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ANOTHER VIEW OF STALIN

Foreword

That a famous Soviet dissident, now living in `reunited' Germany, a man who in his youth was so fanatically anti-Stalin that he planned a terrorist attack against him, who filled entire books with vehement denunciation of Stalin's political line in every possible way, that such a man would, in his old age, pay homage to Stalin is remarkable.

Many who consider themselves Communist have not shown such courage. It is very difficult to raise one's feeble voice against the torrents of anti-Stalin propaganda.

Unfortunately many Communists do not feel at ease on this battlefield. Everything that sworn enemies of Communism had claimed for thirty-five years was supposedly confirmed by Khrushchev in 1956. Since then, angry, unanimous condemnations of Stalin have come from the Nazis and the Trotskyists, from Kissinger and Brzezinski, from Khrushchev and Gorbachev, and many others, each adding to the `proof'. To defend the historic rфle of Stalin and the Bolshevik Party becomes unthinkable, even monstrous. And most people who firmly oppose the murderous anarchy of world capitalism have become intimidated.

Today, for a man such as Zinoviev, seeing the destructive folly that has taken hold of the ex-Soviet Union, with its trail of famine, unemployment, criminality, misery, corruption and inter-ethnic wars, has led to the reassessment of prejudices firmly held since adolescence.

It is clear that, throughout the world, those who wish to defend the ideals of Socialism and Communism must at least do the same. All Communist and revolutionary organizations across the globe must re-examine the opinions and judgments that they have formed since 1956 about Comrade Stalin's work. No one can deny the evidence: when Gorbachev succeeded in eradicating all of Stalin's achievements, crowning thirty-five years of virulent denunciations of `Stalinism', Lenin himself became persona non grata in the Soviet Union. With the burial of Stalinism, Leninism disappeared as well.

Rediscovering the revolutionary truth about this pioneer period is a collective task that must be borne by all Communists, around the world. This revolutionary truth will arise by questioning sources, testimony and analyses. Clearly, the aid that might be offered by Soviet Marxist-Leninists, sometimes the only ones with direct access to sources and to witnesses, will be vital. But today they work under very difficult conditions.

Our analyses and reflections on this subject are published in this work, Another view of Stalin. The view of Stalin that is imposed on us daily is that of the class that wants to maintain the existing system of exploitation and oppression. Adopting another view of Stalin means looking at the historic Stalin through the eyes of the oppressed class, through the eyes of the exploited and oppressed.

This book is not designed to be a biography of Stalin. It is intended to directly confront the standard attacks made against Stalin: `Lenin's Will', forced collectivization, overbearing bureaucracy, extermination of the Old Bolshevik guard, the Great Purge, forced industrialization, collusion between Stalin and Hitler, his incompetency during World War II, etc. We have endeavored to deconstruct many `well-known truths' about Stalin, those that are summarized --- over and over --- in a few lines in newspapers, history books and interviews, and which have more or less become part of our unconscious.

`But how is it possible', asked a friend, `to defend a man like Stalin?'

There was astonishment and indignation in this question, which reminded me of what an old Communist worker once told me. He spoke to me of the year 1956, when Khrushchev read his famous Secret Report. Powerful debates took place within the Communist Party. During one of these confrontations, an elderly Communist woman, from a Jewish Communist family, who lost two children during the war and whose family in Poland was exterminated, cried out:

`How can we not support Stalin, who built socialism, who defeated fascism, who incarnated all our hopes?'

In the fiery ideological storm that was sweeping the world, where others had capitulated, this woman remained true to the Revolution. And for this reason, she had another view of Stalin. A new generation of Communists will share her view.

Introduction: The importance of Stalin

On August 20, 1991, Yanayev's ridiculous coup d'йtat was the last step in eliminating the remaining vestiges of Communism in the Soviet Union. Statues of Lenin were torn down and his ideas were attacked. This event provoked numerous debates in Communist and revolutionary movements.

Some said it was completely unexpected.

In April 1991, we published a book, L'URSS et la contre-rйvolution de velours (USSR: The velvet counter-revolution),

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Ludo Martens, L'URSS et la contre-rйvolution de velours (Antwerp: EPO, 1991).

which essentially