stalin. It was people. Many people. Terribly many.

All these "leftovers" interfered with him (potentially, simply in his consciousness) from finally being confirmed in the role of the sole, undivided leader who was loved by everyone, just everyone.

"Enemies of the People."

No just end or intent can justify immoral means. For "in our ideal"—and V.I. Lenin believed this passionately—"there is no place for violence against people." And this is precisely what Stalin resorted to in that year of 1937, so sad and tragic in our history, and in the following year. It was the culmination of the tragedy of autocracy not only because of the scale of the inhumanity (during the period 1929-1933 people had suffered more) but also because it was the result of an unprecedented political cynicism that an entire great people failed to see in time.

Who was it who brought into common usage the term "enemy of the people"? Of course, it was not a question of a concept but of an attempt to find some historical, political or logical bases that Stalin used for the extensive application of social coercion.

We have already said that Stalin first became familiar with the book on the great French revolution when he was in Turukhansk. The decisiveness of Robespierre and Couthon, who at a critical moment had achieved the adoption of the law to simplify judicial trials of "enemies of the revolution," made a great impression on him. He respected Robespierre's formula of "whoever walks about in sewn gold breeches is an enemy of all sansculottes." Whoever is not for the revolution is its enemy; Stalin read Robespierre in his own way. Even then his attention was drawn to what was in his opinion an interesting part of Robespierre's speech to the Convention on 22 Prairial (10 June) 1794: "When freedom is achieved and is obviously a brilliant triumph, then the enemies of the homeland devise even more daring plots."

Although the term "enemy of the people" had been used earlier, after 1934 Stalin filled it with "specific content." Even the "Secret Letter" that the party central committee had sent to the republic and oblast party organizations on 29 July 1936 and to which Stalin personally put his signature, emphasized that an "enemy of the people" usually appears "obedient and harmless," and that he does everything possible to "quietly creep into socialism," and that "enemies of the people" are people who have not accepted socialism and that the more hopeless their position the more willingly "they will seize on extreme means."

A.A. Yepishev, who in 1951-1953 was deputy minister of state security, told me that at meetings Beriya loved to emphasize a thought that he attributed to Stalin:

"An enemy of the people is not only someone who engages in wrecking but anyone who doubts the correctness of the party line. And we still have many of these people among us and we should liquidate them..."

Yepishev, a man sparing in stories about himself, did share some rare confidences with me:

"I managed only with difficulty to escape from Beriya's den of thieves. After my repeated requests to be reassigned to party work Beriya said ominously: 'You don't want to work with me? Well, as you wish...' Several days later they sent me to Odessa and again elected me obkom first secretary, and soon the chief of the oblast NKVD came to me and suggested that from the following day I stay at home. I knew what that meant: there would be arrests, day after day... But those who worked alongside Beriya and doubted anything, the minister regarded not as 'simple' enemies of the people. A happy event, a miracle saved me: Beriya was arrested during those very same days." " 'Enemy of the people,'" Aleksey Alekseyevich continued, "that was the universal formula for choosing those who fitted into Stalin's sights..."

And many, the majority of those who did not "fit" Stalin's model, his concept, simply suspected that they did "fit." And so Stalin's concept of 'enemies of the people,' seemingly borrowed from the speeches of the leaders of the French Revolution had nothing in common with their understanding of it. Robespierre, who established the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship, saw enemies in those who possessed unjustly acquired riches, and in tyrannical autocracy. Stalin saw them in all those who could even potentially not share his views. Even thinking differently, even the suspicion of its existence, was considered a hostile act. No one spoke out against the autocratic rule of Stalin, but the General Secretary felt that in the souls of many, especially those

from Lenin's old guard, they could not approve of him. This was enough for the endlessly suspicious and cruel dictator gradually to reach a terrible decision.

The overwhelming majority of Soviet people believed implicitly that the struggle under way was not for the life but to the death against people who had not given up their hopes of restoring capitalism in our country. The newspaper editorials in January 1937 were eloquent: "Spies and Murderers," "People Selling out the Motherland," "Trotskiyite, Wrecker, Saboteur, Spy," "The Worst Scoundrels of the Foulest," "Trotskiyite Gang of Restorers of Capitalism"... The constant "massaging" of public opinion yielded its fruits: people became indignant when they "learned" about the baseness of those had for so long disguised themselves.

Why did Stalin and those around him manage to convince themselves and the party and the people that they were living among enemies? What was the basis of this real madness of spy mania and wrecking? To some extent the party Central Committee February-March (1937) Plenum answered these questions.

At the plenum, which lasted about 2 weeks, many reports were heard. Zhdanov started, reporting on the preparations by the party organizations for the elections to the USSR Supreme Soviet under the new electoral system and the restructuring of party-political work. In his report he raised the question of the status of internal party democracy as a most important condition for the moral health of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks). But here he quoted the General Secretary to the effect that they should not forget comrade Stalin's instructions: although "the cultural work of the dictatorship is striking to the eye" today the organs of suppression are just as essential as during the period of the civil war; me must take into account the fact that "while our people still slumber and rock themselves to and fro, enemies are already acting." And in the party, the situation was, in Zhdanov's words, not simple. The party ranks were thinning; many enemies had turned up in them. And here Zhdanov cited figures that were not simply a symptom. He stated that "the harmful practice of co-optation had become enrooted and moved a long way. The practice of co-optation is destroying the legal right of party members to take part in the election of their own leading organs."

Then the central committee secretary reported that up to 59 percent of people in the buros of the raykoms and gorkoms had been co-opted. In Kiev, for example, on 19 October 1934 some 14 people had been co-opted into the gorkom, including Ashrafyan, Dzenis, Senchenko, Toder and others who had turned out to be "enemies of the people." In Kharkov, of the 158 members of the gorkom and 34 candidate members elected at the 4th City Party Conference, only 59 remained, while 61 had been co-opted. With one exception the gorkom buro was made up entirely of co-opted people. On 4 April 1936 the question of "expelling an entire pack of people" had been raised in the Leninskiy rayon of Kharkov. They had been invited into the aktiv. Why? And then only 10 members attended the plenum, but 12 had to be turned out! "So 10 people had to guzzle up 12 people!" (laughter among those present at the plenum). Zhdanov went on for a long time citing similar examples.

They were not simply symptoms of party antidemocracy. Within the party an atmosphere of the permissibility of lawlessness and license to use power methods had been created. Stalin and those around him had already prepared the spiritual and moral climate for the switch from administrative methods for solving social problems to methods of direct coercion of potential enemies.

The "dominant personality" had already carried out a "reconnaissance in force" for that plenum. It was a question of the reprisals against Zinovyev and Kamenev and a group of other Bolsheviks. These figures, reduced to the position of petty servants, had been hampering Stalin, but some of them knew a great deal about him that was very unpleasant for the leader. For example, about the meetings that Stalin had held in his office when he set Zinovyev and Kamenev against Trotskiy. They knew about his numerous intrigues, about the forging of old reports (for example, Stalin had "organized" a note from Vl. Sorin and Ye. Stasova on the need to make changes in the minutes of the central committee meeting of 23 February 1918 on the peace of Brest), about the mysterious history of the illness and death of M.V. Frunze and about other doubtful pages of the past that the leader did not want raked over. Zinovyev and Kamenev were already in prison. On 15 August 1936, on Stalin's personal decision they had again brought to trial. The trial had not yet started but a guilty verdict had already been pronounced and the newspapers and the radio had started up in unison: "Death to the Vile Creatures !" "No Mercy for Enemies!" "Enemies of the People to the Trash Dump of History." There were no compromises in Stalin's vengeance: his former Politburo colleagues were sentenced to death and shot. Their last entreaty—a letter asking for a pardon from Stalin—remained unanswered. The leader hoped that Kamenev's statement at the 14th Party Congress would die along with him: "I have become convinced that comrade Stalin will be unable to fulfill the role of someone who unites the Bolshevik headquarters"; and those malicious and ironic words of Zinovyev describing the General Secretary as "an Eastern despot with no conscience" would also fade into non-existence.

Stalin did not like to be restricted by a single "stratum" of dismissed enemies. Like Zinovyev and Kamenev, hundreds, thousands of other whom he had "stopped trusting" were destroyed along with their families. For example, following L.B. Kamenev, his wife and two sons (one still a teenager) died, along with Kamenev's brother and his wife... Stalin not only felled the tree but also all the brushwood around it. And at that time, in 1937, this

felling went on day and night. The Chief Woodcutter led the slashing like a bloody works superintendent. Haste was made to eliminate the 4 years of "lagging."

The reports of Molotov, Kaganovich and Yezhov at the plenum were devoted to the urgent question of "the lessons of wrecking, sabotage and espionage by Japanese-German-Trotskiyite Agents." They lacked any kind of reasonable analysis or real consideration of the state of affairs for the simple reason that the subject of discussion itself was a mirage, an illusion. There were many hard words and invocations. At the same time they also reported on the first "results" that today simply stun us.

Molotov started his report by announcing that he was doing it in place of Ordzhonikidze. Sergo had shot himself a week before the plenum opened. It was stated in the government report that he had died of a cardiac arrest. According to the testimony of a number of people who knew the Ordzhonikidze family, he had been very upset by the supercharging of spy mania and the seeking out of enemies. He had had several important and sharp conversations with Stalin on this score and the General Secretary had taken to sending Ordzhonikidze the reports on him [Ordzhonikidze] that had been received by the NKVD, hinting broadly that "there is no smoke without fire." Essentially Ordzhonikidze understood that the leader was either demanding total obedience or he could expect to be eliminated. To cap it all Stalin has assigned Sergo the task of presenting at the plenum a report to be entitled "Wrecking in Heavy Industry." Ordzhonikidze had to send to the slaughter many of the captains of production and play a direct part in the tyranny, and this true Bolshevik was unable to do this. Ordzhonikidze settled with his own conscience in what was not perhaps the best way but what was in the circumstances perhaps the only honorable way. On the day of that tragic choice Yezhov's people had passed to Ordzhonikidze the report of an interrogation of his brother Populiy. Several other of Sergo's relatives were arrested. Sergo was literally being pushed toward that fatal step, and he took it.

Arriving at Ordzhonikidze's apartment, Stalin ordered that a "substantiated" version of the suicide be carried in the press. Stalin had a letter which according to the testimony of relatives had been written by the deceased. Its contents have evidently remained forever hidden from history. The plenum had to be postponed because of the funeral for the people's commissar. For Stalin, Sergo's death was merely an episode, and he had no liking for those who wavered. And Ordzhonikidze had not simply wavered about the program of terror that the plenum would have to approve, but had actually protested; now he had done away with himself. However, many others in those years did the same thing: Tomskiy, Gamarnik, Sabinin, A. Lyubchenko...

In his report Molotov presented copious figures and the names of many "enemies of the people" who had elbowed their way into heavy industry: Aristov, Gayperov, Berman, Norkin, Kartsev, Arkus, Yazovskiy, Yakovlev and dozens of other managers. In his words, Pyatakov had been the leader of this entire witches' sabbath of "terrorists and Trotskiyite agents." In order to show that what was needed was not only to state that there had been an expansion of wrecking in the national economy but also to deal with it actively, Molotov reported to the plenum on the number of those convicted in the apparatuses of a number of the people's commissariats up to 1 March 1937: in the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry, 585; in the People's Commissariat of Education, 228; in the People's Commissariat of Light Industry, 141; in the People's Commissariat of Railroads, 137; in the People's Commissariat of Agriculture, 102. And so on for 21 departments. As he presented his report to the plenum Molotov all the time emphasized that all these wreckers had been operating on instructions from a Trotskiyite center. The chairman of the Council of People's Commissars explained the "strategy" of wrecking using one of Trotskiy's slogans: "Strike blows that will be felt in sensitive places."

However, even while admitting that these instances of wrecking had really taken place, and even where, the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars had to have known that given the enormous rates of planning and construction and the development all the time of new industrial and other projects, it was all often done in haste, "like a cavalry charge," with undoubted cases of stupid bungling and incompetence. The poor provision of equipment, the low production and technological standards and poor discipline were leading to numerous accidents, wrecks, fires, wastage and complaints. However, this was all explained only as the result of "the intrigues of Trotskiyite wreckers."

Kaganovich's report was in the same vein, "elucidating" the lessons of wrecking as applied to railroad transport. Here there was another admission: Trotskiyites had wrecked the introduction of the "FD" steam engine, prevented people from "exceeding norms," (and as soon as they had been set, despite the contentions of the "limitationists", they were violated and accidents and catastrophes had followed), opposed the stakhanovite movement, and disrupted freight plans. Kaganovich also had a long list of manager-wreckers.

In his report Yezhov heated up the situation even more; "enemies" had penetrated literally everywhere. His extensive statistics, which it is not worth citing here, left a most dismal impression...

On the eve of the plenum the specially instituted title of General Commissar of State Security had been conferred on Yezhov—that moral and physical pygmy; it had never been conferred on anyone else. Subsequently only Beriya was to be worthy of it. Some of the ideas in his report were openly inflammatory, stimulating the development of mandatory informing against "internal enemies." "For some months," Yezhov announced, "I can recall no case in which any one of the managers or leaders of the people's commissariats has telephoned us

on his own initiative and said 'Comrade Yezhov, I am suspicious of such-and-such a person, something is not quite right, take a look at him.' There have been no such cases. Most often, when the question is raised of the arrest of a wrecker or Trotskiyite, some comrades, on the contrary, try to defend these people."

In a special resolution adopted on Yezhov's report it was again noted that in the struggle against enemies the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs was at least 4 years behind. It looked as if, according to Stalin's idea, the bloody purge was to have taken place on the eve of the 17th Party Congress. The NKVD was charged with the task of "finally unmasking and smashing the Trotskiyites and other agents so as to suppress even the slightest manifestations of their anti-Soviet activity." But this was all only the prelude. The empirical references in the figures presented by Molotov, Kaganovich and Yezhov frightened sober-minded people present at the plenum but did not convince them that they were in the midst of a situation of general wrecking. A theoretical and political substantiation was needed. The first people to present their reports sketched in the "landscape" in which the "enemy" was "running amok" but its basic and essential "nature" and the reasons for its activation were unclear.

What was needed was a clear-cut "program," and the leader formulated this; a theoretical substantiation was needed for the terror against "enemies" and Stalin did this work: it was necessary to "raise people up" to "liquidate" the Trotskiyites and other double-dealers, and he was able to solve that task.

From the careful formulations, the well-considered structure of the report that Stalin presented, and the content of its conclusion and resolution, written personally by Stalin, we can see the great importance that the General Secretary attached to the forthcoming bloody purge.

Stalin's report was entitled "Shortcomings in Party Work and Measures To Liquidate Trotskiyites and Other Double-Dealers." It can be seen from the many deletions, notes in the margins and insertions made in the General Secretary's neat handwriting that Stalin prepared the report carefully. He did not "descend" to the "naming" of petty hostile functionaries, as Molotov, Kaganovich and Yezhov had selflessly done. This speaker did not hand out things in small packages. Stalin started out by characterizing the phenomenon of "political carelessness," and then moved on to the consequences of capitalist encirclement. Here, he rightly noted that the danger from imperialism was real and constant and required constant consideration in the process of the building of socialism. But Stalin linked this danger organically with the Trotskiyite danger, and this incorrect. He described the Trotskiyites as "a frantic and unprincipled gang of wreckers, saboteurs, spies and murderers working for the intelligence agencies of foreign states."

In fact Stalin set Trotskiyism at the center of the danger for socialism. But the ideology and platform of Trotskiyism in the USSR had been ideologically and politically smashed earlier. Stalin, however, offered a very detailed description of contemporary Trotskiyism and the seamy side of our advance, and he drew a far-reaching and ominous theoretical conclusion: "The further we advance and the greater our successes, the greater the animosity of the remnants of the smashed exploiter classes, the more quickly they will move on to sharp forms of struggle, the greater the number of dirty tricks that they play against the Soviet state, and the more they will resort to the most desperate means of struggle as the last resort of the doomed."

The General Secretary had long since been in the habit of making all his theoretical summations the basis of and justification for his political course. On the one hand, even back in 1934 Stalin had asserted that the exploiter classes in the USSR had been liquidated and now, more than 3 years later, he suddenly had to prove that the struggle was "intensifying." This, Stalin insisted at the plenum, had become possible under conditions of the masking of former opposition people, who had carried on their secret, subversive work and consolidated their forces, biding their time. For Stalin, the "class struggle" had been shifted into the "police field." The Chief Reporter counted off the whole "six corrupt theories" that were hampering the party in the work of finally crushing the "Trotskiyite gang"; it was, he said, impossible to think that overfulfillment of the plan would nullify the work of the wreckers; it could, he said, be suggested that the stakhanovite movement in and of itself would eliminate the wreckers; the position of some people, he said, who were suggesting that the Trotskiyites were not training cadres and so forth, was erroneous.

Whereas those presenting their reports before Stalin had focused attention on "specific" instances of wrecking, Stalin, as always, brought everything together in a rigid scheme. In his summation on 5 March he stated that "there are seven points on which those attending this plenum are unclear." These seven points also included particular points that were apparently correct judgments (for example, that a number of former Trotskiyites had taken correct positions and "they should not be discredited"), some were obviously leader-worship judgments (it was sometimes necessary to listen to the voice of the so-called "little people"), and some were intended to mobilize ("in the future, too, we shall smash our enemies as we are smashing them now and have smashed them in the past"). Stalin announced to the plenum that "perhaps several corps will be needed to win the battle. But only a few spies are needed to ruin it. Thousands of people are needed to build a large railroad bridge. Just a few people can blow it up." Thus Stalin emphasized the special danger even of "isolated spies," providing incentive for the highest degree of zeal in unmasking them.

The resolution on Stalin's report contained 27 categorical theses. The General Secretary's pencil had had set them forth in the way he liked best:

—condemn the practice of underestimating the propaganda front;

—condemn the practice of making the plenums a vehicle for showy demonstrations;

—condemn the practice of co-optation and holding elections for the sake of empty formality;

—condemn the practice of creating artels in the matter of allocating party forces;

—condemn the practice of having a callous attitude toward individual members of the party...

Outwardly there was much that seemed correct in Stalin's postulates, but the trouble was that these declarations had no effect at all on the real position in "the fate of individual members of the party." For example, 2 days before these resolutions were adopted, which called for mandatory "condemnation of callousness," the fates of Bukharin and Rykov had been decided, and a month earlier, Pyatakov, Radek, Sokolnikov and other "spies" and "terrorists," who were really party comrades, had been condemned. Stalin had always had the habit of divorcing words from deeds. As a rule, whatever was intended for broad "consumption" seemed more or less respectable, democratic, legal. The information that circulated within a narrow circle of people was kept strictly secret. Double morals, double standards and dual approaches had already become the norm in the system of relations established around Stalin. This was seen with particularly graphicness in the decision on the fate of Bukharin and Rykov.

On 3 March a resolution was adopted on Yezhov's report with the title "On the Matter of Bukharin and Rykov," who before the plenum were still central committee candidate members. A commission led by A.I. Mikoyan had been set up to work on the draft of the resolution, and it also included Andreyev, Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov, Kalinin, Yezhov, Shkiryatov, Krupskaya, Kosior, Yaroslavskiy, Zhdanov, Khrushchev, Yakir, Beriya, Eykhe, Bagirov, Budennyy, Chubar, Kosarev, Postyshev, Gamarnik and some other members of the central committee (36 people in all).

Bukharin had prepared a thorough and impassioned memorandum for the session of that commission, in which he had refuted all the accusations made against him. The disgraced theoretician had also written several letters to Stalin, trying to convince the leader that the "testimony" brought against him by a group of arrested "enemies of the people" had been prompted, and that he had no connection at all with terrorist, espionage or other similar activities. Using the "circuit" (the special government communications arrangement for which he still had an instrument in his apartment) he had even succeeded two or three times in getting through to Stalin on the telephone.

"Nikolay, don't panic. We shall sort it all out," Stalin had reassured him. "We do not believe that you are an enemy. But as soon as Sokolnikov, Astrov, Kulikov and the other double-dealers who have admitted that they have engaged in wrecking 'testified' against you we had to investigate everything calmly.... Don't worry!"

"How can you even think that I am 'an accomplice of the terrorist groups?'" Bukharin burst out.

"Calm down, Nikolay, calm down. We shall sort it out..." And Stalin hung up.

Essentially Bukharin's and Rykov's explanations were not heard by the commission. The main "arguments" were the same: those involved in a "parallel Trotskiyite center" had claimed that Bukharin and Rykov and others who were to be their future "like dealers" knew about their wrecking and terrorist activities and had helped them. Bukharin was in despair but Rykov was more restrained, having understood that the fate that inevitably awaited them was the same as that of Zinovyev and Kamenev and then Pyatakov, Muralov, Drobins, Shestov and other " base traitors" who had been shot. Bukharin went on hunger strike as a sign of protest against the monstrously unjust accusations.

On the morning of 27 February Poskrebyshev telephoned and invited Bukharin and Rykov to the plenum, which was already under way (even though they were still candidate members of the central committee they had not been invited to all sessions). Apart from Uborevich and Akulov no one shook hands with them. The session of the plenum commission on the Bukharin-Rykov affair had started. Even before Yezhov's report Stalin tossed out "Bukharin has declared a hunger strike. Nikolay, to whom in the central committee are you presenting this ultimatum? Beg his pardon."

"But you are about to expel me from the party..."

"I ask that you beg the pardon of the central committee."

As he had done many times before, Bukharin caved in. It seemed that he had sensed some glimmer of hope in the General Secretary's words. However, he did not understand that the basis of the examination of his "case" was "material from an investigation" by the NKVD, and his explanations, written and verbal, were regarded merely as an attempt "to deceive the party." Now we can only guess at what Bukharin and Rykov experienced as they stood before this wall not only of misunderstanding but also previously programmed hostility. The members of the commission had data that relied on "proofs" and "testimony" of people already condemned and obtained by methods not permitted.

At the proposal of the commission chairman, A.I. Mikoyan, that Bukharin make a frank admission of his involvement in antistate activity, the latter responded sharply "I am not Zinovyev or Kamenev and I shall not lie about myself."

"If you not make a clean breast of it," Molotov interjected maliciously, "and show that you are a fascist hireling, they will write in their press that our trials are provocative. If we arrest you, you will confess."

"Bukharin continued: "There are people in the NKVD who hide behind the authority of the party and are creating an unprecedented arbitrary rule."

"Well, we shall be sending you there." Stalin joined in. "And you will see for yourself..."

Perhaps only Stalin and Yezhov and his closest associates knew that the accusations were false. Bukharin and Rykov, whose lives in the party had been an open book, could not be enemies. Stalin sensed vacillation among the commission members who knew about Bukharin's written statement, and he hastened to conclude the previously decided verdict of guilty. They moved on to a roll-call vote on Yezhov's proposal, which stated: "To expel Bukharin and Rykov from their positions as candidate members of the central committee and party members, hand them over to a military tribunal, and apply the severest sentence—execution." But the next to vote, Postyshev, stated that he was for "expulsion and trial, but not execution." Budennyy, Manuilskiy, Shvernik and Kosarev were for "expulsion, trial and execution." Antipov, Khrushchev, Nikolayev and Shkiryatov were for "expulsion and trial but not execution"...

Stalin sensed that there would not be unanimity in the commission and as always made his move only after thinking it through to the end.

"I propose," the General Secretary said, "that Bukharin and Rykov be expelled from the party but not sent for trial and that the case be passed to the NKVD for investigation."

Stalin knew that this was the same as the monstrous and unlawful "expulsion, trial and execution," but outwardly he acted as a peacemaker. Perhaps after Stalin's proposal Bukharin and Rykov were once again warmed by a weak glimmer of hope. Naturally, after Stalin's resume most members of the commission began to say with relief "I am in favor of comrade Stalin's proposal." Krupskaya, Vareykis, Molotov and Voroshilov were in favor. Others—Kosior, Petrovskiy, Litvinov—said the same as Postyshev: trial but no execution. But the story should not told without remembering that Kosarev and Yakir, for example, who were to be the very next victims of the lawlessness, also spoke after Stalin's proposal in favor of "expulsion, trial and execution." We see that five members of the commission acted like a court that had already passed sentence: the rest put forward their own opinions apparently without prejudging the horrible end. Mikoyan, who was chairing the commission, did not publicly express an opinion. After the roll-call vote they voted unanimously for Stalin's proposal, as follows:

"1. To expel Bukharin and Rykov from their positions as candidate members of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee and as members of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks); not to commit them to trial but to pass on the Bukharin-Rykov case to the NKVD;

"2. To entrust a commission made up of comrades Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Mikoyan and Yezhov to draw up a draft motion on the resolution on the basis of the decision reached.

"A. Mikoyan, Commission Chairman.

27 February 1937."

Stalin realized that he had to prepare for yet another trial. The solution was clear to him.

Immediately following the conclusion of the session Bukharin and Rykov had barely left the hall before they were arrested. Then began the long 13 months of detention that separated the plenum from the final tragedy of Bukharin and Rykov.

It remains to be added that a resolution on the Bukharin-Rykov affair, bespattered with Stalin's amendments and insertions, written in his own hand, was passed. It was essentially a set of political instructions and a "methodological key" for the approach to be used on similar cases. The resolution contained three points. Briefly, their content was as follows:

1. On the basis of material from the investigation the Central Committee Plenum established that comrades Bukharin and Rykov as a minimum knew about the criminal, terrorist, espionage and sabotage activities of a Trotskiyite center but hid this and thus furthered a criminal cause.

2. On the basis of material from the NKVD investigation the Central and the confrontations the Central Committee Plenum established that as a minimum comrades Bukharin and Rykov had knowledge of the organization of criminal terrorist groups from their students and supporters—Slepkov, Tsetlin, Astrov, Maretskiy, Nesterov, Rodin, Kulakov, Kotov, Uglanov, Zaytsev, Sapozhnikov and others, and not only failed to act against then but even encouraged them.

3. The All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee Plenum established that comrade Bukharin's memorandum to the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee, in which he

attempted to refute the testimony of the Trotskiyites and rightist terrorists named above, constitute a slanderous document in terms of their content.

Taking this into account and noting that during Lenin's lifetime comrade Bukharin had waged a struggle against the party and against Lenin himself (as did Rykov), everything that has occurred was not fortuitous or unexpected and therefore (and here it is written in Stalin's own hand—author note): Bukharin and Rykov are expelled from their positions as candidate members of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee and from the ranks of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks). The Bukharin-Rykov case is to be handed over to the NKVD.

Note that here, there is no reference to "comrades."

Stalin was not able to remove these Bolsheviks so easily—they were too well known among the people and the party. There had to be a trial, and time was needed for the accusations to "mature."

The decisions of the central committee plenum became a monstrous command. The party committee plenums took place in March in the republics and oblasts. At them, not only were the instructions from the leader set forth but the first results from compliance with them were also reported. Here, for example, is what Andrey Aleksandrovich Zhdanov, who had quickly gained power and enjoyed the special trust of the leader, had to say to the Leningrad communists on 15 March 1937:

"As it turned out, Bukharin and Rykov were no different from the Zinovyev people and the Trotskiyites. It was a single gang of robbers. I do not recall any behavior more shameful, more infamous, more loathsome than that of Bukharin and Rykov. For 4 days we tried to to get the truth out of them. But we did not get a glimmer, not even a hint, of any human attitude toward the party. For their part it was stated that we were not their judges." Zhdanov went on to try to depict Bukharin in more degrading terms. His hunger strike, he said, was just an act: "He ate a good square meal at midnight and by ten in the morning announced a hunger strike."

Zhdanov also had something to say about the "work" started in Leningrad to unmask enemies: "At the Kirovskaya and Oktyabrskaya railroad stations 8 groups of wreckers have been found; 10 groups have been found at plants in the city, and also in the NKVD, the air defense system and the party apparatus." Nests of agents were soon found in every raykom apparatus: 13 in the Vyborgskaya apparatus, 12 in the Vasileostrovskaya, 12 in the Kirovskaya—223 party workers in all. "Can you imagine that the party apparatus would be so infested!" Zhdanov exclaimed pathetically. With energetic brush strokes he continued to paint a picture of the dominance of enemies in the city—the cradle of the revolution. "During the period 1933 through 1936 some 183 people graduated from the Institute of the Red Professorate and 32 of them have already been arrested. Of the 130 who remain in Leningrad 53 have been unmasked as enemies of the people," continued under a roar of indignation from the hall one of Stalin's theoreticians and practical men of terror. The same roar and howl of indignation was going on across the entire country. The bewilderment and suffering whipped up by fear were, on the contrary, dumb and mute.

More than half a century has passed since then. The roar of indignation about the deeds of the "enemies" long since vanished under the high water of the truth, but the pain and suffering have remained. As K.A. Kuzhel, an 80-year-old veteran from Perm wrote to me, "almost every night he sees himself as a young man in the camp at distant Kolymya and every time he wakes in terror..."

The Farce of the Political Show Trials

The penalties for sins while on earth have been "drawn" by the hands of the icon painters in their depictions of the Day of Judgment.

The Chief Director of the political show trials knew what he wanted. And although Stalin hated Trotskiy he had not totally rejected many of his theoretical views. We have already said that the General Secretary's library contained almost all of Trotskiy's books, but one of them, Vol 12 of the Works—"Basic Questions of the Proletarian Revolution"—was very close to his heart, particularly the section entitled "Terrorism and Communism." There Trotskiy writes the following: "The revolution demands from the revolutionary class that it strive to reach its goal by all means at its disposal: if necessary, armed insurrection, if necessary, terrorism... Wherever it (the revolutionary class—author's note) faces armed conspiracy, encroachment or revolt it will pour down severe reprisals in the heads of enemies. The question of the form of repression and of its degree is not one of 'principle.' Terror can be very effective against a reactionary class that is reluctant to leave the stage. Fear is a powerful means of policy." As he moved forward to the "great purge," Stalin increasingly shared the ideas expressed by Trotskiy 15 years earlier. He had followed those recipes during the period of the revolution but also applied them when, in his words, "socialism was the total victor." There is no doubt at all that Stalin saw the mass repressions as a "legal method" of dictatorship of the proletariat even when no exploiter classes remained in the country. In Leningrad this was exactly how A.A. Zhdanov explained the provisions of Stalin's report "Repression Can Have an Educational Role." Of course, one might say "what is meant by repression?" There is little doubt about how Stalin understood the essential nature of repression. In this connection I would like to make a digression.

Some of my correspondents would have liked to place the words "Stalinist repression" in quotes. They were quite willing to analyze all his measures, his "services" and "achievements" but were reluctant even to talk

about the repressions, or in a best case scenario referred to Yezhov and Beriya. There is a unique "stratification" of the biography: these people admit only what they believe. When I read the volumes of thr trials with the names of the thousands of innocent people killed by Stalin I as it were heard their voices from the distant past: eternal bewilderment, a mortal anguish, despair and lost hope. I think that it would be a good idea to have these volumes read by people who try to prove the innocence of the despot. The repressions—the extreme expression of dictatorial autocratic rule—are the apotheosis of amorality. Stalin moved slowly but surely toward total terror. But this man, with his evil and cunning mind, needed arguments "to justify" it to the party and the people, and to history. He did not have those arguments. He falsified them, particularly with the help of the political trials. Stalin, who directed the spectacles from the wings, was pursuing aims that were clear to him.

First, with the help of the trials the General Secretary wanted to deliver a final crushing blow to the Trotskyites by labeling them as "a shameless gang of wreckers" engaged in "espionage, terror, murder and arson." Trotskiy was Stalin's main ideological and political target. The struggle with Trotskiy had been continuing and it could not end in a draw. It was not fortuitous that in the indictments in the trial of Yu.L. Pyatakov, K.B. Radek, G.Ya. Sokolnikov and others, in several pages of text Trotskiy was mentioned 51 times! The picture was similar with the indictment in the trial of N.I. Bukharin, A.I. Rykov, N.N. Krestinskiy, Kh.G. Rakovskiy, A.P. Rozengold and other unfortunates.

When the trials started, from Mexico Trotskiy always gave it to be understood that yes, "they are judging my like-thinkers but they are also judging ideas." Thus, in almost every issue of the journal BYULLETEN OPPOZITSII Trotskiy had to write something about Rakovskiy, Krestinskiy and Rozengold, showing their "incompatibility" with Stalin and stressing his solidarity with them. Almost as regularly the exile published "protests" against the persecution of his own "supporters." Stalin always had all this humanitarian defense by Trotskiy of "enemies of the people" to hand, giving him additional "arguments."

Second, Stalin felt that former opposition people and the old Bolsheviks and communists who knew him from prerevolutionary years had in their hearts not reconciled themselves to his unprecedented elevation. With his vindictiveness he could never forget the independent thinking and "free-thinking" of Bukharin, Rykov, Pyatakov and other former companions-in-arms who knew his—the General Secretary's—true worth. They had interfered in the interpretation of the building of socialism as he saw it. Stalin thought that after the October Bolshevism was too infected with Trotskiyism and the spawning of these deviationists and opposition people. And some of them, the General Secretary believed, had nothing but their prerevolutionary seniority.

Third, Stalin sensed that war was coming and he feared it. He could not rid himself of the feeling that he was looking at the outside world through Trotskiy's eyes, and he was probably afraid of recognizing that in himself. When the General Secretary read something of Trotskiy's he felt that he was not wrong in "cawing out trouble." In that same "The Revolution Betrayed" he writes: "Can we expect that the Soviet Union will avoid defeat in the great war that is approaching? To this frank question we respond just as frankly: if war remains only war then the defeat of the Soviet Union will be inevitable. In technical, economic and military terms imperialism is incomparably stronger." This sounded as a sentence not only on socialism but on him, Stalin. It was essential now, before a war, to remove all potential accomplices of Hitler! For if the Fuehrer comes sword in hand then Trotskiy will be implanted here... We shall now make ready for the coming war, and Hitler and Trotskiy will find no support here... Stalin may well have thought in this vein, the more so since, as we have already said, not long before his death Molotov confirmed that Stalin's course immediately before the war was to weaken the social base of possible Quislings and Lavals as much as possible.

And the final circumstance: despite the general upsurge and notable successes and consolidation of society on the basis of leader worship, the numerous shortcomings in industry, chronic lagging in agriculture, and the very slow improvement in the people's standard of living required explanation. It seemed very convenient for Stalin to shift everything onto "wrecking and sabotage."

In the daily summary reports, obedient executors, having discovered the exact address of a class enemy indicated by the leader, reported to him. Here, for example, is a short extract from a summary report of 19 October 1937:

"To the Central Committee, Comrade Stalin. "The Council of People's Commissars, Comrade Molotov. "Central Committee Secretary Comrade Yezhov.

"In the Urals, Tabori, five persons sentenced to be shot for the breakdown of the kolkhoz (including the chairman of the Tabori rayon executive committee A.L. Motyrev and the chairman of the rayon land department N.L. Meshavkin.

"Minsk. Five persons shot for deliberate contamination of flour (including the chief of the procurement office R.L. Chudnovskiy, the chief of the 'Zagotzerno' office V.M. Levchenko, and the elevator director V.N. Kaplanskiy).

"Saratov. A Trotskiyite rightist group has poured a large quantity of oil into the Volga. Nine persons have been sentenced to be shot, including the manager of the Saratov Glavneft office M.N. Bratkin, the director of the oil refinery V.F. Bogdanov, and N.A. Orlov, a professor at the Saratov University.

"Leningrad. On orders from gestapo agents there have been systematic breakdowns in the Lenenergo system with injuries to workers. Ten persons have been sentenced to be shot."

These lists are long. At the end, just before the signature "V. Ulrikh," there is a laconic note: "All sentences have been carried out." In the corner of these monstrous reports we see a hasty note that reads "Comrade Stalin has been informed. Poskrebyshev."

These mass tragedies became normal during 1937 and 1938 following the noisy political trials. Stalin was convinced that it was now "clear" to everyone who was hampering an even more rapid advance, who was "selling out" the motherland, who was preparing "to murder Stalin and his associates," who was carrying out Trotskiy's directives. The political trials in Moscow became a unique kind of detonator for the explosion of violence in the country, mass informing and terror against not only Stalin's potential enemies but also a majority of simply chance people, especially managers at whose enterprises and establishments there were fires, explosions, collapses or accidents.

Somewhere at the end of 1937 the scale of the repressions perhaps got out of control. In many people's commissariats and other top departments informing became a way of surviving.

The icy lack of feeling and boundless cruelty with which Stalin invariably gave his consent to the destruction of people sometime gave birth to enormous lists. We have found only one case in which he showed "mercy." A. Vyshinskiy had reported to the High Priest of justice as follows:

"To Comrade I.V. Stalin.

"The wife of A.S. Kuklin, sentenced on 18 January 1936 to 10 years imprisonment, has appealed to the prosecutor's office. Kuklin is being held in the Butyrskiy prison. During a medical examination on 7 January this year it was found that Kuklin has a malignant tumor of the esophagus. The prognosis is hopeless.

"I await your instructions.

"A. Vyshinskiy, 22 March 1936."

The decision is noted below: "Stalin has given instructions that Comrade Kuklin is to be released early. A. Vyshinskiy."

Perhaps in 1936 Stalin had not yet sufficiently "ripened." Stalin's hands or voice never shook and his conscience never troubled him when it was a question of people whom he knew well. Stalin personally promised Zinovyev and Kamenev that he would spare their lives if they would falsely admit to Trotskiyite wrecking and making preparations for an attempt on his, the leader's life, but in fact he did not do this; as soon as the death sentence had been passed he insured that it was carried out the same night. He personally sanctioned the execution of his former deputy in the People's Commissariat for Nationalities, N. Broydo, of his former aide A. Nazaretyan, of Lenin's former secretary N. Gorbunov, of his friend A. Yenukidze, of A. Kosarev, whom at one time he had called "a real youth leader," of Ya. Stan, his "philosophy teacher," of S. Uritskiy, the eminent intelligence agent whom he valued very highly, of L. Karakhan, the former deputy people's commissar for foreign affairs, whom he held up as an example for others, of A. Bubnov with whom he had carried out Lenin's assignments during the civil war, of I. Baryekis, a "solid Bolshevik" in the opinion of the leader himself... What does a man think about when he takes from men what is most dear to them—life? From people with whom he has met and conversed, whom he has praised, entrusted with assignments, extended the hand of friendship, given his favors?

When he was running through the numerous lists of those convicted or arrested, Stalin, who possessed a phenomenal memory, would often remark to himself that he knew these people personally. He had something to say, something to remember about every one of them. Here we have the obkom secretaries who had been with him in his office: I. Bareykis, I. Kabakov, P. Smorodin, B. Sheboldayev, E. Pramnek, Ya. Soyfer, L. Kartvelishvili, B. Kalmykov, M. Khavkin... And it was not only he but also the party who knew these notable party workers: N. Gikalo, S. Efendiyev, M. Kuliyev, N. Narimanov, G. Sultanov, M. Kakkianin, N. Lakoba, A. Khandzhyan, S. Nurpeisov, A. Ikramov, F. Khodzhayev. Or here we have the scholars, with most of whom he had personal contacts: Yu. Steklov, V. Sorin, M. Gurshchik, I. Luppol, A. Gastev, N. Vavilov, G. Nadson, A. Svechin... Many of the names he encountered in the lists of writers and figures in the arts were also known to him: B. Pilnyak, B. Yasenskiy, O. Mandelshtam, A. Veselyy, N. Klyuyev, A. Voronskiy, Ye. Charents, Yu. Tabun, T. Tabidze, S. Seyfullin... As he read the list of Comintern workers he could almost, as it were, hear noise in the hall where the last congress had been held, and see the faces of Bela Kun, Lapinskiy, F. Tabor, A. Varskiy, Ya. Envelt, Ya. Lentsmanis, O. Restas, F. Boshkovich, F. Shultke, R. Khitarov... And the endless lists of military people—all the names were so familiar! Thousands of people with their own destinies, hopes, pain and passions. People who worshiped him and were ready to do anything he wanted.

Many of them managed to write their last letters to him and his associates.

Like all the members of the Politburo, 6 months before Bukharin's arrest Stalin had received a letter from him. The convictions of Zinovyev and Kamenev and their 14 "helpers" had just taken place. During that trial, at which the defendants would "finger" Bukharin, Rykov and others, Vyshinskiy had announced that there would

be an investigation of the "Bukharin affair." Bukharin was on vacation at that time, in Central Asia. When he returned home and learned about the "case" being brought against himself, in despair he immediately wrote a letter to Stalin, which unfortunately we were unable to find. Then he immediately sent similar letters to the members of the Politburo and to Vyshinskiy.

I have before me two letters from Bukharin to K.Ye. Voroshilov. In order to understand how the drama of Bukharin grew into a tragedy, let me quote excerpts from them.

"Dear Kliment Yefremovich.

"You have probably already received my letter to the members of the Politburo and to Vyshinskiy: I wrote in last night with the request that it be sent to comrade Stalin's secretariat. It contains everything of substance connected with the monstrous and base accusations of Kamenev (as I now write I am experiencing a sensation of the unreal: what is it—a dream, a mirage, a madhouse, an hallucination? No, it is the reality). I would like to ask (in a vacuum) one thing: do you believe all this? Really and truly?

"So I wrote an article about Kirov. To the point, when I was in disgrace (rightly so) and became ill when in Leningrad, Kirov came to me, sat with me the whole day, wrapped me up well, gave me his car, and set me off for Moscow, all with such tender concern that I will remember it to the day I die. And so why would I write insincerely about Sergey? Pose the question honestly. If it is insincere then I must be arrested immediately and destroyed; for such scoundrels are not to be tolerated. If you think me 'insincere' and still leave me my freedom then you are yourselves cowards undeserving of respect...

"True I would think, since I still have my brains, that from the international standpoint it is stupid to extend the base of 'scoundrelism' (this means going out to meet Kamenev's desire to be a scoundrel! for that is all he is, and it is essential to show that they are not the same thing). But I shall not talk of that if you still think that I am asking for lenience under the pretext of major policy.

"But I do want the truth: it is on my side. In my time I have transgressed before the party and have suffered in that connection. But I state again and again that it is with a great inner conviction that all these last years I have defended party policy and Koba's leadership even though I did not engage in sycophancy.

"It it now the third day that it would a fine thing to fly above the clouds; there are 8 degrees of frost, a diamond purity in the air and one can breathe with a calm sublimity.

"I have written to you somewhat awkwardly. You will not be angry about this. Perhaps in the circumstances you are not pleased to receive a letter from me—god knows: anything is possible.

"But 'in any event' I assure you (who have always regarded me kindly): your conscience should be inwardly quite calm; I have not let you down because of your attitude; I truly am guilty of nothing and sooner or later this will come to light no matter how they may try to blacken my name.

"Poor Tomskiy! He was also perhaps 'frightened'—I do not know. I do not exclude the possibility. He lived alone. Perhaps I should have gone to him, he would not have been so gloomy and afraid. How complicated a man's life is! But that is lyricism. And here what we have is politics, hardly a lyrical thing and quite a stern one.

"I am terribly glad that they shot the dogs. Trotskiy was killed by the trial, politically, and this will soon become quite clear. If I am alive at the time of war I shall ask to be sent into combat (not a beautiful word) and then you can do me a final service and set me up in the army, even as a private (even if Kamenev's poisoned bullet strikes me).

"I advise you sometime to read the drama of the French revolution by Romain Rolland.

"Forgive me for a muddled letter: I have thousands of thoughts and they are jumping about like mad horses with no firm guide.

"I embrace you,

"Nik. Bukharin. 1 September 1936."

After he had read the letter Voroshilov deemed it necessary to send it on to Stalin and to reply to Bukharin but in a way that Stalin and the other leaders knew about the answer. The people's commissar established a political alibi for himself for any eventuality. Two documents were quickly composed:

"Top Secret and Personal.

"To: "Comrade Stalin, Comrade Molotov, Comrade Kaganovich, Comrade Ordzhonikidze, Comrade Andreyev, Comrade Chubar, Comrade Yezhov"

"As an addition to the letter of N. Bukharin sent to you on 1 September as No 2839 Top Secret, on instructions from comrade K.Ye. Voroshilov, I am sending you a copy of the reply from comrade Voroshilov and a copy of Bukharin's response.

"Enclosures: three sheets.

Aide to the USSR People's Commissar of Defense,
Division Commander."

"Khmelnitskiy.

And Voroshilov responded to his former comrade in the spirit of the morals that reigned then in the entourage of the sole ruler.

"To Comrade Bukharin.

"I am returning your letter, in which you allowed yourself malicious attacks against the party leadership. If by your letter you wanted to convince me of your complete innocence, it has convinced me of one thing, namely, henceforth to distant myself from you regardless of the results of the investigation into your case, and if you you do not desist from putting vile epithets in writing I shall also consider you a scoundrel.

"K. Voroshilov. 3 September 1936."

We can imagine how stunned Bukharin was, even though deep in his soul he understood that the blade of Stalin's guillotine had been hanging above his head for a long time. Was Bukharin afraid? Judge for yourselves. After reading Voroshilov's murderous letter Bukharin still had the strength to respond to "Stalin's people's commissar."

"To Comrade Voroshilov.

"I have received your dreadful letter.

"My letter ended with the words 'I embrace you.'

"Your letter ended with the word 'scoundrel.'

"After that, what is there to write?

"Each person has, or, more accurately, should have his pride. But I would like to remove one political misunderstanding. I wrote a letter of a personal nature (which I now very much regret) when I was very heavy of heart; persecuted, I simply wrote to a great man; I have gone out of my mind with the one thought that perhaps someone will believe that I am guilty.

"And so with a cry I wrote 'if you think me "insincere" (that, for example, the Kirov article I wrote was "insincere") and still leave me my freedom you yourselves are cowards, and so forth.' And again: 'If you yourself do not believe that Kamenev was lying...' and so forth. What then, do you think that I think that you are cowards or that I am calling the leadership cowards? On the contrary, what I am saying is that since everyone knows that you are not a coward, this means that you do not believe that I could write insincere articles. And this can be seen from the letter itself!

"But if I wrote in so muddled a fashion that it could be taken as an attack then—not out of some Jewish fear but really—I shall thrice, in writing if you like, take back these phrases even though I meant something quite other than what you thought.

"I consider the party leadership to be remarkable. And in my letter to you, not excluding the possibility that you mistook me, I wrote: 'There have been cases in history when remarkable people and outstanding politicians have made mistakes of a personal nature...' Was that not in the letter? And this is my real attitude toward the leadership. I recognized this long ago and I shall not tire of repeating it. I make to think that I have proved this through my activity all these past years.

"In any event, I ask that this misunderstanding be removed. I am very sorry for my past letter and henceforth I shall not burden you with letters of any kind. I am in an extremely nervous condition. It was this that prompted my letter. Meanwhile, I must await the conclusion of the investigation more calmly; I am sure it will show my total lack of involvement with the gangsters. For this is the truth.

"Farewell.

"Bukharin. 3 September 1936."

Bukharin said "farewell." But Stalin decided once again to loosen the noose around the throat of the choking Bukharin. On 10 September PRAVDA announced that the NKVD organs, not having found any proper information on any crimes, was closing the case. But this was only a respite: Stalin had simply decided that in the next act of the tragedy the main character would be Pyatakov. He, the leader, would himself arrange the sequence of the trials. Bukharin's turn was put back to February. The Central Committee February-March (1937) Plenum would not only "substantiate" theoretically the need for a bloody reaper but also toss new victims under Stalin's sickle.

Stalin would read many similar letters from doomed people, but it would change nothing. The man with the name of Steel knew no pity or compassion, or the call of comradeship, or any sense of honor. Like the man with the skewed forelock, he considered conscience an "illusion"; at any event, it never worried him. All that was needed was to write a few words in pencil in the corner of a list or simply call to Poskrebyshev: "Agreed." That was it. It meant that all those people would today or tomorrow disappear forever. And over time they would report to him only acts that had already been committed, and his agreement was simply not needed. Vyshinskiy and Ulrikh together with Yezhov had adjusted the machinery of punishment so well that the General Secretary only had to familiarize himself with the dry figures in the terrible statistics. But he had had strong nerves since childhood.

There is information that Stalin met several times with A.Ya. Vyshinskiy and V.V. Ulrikh on the eve of the trials. The documents of the General Secretary contain to trace of his conversations with these priests of "legal administration," but, it can be assumed that they were in the nature of instructions. For some reason Stalin was

not pleased with the military jurist Ulrikh. Perhaps it was his laconic speech and his stiff correctness and brevity when reporting some bloody victim, of which he made many to Stalin during 1937 and 1938. We can only guess at the leader's reaction to them. Some have the brief initials of the General Secretary—"I. St."—while others have Poskrebyshev's little flourish. They as it were "recorded" the departure of thousands from this life. But not the departure of foreign aggressors, but their own countrymen.

The stream, and then the flood of these terrible reports would have morally destroyed a normal person, frightened and shook him to his roots. But even at the height of the repressions, Stalin went to the theater as usual, watched movies at night, received the people's commissars, edited resolutions, arranged midnight feasts, dictated answers to letters, offered comments on particular articles in PRAVDA or BOLSHEVIK, said that "cadres are the most valuable capital." Even if we allow (although it is improbable!) that Stalin believed completely that the terror would mow down the real enemies of the people, we can only marvel at his absolute lack of feeling and his cruelty.

Ulrikh responded to Stalin's notions on having a judge to whom sentiment was alien. Stalin saw that as he signed the dozens and hundreds of death sentences the military jurist remained totally undisturbed and calm. He was a living and integral part of the guillotine. For any dictator such men are more important than wise men or heroes.

Vyshinskiy, a stocky, thickset man with eyeglasses, was different. Stalin liked the eloquence of the USSR procurator, who with his accusatory tirades literally paralyzed the defendants. They could do nothing but agree with Vyshinskiy, down to the last word. For his zeal at the Bukharin trial, at Stalin's suggestion Vyshinskiy was awarded an Order of Lenin. The concluding words of the procurator;s speech at that trial had evidently made a major impression on Stalin:

"Our entire country, young and old, expects and demands just one thing: that traitors and spies who sell out our motherland to the enemy be shot like vile dogs! Our people demand just one thing: that the accursed reptile be crushed!

"Time will pass. Tall weeds and thistles will grow up over the graves of the hated traitors and they will be covered with the eternal contempt of honest Soviet people and the entire Soviet nation. And as before, our sun will shine with its bright rays clearly and joyfully over our happy country. We, our people, will as before walk in a path cleared of the last scum and vileness of the past, led by our beloved leader and teacher—the great Stalin..."

The "leader and teacher" loved zeal. Vyshinskiy subsequently became deputy chairman of the Council of People's Deputies, then minister of foreign affairs, and was awarded a Stalin prize and other marks of the General Secretary's special attention. Vyshinskiy no less than the Chief Director knew the price of the political farce that he was assigned to play. At the last, third, political trial, which took place in March 1938, there was a quite public massaging of public opinion. The list of charges was as before: carrying out Trotskiy's "directives," espionage and sabotage, preparing for the defeat of the USSR in the coming war, dismembering the country, a plot to kill Stalin and other top leaders.

In order to insure the success of the political spectacles they were carefully "rehearsed." And indeed they had experience in this. Preparations for Bukharin's trial took more than a year. It took several months to break the will of the defendants. The interrogators had at their disposal a wide range of means of coercion capable of unearthing the necessary proofs. And, the elementary standards notwithstanding, this was considered the main argument in proof of guilt. Some held out for a month, two months, three, others broke quickly. And then there were the humiliating "rehearsals." The broken men were forced to learn the required version, make prompted statements, "finger" indicated people. After numerous repetitions of this shameful staging the producer was informed that particular "actors" were ready for their "premier." True, there were sometimes also temporary interruptions.

Thus, in the indictment read by the clerk of the court on 2 March 1938 it was stated that the defendant, N.N. Krestinskiy, had "entered into treacherous ties with German intelligence in 1921," and had agreed with generals Secht and Hasse to cooperate with the Reichswehr for 250,000 German marks annually to do Trotskiyite work. When after the indictment had been read the chairman of the court started to ask the defendants whether they pleaded guilty, despite earlier indications Krestinskiy started to deny everything. There was a noticeable commotion among the directors of the trial. A recess was called and Stalin was informed. He abused them maliciously: "You have done a poor job with this trash." He gave it to be understood that he had no intention of hearing any more of this. They resorted to extreme "measures' and by evening on the next day Krestinskiy had returned to "normal."

Krestinskiy: I fully confirm my testimony at the preliminary hearing.

Vyshinskiy: Which in this event means that your statement yesterday cannot be considered as anything but a Trotskiyite provocation at the trial?

Krestinskiy: Yesterday, under the influence of a momentary acute sense of false shame, evoked by the situation of being the accused, and under the strong impression made by the public reading of the indictment, accentuated by my painful position, I was not in any condition to tell the truth nor in a condition to state that I am guilty.

Vyshinskiy: Is this mechanical?

Krestinskiy: I ask the court to record my statement that I fully and totally recognize my guilt in all the very grave charges brought against me personally, and I deem myself totally responsible for for the treachery and betrayal that I have committed...

Except for a few similar trivial "misfires" the trial proceeded smoothly. The defendants accepted the monstrous accusations with equanimity. Everyone agrees with the prosecutor and is eager to clarify any detail about his crimes. A unique cooperation was demonstrated between the court and the accused! No one refuted anything, everyone accused only themselves.

However, not always and not everyone. Bukharin, for example, realizing that he was doomed, tried, sometimes in direct or Aesopian form and sometimes in the form of tragic satire, to cast doubt on the lie of the accusation. Perhaps, having said his farewell to life, he was thinking about the future, about our times. Here are just a few of the things that Bukharin said, which show that even in that most tragic moment he retained his presence of mind and the breadth of his intellect. Finally Bukharin refuted his "confessions" with a single exceptionally profound rejoinder:

"The confessions of those accused are extracted using medieval principles."

In his final word he said in particular:

"I consider myself... both legally and politically responsible for the wrecking although I personally do not recall giving directives about wrecking."

"The prosecutor asserts that equally with Rykov I was one of the major organizers of espionage. Where are the proofs? The confession of Sharangovich, of whose existence I was unaware before I heard the verdict of guilty..."

"I categorically deny that I had anything to do with the murders of Kirov, Menzhinskiy, Kuybyshev, Gorkiy and Maksim Peshkov, According to Yagoda's testimony Kirov was killed in accordance with a decision of the 'rightist-Trotskiyite bloc.' I knew nothing about that..."

"The cold logic of the struggle was accompanied by a degeneration of ideas, a degeneration of attitudes, a degeneration of us ourselves, a degeneration of people..."

The final fragment from Bukharin's last words are most remarkable. It is not a confession but rather an accusation against the organizers of the trial, and against those who by pursuing the "cold logic of the struggle" led to the degeneration of ideas and of people. The oblique allusion to Stalin here is quite transparent. Bukharin was trying, as far as he could, to use the last chance of his conscience...

The course of the trial was reported in detail to Stalin every day. Stalin clarified the details, offered advice. He was the first to see the movie record of the trial and the photographs of the courtroom and the dfeendants. On his instructions the spectacle was reported widely in the press and on the radio. Foreign correspondents were invited, even diplomats! Everyone was amazed that at how the criminals were so ideally "conscientious"! There was no need for expert examinations, additional investigations, legal disputes, dialogue between prosecutor and defendants. At the trial the prosecutor was totally in charge and everyone else played up to him. Even Leon Feuchtwanger in his book "Moscow 1937" was forced to admit that "if this trial had been entrusted to a director for staging he would probably have taken many years and many rehearsals to get such teamwork from the defendants: they were so conscientious, so assiduous in not permitting even the slightest inaccuracy one with another, and their agitation was displayed with such restraint. In short, in addition to their own stunning qualities, the mesmerists, poisoners and court officials who prepared the defendants would have had to be outstanding directors and psychologists." In this conclusion the German writer was correct: the directors of the farce, particularly the Chief Director, were "outstanding."

In addition to the gross violation of the law during the investigation and the acts of violence, there was another reason for the total resignation of the people accused. For weeks and months it had been drilled into them that confession was "essential for the people and the party." Only "confession will help finally to unmask the criminals." And that meant that they must "confess" and mention others... Once the people and the country try us then we must say whatever they demand. This was evidently the motive that guided the actions of many people. In the final statements this was expressed in various ways. Defendant G.F. Grinko: "The heaviest sentence, the highest degree of punishment I accept as necessary." Defendant N.N. Krestinskiy: "My crimes before the motherland and the revolution are boundless and I accept as quite deserved any sentence you may pass on me, no matter how severe it may be." Defendant A.I. Rykov: "I would like for those who have not yet been unmasked and disarmed that they do this immediately and openly. I would like them to be convinced in the example of myself of the inevitability that they will be disarmed." Defendant N.I. Bukharin: "I kneel before the country, before the party, before all the people."

Reading these words Stalin could be completely satisfied. He considered this "candor" a victory, not suspecting that it contained the seeds of his, Stalin's, inevitable historical and moral defeat. History was still to condemn the "victor." The General Secretary knew that Bukharin had been "detained" for the first three months of his arrest. He was threatened and demands were made but even from his prison the disgraced academician tried to convince Stalin (it is known that he wrote several letters to him, his former apartment neighbor in the Kremlin,

but their fate is unknown) about the main idea of his statement at the Central Committee February-March Plenum: "There is a conspiracy and there are enemies of the people but the chief of them are to be found in the NKVD." Stalin. however, did not respond to these signals.

Perhaps when he met with an icy silence in response to his letters, Bukharin recalled, between his interrogations, the fate of Ferdinand Lassalle...

Lassalle fell in love with a girl from one of the noble families, even though she was engaged to someone else. Lassalle, a handsome and brilliant man, managed to win her heart. The girl once said to him: "My family is hostile toward you, we must elope!" He tried to calm her: "Why make a scandal and harm your fate? Just be patient for a few months and then we shall be married with your parents' consent." Lassalle did not win that consent, nor did he win the girl. Moreover, her fiance killed him in a duel. The girl wept for Lassalle and then married the man who had killed him...

Who knows, perhaps Bukharin's fate also gave him that chance—to run away? He had quite recently spent several weeks abroad in an attempt to obtain certain archives from the history of Marxism. Even then Bukharin had sensed that the noose was closing round him—Koba did not make jokes. His jokes were gallows humor... Did he think of not returning home when he was in Paris? Did he not regret that he had let slip the chance? No one knows. However, his entire life had been such that, to use Robespierre's words, along with his grave, he could achieve immortality only in his motherland.

Lying on his plank bed in his cell Bukharin tried to understand why the irony of fate was so cruel. For it was he who had at one stage helped to consolidate Koba... If along with Tomskiy and Rykov he had been more decisive and consistent then perhaps in 1927 with the help of others they would have been able to curb Stalin. However, Bukharin again, for the *n*th time had trusted the General Secretary at that time...

After the process of extracting a confession from Bukharin started to drag on, Stalin gave Yezhov permission to use "all means," the more so since it had been at his insistence that the following clarification had been previously sent "to the local level": "The use of methods of physical force in NKVD Practice have been permitted by the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee since 1937. It is known that all the bourgeois intelligence services use methods of physical force against representatives of the socialist proletariat and moreover use these methods in the most repulsive form. The question arises as to why socialist organs of state security should be more humane with respect to the rabid agents of the bourgeoisie and the sworn enemies of the working class and kolkhoz farmers. The All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee considers that methods of physical force should, as an exception, henceforth be used against known and inveterate enemies of the people and regarded, in this case, as a permissible and correct method."

Essentially this "exception" became the usual rule and it was resorted to immediately on any accused person displayed any stubbornness about "dialogue" with the interrogator. In fact Stalin officially sanctioned violation of the elementary standards of socialist legality. Accordingly, when it was again reported to Stalin that Bukharin was "refusing to speak" it was proposed that the "methods of interrogation" be broadened. When threats against his wife and tiny son were combined with "methods of physical force" Bukharin gave in. He signed the most monstrous inventions of the interrogator and labeled himself "Trotskiyite," "leader of a bloc," "conspirator," "traitor" and "organizer of sabotage." It is unbearably hard to read his words today: "I admit that I am guilty of treason against the socialist motherland, the most serious crime that there can be, of organizing kulak uprisings, of making preparations for acts of terrorism, and of belonging to an underground anti-Soviet organization. I further admit that I am guilty of making preparations for a 'palace coup.'"

But Stalin was in no hurry to start the trial. He could not allow any misfires. Bukharin and his "fellows" must be completely "ripe." Moreover, it was the leader's intention that the trial should be the culmination of the first stage of the extensive purge and terror that had been unleashed in the party and in the country. Stalin regarded the trial not only as a legal act culminating in the liquidation of the most dangerous "enemies" but also a national lesson in class vigilance, alertness and implacability and hatred toward all those who would dare even potentially to act against him, the leader, and hence socialism. His instructions to report the trial in the press and on the radio in the widest possible way, and to organize the numerous meetings demanding the "destruction of the fascist reptiles" were not happenstance.

In Stalin's opinion the people and the party were not learning the lesson of the shortsightedness of any possible opposition. Through the trials he implanted a system of the broadest mutual social control that functioned through everyone spying on everyone else. Only he, now finally recognized as the only leader, was outside that system of spying and informing. But even the people in his closest entourage could not feel serene even for an instant. The fates of Kosior, Postyshev, Rudzutak, Eykhe, Chubar and other top-echelon leaders was eloquent testimony of that.

On the other hand, the political trials were organized in such a way that Stalin as their Chief Director remained in the shadows. The General Secretary made very few public statements on the trials. His true role was for the absolute majority of the people unknown. The impression was created that it was the people themselves who

were judging the "traitors" and "murderers." But if it had been possible for the entire people to judge the accused directly, it would probably have been the same thing. The country had not yet cooled down from the class battles of the revolution and civil war, and collectivization. The social instincts and class nerves of the mass were raw. Fascism had produced a trial of strength in Spain, the militarization of Germany was under way, anti-Comintern pacts were being knocked together.

Here, for example, is VECHERNYAYA MOSKVA for 15 March 1938:

"History knows of no evil deeds equal to the crimes of the gang of the anti-Soviet 'rightist-Trotskiyite bloc.' The espionage, sabotage and wrecking of the gangster chief Trotskiy and his henchmen—Bukharin, Rykov and others—evoke feelings of anger, hatred and contempt not only among the Soviet people but also among all progressive mankind."

Or: "They have tried to kill our beloved leader, Comrade Stalin. In 1918 they shot at Comrade Lenin. They cut short the ardent life of Sergey Mironovich Kirov, killed Kuybyshev, Menzhinskiy and Gorkiy. They have betrayed our motherland."

Or: "The glorious Soviet intelligence services, led by Stalin's people's commissar Nikolay Ivanovich Yezhov, have smashed the viper's nest of these vile creatures!"

Thus the people were transformed into a mob, and this kind of "massaging" of the psychology gave birth to the phenomenon of unity around a false idea.

Trotskiyite wreckers were the certain enemies of everyone. And how could it be otherwise? On the day that the trial ended—13 March 1938—the 200,000th ZIS car was produced at the Moscow Automobile Plant imeni Stalin; people traveled for the first time on the just opened Pokrovskiy link on the second moscow Metro imeni L.M. Kaganovich; the radio reported that in Tula Oblast construction had started on water pipelines to the leading kolkhozes (a bore hole 46 meters deep had been dug at the kolkhoz imeni Khrushchev)... Each republic, each oblast, each factory and kolkhoz was striving to please the party and the leader with new achievements. The atmosphere in society, now frenziedly building new cities and highways and plants and palaces, was utterly electrified.

The monstrous mystification of the trials seemed to be a real reflection of a sharpening class struggle. Lack of publicity and real information made it easier to manipulate the consciousness of the millions.

On the days when the trial of Bukharin, Rykov and the other defendants in the case of the "anti-Soviet rightist-Trotskiyite bloc" was coming to an end, we see in the newspaper PRAVDA the shadows of the ominous events that were taking shape in the country. In particular, it was talking about "harmful haste" in the way a party aktiv was being held in one of the committees, and about "the bureaucrats from the Kuybyshev Komsomol obkom." The shadow closed in in Pospelov's article "The Struggle by Bukharin and Rykov against Lenin and the Party." Without a twinge of conscience this Stalinist theoretician was writing about the former condemned party leaders as "a band of criminals and hirelings." Such were the cruel and at the same time dynamic times. In one place the interrogator Rodos, who according to Khrushchev was a "vain person with the brain of a chicken," was questioning some new victim while in Leningrad the movie "The Great Citizen" was playing; V.V. Ulrikh was signing the latest report for Stalin about the work of the tribunals while ecstatic people were preparing to greet the Papanin heroes...

It is always easier to judge the past than the present. Enriched by our experience of the long road we know more than those who lived at that time. While we rightly place one man at the center of historical guilt, we should at the same time not forget that this personality was able to come into being thanks to a system of relations that ultimately people themselves created. Jean de La Bruyere made the profound remark that "an innocent man condemned is a matter for the conscience of all honest people." Stalin usurped power and committed crimes and therefore he must have been allowed to do it. Today the confessions of those condemned are an eternal historical accusation against those who organized the trials.

No, it is not only now that people spread their hands in sad incomprehension: why did they all confess to crimes that they did not commit? Even when the trials were in progress this was one of the great puzzles for the press in the West, which covered them extensively. Stalin, always carefully watching the barometer of public opinion, and not only "there at home" in his own country, responded immediately. On his instructions an article entitled "Why They Confess," was quickly prepared and published in PRAVDA under D. Osipov's signature. It stated, in particular: " 'Why are you confessing,' Vyshinskiy asked. 'perhaps there is some pressure from the side?'

"The accused categorically refuted this suggestion. They confirmed that the interrogation had been carried out in a quite correct manner and that there could be no question of coercion, direct or indirect. The defendant Muralov stated, for example, that during his confinement they had always been "cultured and educated" in their dealing with him. Muralov refused to talk for 8 months, Boguslavskiy for 8 days, Radek for 3 months. Then they started to talk. Because of the evidence. The charges were based strictly on the facts. The accused were crushed by the weight of indisputable evidence." Such was the official explanation at that time for the phenomenon of the complete confessions.

There is no doubt today that the accused were "crushed." But not with "evidence." At its meeting on 5 February 1988 the CPSU Central Committee Politburo

Commission stated that the preliminary investigation "was carried out with gross violations of socialist legality and false evidence, and confessions were extracted from the accused by unlawful methods." It was not happenstance, for example, that people who often did not know each other were gathered into the "ring" of the accused in the so-called "anti-Soviet rightist-Trotskiyite bloc": a party worker and a physician, a diplomat and a people's commissar, a manager and a republic leader. The organizers of the political farce had to show that a broad network of rightist-Trotskiyite traitors had been created in the USSR. It was given to understand that there was a real danger that anyone who allowed complacency, loss of class vigilance or gullibility could fall into that network. The actions of the members of the "bloc" showed, and the organizers of the trial instilled in them, that they were not only "selling out the motherland" when they made preparations to dismember it, but were also engaging in espionage for Germany and Japan, blowing up mines and causing train wrecks, murdering Soviet people, making preparations to kill Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich, Yezhov and other leaders...

Knowing little about the real facts that accompanied the trials the bourgeois press was unable to rise above abstract condemnations of "antidemocratism." The General Secretary raged against Trotskiy, who almost daily continued to unburden himself on the pages of the western newspapers with his arguments and denials and denunciations, and to boot made it known that the exile was making preparations to conduct his own propaganda "countertrial." Trotskiy's mocking article in issue No 65 of the BYULLETEN OPPOZITSII 1938 drove Stalin out of his wits. With his usual sarcasm and acumen Trotskiy spitefully swept aside the false nature of the trials: "In this criminal activity the people's commissars, marshals, ambassadors and secretaries are undoubtedly receiving their orders from one place, not from their official leaders but from an exile. Trotskiy gives the wink and veterans of the revolution are happy to become agents of Hitler and the mikado. On Trotskiy's 'instructions,' passed on through the best correspondent that TASS has, the leaders of industry and agriculture and transport destroy the country's production forces. On orders from 'enemy No 1,' issued from Norway or Mexico, the railroad workers destroy military transport in the Far East, and very respected physicians poison their patients in the Kremlin. This is the amazing picture that Vyshinskiy draws, but a difficulty arises here. In a totalitarian regime the apparatus exercises a dictatorship. But if my hirelings have occupied all the key posts in the apparatus, why is Stalin sitting in the Kremlin while I am in exile?"

Stalin went literally rabid when he read these lines. After abusing Yezhov for his "cretinism" is fabricating the cases, he again—how many times now?—started to think to himself: perhaps it is time to end this campaign of trials. No, it was still too soon: while there were still people who could even in their hearts see Trotskiy as an alternative he could not stop. The General Secretary was apparently reading a history of the French revolution: a terror stopped halfway was dangerous. Those who survived would be out for vengeance.

The political trials served one more purpose: most of those who had been abroad—diplomats, cultural figures, industrialists, scientists, even those who had fought in Spain—were in fact "implicated" with the former opposition people, Trotskiyites, Bukharinites, Zinovyevites, Menshevisks, Dashnaks, social revolutionaries, anarchists and Bundists. The "enemies" included many emigres who had returned to the country and many foreign communists working in the Comintern or Comintern organizations. There were also those who had at one time been expelled from the party, who had been "offended" by Soviet power, who at some time had expressed political doubts. And the close relatives of those repressed were automatically "enemies." The Chekists made up a large group. Some of them had been destroyed because they had tried, even though indirectly, to sabotage criminal designs, and now on the contrary were numbered among the enemies like, for example, Yagoda, Frinovskiy and Berman, because of their overzealousness and because they knew too much. As we have already said, all the "extremes" and distortions and "wrecking in the organs of the NKVD" were now ascribed to those people.

Those who remembered Lenin and real Leninism, who in their time had fought tsarism, and, that meant, valued true freedom and democracy almost instinctively, as it were, were subjected to special persecution. These were the people who took literally V.I. Lenin's instructions that "there is no other way to socialism except through democracy and political freedom." These people did not want to be fed by surrogates using Stalin's interpretation of Leninism, but they were also in a minority. The rest had fallen under the millstone of repression by chance or by association: some had worked under the chief of the "enemies of the people," others had not been promptly unmasked, and yet others had been "accomplices" in something that they could not even guess at...

The all-seeing eye of suspicion strengthened the inertia of violence. V. Zakharov, M. Motsiyev and the other railroad workers from the Arzamas station had barely presented their "Trotskiyite" opinions before they—the opinions—along with the "intention to engage in terrorist-sabotage activities" served as the justification for imposing death sentences on 31 October 19937. As the chairman of the USSR Supreme Court Collegium V. Ulrikh said in his report to Stalin, "all the accused fully confessed their guilt." The monstrous suspiciousness, interpreted as "Stalinist vigilance," punctually presented Moloch with his "just" sacrifices.

Yet another feature of these trials was Stalin desire not simply to physically destroy his real and potential opponents but also first to drag them through the dirt of amorality, "treason," and "betrayal." All the trials offered an unprecedented example of self-abasement,

self-detraction, self-condemnation. It often seemed simply absurd and dictated only by petty vengeance. Thus, the accused—the "actors" in the play—importunately asserted that they were "traitors," "spies," "double-dealers," "wreckers," "murderers." Kamenev, for example, stated directly that "we served fascism, we organized a counterrevolution against socialism." The promises of mercy, the threats of repression against families, and the physical violence during the interrogations broke those people and forced them to play their roles in the scenes written by the "high priests of the law."

Stalin: "Value Cadres Highly..."

On 4 May 1939 Stalin made a speech in the Kremlin at a graduation ceremony for "academicians" of the Red Army. By that time the cadre pogrom that had started back in 1936 had gradually abated. Yawning gaps had appeared in the leading echelons of the party, state and economic apparatus, among professional military people, and in the ranks of the technical and creative intelligentsia and the local workers in the republics, krays and oblasts. Hundreds of thousands of people had been mown down as if by some epidemic of a terrible plague. Stalin had demanded from the Main Administration for Personnel in the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army information about the qualitative makeup of the command leadership in the army and navy. The General Secretary looked for a long time at the graphs and tables and the skimpy figures testifying to the "greening" of personnel—about 85 percent of commanders were aged under 35. Did Stalin think at that time that, except for three marshals the large group of first- and second-echelon rank commanders and other capable military leaders had disappeared at his will? When they had been appointed many of them had been right there, in the General Secretary's office... Perhaps he remembered Voroshilov's speech at the meeting of the People's Commissariat Military Council on 29 November 1938? At that time the people's commissar had reported, as if reporting a great achievement: "During the course of the purge in the Red Army in 1937 and 1938 we purged more than 40,000 people... In the first 10 months in 1938 more than 100,000 new commanders have been promoted. Of the 50 or more members of the old Military Council only 10 remain." What were the feelings of the leader as he gazed on the gaps in his command corps? There was now hardly anyone to say what was common knowledge: after he had read the report Stalin proposed that the number of academies be increased and that new schools be set up. But this kind of "waste" existed not only among the military...

The former people's commissar of railroads I.V. Kovalev once told me that "in 1937 I was appointed chief of the Western Railroad. I traveled to Minsk and went in the railroad headquarters. It was empty. There was no one to do the work: Rusakov, my predecessor had been arrested and shot. I called the deputies: there was no one, they had also been arrested... I looked for this one and that; there was a strange silence, as if some great storm had just passed by. It was amazing that the trains were even running; who was in charge of this enormous railroad?! I went to the home of a worker from the railroad administration whom I knew. To my astonishment I found him there with his weeping wife.

" 'Why are you not at work?' I blurted out, without even greeting him.

" 'I am waiting. Today they said they would be coming for me. See, I have even collected my things here. Nasedkin from the NKVD is rubbing out half of us. The railroad may be paralyzed....'"

Kovalev went on to tell me that after he had clarified the picture of the calamity and recovered himself from the scale of the pogrom, he telephoned Stalin in Moscow ("For if the railroad was not operating properly they would pretty soon take me too"). Poskrebyshev answered the call. He told him about the situation and said that the monstrous bacchanalia had to be stopped, and quickly. Ivan Vladimirovich ended the conversation by saying: "And no one else must be arrested."

The situation on that railroad was no exception. The machinery of repression was operating at full speed. How it was working can be seen from these extracts from speeches made by those attending the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee October (1937) Plenum. Here, for example, is what was said by Sobolev, secretary of the Krasnoyarsk party kraykom, during the discussion of Molotov's report on the course of the election campaign (even though the subject was the elections they were still talking about "enemies of the people"):

"We are now unmasking and destroying our enemies: the Bukharinites, the Rykovites, the Trotskiyites, the Kolchakovites, the saboteurs, all that riffraff that we are annihilating in the kray. They are acting quite openly against us... What I have in mind is one of the favorite forms of sabotage in the kray—arson."

Peskarev from Kursk Oblast painted this picture in his statement:

"Since we long ago dealt with the scoundrels, wreckers and enemies of the people in the leadership of the oblast prosecutor's office and oblast court, it seems that they have shifted the center of gravity of their policy of reprisals onto totally innocent people: in the last 3 years some 18,000 people in the kolkhoz and rural aktiv have been condemned" (often because a horse had gone lame or because they were late for work).

The "unmasking and destroying" was going on everywhere. By May of 1939, when Stalin delivered his famous speech in the Kremlin that we have mentioned, the results of this "unmasking and destroying" were too palpable not to be mentioned. But as always, Stalin approached this "problem" from an unexpected angle.

His quiet voice sounded out in the absolute silence of the hall. Although he held his text in front of him, Stalin rarely glanced at it. The hundreds of eyes of the junior commanders, political workers and engineers with their squeaky new shoulder belts and their "peg-tops" and "crossties" in their buttonholes, gazed tensely at the small, compact figure of the leader.

"I recall a case in Siberia, where at one time I was sent in exile," the General Secretary of the Party related. "It was springtime, the time of the floods. About 30 people went to the river to retrieve a fishing net carried away by the raging river. In the evening they returned to the village, but one comrade was missing. To the question of where was the thirtieth man they responded indifferently: 'He stayed there.' In response to my question 'What do you mean, he has stayed there?' they answered just as indifferently 'Why do you ask? he drowned it seems.' And then one of them started to bustle about, saying that 'the mare must be watered.' In response to my reproach that they were more concerned about the animals than people, one of them answered, with the general approval of the rest of them: 'Why should we worry about people; we can always make more people. But a mare... you just try to make a mare...'"

It was noted that at this point there was "general animation in the hall." The leader's half-bent forefinger froze in the air, recording the paradoxical nature of the Siberian's answer.

"So, the indifferent attitude of some of our leaders to people and to cadres, and their inability to value people," Stalin continued, chopping the air with his hand, as if chopping the words, "is a vestige of that terrible attitude of people toward people of which I have so often spoken...

"And so, comrades, if we want successfully to deal with this famine in the field of people and give our country enough cadres capable of advancing our equipment and using it, we must first and foremost learn to value people, value cadres, value each worker who is capable of bringing benefit to our common cause. And we must, finally, understand that of all the valuable capital available in the world, the capital that is the most valuable and the most decisive is people, cadres. We must understand that in our present conditions it is cadres who resolve everything."

I have quoted this lengthy extract from Stalin's speech for several reasons. One the one hand we see that the General Secretary was obliquely recognizing the shortages (the "famine") of cadres that occurred after 2 years of the most extensive destruction. On the other hand, knowing Stalin's role and place in the mass repressions, again and again we are struck by the political cynicism of the "leader" and and his duplicity and cruelty. While sanctioning the violence against thousands of workers devoted to the party and the people he publicly argues that cadres are "the most valuable capital." Even if we suppose that at some stage the punitive situation passed beyond Stalin's control and that the lawlessness continued by the force of inertia, we cannot fail to be astounded when we compare the pharisaical maxims of the "leader" and his actual "contribution" in the destruction of cadres.

I do not have at my disposal any official figures on the number of victims in 1937-1938, and possibly there are none. But on the basis of material available to me (the composition of the congresses, the party statistical reports, reports of the time from the oblasts, figures from the archives of the organs of the courts and so forth) it is possible to make a guarded assessment of the total number of those repressed. The most accurate figures in this case are from the People's Commissariat for Defense. On the basis of a whole series of figures, which, I repeat, may well not be complete figures, in those tragic years—1937 through 1939—in my opinion something on the order of 3.5 million to 4 million people were repressed. Of these, about 600,000 to 650,000 people were given the death sentence. In addition—and this we know accurately—very many who were not sentenced to death by the "court" rotted in the camps and prisons.

If we talk about personal responsibility then the chief culprit in what happened was I.V. Stalin. The "leader" personally issued instructions to Yezhov on the direction and scale of the repressions and he frequently indicated particular persons who in his opinion should be "checked." In order to avoided using the words "death penalty" and "ultimate punishment" Stalin suggested that it be referred to as "Category one" punishment. It is known from documents that it was on Stalin's personal instructions that many well-known people were repressed. R. Eykhe, Ya. Rudzutak, V. Chubar, S. Kosior and P. Postyshev were arrested, sentenced and executed with Stalin's approval. In the central committee apparatus, for example, the General Secretary proposed that a "check" be conducted (and this meant the worst) on the chief of the propaganda department A. Stetskiy, the chief of the press department B. Tal, the chief of the agricultural department Ya. Yakovlev, the chief of the science department K. Bauman, official of the Party Control Committee F. Zaytsev and dozens of other workers. For all of them the "check" ended up with their being shot.

When the business had grown in scope, Stalin started to "approve" death sentences in long lists, and in 1938, after "retiring" from this work he conferred this right—without any kind of reporting, to the courts and tribunals. At the 20th Party Congress N.S. Khrushchev said that in 1937-1938 Yezhov sent Stalin 383 lists with the names of many thousands of party, soviet, Komsomol, army and economic workers. They were all confirmed. But Stalin did not limit himself to those lists. There were many more.

Since those papers also contained the official signatures of other leaders, after the 20th Party Congress many documents imply disappeared. A.N. Shelepin told me in

April 1988 that in particular the lists with Khrushchev's signature were, on instructions from the first secretary, removed from many archives by Serov, who at that time was the deputy minister of state security. They were passed to Khrushchev, who had decided on the bold step of revealing Stalin's crimes: Nikita Sergeyevich did not want to appear as an accomplice to Stalin's crimes, but that is precisely what he was. Incidentally, I am myself convinced that a number of the central archives have been "cleaned up" since the 20th Congress; many documents relating to Stalin and his immediate entourage have been removed. Are they all safe? I very much doubt it. Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov, Malenkov, Khrushchev and other leaders were guilty of illegalities, either as accomplices or obedient executors, or as unconcerned "yes-men." But of course, Stalin is mainly responsible before history for these evil deeds.

As we have mentioned, the General Secretary took care that his name did not often figure as the person sanctioning "DS" (the death sentence), but still there are many such documents. I have many letters addressed to Stalin, Voroshilov, Molotov and other party figures with appeals for mercy. They read the letters often without affixing their "autographs" to them. All those who wrote perished, and we are left to assume that Stalin preferred to issue his decisions verbally, and sometimes did not even look at the appeals for mercy because the fates of those people had already been decided. This, then, was Stalin's "secret" role as a direct and immediate participant in the terror, and it was this that made possible the legend that was current for a long time that the leader "did not know" about the repressions. The old Bolshevik D.A. Lazurkina, for example, said at the 22nd Congress that when she was in prison "I never once blamed Stalin at that time. All the time I used to stand up for Stalin, who other prisoners sent to the camps were cursing. I used to say: 'No, it cannot be that Stalin would permit what is going on in the party. It cannot be.'" Such naivete could be born only out of ignorance of the true picture. As was stated in the report to the 20th Party Congress with reference to "personality cult and its consequences," the tyranny "of one person encourages and condones the manifestation of tyranny in others. The mass arrests and the exile of many thousands of people, execution without trial and the normal procedures of investigation created an atmosphere devoid of any sense of security, and of total fear, and even horror."

It is a sad and tragic circumstance that the terror was unleashed under conditions when there was no direct or immediate threat to the socialist order from within the country. The external threat, which had always existed, could not have been embodied and realized within the country itself to such a degree that the violence would thus somehow be justified. It is probable that there were isolated manifestations of class enmity and rejection of the new order, but there is no proof at all of the presence of mass harmful and hostile elements. Stalin totally ignored the Leninist attitude toward revolutionary terror.

"The terror was foisted on us by the terrorism of the Entente," Lenin had said in his report on the work of the All-Union Central Executive Council and Council of People's Commissars on 2 February 1920, "when the world's most powerful states turned their hordes on us, stopping for nothing. We would not have been able to hold out in those days if the attempts of the officers and the White Guards had not been responded to mercilessly, and this meant terror, but it was forced on us by the terrorist methods of the Entente. And as soon as we had won a decisive victory, even before the end of the war, immediately after we had taken Rostov, we abandoned the use of the execution and thus showed that in our program we were behaving as we had promised." Stalin evidently did not regard himself obligated to abide by "his own program" as a "promise." This had become obvious even in December of 1934 when at Stalin's insistence it was decided to use the death sentence extensively, without any right of appeal.

Several party central committee plenums took place in 1937. At each of them, in addition to the review of matters concerning preparations for the USSR Supreme Soviet elections, errors in expelling communists from the party, and measures to improve the operation of the machine-and-tractor stations and other business, there was also the mandatory consideration of "the composition of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee." And this meant that the purge of the top party Areopagus was continuing. For example, at the Central Committee October Plenum that year, 24 members and candidate members were removed! They included Zelenskiy, Lebed, Nosov, Pyatnitskiy, Khatayevich, Ikramov, Krinitskiy, Vareykis, Grinko, Lyubchenko, Yeremin, Deribas, Demchenko, Serebrovskiy, Rozengold, Ptukha, Shubrikov and others. They were nearly all Bolsheviks with long seniority who represented the backbone of the party cadres, and there were categorized as "enemies of the people." And so at every plenum... At the December Plenum on 4 through 8 December, for example, the following resolution was approved (by absent written vote):

"On the basis of irrefutable information the Central Committee Plenum deems it necessary to remove the following persons from the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee and place them under arrest as enemies of the people: Bauman, Bubnov, Bulin, Mezhlauk, Rukhimovich and Chernov, who have turned out to be German spies and agents of the tsarist Ohranka; Mikhalylov, who is connected with counterrevolutionary work along with Yakovlev; and Ryndin, who is connected with counterrevolutionary work along with Rykov and Sulimov."

Below is written in Stalin's hand: "All these persons have confessed that they are guilty."

We can only imagine how impoverished the fantasy of the Chief Inquisitor was: more than half of the central committee were "spies" and "agents of the tsarist

Ohranka"! Twenty years after the downfall of the house of the Romanovs their police apparatus was still operating as it always had! It was all like a madness, a feast of some evil force. Looking at the yellowed pages distributed among the members of the central committee before the vote by correspondence I found not one (!) case of disagreement, objection or doubt. Just "for," "agreed," "agree unconditionally," "the correct decision," "a necessary step." Conscience was silent in that prison of antitruth and fear.

By the end of 1938 almost no candidates remained who could have made up for the terrible losses. As we have already said, of the 139 members and candidate members of the party central committee elected at the 17th Congress, 98 people, that is, 70 percent of them, had been arrested and had perished in 1937 and 1938. The same fate awaited not only the majority of the members of the central committee but also most of the delegates to the "congress of victors." And 80 percent of those attending that congress with right of vote were Bolsheviks who had joined the party before 1921!

The republic, kray and oblast party echelons were also bled terribly. Many obkoms were simply decapitated; all the secretaries of those committees found themselves, to use Kaganovich's words, "living" with Yezhov. Here are the names of just a few of the thousands of party workers in the provinces who drank from "Iosif's cup": A. Bogomolov, T. Bratanovskiy, Ye. Veger, M. Gusseynov, B. Dodoboyev, N. Zhuravlev, S. Zeger, V. Yeremenko, Yu. Kotsyubinskiy, G. Krutov, N. Margolin, D. Orlov, N. Stepanyan, Ya. Ponok, A. Shpilman, A. Khandzhyan and many, many others. Only Stalin could have the total figures. Could he have been visited after reading the terrible lists and reports from Yezhov and Ulrikh and Vyshinskiy with the thought that his concept of "enemies of the people" was a monster in its blindness and criminality? No, the leader was distinguished by one thing—consistency: once had had reached a decision Stalin always tried to carry it through to its conclusion. With this "purge" of society, the General Secretary thought, he would achieve so much, so very much, that they would "talk about him for centuries."

Once when discussing the latest list with Yezhov, Stalin, without turning to him, dropped this:

"Who will remember all these scoundrels after 10 or 20 years? No one. Who now remembers the names of the boyars done away with by Ivan the Terrible? No one.... The people should know that he 'does away' with his enemies. Ultimately everyone will get what he deserves..."

"The people understand, Iosif Vissarionovich, they understand and they offer their support," Molotov [as published] responded somewhat mechanically. Even though they both knew that the people were silent. The shouts of approval were the voice of ignorance, lawlessness and depression.

In October 1937 Yezhov became a candidate member of the Politburo. At his suggestion the NKVD organs began to compile lists of people who came within the jurisdiction of the collegiums of the military tribunals. For example, it was hardly worth charging a person with "espionage" if he had already appeared before a military tribunal. The way in which "spies" were dealt with, and how many of them there were, can be seen for example, from this report by V. Ulrikh:

"To the Commissar of State Security, 1st Rank, Comrade L.P. Beriya.

"During the period 1 October 1936 through 30 September 1938 the Military Collegium of the USSR Supreme Court and out-of-town sessions of the collegium in 60 cities have imposed the following sentences:

"execution—30,514 persons; imprisonment—5,643 persons; total— 36,157

"V. Ulrikh. 15 October 1938."

During 1937 and 1938 Yezhov, and then Beriya, issued numerous lists of "spies" in Stalin's name, where a specific penalty (in most cases execution) was suggested even before the trial. But we have ascertained that first they received reports from Ulrikh. Here is one of those reports taken from the archives of the Military Collegium:

"To the Commissar of State Security 1st Rank, USSR Deputy People's Commissar for Internal Affairs Comrade Beriya.

"In September 1938 the USSR Supreme Court Military Collegium in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Kharkov, Khabarovsk and other cities have imposed the following sentences:

"execution—1,803 persons; imprisonment—389 persons ; total— 2,192

"V. Ulrikh."

In October the number was larger—3,588 persons. But this was the work only of the military tribunals. But what of the civil courts?! And the simple "troykas," "meetings" and "hearings"?! Stalin, who loved to say that it was essential to show concern for the individual and for cadres, and pay attention to the communists, approved those dreadful lists without wavering.

To this day there are still many people who would like to separate this aspect of Stalin's activity, which was characterized by total misanthropy, from the steps and measures that he implemented as head of the party and

people to realize socioeconomic plans and programs. Even if, agreeing to the logic of these people, we recognize his "services" in this field, we have no right, no moral right, to afford Stalin any indulgence by saying that "he committed the crimes truly believing that he was doing it for the good of the country." How could it be for the "good of the country" if it required hundreds of thousands, millions of human sacrifices? Accordingly, N.S. Khrushchev's statement at the 20th Congress seems very debatable: "We should not think that Stalin's deeds were the acts of a mad despot. He believed that they were necessary in the interests of the party and the working masses, in the interests of defending revolutionary gains. Herein lies the tragedy."

We cannot agree with this: Stalin deliberately created a regime of personal dictatorship in which he considered he had absolute freedom in his choice of means. What was there in this that was "defending revolutionary gains"?! A terrible and intoxicating feeling of absolute power was what drove him... Stalin was quite well aware that not Kosior, nor Postyshev, nor Rudzutak, nor Chubar, nor Eykhe could have been "enemies of the people"; in an extreme case they might have distanced themselves from him but this was certainly not seen in public. His impunity and the lack of control encouraged the most evil manifestations of Stalin's cruel nature. The system that he created offered scope for any action by the dictator. Stalin's complete freedom meant complete lack of freedom for all who depended on him. But for the purpose of moral and social camouflage the leader continued to act the Pharisee in public. Absolute power corrupted him absolutely.

Arguments that "the tragedy of Stalin was that he believed in the presence of 'enemies of the people' and therefore dealt with them" are not simply naive but also profoundly wrong. It was not Stalin's tragedy, but the people's tragedy. The actions of the "leader" can be described only as criminal. The model of society created in his mind assumed that the use of violence as an indispensable attribute of proletarian power was natural. It is quite probable that Stalin did in his own way want society to "flourish," and wished for the material well-being of its members, and certainly he wanted to create a strong state. But he was reluctant (and did not even think) to ask the members of society how they wanted to achieve socialist ideals.

Even with all his inexorability in achieving the goals he had set for himself, on more than one occasion Stalin did show some vacillation in the face of the growing scales of the repressions. This is precisely what explains the discussion at the party Central Committee January (1938) Plenum, at the General Secretary's initiative, of the question of mistakes by the party organizations in expelling members from the party. As he listened to Malenkov's report and the statements by Bagirov, Postyshev, Kosior, Ignatyev, Zimin, Kaganovich, Ugarov and Kosarev, Stalin must have been struck by the scale of the repressions and the scope of the lawlessness and real pogrom among cadres. For example, in the statement by Postyshev it was noted that when he had traveled to Kuybyshev he found a situation in which as the result of the purges the normal activity of the party obkom, the oblispolkom and the raykom had been virtually paralyzed. Because of this, in many raykoms only two or three members remained and they had ceased all practical work; there were more than 30 such raykoms in the oblast! Stalin, Beriya, Yezhov, Malenkov and Molotov immediately shifted all the blame onto Postyshev, even though he had only just been sent to work in Kuybyshev.

After becoming familiar with the documents the impression is created that the decision to "sink" Postyshev was taken before the plenum. Virtually all statements, starting with Malenkov's, placed special emphasis on Postyshev's mistakes. On Stalin's cue of approval, at the plenum Kaganovich assumed the main role of "critic" against Postyshev.

"I know Postyshev well. On instructions from the Central Committee I traveled last year to Kiev when we learned about Comrade Postyshev's gross errors in leading the Kiev and Ukrainian party organizations. In Kiev Postyshev showed himself to be a worker who had in practice frustrated party directives; for which the Central Committee removed him from Kiev at that time (as published in the text of the statement—author's note). Comrade Postyshev's blindness to enemies of the people borders on the criminal. He does not see enemies even when all the sparrows are twittering on the rooftops... Observing you in the lobbies and hearing your speech at this plenum I am convinced that you are playing a cunning game with the party central committee."

"I never played a cunning game in my life," Postyshev tried to parry.

"What Postyeshev said here at the plenum is a repetition of conversations hostile to the party. He does not see that during the last year we have promoted more than 100,000 new people. This is our great Stalinist victory."

When he said "Stalinist victory" Kaganovich was unwittingly talking about the enormous forced replacement of leaders who had been "put out of action." The colossal gaps in cadres, occurring as the result of the lawlessness, were assessed by people close to Kaganovich's type as a situation that facilitated the revolutionary renewal of the leading cadres at various levels.

The critical statements by Yaroslavskiy, Kosarev and Ugarov were stronger. Postyeshev was now not simply be criticized but directly accused and judged. It was obvious that the victim selected this time was precisely him. It was as if Kaganovich had succeeded in transferring his long-standing enmity toward Postyshev to the party leadership. The second secretary of the Kuybyshev Obkom, Ignatov, who had been invited to attend the plenum, completed Postyshev's rout. He directly called

Postyshev's actions "antiparty." Kaganovich immediately picked it up, and turning to Postyeshev said: "Well now you are playing cunning games with the Central Committee. This is a hostile line. As a political leader Postyshev is bankrupt."

Postyshev rose. "I fully and completely admit that the speech I have made here was incorrect and nonparty. I myself cannot understand how I came to make such a speech. I beg the plenum to forgive me. But I have never consorted with enemies but have always fought against them..."

But now only Stalin could save Postyshev. The General Secretary, however, who had waited for the total humiliation of the Politburo candidate member and old Bolshevik who had tried to have his own opinion, finally predetermined his fate:

"Among us here in the central committee presidium, or Politburo, as you like, the opinion has been formed that after everything that has occurred, some kind of steps should be taken against Comrade Postyshev. In our opinion he should be removed as a candidate member of the Politburo but remain a member of the Central Committee."

Naturally everyone voted in favor of this. Postyshev remained free only for a month. In February of the same year, at Stalin's suggestion the Commission for Party Control prepared a draft resolution on Postyeshev and this was approved by the Central Committee Politburo. It is worth citing the main content of this document. Postyshev was found guilty of the following transgressions:

"1) The breakup of 35 party raykoms (we recall that they had simply ceased to function since in 5 months in 1937 some 3,500 communists had been expelled from the party in Kuybyshev Oblast—author's note);

"2) Provocation against soviet organs (at one meeting of the city soviet 34 deputies were dismissed);

"3) Recruiting cadres for field work, dismantling of public buildings, wrecking activities at the height of the harvest;

"4) During his work in Kuybyshev Postyshev hampered the NKVD in its work to unmask enemies by directing blows against honest communists;

"5) Postyshev's aides, both in the Ukraine and in Kuybyshev, had turned out to be enemies of the people (spies);

"6) Postyshev knew about the presence of a counterrevolutionary rightist-Trotskiyite organization in the oblast...

"All these actions of Postyeshev are deemed to be antiparty and aimed at benefiting enemies of the people. Resolved that P.P. Postyshev be expelled from the ranks of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks)."

All of the other 49 members and candidate members of the Central Committee voted (by absent roll-call) in favor of this resolution. Again, Stalin's ballot paper was not found... He always tried to leave as few tracks as possible.

Postyshev's fate was decided; his arrest and execution followed. Stalin's "concern for cadres" can be seen in high relief in the "Postyshev affair"; for a number of reasons Postyshev did not suit the General Secretary, not only as a member of the top party leadership but in general as a communist of the old Leninist school. Sometimes it was enough for Stalin to hear a single phrase, have a single conversation, learn about a single fact for him to make a final judgment about an individual. In those years this could be a passing of sentence.

Thus, after Postyshev's "inspection" in Kuybyshev, Malenkov reported to Stalin: "Postyshev is a politically harmful person" (Malenkov repeated this evaluation at the plenum—author's note).

"How can he be restrained?" Stalin answered with a question.

Not everyone noticed, or, more accurately, attached any special significance to the fact that during Kosarev's speech at that same January Plenum he had high words with Mekhlis. Kosarev virtually criticized the Political Directorate of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, which was doing poor work in organizing work with members of the Komsomol: "There are 500,000 members of the youth organization in the army, and each year only a few thousand become party members."

Mekhlis' immediate parry was full of bile: "The Komsomol Central Committee does not deal with the army Komsomol. I have suggested that Beloborodov (a Central Committee secretary—author's note) be put in charge of the Komsomol in the army but he refused. They want to lead only from the Central Committee."

Mekhlis' long-standing hostility toward Kosarev could have been reinforced and, who knows that it did not play a fateful role in the fate of the Komsomol leader?

Having raised the issue of mistakes when reviewing communists' personal affairs, the plenum imperceptibly tuned into the old fatal rut of discovering that all these "mistakes" and "distortions" were once again nothing but intrigues by still undiscovered "enemies." This was exactly the conclusion reached at the plenum: "It is high time for all party organizations and their leaders to unmask and once and for all destroy the hidden enemy who has penetrated our ranks." We see that the feeble attempts to make a mature approach in evaluating the

bacchanalia of lawlessness in 1937-1938 were ineffective. The demonstration of violence won out over elementary prudence. Stalin saw errors in the violence as shortcomings in the application of that violence. As a result, instead of analyzing the reasons for the distortions and the callous and criminal attitudes toward the fates of communists, new impetus was imparted to the search for "undiscovered enemies."

When he spoke at party meetings the former secretary of the Kiev party obkom, Kudryavtsev, used to ask communists: "And have you written any statements about anyone?" As a result of such calls for vigilance, almost half of the party members in the Kiev organization were denounced. Kudryavtsev, by the way, was one of the first victims...

The cadre pogrom carried out at the initiative of Stalin and his entourage did not simply lead to a cadre shortage; it raised up a wave of denunciations, and many unscrupulous people tried (sometimes not without success!) to make a party, state or army career out of the existing situation, and some simply settled old scores. A decision of the Central Committee January (138) Plenum stated that "individual careerist communists are trying to distinguish themselves and gain promotion to posts occupied by those expelled from the party and repressed party members, or trying to insure themselves against possible accusations of inadequate vigilance by means of applying groundless repressions against members of the party." However, this correct statement of the danger to the party from careerists and informers was not linked to the very course of the top political leadership toward repression, which was where the deep sources of the tragedy and deformations were to be found.

A lie is like a snowball: one falsehood gives birth to another. By arbitrarily "intensifying" the class struggle Stalin called forth a flood of insinuations and slander before which society was defenseless. The Lie of Yezhov's agencies in alliance with a shameless court and prosecutor's office, the nonsense in the press, and the numerous speeches in support of "just sentences" created a situation that was truly unique and profoundly tragic: the causes of the bacchanalia were to be found nowhere; there was nowhere to appeal for help; no one could permit the exposure even of obvious scoundrels... The Lie enthroned by Stalin disposed of the fates of millions. Most of all the General Secretary cannot be forgiven for the state to which he reduced society, when people were forced to submit to, remain silent about or support decisions whose essential nature was for many totally unclear. Stalin considered that he had the right to "parcel out" truth, make generalizations that were binding on al the people, and determine what they did or did not need. He completely trampled on the openness bequeathed in Lenin's legacy. The campaign of violence was possible only in the darkness of antitruth, hypocrisy and double standards.

The wound of 1937-1938, so difficult to heal, was associated not only with the pain and incongruity and illogicality of the feast of violence that Stalin celebrated; that wound was also the start of the many misfortunes associated with the loss of talented leaders, managers, scientists, military people and cultural figures. And did not the gaps in the legions of cadres enable the "careerist communists" to worm their way into posts and offices and occupy advantageous positions? In its resolution the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee February-March (1937) Plenum not only "obliged the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs to bring the issue of unmasking and smashing Trotskiyite and other agents to a conclusion and to suppress even the smallest manifestation of their anti-Soviet activity," but also to "strengthen the NKVD cadres." The criteria for "strengthening" were at that time unambiguous: blind, fanatical execution of the will of the leader. At that time people of conscience could not survive in the "organs." The Abakumovs, the Merkulovs, the Yezhovs, the Beriyas, the Kobulovs, the Rukhadzes and many others among those "promoted" were placed in the organs of the NKVD and above the people and the party at the will of the leader. Under the conditions of autocratic rule the system of relations that had been shaped gave birth to unprincipled people, toadies and lickspittles.

Of course, devotion to truly Bolshevik ideals, selflessness and revolutionary enthusiasm were still then preserved in many people and they did not drown in the slime of lies, glorification and bureaucratic distortions of the times. But of course, the positive attributes of the intellectual and moral potentials of the people would have been developed incomparably if they had not had to deal with what became the culmination of the national tragedy.

Tukhachevskiy's "Plot."

In time Stalin's favorite apparel was the full-dress greatcoat of a marshal. When he had donned it the General Secretary gazed at himself in the mirror with satisfaction: the severity of the uniform with the splash of gold epaulets suited his ideas of esthetic perfection.

Yes, Stalin "loved" the army and he "loved" military people, and the Armed Forces were the subject of his special concern. The "leader" always recalled with some sense of inner pride his own activity on the fronts of the civil war. As he managed two people's committees simultaneously, Stalin at that time was perhaps more than anyone (except Trotskiy) with the army forces in the field and he visited the fronts about two dozen times on Lenin's direct instructions. The General Secretary was personally acquainted with almost all the command staffs, from corps commanders up. Most of the marshals and army commanders were well known to him even during the civil war. And now, in the late Thirties, appointments to all the main posts in the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army were made through his office.

The General Secretary usually heard a brief report on the individual recommended for these posts, carefully looked into the eyes of the individual, was silent, and then had a conversation lasting 7 to 10 minutes. He was interested in the appointee's military experience, knowledge of theater military actions, and his views on the future commander in military development under the conditions of the rapid motorization of the army. Sometimes he asked questions of the kind "How do you assess the German tanks,?" "Do we need reinforced sectors under present conditions," "What is your opinion of the new Workers' and Peasants' Red Army Field Regulations?" At the conclusion of the conversation, limply shaking the hand of uneasy army commander or corps commander, he would wish him success in his new post and mention his constant readiness to implement the "party line." And again he would look searchingly into the eyes of the person, trying to read in them the thing that was most important for him: was he devoted to "Comrade Stalin?"

Stalin spent long hours with the people's commissars and the designers and scientists developing new kinds of military equipment and weapons, and he personally inspected military innovations and attended the tests. It was at his initiative that meetings were held on various questions of military development, which he also attended. He spoke only rarely, but his remarks and comments always "turned" the course of the discussion into a particular channel. In 1939, for example, Stalin spent an entire day at a meeting of leading personnel from the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army Rear Services resolving the question of clothing supplies, field and everyday uniforms for command and rank-and-file personnel, and the quality of clothing.

Of course, the General Secretary did not engage in all these things out of "pure love" of military affairs: like any leader of state level Stalin was perfectly well aware that political power and his real strength and place in the world were largely determined not only by economic but also military might. Many of his speeches in the latter half of the Thirties bear the stamp of the alarm evoked by the growth in the fascist danger and the increased imperialist threat from West and East. It can be said without exaggeration that in those years the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army and the NKVD were the General Secretary's priority concerns. And it was precisely from the NKVD that late in 1936 Stalin started to receive alarming reports.

It is interesting that it was Germany that picked up the first symptoms of Stalin's collision with the top military command in the USSR. The chief of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army Main Intelligence Directorate, corps commander S. Uritskiy, had reported to Stalin and Voroshilov as early as 9 April 1937 that rumors were current in Berlin about an opposition to the USSR leadership among the general officers. True, the intelligence chief was not concerned and he gave the rumors little credit. In proof he produced statements by a certain Artur Just carried in DEUTSCHE ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG to the effect that today "the Stalin dictatorship has need of exceptional support. It would the strangest thing if it were precisely now that the foundations of the army started to shake. Nothing is now so important to Stalin as the absolute reliability of the Red Army." It was just what the General Secretary himself was thinking, but "absolute reliability" had become precisely "shaking the foundations of the army," the more so since signs about an opposition and conspiracy among the general officers had started simultaneously from many sources.

First there had been a note from Yezhov with materials from ROVS (the White emigre "Russian General Military Alliance" organization) from Paris, in which it was asserted that "in the USSR a group of top commanders is making preparations for a state coup." It was claimed in this document, which was probably false, or at best the invention of some White emigre, that the plot was being led by Marshal M.N. Tukhachevskiy. Stalin passed the note to Ordzhonikidze and Voroshilov with the comment "Please find out about this." His associates could find no trace of any response to the document. Most probably the clearly nonsensical nature of the note made no impression on those who read it, even Stalin, who was an extraordinarily mistrustful and suspicious man. Here we should once again emphasize that Stalin always relied a great deal on the "paperwork" in any case being conducted by the NKVD organs, and on their "reports."

Let us digress to cite an example of this. A.T. Rybin, who during the Thirties worked in one of the NKVD departments and then in the leader's personal security section, told me that when it was reported to Stalin verbally that there were "links" between Mikhail Koltsov and the foreign intelligence services, he did not at first attach any significance to that information. A recent conversation with the writer, which had left not a bad impression on him, was still fresh in the General Secretary's mind. But when a month later (someone obviously really needed this!) a pile of papers placed on the General Secretary's desk contained a denunciation with two sets of testimony from persons closely acquainted with Koltsov, Stalin ordered the "go-ahead" for this fabricated case—even in his thoughts he could not admit that written reports might be deceiving him or leading him into some delusion. Stalin thought that as leader, only he had that right. To the point, this peculiarity of the General Secretary to believe a "paper" absolutely was always actively used by Yezhov, and later by Beriya. Denunciations, information and reports that were sometimes pure fantasy found extremely fertile soil in Stalin and literally "bewitched" his consciousness. This suspiciousness ad absurdum was expressed, for example, in the fact that he never really believed the people in his own entourage, or his relatives and closest aides.

Many workers who knew him well at the time of his personal "triumph" told me about Stalin's exceptional mistrustfulness. A.N. Shelepin told me that the General Secretary demanded from Beriya a special check on the

people in his bodyguard, and Beriya "played up" to this: he periodically "found" a "spy" or "terrorist" in Stalin's entourage. For example, Beriya once gave orders for the arrest of an office cleaner, one Fedoseyev, and his wife, for preparing to commit an "act of terrorism." Beriya was the only person who dared to enter Stalin's rooms without being summoned. When the premises were being cleaned the people who monitored the work of the cleaning woman were changed. Even the drapes at the windows were cut short half a meter from the floor to prevent, god forbid, anyone from "hiding" there. No one knew where Stalin would sleep on any particular night—on the sofa in his office or in the small hall: the beds were ready for occupation on both places.

Even though stories are told by Beriya's people about several attempts on Stalin's life, I was unable to find any material on this subject in the material I examined during my work. But as he traveled out to his dacha in his armored car Stalin knew that each such trip was an entire operation to insure security along the route. Either Tukov or Starostin (in the Forties) always sat next to the driver Mitrokhin, ready at any moment, like the people in the accompanying vehicles, to "protect" Stalin from "terrorists." We recall that the leader had the habit of gazing intently into people's faces. If he did not like the "looks" of anyone, that person no longer worked for him.

Rulers who live in constant fear for their lives begin to suspect everyone. It is known that Alexander II, against whom several attacks were made (and finally the terrorists got him) began by degrees to become so painfully suspicious that, according to P. Kropotkin, on one occasion "he shot his own aide when the latter made a sharp movement, and the tsar thought that the officer wanted to kill him." And so, as we try to understand the inner world of a despot, which Stalin was, it is impossible when we consider his relations with other people not to take into account the excessive mistrustfulness that was natural to the "dominant personality." In his report to the 20th Congress Khrushchev emphasized that Stalin's extreme suspiciousness extended even to members of the Politburo. Perhaps he fully trusted only Vlasik and Poskrebyshev, yes, and perhaps Valentina Vasilyevna Istomina, his "housekeeper," who, as we have already said, went to his home soon after the death of the General Secretary's wife, while still a young woman. She would care for the old widower to the end of his days, trying to create for Stalin the warmth of a home, as far as it was possible. And he, a very hard-hearted man, nevertheless remarked many times on the simple but sincere concern that this woman had for him...

Late in 1936 Stalin received a report from Benes in Czechoslovakia that sharply revived the now calmed suspicion about Tukhachevskiy. According to V. Hagen, former associate in Kaltbrunn, in his book "The Secret Front," and also H. Hegner in his memoirs "The Reich Chancellery 1933-1945" and W. Churchill in his memoirs, Stalin "bit" at the document fabricated in Berlin that Tukhachevskiy and a number of other Red Army commander were "cooperating" with German general officers. In Kanaris' department they had skillfully made a facsimile of Tukhachevskiy's signature that Mikhail Nikolayevich had left in Berlin back in 1926 on a document that provided for technical cooperation with one of the German aviation companies.

The forgery suggested the idea that Tukhachevskiy had established secret links with representatives of the German military with the intention of overthrowing Stalin by force in the USSR. In Berlin they put on a performance with a fire and theft of documents that finally turned up in Prague. Yezhov reported the fire to Stalin and Voroshilov as follows:

"As an appendix to our report on the fire in the German War Ministry, I am sending detailed material on the event of the fire itself (on the night of 1-2 March 1937—author's note) and a copy of the report from the chief of the Gestapo commission on sabotage...

"General Commissar of State Security Yezhov."

Benes, the president of Czechoslovakia, probably with the best of intentions, gave instructions for the documents to be passed to Moscow. The new report greatly disturbed Stalin but he still limited himself merely to passing the document to Yezhov. The shadowing of Tukhachevskiy was intensified and they started to collect "material." Subsequent events evidently developed as related by B.A. Viktorov, former deputy chief military prosecutor. After the 20th Congress he led a specialist group of military prosecutors and investigators to rehabilitate innocent people repressed during the years of lawlessness and legal tyranny.

He offers many interesting facts in his notes. Leafing through the pages of the case of interrogator A.P. Radzivilovskiy, sentenced in 1957 for violation of the law, Viktorov's attention was caught by these lines in the testimony: "I worked in the NKVD administration in Moscow Oblast. Frinovskiy (one of Yezhov's deputies) called me and was interested in learning whether I had any cases on major military people. I answered that I was dealing with the case of former brigade commander Medvedev. Frinovskiy gave me an order: 'It is essential to have the picture of a large and deep plot in the Red Army whose exposure would play an enormous role and be of use to Yezhov for the Central Committee.' I accepted the task for execution. I was able—not immediately, of course—to get from Medvedev the necessary evidence about a plot in the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army. The evidence obtained was passed to Yezhov. He personally interrogated Medvedev. Medvedev told Yezhov and Frinovskiy that his evidence was made up. Then Yezhov ordered Medvedev to be made to return to his original testimony, by any means, and this was done. The record with Medvedev's testimony, obtained by physical force, was passed upward."

The arrest of Tukhachevskiy and other "conspirators" followed soon after this. And literally the day before it was reported to Stalin that Trotskiy in his latest statement had announced that "the dissatisfaction of the military with Stalin's diktat is putting on the agenda the possibility of action by the military." This was essentially an inflammatory statement by Trotskiy, who really was hoping that the military would act against Stalin. This statement sharply swung the mood of the mistrustful leader toward elimination by force of the "imminent conspiratorial abscess." Before reaching the final decision to arrest Tukhachevskiy—an extremely popular military leader among the people—Stalin listened to what Molotov, Voroshilov and Yezhov had to say, who added their own assessments and ideas. Molotov immediately checked the reports from abroad (by the way, to the end of his days Stalin's former closest associate insisted, as we have already said, that there was a plot); Voroshilov in general did not hide his long-standing dislike of Tukhachevskiy; and Yezhov was eager through this case to raise himself even higher. And naturally they all supported this scenario. On the same day, after some hesitation Stalin took another step that acutely sharpened the bloody orgy and had serious consequences later. The members and candidate members of the Central Committee were directed to vote (again by roll-call) on the following document:

"On the basis of information unmasking All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee member Rudzutak and All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee candidate member Tukhachevskiy in involvement in an anti-Soviet rightist-Trotskiyite conspiratorial bloc and espionage against the USSR for fascist Germany, the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee Politburo puts to the vote the proposal to expel Rudzutak and Tukhachevskiy from the party and pass the case to the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs.

"I. Stalin.
All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee Secretary."

The vote was unanimous in favor of adoption. No one doubted, no one defended the military leader. People who knew Tukhachevskiy quite well from the civil war, blindly and on faith accepted the report of the provocateurs and did not even try to hear what the marshal himself might have to say; the inertia of lawlessness was now already too strong. No one wanted to know, or dared to ask, exactly what was meant by the phrase "on the basis of information unmasking..." Some of those voting went even further than the proposal written by Stalin. S.M. Budennyy, for example, wrote on his ballot paper: "Unconditional 'for.' These scoundrels must be punished. 25 May." As in most other cases, Mekhlis underlined the word "for" several times. Neither Voroshilov nor Yegorov—Tukhachevskiy's fellow servicemen—nor Khrushchev nor Mikoyan, who subsequently condemned this act of lawlessness, could at that time find the courage not to write that fatal "for." And again—how many times now!—Stalin left his ballot paper unmarked. Either he identified himself totally with the Politburo or he was taking care that fewer of his own tracks would be left for history. Or was it perhaps that the General Secretary had come to believe that what remains behind in our history is always sacred and inviolable?

Stalin had known Tukhachevskiy for a long time, since the civil war. He remembered that he had commanded the 5th Army, and the order of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic that was issued on 28 December 1919, in which the following was stated:

"Commander of the 5th Army Mikhail Nikolayevich Tukhachevskiy is awarded the Distinguished Golden Sword for personal bravery, broad initiative, energy, fine management and knowledge displayed during the victorious actions of the Red Army in the East culminating in the capture of Omsk."

Stalin could remember their joint work on the Southern and Western fronts. And the victorious offensive at the front in July; and the failure at Warsaw, for which not Tukhachevskiy alone was to blame; Stalin had been a member of the Military Council on the Southwestern Front and, as we know, had delayed the movement of reinforcements.

Walking up and down in front of his desk in his office, in a moment of leisure Stalin could recall how several days previously, on the eve of the central committee resolution on Tukhachevskiy's arrest, he had invited Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov, Chubar and Mikoyan to a performance of the Uzbek State Music Theater's "Farkhad and Shirin." After the performance everyone had agreed that it had been a brilliant expression of the rise of socialist culture. Opening the latest edition of PRAVDA in the morning Stalin read with pride about the glorious new deeds that Soviet people had done "under his leadership." Late in May the polar explorers led by O.Yu. Shmidt had reached the North Pole and set up a drifting station; the 1st Congress of Soviet Architects would soon open (it was, finally, time to build projects worthy of the times). Although mathematics was a subject far from the General Secretary's interests, the work of Academician I.M. Vinogradov was obviously glorifying Soviet science as fast as he wrote it. Even the small reports about reducing the price of toilet soap by 15 percent was somehow inwardly moving. How right that unknown poet had been when he wrote "country on the march." But they were interfering with that march, trying not simply to "send it off course" but even halt the stream at whose head he marched. People like Tukhachevskiy were dangerous not only for him—Stalin—but for the entire country. How many wolves to feed... Yes, royal blood could not be replaced with proletarian blood.

And now it is midnight and his appointed meeting with Yezhov, who is to report on the investigation in the Tukhachevskiy case. And as hears the report on the course of the interrogation of M.N. Tukhachevskiy, I.E. Yakir, I.P. Uborevich, A.I. Kork, R.P. Eydeman, B.M. Feldman, V.M. Primakov and V.K. Putina, Stalin reflects on the most junior of all five marshals of the Soviet Union. On the one hand he has always given Tukhachevskiy's high degree of professional competence its due, his original strategic thinking and undoubted talent as a theoretician. On the other hand, even back in the civil war he had entertained some mistrust in his heart for the "bourgeois military expert, and he has disliked the marshal for his independence and boldness of opinion, and known about his quite strained relations with Voroshilov. The General Secretary also remembers Ya. Gamarnik's note to him, Stalin, in which the chief of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army Main Political Directorate wrote:

"Just now, immediately before my departure, I have obtained a copy of a letter from Comrade Tukhachevskiy addresses to you about the military councils of the districts and I have therefore had no opportunity to set forth my ideas on the question it raises. While agreeing in the note that the military councils should remain in the districts, Tukhachevskiy is proposing that the chiefs of the political directorates be removed...

I consider Comrade Tukhachevskiy's to be absolutely wrong and harmful both in peacetime and particularly in wartime.

"Ya. Gamarnik."

At that moment Stalin supported Gamarnik. He remembered an even earlier note from Tukhachevskiy that Voroshilov had shown to the General Secretary. In it the first deputy people's commissar for defense had offered his own definition of the categories of military science: "maneuver in depth," "frontal attack," "flanking movement," "meeting engagement" and so forth. At that time Stalin had silently listened to Voroshilov's disagreement with the "theorizing" of Tukhachevskiy, to whom the people's commissar had wanted to respond with a special letter. That letter is retained in the archives. It ends with these words from the people's commissar:

"I advise you to make an end to your extraordinary literary passion and direct all your knowledge and energy toward practical work. This will be of immediate and tangible help in the business to which the party has set you and me.

"With communist greetings,

"K. Voroshilov."

The people's commissar for defense had reacted adversely to Tukhachevskiy's theoretical research, yet again underscoring his, Voroshilov's, poor education and his attraction for the old conservative forms of military development.

It was difficult for Tukhachevskiy to count on Voroshilov to assess him at his worth, or that he would imperceptibly transfer him to a less important post. That is what happened: in May 1937 Tukhachevskiy was appointed commander of the Volga Military District, but he was there only 2 weeks.

Stalin had to admit that in terms of intellectual development, theoretical training and freshness of thought Tukhachevskiy was considerably superior to his chief, although that often happens...

It is difficult to ascertain exactly what Yezhov reported, but in his "The Revolution Betrayed" Trotskiy again alludes to it. In one of his interviews in Oslo that "citizen without a visa" said the following: "Not everyone in the Red Army is devoted to Stalin. They still remember me there." And Trotskiy was personally well acquainted with Tukhachevskiy... And Stalin forced himself increasingly to believe that the "fascist plot" in the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army did exist and that it was a real threat.

During his next report Yezhov said that finally "the conspirators had confessed." Stalin now had every reason to remember the lines from Psalm 37 of the Psalter: "And I said: 'my enemies shall not be exalted over me.'" Over him, him, not the people!

Stalin ordered a closed trial as quickly as possible, without delay. "Execute them all." On his desk lay an open copy of the journal BOLSHEVIK with an article by M. Tukhachevskiy entitled "The New Field Regulations for the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army"—there had not been time to "discard" the material from the journal because events had moved so quickly.

Early in June, before the trial, at the People's Commissariat Military Council they heard reports from Yezhov and Voroshilov on the discovery of a counterrevolutionary fascist organization. The reports said that the conspirators had been operating for a long time and that their activity was closely linked to German military circles. It was claimed that they had been making preparations to destroy party and country leaders and with help from fascist Germany they had intended to seize power. Members of the government attended the meetings of the Military Council and what went on at those meetings was immediately reported to Stalin. The fate of Tukhachevskiy and his "people" was predetermined. Less than 2 weeks after their arrest, on 11 June 1937, the secret trial took place. The press report that the case of those arrested had been turned over to the court appeared only on the day of the trial, and by 12 June, the following day, the sentence was made public.

The court was convened with the utmost haste and was monstrously illegal. It went into session at 0900 hours and sentence was passed soon after dinner. The court was composed as follows: the chairman was that same army military jurist V.V. Ulrikh, who was well accustomed with these cases, along with marshals S.M. Budennyy and V.K. Blyukher, army commanders 1st rank B.M. Shaposhnikov and I.P. Belov, commanders 2nd rank Ya.I. Alksins, P.Ye. Dybenko and N.D. Kashirin, and divisional commander Ye.I. Goryachev. The defendants were tried without defending counsel and without right of appeal, as provided for by the law of 1 December 1934.

Tukhachevskiy, Yakir, Uborevich, Putna, Primakov, Kork, Eydeman and Feldman were seated opposite their combat comrades. Everyone knew everyone else very well. It is scarcely possible that any of the members of the court believed that these were "conspirators and spies" sitting before them. I think that Tukhachevskiy and his comrades may have entertained some hope in their hearts: the court was made up of people with whom they had served for 20 years under the same banners and must consider not only the call of justice but also the traditions of combat comradeship. But this did not happen...

The chief of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army Political Directorate Ya.B. Gamarnik was also to have been present in the court. Either as a defendant or... as a member of the court. This is what his daughter Viktoriya Yanovna Kochneva told me about the final days of Yan Borisovich:

"I was 12 years old at the time. I remember that father fell ill late in May: first he felt that he could not cope, and then that he was suffering from another bout of diabetes. My mother later told me that he knew that Tukhachevskiy had been arrested on 26 May, and Uborevich and Yakir a day later, right there on a train, along with other military leaders. On 30 May Blyukher came to see my father—they had known each other well in the Far East—and they talked about something for a long time, Father then told mother that it had been proposed that he would be a member of the court in the case against Tukhachevskiy. 'But how can I!" he cried. 'For I know that they are not enemies... Blyukher said that if I refuse they will arrest me.'

"On 31 May Blyukher again came. Then some other people came and sealed father's safe. They told him that he had been relieved of his duties and that his deputies Ovsepyan and Bulin had been arrested. They ordered father to remain at home. As soon as the NKVD people had left we heard a shot from his office. When I ran in with my mother, it was all over..."

"I think," Viktoriya Yanovna continued, "that the shot was an answer to Stalin's proposals that he be a member of the tribunal to try his own combat comrades, a response to the lawlessness. At that time father could answer them in no other way. Mother was arrested and given 8 years as a wife who was an 'enemy of the people,' and then when she was in the camp she got another 10 years for 'cooperating with an enemy of the people.' I never saw my mother again, she died in the camp in 1943 according to the notification. They sent me to a children's home and when I achieved my majority they gave me 6 years as a "socially dangerous element." Then the exile started..."

The fate of the Gamarkin family was typical of many, many thousands of the relatives of innocent victims.

And what was the proof of the existence of the "military-fascist plot" that Ulrikh showed in court? He relied mainly on the contacts of the defendants with representatives of the armed forces in Germany. As we have already said, in 1926 Tukhachevskiy has led a Soviet military delegation to Berlin; Yakir had studied on General Staff courses in Germany in 1929; Kork had been a military attache. Many of them had met representatives of the German military command at diplomatic receptions, on maneuvers, and during the course of various negotiations, but all of them except Primakov resolutely denied any kind of "espionage links" with Germany. For example, Tukhachevskiy told the court: "The meetings and conversations with representatives of the German command were only of an official nature. And they all took place before Hitler came to power."

The defendants partly admitted the accusations of "wrecking," but not as deliberate actions but as shortcomings and omissions in combat training and the construction of military projects. One of the main arguments in support of the "wrecking" scenario was Tukhachevskiy's concept on the need for rapid formation of tank and mechanized formations by reducing the cavalry. Here, Ulrikh was actively helped by Budennyy.

Since the defendants had not corroborated the information at a preliminary hearing of the evidence, the chairman was all the time asking: "Do you corroborate the evidence given to you by the NKVD?" thus forcing the defendants to move into the channel fabricated before the trial.

It has now been established that the "full measure" of physical force was applied to all these eminent Soviet military leaders.

Finally, one last point in the indictment made it clear that the defendants had allegedly intended to eliminate Voroshilov in order to insure the success of the plot. Tukhachevskiy, Kork, Putna and Uborevich said that together with Gamarnik they had wanted to raise with the government the question of replacing the people's commissar, who in their opinion was unable to cope with his duties. Their openly expressed desire was assessed by the court as "conspiratorial activity." But essentially the defendants denied the filthy fantasies about "spying for

fascist Germany and making preparations for a counter-revolutionary coup." In their final statements Tukhachevskiy, Yakir, Kork and Uborevich spoke convincingly about their personal loyalty to the motherland, the people and the army, and they particularly emphasized their complete loyalty to "Comrade Stalin" and asked for clemency for possible errors and slips in their work.

Primakov's final statement sounded as a dissonance in the court. He essentially fully corroborated the official charges, stating that "all the conspirators were united under the banner of Trotskiy and adherence to fascism." He went on to say that he had named for the interrogator more than 70 people whom he personally knew to be "members of a military-fascist plot." The "chief" conspirators, he said, had a second motherland: Putna, Uborevich and Eydeman had relatives in Lithuania, Yakir had close relatives in Bessarabia, and Eydeman in America. Primakov obediently said everything that he had been told to say by the interrogators... Whereas the other defendants had been arrested less than 2 weeks before and had managed to maintain their strength of soul, Primakov, an honored hero of the civil war awarded three Orders of the Red Banner, had been in the torture chambers for more than a year. His will had finally been broken, and in an aloof and dispassionate manner the former corps commander said the monstrous things he had been told to say during his interrogation.

At that time only interrogators of a certain cast of mind could work in the NKVD system: heartless cynics and sadists who were ignorant of concepts such as conscience. Army general A.V. Gorbatov, who endured the Stalinist range of hell of earth, recalled that "I knew by chance that the name of my interrogator was Stolbunskiy. I do not know where he is now. If he is alive then I would like him to read these lines and feel my contempt for him. I think, however, that he knew it quite well even then... I can still hear Stolbunskiy's evil, sibilant voice in my ear, a voice that became hard when, helpless and bloodied as they carried me out: "Sign, sign!" I held out for two rounds of that torture, but when they started a third one I wanted to die!"

In the Tukhachevskiy "case" the interrogator, Ushakov (the same as Ushiminskiy), was distinguished for his handling of particularly important cases. In the explanations he offered to the rehabilitation commission following the 20th Congress, Ushakov writes: "Feldman was the first to be arrested. He categorically denied involvement in any kind of plot, even less against Voroshilov... I handled Feldman's case personally and as a result concluded that Feldman had links of friendship with Tukhachevskiy, Yakir and number of other top commanders... I had Feldman brought into the office and locked myself in with him and by the evening of 19 May he had signed a statement about a plot with the involvement of Tukhachevskiy, Yakir, Eydeman and others... Then they gave me Tukhachevskiy to interrogate, and on the following day he confessed. Almost without sleep I extracted more facts and more conspirators. Even on the day of the trial, early in the morning, I got additional 'evidence' from Tukhachevskiy about the involvement of Apanasenko and others in the plot."

Vyshinskiy "himself," who forced Tukhachevskiy to sign the words "I admit that I am guilty. I have no complaints" took part in one of his interrogations. But "complaints" and the appeals for mercy were written to Stalin, Molotov and Voroshilov by almost everyone.

Tukhachevskiy's comrades also underwent "energetic" treatment: intimidation, promises, threats against families, unrestrained force. During the interrogation it was instilled into the accused that only confession could save their lives...

Ulrikh and Yezhov visited Stalin before the sentence was passed. They reported on the course of the trial and the behavior of the defendants. Ulrikh obsequiously placed a draft of the sentence on the desk. Stalin did not look at it; he merely said "agreed." After a silence he asked:

"What did Tukhachevskiy say in his final statement?"

"He said, the skunk, that he was loyal to the motherland and to Comrade Stalin. He asked for clemency," Yezhov quickly replied. "But it was immediately apparent that he was playing some cunning game and had not been disarmed..."

"And what about the court? How did the members in attendance conduct themselves?"

"Budennyy was active... The members of the court were mainly silent. Alksins, Blyukher and, yes, I think Belov asked one or two questions..."

Right from the start Stalin had been suspicious of the composition of the court and now he had the chance to "look at" these people carefully. Apart from Budennyy and Shaposhnikov they were all soon arrested, and Army Commander 2nd Rank I.D. Kashirin (like two of his brothers) was taken literally after just a few days...

There was one other episode from the civil war that Stalin might have recalled in those days. Once after a meeting with S.S. Kamenev, where Tukhachevskiy and other commanders had to endure several unpleasant minutes because of the catastrophe at Warsaw,a junior front commander had said in a quiet, sad voice when they were making their farewells to Stalin: "My Fate cries out and makes each petty artery in this body as hardy as th'Nemean lion's nerve...."

Uncomprehending, Stalin looked at Tukhachevskiy. He smiled, and added: "That is what Hamlet said after his meeting with the ghost of his father..."

Stalin did not pursue his questions on the final statements of the accused about clemency—he did not like, as he put it, "to sentimentalize." They were all shot during the night of 12 June. Primakov too, even though he had been promised his life in exchange for the slander.

On the day that Tukhachevskiy and his "people" were tried the People's Commissar of Defense K.Ye. Voroshilov issued an order in which it was reported that from 1 through 4 June, with the participation of members of the government, the Military Council had convened under the people's commissariat (for the next 18 months it would be impossible to convene it because nearly all its members would have been repressed), which recognized the unmasking of "a foul counterrevolutionary military-fascist organization." Issue No 12 the journal BOLSHEVIK—already by 15 June! (no slips this time)—carried a leading article entitled "No Mercy for Spies and Traitors to the Motherland," which read as follows: "The sword of the dictatorship of the proletariat has smashed another gang of traitors and enemies. Neither the deep conspiratorial nature of their criminal activity nor all the experience gained in camouflaging intelligence agents was able to help Tukhachevskiy and company, who had had secreted themselves in the ranks of our glorious Red Army... Their ultimate goal, as is noted in the order of the USSR People's Commissar for Defense Marshal of the Soviet Union Comrade Voroshilov, was 'to liquidate by whatever means that might come to hand the Soviet system in our country, destroy Soviet power in it, overthrow the workers' and peasants' government and restore the yoke of the landowners and factory owners in the USSR...' Tukhachevskiy and company had gathered in our great country to play out the role being played by Franco, the sworn enemy of the Spanish people."

But the tragedy of reprisals against military personnel had not ended but only started. People of Mekhlis' type "worked" with might and main. Each of their telephone calls, telegrams and reports resulted in pain, victims and calumnies. Here, for example, are two telegrams from Mekhlis that we take from those tragic years:

"Moscow, People's Commissariat of Defense, Shchadenko. "Political Directorate of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, Kuznetsov.

"Chief of staff Lukin is a very doubtful man who has kept company with enemies and was associated with Yakir. Brigade commander Fedorov should have enough material on him. In my note on Antonyuk much attention was paid to Lukin. You will not be wrong if you remove Lukin immediately.

"Mekhlis. 27 July."

"To Comrade Stalin.

"I have dismissed 215 political workers and most of them have been arrested. But I have not yet completed the purge of the political apparatus, particularly at the lower level. I think that I cannot leave Khabarovsk since not even a rough draft of the makeup of the Komsomol has yet been drawn up...

"Mekhlis. 28 July."

The picture of the terror among the military appears even blacker from all these examinations of "rough drafts." With Stalin's approval Mekhlis and those like him "forged" the defeats of 1941 that brought millions of new victims. The lists of commanders and political workers who lost their heads not on the field of battle for the freedom our motherland but who perished during the course of the repressions read like a monstrous and dreadful obituary notice, insane, bitter and unending.

Following the death of Tukhachevskiy the brigade commander Medvedev was immediately shot, since after he had been broken he had provided the necessary testimony against the junior marshal. Like Yagoda before him, Yezhov started to cover his tracks. Most of the members of the Special Hearing, Tukhachevskiy's trial group, soon perished: Marshal Blyukher and army commanders Kashirin, Alksins, Belov and Dybenko. We have a letter from P. Dybenko that he managed to send to Stalin from Leningrad before his arrest. This is what he wrote the the General Secretary:

"Dear Comrade Stalin.

"By a decision of the Politburo and the Government it seems that I am an enemy of our motherland and the party. I am a living corpse, isolated politically. But why? for what? Is it because I knew that those Americans who visited Central Asia on an official government mission, with official representatives of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and the OGPU, are special agents? On the journey to Samarkand I never spent a single second alone with the Americans. I do not even speak the American language...

"With regard to the provocative statement by Kerenskiy that was carried in the White Guard press, to the effect that I was allegedly a German agent. Can it be that after 20 years of honest and loyal work for the motherland and the party the White Guard Kerenskiy could have got his revenge on me with his provocation? This is simply monstrous.

"Two notes that are in the possession of comrade Yezhov, written by employees at the 'Natsional' hotel, contain a certain portion of truth, which amounts to the fact that sometimes when acquaintances visited me at the hotel I permitted myself to take a drink with them. But I was no drunk.

"I allegedly selected the room next door to an embassy representative? This is one and same pleiad of monstrous provocations...

"I was supposed to have kulak attitudes toward the development of the kolkhozes? That nonsense can be dispelled by comrades Gorkin, Yusupov and Yevdokimov, with whom I have worked for the past 9 years...

"Comrade Stalin, I implore you to investigate this whole series of facts again and remove from me this shameful stain, which I do not deserve.

"P. Dybenko."

A few days after his letter Army Commander P. Dybenko, a member of the party since 1912 and former chairman of the Central Committee of the Baltic Fleet, was arrested, "condemned" and executed. His interrogators barely knew (by then the mechanism of violence was being filled with people who not only had no conscience but no memory either) that he was a legendary figure. When the Cossack general Krasnov was preparing to break out of Gatchina for Petrograd it was the revolutionary sailor Dybenko who was able to "talk them out of it" and turn them against the Provisional Government.

On Dybenko's letter Stalin just wrote "for Voroshilov." Neither the General Secretary nor the people's commissar had any wish to concern himself with the fate of an old Bolshevik, who, moreover, before his death had been forced to "condemn" Marshal of the Soviet Union Tukhachevskiy.

After the death of the most junior of the five marshals, two more were in line. Coming to believe in if not the presence then at least the possibility of a "military-fascist plot" against him, Stalin started to think: and who, now that Tukhachevskiy was gone, could lead it? He read one report sent to him by the deputy chief of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army Intelligence Directorate, Aleksandrovskiy, obtained from Germany, in which official German military circles had provided an evaluation of the business qualities of the Soviet army leaders. Berlin's opinion of Tukhachevskiy no longer interested him. They had written in the report that among "Russianized Germans" Blyukher was the most influential and authoritative of the Soviet military people; the German headquarters people had reported that Yegorov was a marshal who possessed "an analytical mind" and was a "strong military leader." And Stalin hardly had need of people like that—we know that with their servility and pedestrian thinking Voroshilov and Budennyy were more to his liking.

And again he remembered Trotskiy. Soon after the time when at the initiative of the General Secretary the ukase depriving Trotskiy of his soviet citizenship was adopted on 20 February 1932, the exile had responded with an open letter to the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. In particular Trotskiy had written there the following: "The opposition will walk over the ukase of 20 February like a worker walks over a puddle on the way to the factory." The letter had ended with an appeal: "Push Stalin aside!" Some time after this public appeal, in one of his speeches Trotskiy stated: "Even at the top, including the military top, there are people who are dissatisfied with Stalin and who support my call to 'Push Stalin aside.' There must be many such people there."

Now, with Tukhachevskiy gone, Stalin was thinking that four influential military leaders remained. He had no doubts about Voroshilov—all his life that man, whose career was based on legends and the past, and on him, Stalin, was personally high in Stalin's favor. Budennyy... A zealous campaigner, nothing else. Well, it was true that Yezhov was reporting that Budennyy had links with some foreigners, perhaps that should be looked into... No, they could not act against him. And so, Blyukher and Yegorov, whom the General Secretary knew well from the civil war; they had changed noticeably. And the Germans in Berlin were writing good things about them, and Voroshilov had been dissatisfied with Yegorov when he had been serving as chief of the General Staff. He would have to give that letter he had received from a communist about Yegorov to Yezhov to be checked out. And once again Stalin carefully read it through:

"To the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee, Comrade Stalin.

"I am convinced that a whole series of very important questions concerning the organization of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army and the operational-strategic use of our Armed Forces has been mistakenly resolved, and possibly in a harmful way. During the initial period of war this could entail major failures and numerous unnecessary casualties.

"I ask you, Comrade Stalin, to check up on the activity of Marshal Yegorov and his fitness to be the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army Chief of General Staff since he bears the actual responsibility for the errors permitted in the field of training for the operational-strategic use of our Armed Forces and their organizational structure.

"I know nothing of Comrade Yegorov's political past or present but his practical activity as chief of the General Staff gives grounds for doubt.

"Ya. Zhigur,
member of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) since 1912. 9 November 1937."

This letter had been written by Yan Matisovich Zhigur, a brigade commander and an officer in one of the departments of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army General Staff Academy. A former lieutenant in the tsarist army, he accepted the revolution without wavering, played an active part in the civil war, was twice

wounded, and had been awarded an Order of the Red Banner. The endless calls for vigilance and the bacchanalia of lawlessness, which for years had been the standard of life in those nightmare years, had pushed many honest people from the path. But this denunciation did not save Zhigur: he was arrested and executed in that same 1937.

Stalin ordered Poskrebyshev to inform Yezhov to pay attention to Yegorov, an old comrade of the "leader" at the front. Yezhov "checked" and "investigated" for a few months, the more so since yet another "paper" had come to hand. One of Yegorov's former fellow servicemen had been forced to write it about Yegorov, who had subsequently become a major Soviet military leader. The marshal's brother officer had remembered the following:

"In 1917, in November, at a conference of the 1st Army in Shtokmozgof, where I was a delegate, I heard a speech by Lt Col A.I. Yegorov, who was at that time a rightist social revolutionary, who in his speech called Comrade Lenin an adventurist and emissary of the Germans. All in all his speech amounted to a claim that the soldiers did not trust Lenin." Even though at that time the fate of the marshal had not yet been predetermined, the letter did confirm Yegorov's "harmful nature." In the narrow circle of the General Secretary, after discussing the results of the "investigation" with Molotov and Voroshilov they decided to expel Yegorov from the Central Committee and hand him over to the NKVD, the more so since yet another "compromising" factor had been revealed concerning his wife.

Between 28 February and 2 March the following resolution was adopted by a roll-call vote of the members of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee and Central Committee candidate members:

"In light of the fact that a personal confrontation with Comrade Yegorov has shown that Comrade Yegorov has turned out to be politically more involved with the arrested conspirators Belov, Gryaznov, Grinko and Sedyakin than could have been thought before this personal confrontation, and giving due consideration to the fact that his wife, nee Tseshkovskaya, with whom Comrade Yegorov has a very close relationship, has turned out to be a long-time Polish spy, which has become clear from her own testimony, the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee deems it necessary to expel Comrade Yegorov from his post as candidate member of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee.

"I. Stalin."

And again the decision was unanimous. Of course, the General Secretary's ballot paper remained "blank." And during the civil war Stalin had on more than one occasion eaten with A.I. Yegorov from a peasant's tureen and covered themselves with the same army greatcoat. But all that had been long ago, and now held no significance for the "leader."

One more "suspicious" marshal remained—Vasiliy Konstantinovich Blyukher, possibly, to be objective, the most illustrious military leader of the prewar period. He had five (!) orders of the Combat Red Banner, one of which was the first ever awarded. One of his orders of the Red Star was also the first one ever, awarded to Blyukher immediately after the order was established. Blyukher was also among the first to be awarded two Orders of Lenin...

Stalin had taken a dislike to Blyukher long before during the course of the well known events in the Far East, when the Japanese militarists had seized two Soviet hills—Bezymyannaya and Zaozernaya. At that time the people's commissar had given the order to destroy the invaders. However, there had been a hitch in complying with the order: the commander did not rush headlong to carry out his instructions but made careful preparations. Blyukher, who was commanding the Independent Red Banner Far East Army, was called on the direct line to talk with Stalin. The archives testify that the conversation was eloquent and short:

"Stalin: Tell me Blyukher, why is the order from the people's commissar of defense to use the air force to bomb all of our territory taken by the Japanese, including Zaozernaya hill, not being carried out?

"Blyukher: I have to report that the air force is ready to fly. The mission is being delayed because of bad weather conditions. I have this very minute ordered Rychagov to disregard everything and get the aircraft into the air and attack.... The planes are taking off now but I fear that we shall inevitably cause casualties to our own units as well as to the Korean villages in this bombing raid.

"Stalin: Tell me honestly, Comrade Blyukher, do you really want to bomb the Japanese? If you do not, say so candidly, as becomes a communist. And if you do want to do it, then I would think that you should go there immediately.

I cannot understand your fear of bombing the Korean population, nor your fears that the air force will be unable to carry out its duty because of the fog. Who forbade you not to cause casualties among the Korean population under the conditions of a military encounter with the Japanese?.. What is a little cloudiness for a Bolshevist air force if it really wants to defend the honor of its motherland! I await your answer.

"Blyukher: The air force has been ordered to take off and the first group will be airborne at 1120 hours—the fighters. Rychagov promises to have the attack planes in the air by 1300 hours. In one-and-a-half hours Mazepov

and I will be flying, and if Bredinskiy goes earlier we shall fly to Voroshilov. Your instructions are being executed and we are carrying them out with Bolshevist precision."

Mekhlis, sent to the East by Stalin, had heated up the leadership in Moscow with his reports compromising Blyukher. It was not fortuitous that, speaking on the direct line with Mazepov and knowing that Blyukher was sick, he asked as follows:

Voroshilov: Comrade Mazepov, is Bacchus involved in the marshal's illness or not?

Mazepov: Let me answer that for the last 3 days I have had no grounds for claiming that this process of the illness has anything to do with Bacchus. There were two occasions during the course of dinner when he asked for cognac to be brought to the table, but he drank only two glasses, no more. I have answered everything to the point in this matter...

Dissatisfied with Blyukher's actions, Stalin soon summoned him to Moscow. The General Secretary did not want to talk with him. For some time the marshal was not at work, and then on 22 October 1938 he was arrested. The order for the arrest was signed by Yezhov, who himself only had weeks before he was sent to the place where he had sent thousands of others...

Blyukher was pushed into the machinery of repression when its rate of revolution was already slowing down. The November resolution of the USSR Council of People's Commissars and All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee noted the presence of gross violations of legality and of procedure for conducting investigations. Stalin and his associates, who had stirred up the wave of repressions that for 2 years had rampaged about the country, must have sensed how destructive their actions were. But in the official reports and speeches the entire bacchanalia was called a "great Stalinist victory over the Trotskiyite-fascist conspirators and wreckers." Beriya, who was now leading the investigation in the Blyukher case, ignored the resolution.

The illustrious marshal was interrogated for several days, with demands that he confess his involvement in a "military-fascist plot." Blyukher held out with exceptional courage and completely denied everything. Who knows, perhaps when they tortured him the marshal remembered his participation in the illegal trial of Tukhachevskiy as a member of the Special Hearing. Although Blyukher's part in the trial had been expressed by his silence... But he had not tried to give his conscience a chance. And now he was himself in the hands of Beriya, at that time a relatively unknown person.

According to the testimony of B.A. Viktorov, who conducted the investigation in this case, when they saw Blyukher for the last time on 5 and 6 November they were not sure that it was him because he had been beaten beyond recognition. His face was a solid bloody pulp, and one eye was torn out. Evidently on the eve of the great holiday the inquisitor Beriya's had wanted to complete his black deed. On 9 November 1938 yet another Marshal of the Soviet Union died from inhuman beatings in Beriya's torture chambers. But he did not break and he did not sign any monstrous cock-and-bull stories.

The blade of the guillotine of lawlessness had by that time dispatched thousands of eminent military figures and political workers. Among them were I.N. Dubovoy, Ya.K. Berzin, M.D. Velikanov, Ye.I. Kovtyukh, I.F. Fedko, I.S. Unshlikht, A.S. Bulin, G.A. Osepyan, M.P. Amelin and many, many others.

I have before me several volumes containing the lists of repressed military leaders: name, rank, duties, when died, awards... Most commanders are relatively young—the flower of the officer corps that as a rule had been through the civil war. In order to gain a better sense of the eternal pain resulting from Stalin's madness let us open a page at random and remember the names of those who perished, not in the fighting against fascism but at the "leader's" will. Here are two pages from the letter "K":

"Kalmykov, Mikhail Vasilyevich, corps commander. Commander of the 20th Rifle Corps. Awards: Order of Lenin, Order of the Red Banner (two). Shot in 1937.

"Karev, German Stepanovich, brigade commander. Commander of the 135th Rifle Machinegun Brigade. Convicted and shot in 1937.

"Kassin, Grigoriy Ustinovich, division commander. Commander of the 45th Rifle Corps. Awards: Order of the Red Banner (three). Convicted and shot in 1938.

"Kirichenko, Ivan Grigoryevich, brigade commander. Commander of the 23rd Cavalry Division. Awards: Order of Lenin, Order of the Red Banner (two). Convicted in 1937 and shot.

"Knyagnitskiy, Pavel Yefimovich, division commander. Commandant of the Kiev fortified region. Awards: Order of the Red Banner (two), Order of the Red Star. Convicted and shot in 1937.

"Kozhanov, Ivan Kuzmich, Flag Officer 2nd Rank. Commander of the Black Sea Naval Forces (sic—author's note). Convicted and shot in 1937.

"Kossogov, Ivan Dmitriyevich, corps commander. Commander of the 4th Cossack Corps. Awards: Order of the Red Banner (two). Convicted and shot in 1937.

"Kozhanskiy, Vladimir Stanislavovich, division commander. Commander of the 5th Heavy Bombing Air Corps. Awards: Order of the Red Banner. Convicted and shot in 1937.

"Krasnov, Yevgeniy Vasilyevich, divisional commissar. Deputy chief of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army Directorate for Command and Chief Personnel. Convicted and shot in 1937.

"Kuybyshev, Nikolay Vladimirovich, corps commander. Commander of the Transcaucasus Military District. Awards: Order of the Red Banner (four). Convicted and shot in 1938.

"Kutyakov, Ivan Semenovich, corps commander. Deputy commander of the Volga Military District. Awards: Order of the Red Banner (three). Convicted and shot in 1937.

"Kuchinskiy, Dmitriy Aleksandrovich, division commander. Chief of the General Staff Academy. Convicted and shot in 1937.

"Kutateladze, Georgiy Nikolayevich, division commander. Commander of the 9th Rifle Corps. Convicted and shot in 1937.

"Kruk, Iosif Mikhaylovich, brigade commander. Sector chief in the Chemical Troops Headquarters. Convicted and shot in 1937.

"Kireyev, Georgiy Petrovich, flag officer 1st rank. Commander of the Pacific Fleet. Awards: Order of the Red Banner. Convicted and shot in 1937.

"Kork, Avgust Mikhaylovich, army commander 2nd rank.. Commandant of the Military Academy imeni M.V. Frunze. Convicted and shot in 1937.

"Korin, Fedor Yakovlevich, corps commissar. Chief of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army Intelligence Directorate. Convicted and shot in 1937.

"Kashirin, Nikolay Dmitriyevich, army commander 2nd rank. Chief of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army Combat Training Directorate. Awards: Order of the Red Banner (two). Convicted and shot in 1937.

"Keyris, Romuald Isidorovich, brigade commander. Aide to the commander of the 61st Rifle Division. Convicted and shot in 1937.

"Klochko, Ivan Gavrilovich, brigade commander. Awards: Order of the Red Banner. Convicted and shot in 1937.

"Kozhenvnikov, Aleksandr Timofeyevich, division commander. Deputy commander of the Ural Military District. Awards: Order of the Red Banner (two). Convicted and shot in 1938..."

I have not the strength to continue this sorrowful list, for just one letter of the alphabet, but the names of the innocent victims go on and on: Kalinin, Kalnin, Kalvan, Kalpus, Kakchelari, Kaptsevich, Karpov, Karmalyuk... And no end is in sight. How many lives so tragically lost!

The lists of these and many thousands of other military people all went through the hands of Stalin, Voroshilov and other leaders. What monstrous callousness they must have possessed to believe the barbarous and delirious denunciations and reports!

The blow struck against the armed force was very severe: Hitler's intelligence services and the White Guaranteed emigres could scarcely have foreseen that their provocative grains would have fallen on such a fertile soil of suspiciousness, mistrust and cruelty. Virtually all the deputy commissars for defense were destroyed, along with most members of the People's Commissariat for Defense Military Council and almost all district and army commanders. According to the figures available to us and the calculations we have made, we may conclude that during 1938-1939 up to 55 percent of the command and political staffs of the army and navy perished, from regimental commander up. During the Great Patriotic War our army lost (killed, died from wounds, taken prisoner, missing in action, repressed) about 1,000 generals. Stalin and his machinery of terror mowed down many more commanders and political workers who because of their posts were on an equal footing with the generals... In all about 43,000 people in the command staffs were repressed. Given these kinds of losses, in any war an army's combat capacity will be seriously impaired. An army commander, for example, cannot be trained like a platoon commander on a quick 6-month course; long years of service and training are required. And the promotion base was "thinned out" to the extreme. On the eve of a major war Stalin and his associates had created the objective prerequisites for its extremely difficult beginning; the innocent victims of the "military slaughter" in 1937-1938 would result in even greater losses at the front of the Great Patriotic War.

The Military Council under the People's Commissariat of Defense convened late in November 1938. In his report Voroshilov announced the terrible figures:

"During 1937-1938 we 'purged' the Red Army of about 40,000 people. In 1938 alone more than 100,000 men were promoted and assigned to new duties! Huge changes have taken place in the army leadership." Of the several dozen members of the Military Council only 10 of the previous composition remained. It is not difficult to imagine what had been going on in the districts!

In their reports in March 1938 in Moscow the commander of the Kiev Military District S.K. Timoshenko and member of the Military Council N.S. Khrushchev reported, as if reporting a major success, that the "enemies had been purged" from the troops in the

district, and that over the previous year 2,922 commanders had been expelled from the troops, of whom 1,066 had been arrested, and that as a result "Trotskiyite-Bukharinite elements have been liquidated" and the might of the district troops had grown.

Could people not see the consequences of this madness? Many did, but they said nothing about it aloud. True, not everyone was silent: even in those cruel times there were people who tried to give their conscience a chance. I have before me from the archives a letter from Col S.P. Kolosov to the people's commissar of defense K.Ye. Voroshilov. It states in particular:

"Two commanders meet on a tramcar: so how are things? We have a 'Mamayevo slaughter'; so-and-so has been arrested, and so-and-so and so forth. Now I am afraid to say one word to the other. You say something, you make a mistake, and now it seems you are an enemy of the people. Cowardice has become a normal phenomenon...

"Look at the figures and see how many you have dismissed from the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army in 1937, and you will see the bitter truth.

"You can call me a Trotskiyite panicmonger if you like, enemy of the people and so forth. I am no enemy but I do believe that by doing this things will get out of hand...

"Kolosov. 5 December 1937."

We do not, unfortunately, know the fate of S.P. Kolosov, but it can be predicted with a fair amount of certainty.

As one returns to the sorrowful pages of our history, again and again the question comes up: how could such an atmosphere of cruelty, total disregard for the law, and the excessive suspiciousness that untied the hands of so many scoundrels have been created?! Does not everything that happened testify to some special "strength" that Stalin possessed as he led this cadre pogrom? And how mocking the words of the General Secretary to Chkalov sound today, that "a person is more precious than a machine." The outstanding flier did not live to see the days that dawned from the hypocrisy of the leader; on 15 December 1938 Chkalov died testing a new aircraft.

In fact, how was Stalin's "strength" displayed? For what he caused was a social cataclysm, perhaps the most painful and tragic in our history. Reflecting on these questions one comes gradually to the conclusion that Stalin's "strength" lay not in himself, in his intellect or will or malicious purpose of cruelty but in his creation and use of an obedient state and party apparatus, without which he was nothing. With the help of this machinery he gradually succeeded in shaping the kind of system of relations in society in which his word, directive, order or instructions could result in a chain reaction in the actions of thousands and even millions of people who accepted these signals on faith.

When he had attained total autocracy Stalin realized that maintaining such a position would require further improvements in the apparatus—party, state and, as they then said, punitive. With its help Stalin was able to manipulate the public consciousness, initiate political and cultural campaigns, cut the cloth of history, and establish the foundations of a "new" world view whose center must be he and his ideas and that must set goals that would be perceived as a divine revelation. And he had no doubt that the apparatus would supplant the people as a system. This distorted view of the world did not simply impoverish socialist ideals but objectively weakened their attractiveness and ultimately sowed the seeds of doubt about their true nature.

Reinforcing the temple of personality cult did not, the way Stalin understood it, contradict the ideals of socialism. It was, he thought, like having a right to interpret those high ideals. But he forgot Marx and Engels, who, criticizing the content of Carlile's theory on the rights of geniuses and leader to dominate, perspicaciously remarked that the "new era" in which the genius ruled differed from the old era mainly in that the lash imagines itself to be a genius. Stalin could not manage without the lash. But now so many people had been flogged to death with that "lash" that someone else was needed to wield it.

Stalin's Monster

The violence reached its height at the beginning of 1938. Stalin was receiving increasing numbers of reports about the catastrophic situation with cadres at particular factories, on the railroads, and in the people's commissariats. Arrests were made to "unmask" new "accomplices"; the possibility of promotion had opened the door to the careerists; new denunciations were being made all the time that sometimes involved revenge for repressions against relatives and close ones... The situation began to go increasingly out of control. Some time in the summer of 1938 Stalin was making preparations to carry out his own kind of favorite scenario in one case, namely, replacing the executors and making them responsible for the "distortions" and "abuses" and "excesses of authority."

When Stalin looked more closely at Yezhov, a candidate member of the Politburo, it turned out that he was a total intellectual and moral cipher. But by then the press had already created around Yezhov an aura of "talented Chekist," "Stalin's most loyal student," "a man who sees through people." Even the well-known political commentator Mikhail Koltsov had described this monstrous moral pygmy in PRAVDA as "the wonderful unbending Bolshevik Yezhov, who day and night, without leaving his desk, swiftly untangles and cuts the threads of the fascist conspiracy."

Stalin very quickly found out with disgust that Yezhov was a man totally devoid of any kind of political or moral principles, and on top of everything else was a drunkard. The General Secretary was not repulsed by Yezhov's extreme cynicism, or by his evil and cruelty (the people's commissar sometimes conducted interrogations himself)—Stalin knew many such people—but he could not endure a weak-willed man in his own entourage. And he was deeply convinced that alcoholism was the visiting card of a weak will.

The people from his retinue whom he particularly valued—Molotov, Kaganovich, Zhdanov, Voroshilov, Andreyev, Khrushchev, Poskrebyshev, Mekhlis—possessed, quite apart from their loyalty to the "leader," enough will to express this loyalty. The General Secretary had arrested someone from among the close family members of almost all those closest to him. Yes, it was precisely Stalin himself who had arrested them since neither Yezhov nor Beriya would ever decide to take such a step without his approval. In such a situation whoever might try to protect his own relatives or close ones (Kalinin, Molotov, Kaganovich, Poskrebyshev and others) would immediately show lack of political will. And they all knew that Stalin would not tolerate that.

But now it was a different matter: the next "scapegoat" was needed, and Stalin made ready the bloodthirsty pygmy alcoholic for this role. As always, the appointment of Beriya as Yezhov's deputy had been made with an eye to the future. Already in September-October 1938, although Yezhov still formally held his post, Beriya was in fact already managing the NKVD apparatus. In October 1938 several denunciation reports examined by the USSR Supreme Court Military Collegium and signed by V.V. Ulrikh, had already been addressed, true, without any indication of the post, to "commissar of state security 1st rank Beriya." Yezhov was relieved of his duties as people's commissar of internal affairs on 7 December 1938. He appeared briefly once more alongside Stalin, as people's commissar of water transport, at the 22 January 1939 meeting of mourning devoted to the 15th anniversary of Lenin's death, after which he literally dissolved. It is known that Yezhov was executed, but when or where, or what accusation was made against him, no one knows to this day. However, the questions "when?" and "where?" should not be asked in such cases.

By the end of the year, with Stalin's blessing Beriya was totally busy at his "work." His first act was to conduct a purge of "Yezhov's cadres." Evil figures such as Frinovskiy, Zakovskiy and Berman, who had carried out their dark deeds under Yagoda, were condemned and shot. They were replaced by people like Merkulov and Kobulov, Goglidze and Tsanavi, Rukhadze and Kruglov, who were distinguished by their special loyalty to their new patron.

Why did Stalin choose Lavrentiy Pavlovich Beriya? Why did that man so quickly gain the special trust of the all-powerful party general secretary? How could it happen that this adventurist achieved such a high degree of power so quickly?: after a few years he would become a member of the Politburo, first deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers, a marshal of the Soviet Union, a hero of the Soviet Union.

Stalin had first met Beriya sometime in 1929 or 1930 during his treatment at Tskhaltubo. Beriya, who was at that time chief of the State Political Administration in the Transcaucasus, had been in charge of security for the General Secretary at the resort. Stalin conversed several times with this man, who was unattractive even outwardly, but capable of instantly understanding the leader's wishes.

At the beginning of his career Beriya had make skillful use of the acquaintance of his wife Nina Gegechkori (and her brother, a well-known revolutionary) with G. Ordhzhonikidze. But Sergo had very quickly "seen through" this adventurist and subsequently entertained an extremely hostile and guarded attitude toward Beriya's advance. Beriya also had serious opposition in the persons of many honest Bolsheviks who knew him well. Thus, for example, the well-known Cheka-OGPU-NKVD associate Tita Illarionovich Lordkipanidze, tried to open their eyes to this vampire in Moscow. The way it ended up, however, was that at Stalin's suggestion Lordkipanidze was relieved of his post as people's commissar of internal affairs in the Transcaucasus, and in 1937 Beriya eliminated him. And in general Beriya's entire upward path was strewn with numerous victims.

Beriya's grasp of things, his imperiousness and decisiveness, and his outstanding knowledge of the state of affairs in the Transcaucasian republics made a strong impression on Stalin. Yes, they did talk to Stalin (L. Kartvelishvili, apparently) about Beriya's dark past—his links with the Musavatisty and Dashnaks during the civil war—and they emphasized the extreme careerist inclinations of the chief of the State Political Administration in the Transcaucasus. But in certain cases Stalin considered such facts in a biography to be positive—such people would always be, as it were, on the hook. Vyshinskiy, that former Menshevik who had actually signed an order for Lenin's arrest, and now was trying so hard—he could go! Or Mekhlis, also a former Menshevik—now no longer loyal to him, Stalin.

Beriya's July 1935 report "On the Question of the History of the Bolshevist Organizations in the Transcaucasus," published first in the press and then separately as a book, had made an impression on the General Secretary. There, Beriya had "unmasked" A. Yenukidze as a falsifier of history and, the main thing, had shown Stalin's special and exclusive role in the revolutionary movement in the Transcaucasus. Of course, the "leader" saw many strained interpretation, factual inaccuracies and improvisations in the report, but the author's desire to reflect in higher relief Stalin's place in the history of the Bolshevization of that area impressed him positively.

It was precisely the General Secretary who in October 1931 achieved Beriya's transfer to party work (as second secretary of the Transcaucasus Kraykom), and, again at his suggestion, a few months later Beriya became first secretary. True, in order to do this it had been necessary to remove Kartvelishvili, Orakhelashvili, Yakovlev and Davdariani, who had opposed Stalin's candidate, from the Transcaucasus. In a few years, in the opinion of the General Secretary, Beriya had brought "order" to the Transcaucasus. Stalin was pleased when at the plenums in 1937 and 1938 all of Beriya's rejoinders were successful and in the same vein as the thinking and statements of the General Secretary himself.

Stalin could remember (he never did suffer from poor memory) how Beriya had conducted himself at the notorious February-March (1937) Central Committee Plenum.

"How were you able to take Vardanyan when we kicked him out of the Transcaucasus?" the future people's commissar of internal affairs had thrown at Yevdokimov, secretary of the Azov-Black Sea party organization, after he had spoken. "Why have you promoted Asilov when we have expelled him from the party?"

Or take another of his statements:

"Complying with Comrade Stalin's instructions on work with cadres, we unmasked seven members of the Georgian Communist Party Central Committee and two members of the Tbilisi Gorkom. Last year we arrested 1,050 Trotskiyite-Zinovyevites."

The wave of repressions that would later engulf the entire country had only just started, but Beriya was anticipating events.

Nevertheless, in the interests of fairness it must be said that at that time still very few people realized Beriya's "potential." People linked his appointment directly with the 17 November 1938 All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee and USSR Council of People's Commissars decree "On Arrests, Examination by the Prosecutor's Office and Conduct of Investigations"; Beriya became people's commissar of internal affairs a few weeks after the document was adopted.

Initially things, as it were, died down. Following the 18th Party Congress, some of those who had been condemned even though innocent were rehabilitated. But compared to the total number of people thrown into the prisons and shot it was simply a cosmetic operation. No matter how blame may be shifted onto Beriya, acknowledging that the mass acts had been unlawful would necessarily cast a shadow on Stalin himself, and that was going too far—the General Secretary could not allow that.

The unlawful acts were set to rights primarily for persons whose activity was connected with defense. On Stalin's instructions some of the commanders whom they had been unable to slander totally and toward whom they still entertained an ambiguous attitude, and also a number of scientists and designers, were returned from the prisons and from exile. Among them we might name K. Rokossovskiy, K. Meretskov, A. Gorbatov, I. Tyulenev, S. Bogdanov, G. Kholostyakov, A. Berg, A. Tupolev, L. Landau, V. Myasishchev, N. Polikarpov and certain other sons of the motherland who had played important roles in its defense. Many, like the well-known designer S.P. Korolev, had to wait immeasurably longer (Korolev was freed only in 1944), and most of the people who survived, enduring all the physical and moral tortures of hell, were given their liberty only after the then distant 20th Party Congress.

Even though the madness in the country in 1937 and 1938 was not again repeated on such large scales, the punitive organs never found themselves "out of work." Placed beyond party control and in fact serving Stalin personally, they were a worthy adjunct to, no, not personality cult! but to personality tyranny. All honest and worthy people who preserved the traditions of F.E. Dzerzhinskiy were, as we have already said, removed from the NKVD or destroyed. According to the figures we have at our disposal, by the end of the Thirties 23,000 communists who had worked in the NKVD organs or who somehow tried to slow down the flywheel of violence, had perished.

When they talk about the abuses and crimes of those years people sometimes place the emphasis only on the personalities of Yagoda, Yezhov and Beriya, or Vyshinskiy and Ulrikh. There is no doubt that these degenerates and consummate criminals were the ultimate in spiritual and moral decay; they were essentially Unmensch. Everything is clear here. The more substantive question is: how were such people able to occupy high posts in a socialist state? And here it must be said that Stalin's punitive system the way it was in the late Thirties was always able to find its "worthy" representatives. Separation of the organs of internal affairs from the people, from democratic control and from accountability sooner or later had to turn them into a mechanism of one person's tyranny. Authoritarian methods of leadership that rely on a bureaucracy are always fraught with secrecy, lack of respect for the law, and the ability to use force for unlawful ends.

Did not even individual communists, showing a high degree of courage and civic duty, raise these questions with the General Secretary? Did Stalin know everything about that adventurist Beriya? We do have instances of such attempts being made. But Stalin had no need to have his eyes opened to the crimes of Yezhov and Beriya—he knew about them. Moreover, the General Secretary personally approved the most evil deeds. We have figures, and we have already cited them, that Stalin together with Molotov approved about 400 (!) lists of people whose "cases" should have been examined only by the courts. They have written on them the laconic signatures of Stalin and Molotov—the words "in favor

of." With a single stroke of Stalin's pen the lists, containing the names of from dozens to several hundred people, were transformed into obituary notices for the doomed.

Having usurped for himself the right to take from people that was most dear to them and could not be returned—their lives—Stalin and the executors of his will were encroaching on the very humane foundations of socialism even though in words their actions were being carried out precisely on behalf of those high values. Here, I think, it is apropos to recall the words of F.M Dostoyevskiy, who once said that people do not suffer so that through their suffering they may fling dung at someone's harmony in the future. The greatest ends can never justify the use of unjust means.

Having being shaped in conditions of constant struggle, class passions and uncompromising disposition, at some stage of his consolidation Stalin as a personality completely lost even the elementary human qualities that previously had merely been "deficient." Compassion, mercy and any understanding of good were alien to him. Stalin's lexicon and political vocabulary was filled with words like "kill," "smash," "destroy," "eradicate," "cut short." They reflect very accurately the profound moral weakness of his nature. Because of this, people like Beriya, capable of placing absolutely no value in the lives of other people, evoked no protest, indignation and dislike in him.

But when on 23 December 1953 Beriya himself was given the death sentence, the members of the Special Hearing of the USSR Supreme Court meeting in the premises of the headquarters of the Moscow Military District could see with their own eyes the abyss of insignificance and inconsequentiality of this man whom Stalin had allowed to deal criminally with thousands of people's lives. The late Marshal K.S. Moskalenko, who took part in the arrest of Beriya and in his trial, told me that this monster was cringing on his knees before his judges. F. Engels one noted with perspicacity that "one cannot avoid one's destiny... or the inevitable consequences of one's own actions."

There is evidence (true, now difficult to corroborate with documents) indicating that not long before Stalin's death Beriya was hatching plans to usurp power. Perhaps the aging "leader" himself sensed this. At any event during the last year or year-and-a-half of Stalin's life their relationship cooled noticeably. Many people who at one time were associated with work with Stalin told me this. Mariya Semenovna Vlasik, the wife of Lt Gen N.S. Vlasik, former chief of the Ministry of State Security Main Administration, revealed to me many things of great interest.

For more than a quarter of a century Vlasik was the chief "guard" of Stalin, who placed great trust in him, and he knew a great deal. Beriya hated him but Stalin would not let him touch Vlasik. But a year before Stalin's death Beriya did nevertheless succeed in compromising Vlasik, as he did Poskrebyshev, and removing him from Stalin's entourage. And Vlasik was arrested and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment and exile. When he regained his freedom after the "leader's" death, he was absolutely convinced, and made the claim in interviews, that Beriya had "helped" in Stalin's death. For it was precisely he who in the final year brought in the doctors who observed Stalin's health, and removed him, Vlasik, and Poskrebyshev, and also several other persons who were Stalin's personal servants. Shortly before his death Vlasik dictated to Mariya Semenovna a slim notebook of memoirs where, to judge from the text, this suggestion, and then simply conviction, of the former chief of Stalin's bodyguard, occupied an almost central place.

Whatever the real facts,—whether the dictator died his own death or was "helped" by Beriya—it was a terrible thing: the things that could have happened in our motherland if the barbarous plans of this monster had been realized! For the system at that time in no way excluded the possibility of one dictator being replaced by another. What is impossible under the conditions of democracy, which at that time existed only on paper, became a threatening reality in a situation of totalitarianism. The party and state leadership finally found the courage and astuteness to subdue the monster. I think, incidentally, that a not unimportant factor in this resolve was the understanding that Beriya would not fail to take reprisals against most of the leaders; only Malenkov had a close relationship with the bankrupt dictator.

According to Marshal Moskalenko, Beriya's trial took place in the office of a member of the Moscow Military District Military Council, but the top party leadership in the Kremlin carefully followed its development via a special telephone line that had been hooked up. G.M. Malenkov, N.S. Khrushchev, V.M. Molotov, K.Ye. Voroshilov, N.A. Bulganin, L.M. Kaganovich, A.I. Mikoyan, N.M. Shvernik and other leaders who were also responsible for the years of lawlessness, had a good opportunity to peer deep to the very bottom of the abyss of evil that both Stalin and they had been able to create with the help of this chastiser.

We have already talked about people's attempts to prevent the terror under Beriya. But all were in vain. Documentary evidence has been preserved that those people quickly disappeared forever: Beriya was not some random event; he suited Stalin. At one of the Central Committee plenums in 1937 (there were, we repeat, several that year) the people's commissar of public health Kaminskiy tried to speak about the true face of Beriya. However, the plenum had scarcely ended when Kaminskiy was arrested and soon perished. The old communist Kedrov also wanted to report to Stalin on the criminal activity of the evildoer but the result was the same. The sentence imposed on the old Bolshevik was fabricated after they had shot him and was antedated.

The man who by virtue of his own activity should have been devoted in the highest degree to the Law and only the Law, embodied within himself absolute lawlessness and tyranny. And Stalin was most responsible for that. Beriya was ideologically neutral and for him nothing sacred existed; he worshiped only violence.

The man who wore the little pince-nez and whose mouth was turned down, which gave him a somewhat whimsical appearance, was ice cold. Like a pangolin, his eyes almost never blinked. Since he was a sadist, Beriya often conducted the interrogations personally, and they always ended tragically. This monster combined his criminal proclivities with a love of music. They say that he had a unique collection of gramophone records of classical music and that when he listened to the Rachmaninov preludes he would weep. There are stories of similar paradoxes that serve merely to show the absolute emptiness of his soul.

Even though he professed to value asceticism and puritanism, the General Secretary must have known that Beriya was a notorious profligate. He represented that type of person who simply has no awareness of even the rudiments of morals. Col Nadoraya, the chief of his personal bodyguard, and his adjutant, Col Sarkisov, used to "supply" Beriya with the women that pleased him. The slightest resistance from his latest victim would result in the most tragic consequences both for her and for those closest to her. A criminal, a political adventurist, and a moral degenerate all in one, Beriya will remain forever a personal indictment against Stalin, who permitted his elevation.

I learned many details about Beriya from Ye.P. Pitovranov, who worked in the NKVD in the Thirties and after the war became an administration chief and a deputy people's commissar. Incidentally, he himself was spared only because he was imprisoned for "softness" with regard to "enemies of the people." In his words, Beriya was not only totally amoral but also profoundly apolitical. "I think," Pitovranov told me, "that Beriya understood nothing about Marxism and was completely ignorant of Lenin's work. For him politics made sense only in connection with his own purposes. And that was power, power, power over people! It is hard to understand why Beriya, about whom Stalin knew a very great deal, stayed on top for so long. The General Secretary usually foisted onto such people the responsibility for their own failures and removed them without mercy, but Beriya remained." Evidently the fact was that people of this type were close to Stalin in their readiness to carry out any instruction he might issue. And it must be said that Stalin gave Beriya the most delicate assignments. Thus, Trotskiy, the "leader's" most irreconcilable personal enemy, was ultimately physically annihilated not without the involvement of the people's commissar.

This monster's lack of any kind of moral principles soon became known to all of Stalin's entourage and there was not a man who did not openly fear Beriya. Beriya sometimes emphasized Stalin's special attitude toward him by exchanging a few words with the "leader" in the Georgian language in the presence of members of the Politburo. At such times everyone would fell into a dispirited silence and could only imagine what each of the others might be thinking: were they talking about him?

During the war Stalin gave Beriya assignments that were connected mainly with the work of prisoners in the rear: in the absolute minimum of time they rebuilt bridges, laid railroad track, opened up new mines. So that Beriya's "combat actions" in the Great Patriotic War were virtually limited to his two trips to the Caucasus as a member of the State Defense Committee, in August 1942 and in March of the following year. The archives testify that even there in Stalin's name he put fear into the military workers, and removed people who did not suit him and had them shot. He was accompanied on those trips by Kobulov, Momulov, Milshteyn, Piyashev, Tsanava, Rukhadze, Vladzimirskiy, Karanadze, Kakuchya and his own son. Tyulenev, Sergatskov, Petrov and other military leaders all had trouble. Each of them, it turned out, had not only the enemy before them, on the field of battle, but also the crafty torturer in the rear. As a rule the telegrams from the people's commissar of internal affairs to Stalin played a decisive role in the appointments. On 1 September 1942, for example, Beriya reported to the General Secretary as follows:

"I think it would be advisable to appoint Tyulenev as commander of the Transcaucasian Front, who despite all his shortcomings is more suited for that appointment than Budennyy. It should be noted that in connection with his retreats Budennyy's authority in the Caucasus has declined significantly, not to mention the fact that he is ruining things because of his poor skills...

"Beriya."

Tyulenev had reported to Moscow that at a difficult moment he had asked Beriya for permission to use a large contingent of internal security troops stationed in the Caucasus. "Beriya agreed to release only a few of them," Tyulenev wrote, "and that on Stalin's instructions."

With his furious activity Beriya created an atmosphere of nervousness, suspicion and mutual denunciation in the headquarters. Thus, General D. Kozlov was forced to appeal to Stalin, complaining about the chief of the special section, Rukhadze, who with Beriya's knowledge had been trying to apply pressure to the leadership of the front in making operational decisions. But all these feeble protests were ignored in Moscow. The very presence of the monster literally paralyzed creative thinking among the military leaders; no one wanted to be his next victim. When Beriya with his extended retinue left, the tension immediately eased: they no longer felt the deadly breath of the executioner at their backs.

The "Leningrad affair," the "Mingelskiy affair" and the "doctors affair" and other similar actions were a direct manifestation of Beriya's criminal "creativity." He was a very powerful man not only because he stood at the controls of the punitive machinery but also because he had the entire GULAG system at his disposal. When the Americans dropped their bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Stalin ordered forced work in this field in the Soviet Union. Overall command was given to Beriya. His assistants, V.N. Merkulov, V.G. Dekanozov, B.Z. Kobulov, S.A. Goglidze, P.Ya. Meshik and L.Ye. Vladzimirskiy, were obedient executors of his evil will. It was through their efforts, approved in every possible way by Stalin, that the scientific and engineering-and-technical laboratories in the camps for the prisoners obtained their "right of citizenship." The intellectual might of many eminent people confined in the rectangles of the "zones" tried intently to find the vitally important solutions essential to respond as soon as possible to the threatening challenges of the times. Of course, the Soviet atomic bomb was developed in the shortest possible time not at all thanks to the services of Beriya; free intellect under conditions of normal scientific creativity would have coped with this problem more quickly. But Beriya believed only in the omnipotence of violence.

But the old Bolshevik Kedrov believed in justice. Let me quote extracts from the letter he sent to the party Central Committee:

"I am appealing to you for help to get out of the gloomy cell of the Leforto prison. I hope that this cry of despair reaches your ears: do not remain deaf to this call; take me under your protection; I beg you, help make an end to the nightmare of these interrogations and show that it has all been a mistake.

"I am suffering even though completely innocent. Please believe me. Time will show the truth. I am not an agent provocateur of some tsarist okhranka; I am not a spy; I am not a member of an anti-Soviet organization, which is what I am being accused of on the basis of the interrogations. I am also innocent of any other crimes against the party and government. I am an old Bolshevik and am unstained. For almost 40 years I have fought honestly in the party ranks for the well-being and flourishing of the country...

"My suffering have reached the limit. My health is broken, my strength and energy are fading, the end is near. To die in a Soviet prison labeled as a low traitor to the motherland—what can be more monstrous for an honest man! No! No! This cannot be! This is what I shout. Neither the party, nor the Soviet government, nor commissar L.P. Beriya will permit this cruel and unwarranted injustice. I am firmly convinced that with a calm and objective investigation of my case, without coarse abuse, without angry shouting and without dreadful torture, it will be easy to prove the groundlessness of all these charges. I believe deeply that truth and justice will triumph. I believe it. I believe it."

In answer to this letter Beriya ordered that Kedrov be shot immediately. Without a trial. But the old Bolshevik was right: truth, the bitter truth, did triumph.

Guilt Without Forgiveness

The years pass and still people who learn all the unvarnished truth, without reservation or things left unsaid, will be able to leaf through the blood-stained pages of the past at least a little more calmly, and I hope that those pages will say quite definitely that the person most to blame for what happened was Stalin and the command-administrative system in all its manifestations that he created. No matter what Stalin may have done to strengthen the state and smash the fascist aggression, the guilt for what happened during the late Thirties is without measure, and he will never be forgiven for that. And that is only part of the total guilt.

During 1937-1938 Stalin publicly—not verbally, not in print—was not pursuing his course of cruel repression. Even his speech at the Central Committee February-March (1937) Plenum, published later in PRAVDA in shortened form, still amounted only to calls for vigilance, the impermissibility of carelessness, and the danger of Trotskiyism, even though even here evil tones can be heard behind each phrase. But in reality it was precisely he who directed the entire enormous machinery of violence. The anthology "On the Subversive Activity of Fascist Intelligence Agents and Trotskiyite-Bukharinite Gangs in the USSR and Tasks in the Struggle to Deal with Them," published by a number of publishing houses, contains Stalin's report to the plenum, V.M. Molotov's report, articles by N. Rubin, Ya. Serebrov, A. Khamadan , S. Uramov and A. Vyshinskiy, and editorials from PRAVDA. Such publications literally whipped up the psychosis of spy mania and wrecking, encouraged denunciations and created a heavy atmosphere of approaching misfortune. Stalin, as it were, stood off to the side, in the wings. But while he was there he did not simply observe and skillfully direct that tragic play. He many times invited Yezhov, Vyshinskiy and Ulrikh to his office and discussed with them the course of an investigation and the trial itself and the verdict, particularly when it affected well-known people. Sometimes Poskrebyshev passed on instructions in the name of the General Secretary. Traces of Stalin's personal corrections have been preserved in many of the documents on the "cases" of those arrested during the struggle against the "enemies of the people." Thus, for example, a special resolution was adopted on a report from Yezhov made at the Central Committee February-March Plenum, and some of the points of that resolution about "shortcomings" were clarified in its final edition at the suggestion of the General Secretary, as follows:

"b) We note a poor presentation of investigation work. The investigation often depends on the criminal (!) and his good will in providing, or not providing, an exhaustive confession...

"c) A situation has been created for the enemies of Soviet power that is intolerable. Their accommodations are like mandatory rest homes more often than prisons (they can write letters, receive packages and so forth)."

Further on it is recorded that these "shortcomings" must be eliminated immediately. It is not difficult to imagine how the "proper arrangement" that Stalin had ordered was brought about!

Even after the November 1938 resolution, when the bloody bacchanalia had started gradually to subside, Stalin demanded "the completion of all cases still open." Instead of dealing with things quietly and freeing the innocent who had been arrested—and apologizing to them!—the subsiding waves of the campaign swept away more people into oblivion.

Here is one of the last major reports of the period:

"To the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee "Comrade I.V. Stalin.

"Between 21 February and 14 March 1939 the cases of 436 persons were considered by the Military Collegium of the USSR Supreme Court in closed sessions in Moscow. A total of 413 were sentenced to be executed. The sentences based on the Law of 1 December 1934 have been carried out.

"The following admitted their complete guilt at a session of the Military Collegium: S.V. Kosior, V.Ya. Chubar, P.P. Postyshev, A.V. Kosarev, P.A. Vershkov, A.I. Yegorov, I.F. Fedko, L.M. Khakhanyan, A.V. Bakulin, B.D. Berman, N.D. Berman, A.L. Gilinskiy, K.V. Gey, P.A. Smirnov (the former people's commissar of the navy—author's note), M.P. Smirnov (the former people's commissar of trade—author's note) and others.

"Some of the condemned repudiated the confessions that they had made during the preliminary hearing but were totally exposed by other materials...

"Chairman of the Military Collegium of the USSR Supreme Court, "Army Jurist V. Ulrikh. 16 March 1939."

Incidentally, the list indicated that A.I. Yegorov had "confessed" and "been condemned." That was yet another falsification—he did not "confess" but died during interrogation.

As always, nothing affected Stalin, and as always, there was Poskrebyshev's short, cruel phrase: "Stalin has been informed." Many people wrote letters to Stalin from the torture chambers but only isolated ones ever got through to him. And the General Secretary's response was always the same—I could find no instance in which Stalin intervened, forced an investigation or saved anyone.

Following a (roll-call) decision of the members of the Central Committee in July 1938 Politburo candidate member V.Ya. Chubar was relieved of his position, to which he had been elected at the 15th Party Congress. Chubar had written Stalin a long and sensible list of measures to improve the military defense industry. The General Secretary read it carefully and noted for himself the businesslike nature of the conclusions and proposals, but was not pleased by the final portion of the letter:

"I was ready to report all these consideration but the matter was again disrupted, and again not through my fault. It is very disappointing and difficult to admit that because of the stream of slanders and intrigues by enemies of the people that I have been forced to be out of harness, but wherever I have to work on your instructions always and everywhere I shall honestly and with a good will fight for our common causes, for the burgeoning of the USSR, and for communism.

"V. Chubar. 16 July 1938."

He was "playing a cunning game," and he ordered the letter to be sent to Yezhov; it was impossible to "move" Stalin "to pity." After he had learned from Ulrikh's report about the death penalty imposed on Chubar and the others, the General Secretary did not react at all and, putting aside the report from the chairman of the Military Collegium, he leisurely started to read a proposal from M. Mitin and P. Pospelov on the need to prepare a "Short Biography of I.V. Stalin."

The General Secretary could remember that Eykhe, and Rudzutak, and Postyshev, and many, many others had asked him to intervene and halt the violence. All had sworn loyalty to him, "Comrade Stalin." But why were they asking this? Was it worthy? "If the NKVD has conducted an investigation and reached a decision, what need is there for Comrade Stalin here?"; he liked to think and talk of himself in the third person. And again we turn to F.M. Dostoyevskiy: "They are drunk with blood and power: coarseness and depravity gather pace; intellect and feelings are no longer accessible, and finally the most abnormal phenomena are honied. The person, the citizen perishes forever in the tyranny, and any return to human dignity, to repentance, to revival become almost impossible for him." That is what he wrote in his "Notes from the House of the Dead."

In his conversation with me Ye.P. Pitorvanov told me that to move Stalin to pity was a "dead issue." He simply paid no attention to appeals for clemency and calls for mercy and justice. "When I was imprisoned for 'softness toward enemies of the people'" Yevgeniy Petrovich told me, " I said to myself: that's it, the end. No one from among the top people in the NKVD who had been arrested evert came out of Leforto alive. I shared a cell with L. Sheynin, the researcher and future writer. While everyday expecting a tragic outcome, at the same time I was racking my brains to find a way out. And as it subsequently turned out, I found it. After begging a sheet

of paper I wrote a letter to Stalin, by whom I had on a number of occasions been received as chief of one of the main administrations of the NKVD. In the letter I asked for nothing, begged no lenience, solicited no mercy. I wrote only that I had some fundamental ideas about improving our counterintelligence. I got the prison warden to come to the cell and I said to him: 'They know about this letter "up there." If you do not pass it on to its destination things will go badly for you.'"

"They told me later," Yevgeniy Petrovich continued, "that Stalin was informed about the letter. He telephoned our department and asked: 'Why is Pitorvanov in prison?' They told him. After a short silence, Stalin shouted into the telephone: 'Put him back to work. It seems that he is not a stupid man.' Several days later they unexpectedly released me. Stalin had just needed a few words for this. But I understood that I had managed to play on the dictator's psychology: I had not begged for mercy, like everyone did, but suggested ideas and new solutions."

In the General Secretary's secretariat special people analyzed the content of his mail. Sometimes they gave Stalin a summary of those letters that were, in the opinion of those workers, the most interesting. They reported to him about the appeals from N.I. Vavilov, the major biologist, geneticist, botanist and geographer, to the Central Committee; he knew about the arrest of M.Ye. Koltsov, whom he valued for his reportages from Spain and with whom he met in 1937; they also told Stalin about the letter from S.P. Korolev, who was in one of the remote camps in Kolyma... How many of those letters there were! But these often moving letters did not touch Stalin. He believed that people's suffering was inevitable, that they were the law-governed cost of progress, for the advance to the great goal, for the successes along the road of building the new society.

Stalin was convinced that great ideas demand selflessness, self-sacrifice and total self-giving—socialism could not be built without sacrifices. And since there were so many sacrifices, Stalin became accustomed to them. True, no summarized figures or statistics on the repressions were reported in the press—the General Secretary had forbidden that. People were fed on sinister rumors.

In the public awareness, which was focused on reaching specific economic, social and cultural heights, it was fear that laid the road. Settling in those years on the roofs of many houses, this fear was fed not with real guilt but with calumny, tyranny and evil chance. Someone failed to come to work; four people had come in the night to the neighbors and taken away the boss; they would guardedly tell someone to pass the news on to the family: the husband should not come to factory today; or suddenly they would start ripping pages out of the textbooks at the school... It was as if someone invisible was waving his hand and thinning out the field of humans.

Stalin was aware of the exact figures but they did not frighten him. True, sometime during the latter half of 1938 he began to receive alarming reports: two divisions of the Kiev Military District called out at a given time to a particular area had been unable to cope: the plans for a chemical plant were unsatisfactory; a design bureau that handled transport aircraft was falling behind with its tasks.. It was becoming clear that this was a matter not only of "wreckers." The country and the national economy were lagging behind, not by a month but by years.

As always, in such cases Stalin, we will remember, found the "guilty party"—it turned out to be Yezhov. The well-known Soviet designer A.S. Yakovlev, who met Stalin, recalled the "leader's" words: "Yezhov is a scoundrel. In 1938 he killed many innocent people. That is why we shot him." Candidate members of the Politburo Postyshev, Rudzutak, Chubar and Eykhe were arrested and in addition to the other crimes, were accused of "destroying Bolshevist cadres." This time, too, Stalin tried to shift responsibility for the terror onto other people.

They reported to the General Secretary about their letters, in which they completely denied their guilt. And Stalin had discussed state and party matters with them, telephoned them, given them their assignments. Each of those who appealed to him—Postyshev, Kosior, Rudzutak, Chubar, Eykhe—he had known for many years. Before recommending them for election to the Politburo Poskrebyshev, Mekhlis, Yagoda and Yezhov had studied their genealogy down to their cousins five times removed. They were verified people and in their letters before their deaths they wrote of this to Stalin, and talked about the sessions of the illegal court. Here, in particular, is what Eykhe wrote in his message to Stalin:

"I am now moving to the lowest time of my life—to my really serious guilt before the party and before you. This guilt is my admission of counterrevolutionary activity. But the situation was like this: I was unable to endure the torture to which Ushakov and Nikolayev subjected me, especially the former—he knew that my broken ribs had still not healed, and using this knowledge, he caused terrible pain during the interrogations—they forced me to betray myself and others (with my confession).

"I beg you, I beseech you to take another look at my case, not to offer me mercy but in order to expose this entire foul provocation that, like a serpent, has now enveloped so many people because of my weakness and criminal slander. I have never betrayed you or the party. I know that I shall die because of the vile and base provocation that enemies of the party and the people have fabricated about me."

When he read Eykhe's letter Stalin had to have known that he himself, the head of the party and of the state, had released the "serpent of provocation." The General Secretary had not even taken counsel with the other

members of the Politburo: he had already condemned Eykhe when he gave approval for his arrest, and the country's Grand Inquisitor never changed his decisions.

They also reported to Stalin about Rudzutak's statement in court, which lasted 20 minutes. The only request he had made to the court was this: "to report to the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee that within the NKVD the center that adroitly fabricates cases and forces innocent people to confess to crimes that they have not committed, has still not been eliminated; the accused have no opportunity to prove that they did not take part in the crimes that they talk about in confessions extracted from various people by torture. The methods of interrogation are such that they force people to lie and slander innocent people." Rudzutak requested a meeting with Stalin but the General Secretary responded with coarse abuse. And the old Bolshevik, who had spent 10 years in a tsarist prison, perished in Stalin's torture chambers.

On the day before his arrest in May 1937 Rudzutak had been with Stalin and had calmly reported to him on a matter that interested the General Secretary. But at that moment the "leader" had not been listening to him but was trying to understand how correct was Yezhov's report, in which it was stated that supposedly ever since the Genoa conference, Rudzutak had been enlisted in foreign intelligence. While working as chairman of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Control Commission and later also as the deputy chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, Rudzutak, it turned out, had been maintaining links with the Trotskiyites. Stalin could remember that once, while Lenin was still alive, Trotskiy had spoken highly of Rudzutak the diplomat, about his erudition and intelligence, a man who spoke so many foreign languages. And here the suspicion immediately became a certainty...

In the evening of the same day, when signing the greeting message from the Soviet government to the members of the expedition to the North Pole, Stalin saw Rudzutak's signature among the others. After just a second of hesitation the General Secretary scored through that name. And on the following day, 24 May 1937, Stalin dictated the text of a notification to the members of the central committee for an out-of-town (written roll-call) vote: "The organs of the NKVD have established irrefutably that M. Tukhachevskiy and Ya. Rudzutak are German-fascist spies..." The eminent Soviet military leader and a major state figure and Bolshevik of the Leninist school were at Stalin's will enmeshed in the same tragic toil, but with one small difference: Tukhachevskiy had little more than 2 weeks to live, while Rudzutak had about a year...

The dictator, we repeat, personally decided beforehand the fate of many thousands of people. He supported virtually all of Yezhov's, Ulrikh's and Vyshinskiy's proposals to impose the most severe sentences. I have already written that Stalin sometimes simply said "agreed," but very often he also condescended to put his "autograph" on some monstrous obituary. The tracks left by Stalin himself are bloody, and there are many documents testifying to his monstrous ruthlessness. Here is one of them:

"To Comrade Stalin.

"I am sending the lists of those arrested who are being tried by the Military Collegium 1st category.

"Yezhov."

The resolution was laconic: "Shoot all 138 people.

I. Stalin, V. Molotov."

And another document that staggers in its cruelty:

"To Comrade Stalin.

"I am sending for approval four lists of people liable to the court: for 313 people, for 208, for 15 women who are enemies of the people, and for 200 military workers. I request permission to sentence them all to execution.

"Yezhov. 20 August 1938."

As always, the resolution was unambiguous: "In favor. I. Stalin. V. Molotov. 20 August."

There are also simply monstrous "records": on 12 December 1938 Stalin and Molotov approved the execution of 3,167 people! These lists, which are preserved in the archives, were compiled without any proofs of guilt or results from investigations. In fact what used to happen was that after the lists had been approved all that remained to be done was the "formal" imposition of the sentences. These kinds of bloody statistics can be cited without end. But behind those "lists" and papers there were real people! People with their fates and sufferings and hopes!

I have before me a letter from the almost 90-year-old Vera Ivanovna Deryuchina from Belaya Tserkov. Her letter alone can be a dreadful accusation against everything that Stalin's machinery of punishment did.

"When on that dreadful night in 1937," Vera Ivanovna writes, "they came for my miner husband, who used to fulfill four norms and was a stakhanovite, I thought that it was a mistake. They told me: don't shout, you fool, your husband will be back in an hour. But he came back after 12 years. An invalid. And what I endured with my small children and my aged mother I cannot describe! They threw us out of our apartment and everywhere they pinned the label on us: the family of an enemy of the people. We would all have perished were it not for some kind people... Write about my fate in your book, in a corner somewhere."

Or here is another letter from Muscovite Stepan Ivanovich Semenov, who spent 15 years in Stalin's camps. They shot his two brothers, and his wife died in prison. Now he is a very old man who has no one—no children, no grandchildren. His letter contains the following lines:

"The most terrible thing happened when no one was expecting it, when you did not need it. My brothers and I could have had children, grandchildren, families. The cursed Tamerlane smashed and crushed everything. He deprived the future of citizens yet unborn. He did not allow them to be born because he killed their fathers and mothers. I am living out my life alone and I still cannot understand how we did not see the monster in the 'leader.' How could our people permit such a thing?"

The gigantic machinery of terror was Stalinism's very own progeny. There is no doubt of the General Secretary's authorship here. And accordingly the opinions encountered among some people (I. Ehrenburg wrote about this in 1962, and many have since repeated this idea, and others) that "Stalin did not know what Yezhov was doing," and "did not realize the scale and scope of the repressions," and that, supposedly, it was "the business of the provocateurs who had insinuated themselves into the NKVD," have no basis whatsoever. Stalin led the repressions, Stalin determined the "strategy" of the terror, Stalin changed the emphasis in this violence, Stalin tried in every possible way to conceal the true scales of the brigandage by liquidating many of the executors of his will. I think that no one, apart from Stalin himself, knew the real scale, the apotheosis of tyranny at the "epicenter of the tragedy."

Of course, those who were the willing or unwilling instruments of terror knew and know a great deal about it. During the course of work on this book I received, as I have already said, more than 1,000 letters from readers. But I recognized those people's letters immediately—they were often unsigned. Let we cite a few excerpts from them:

"Stalin as a corps man cleared the country of the riffraff. Yes, it is a pity that he cleared it poorly if even today we have those who trample his pure name.

Yu.K."

"You play about with democracy, you play about and invite a dictator. In Russia it has never been possible to do anything worthwhile without a strong hand. Stalin transformed it from a country of wooden plows into a country of the atom bomb. That says it all." No signature.

Once, in the evening time, the telephone rang. A senile old voice announced himself as "Ivan Nikolayevich" (I think that the name was made up). Without beating about the bush he stated that "he could stand me up against a wall with satisfaction," the more so because of what he had been doing in 1937-1938. "Leave Stalin alone," the former executor of sentences mumbled, "he is coming back in another form." And he hung up.

The consciousness of such people as it were froze in 1937 and their damaged world outlook of "being cogs in a machine" has been changed neither by the years nor by the winds of change. Many such people have remained, but they prefer not to talk publicly about their involvement in the great terror. And if an old man in his Eighties says to you in a squeaky voice that "he does not regret his own involvement" this is not a pose, a stance. Stalinism was firmly implanted in the consciousness of such people and they are hardly about to repent it.

There are always pages in history that people would have liked to forget, but this is impossible and unnecessary. Everything that has been has become part of us ourselves. It was the generations that are no longer with us that mainly experienced it. The longer we live the fewer the people who are older than us, and with each passing day the more younger people there are. But the bitter memory of those innocent people who perished in the years of Stalin's madness remains with us.

We remember Stalin's appearance from the photographs and old newsreel footage, and we have seen the monuments and the busts that unremarked but somehow rapidly disappeared from their pedestals. The General Secretary was often depicted with a raised arm, "pointing" the way to everyone's bright future, with a benevolent smile and the typical crinkled, yellowish, attentive eyes. Who at that time could have thought that behind that smiling mask was hidden a pathological cruelty, a callousness and perfidy whose equal cannot be found in all the pages of our long-suffering history? But it was felt, and not only by the millions repressed people and their families, but even by the relatives of the General Secretary himself. One thorough researcher of the life of I.V. Dzhugashvili-Stalin, V.V. Nefedov, has done a great deal of work to research the fate of the leader's close and distant relatives. He managed to establish that through the line of Ye.S. Svanidze (the first wife) the following were repressed:

1. Aleksandr Semenovich (Alesha) Svanidze, the brother of Stalin's wife. Party member since 1904. Was people's commissar finance in Georgia and until 1937 worked in the USSR People's Commissariat of Finance. One of Stalin's closest friends. Accused of espionage and shot.

2. Mariya Anisimovna Svanidze, the wife of A.S. Svanidze. An opera singer. Arrested in 1937 and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. Died in exile.

3. Ivan Aleksandrovich Svanidze, the son of A.S. Svanidze. Arrested as a son of an "enemy of the people." Returned from exile in 1956.

4. Mariya Semenovna Svanidze, sister of Stalin's wife. Personal secretary to A.S. Yenikidze 1927-1934. Arrested in 1937. Died in prison.

5. Yuliya Isaakovna Meltser (Dzhugashvili), wife of Stalin's son Yakov. Arrested, freed in 1943.

Through the line of N.S. Alliluyeva (Stalin's second wife) the following were repressed:

1. Anna Sergeyevna Alliluyeva, sister of Stalin's wife. Arrested in 1948 and sentenced to 10 years for "espionage." Freed in 1954.

2. Stanislav Frantsevich Redens, husband of A.S. Alliluyeva, people's commissar of internal affairs in the Transcaucasus, Kazakhstan. Delegate to the 15th, 16th and 17th All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) congresses, member of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Control Commission and Central Inspection Commission. Arrested in 1938 an an "enemy of the people," shot in 1941.

3. Yevgeniya Aleksandrovna Alliluyeva. Arrested in 1948 and sentenced to 10 years for "espionage." Freed in 1954.

4. Ivan Alliluyev (Altayskiy), the son of P.Ya. Alliluyev. Party member from 1920, editor of the journal SOTSIALISTICHESKOYE ZEMLEDELIYE. Arrested in 1938; freed in 1940 with the help of S.Ya. Alliluyev.

The notes of Ivan Alliluyev, the nephew of S.Ya. Alliluyev, who was condemned for "involvement in a counterrevolutionary organization" and spent a term in "Soroklager," have been preserved. In them he describes his own friends in misfortune: brigade commander Kholodkov, chief of one of the directorates in the Moscow Military District Lapidus, the young man Petr Zhila, who, incidentally, became an "enemy of the people" merely because he sat next to Kosarev in the presidium of a Ukrainian Komsomol congress.

It subsequently became known that Ivan Pavlovich's aged uncle S.Ya. Alliluyev made bold to solicit on his, Ivan Pavlovich's, behalf. Without asking Stalin he appealed to Beriya and Bobulov and, perhaps for the only time, the monster showed compassion.

Stalin was not selective in his cruelty; everyone was measured by the same yardstick. His own people and "foreigners," his acquaintances and relatives, his comrades in the Central Committee and people quite unknown to him, Bolsheviks young and old, illiterate mujiks and academicians, men and women—if the stamp "enemy of the people" was affixed to their case file, for Stalin those people immediately became "camp dust." As soon as the "signals" came in from Yezhov or Beriya about "wrecking" or other "counterrevolutionary" activity (and among Stalin's own relatives there were especially many "spies," which is understandable—the source of the "information" was the very highest!), without any reflection, the "leader" sanctioned their arrest. Stalin usually had no more interest in those people. There was, perhaps, just one exception. When they told him that A. Svanidze had been sentenced to be shot as a "German spy" Stalin dryly remarked: "Let him ask for forgiveness." Before he was shot Svanidze was told about the "leader's" words. "For what must I ask forgiveness?" the prisoner asked in astonishment. "For I have committed no crime." And Svanidze was shot.

When he learned of the last words of this close childhood friend and relative he merely said defensively "You see how proud he was: he died but would not ask for forgiveness..."

"It was as if," his daughter Svetlana wrote," a black circle had been drawn; everything falling within it dies, is destroyed, disappears from life..."

It was, we repeat, useless to write to Stalin, whether you were a Politburo candidate member, a man-in-the-street or a close relative. I think that this is in some sense a "personal" page from the life of Stalin in which the profound misanthropy of his nature, which excluded the slightest degree of mercy or compassion, is characterized; also of the fact that Stalin was evidently unable to agree to the arrest of his own relatives without "assurances" that it was "essential." Given Stalin's exceptional mistrustfulnees, his suspiciousness almost did not extend to the informers; the General Secretary usually believed the slanders and the fates of his unlucky relatives is yet one more confirmation of this.

As one grows familiar with the archives that reveal the culmination of the tragedy, and meets and converses with the witnesses and victims of those far-off events, again and again one reaches the same conclusion: what happened was the extreme consequence of the establishment of one-man rule and the destruction of the still fragile and impoverished forms of democracy. There are repeated cases in history in which the logic of revolution or counterrevolution has led to terror. And then it—history—is the cruelest of the gods and has been able, in the words of F. Engels, to drag its triumphal chariot through mountains of corpses not only in time of war. In the latter half of the Thirties, we repeat, there were no visible signs of the unleashing of the mass repressions.

It seemed that the people accepted the torments with an outward calm, but that can happen only in conditions in which no reliable mechanism had been created for the individual's social protection. And the higher the level of democracy in society the less it depends on the personal qualities of the leader. Ultimately, real democracy will simply reject what is unsuitable. And the terror, and again we recall F. Engels, is made up in most cases of useless cruelty perpetrated by frightened people for the purpose of self-assurance.

According to Stalin a great goal justifies the extensive use of force in order to create a more "uniform" society, in the sense of leveling the world outlook and thoughts of the people living under socialism. But the "leader" erred in the main thing: he had a poor understanding of his own people. Yes, the repressions did "silence" the people who submissively endured the madness of Stalin's plans. But Stalin could not weaken faith and conviction in social justice. Many of the people whose consciousness was not totally sullied with the litter of cult trash maintained an acute dislike of the authoritarianism that was instilled deep within them. At the same time they could not find suitable way out of their voiceless dissatisfaction. To the point, many honorable people really thought about it only when they found themselves on the wrong side of the barbed wire. But the seeds of indignation and anger and outrage and grief for the desecration of an idea by force did burst forth many years later.

Today, for example, the lines written by Trotskiy in his book "Stalin's Crimes" (1937) are perceived in a different way. The exile, of course, was looking at the General Secretary primarily through the prism of his own personal hatred and therefore he predicted his downfall soon. But he was not a good futurologist and was unable to propose that condemnation of Stalin's crimes would come considerably later. Trotskiy wrote that Stalin's fall was inevitable: the monuments raised in his honor will be destroyed or given to museums of cruelty, and instead monuments will be raised to the victims of Stalinism. The reader now has an opportunity to judge Trotskiy's conclusions for himself.

Stalin's actions sometimes seem irrational: it is difficult to explain, for example, the political logic of sharply weakening the army on the eve of a terrible war; he approved the destruction of M. Koltsov, whom he knew well and had met, but he did not touch B. Pasternak with his independent views. Stalin's actions were guided by the boundless lust for power that he was never able fully to satisfy.

We cannot be reconciled to the idea that Stalin made millions of people the passive accomplices of his acts—people who believed that "it was necessary." He managed to enlist the support (by fear rather than conviction) of a large number of honest citizens.

The lie of Stalin has left deep marks in people's memory and psychology, and in our culture. But at that time the lie stood a better chance when it opposed truth in alliance with conscience. It is precisely conscience that is the most exacting and taciturn of judges. Conscience cannot be deceived. And today we know that if conscience was often quiet in those days then it was primarily because it did not stand side by side with truth.

The culmination of the tragedy of the people also occurred during the years of one-man rule because many honest communists, the best experts, the great talents and the people who offered some special hope perished by violence. We know that their replacement—often hurried, sometimes by chance, and sometimes mercenary—could not have been with people of equal worth. But Stalin knew that the people promoted during the years of the repressions would be more loyal to him, to his "line," to his arrangements. He could count fully on their devotion and diligence.

During the 2 years before the war the country was, as it were, bled dry. No, the smokestacks of the factories and plants still smoked, the trains ran on their rails, students went to their universities, and people preserved the hope of sometimes better on the morrow. But an "evisceration" could be sensed everywhere: the overfilled prisons and camps, lack of news about those who had disappeared, the thinning cadres of the military, and much else. Such was the quite monstrous outrage committed against people and the great ideal that had seized them. After committing the physical act of evil against his own people, Stalin also committed a criminal act against thought.

No, Stalin did not call a halt to the madness: this unthinkable terror went to the limit, reaching the limit of the most severe trials and threatening the functioning of the system itself.

End of Book One

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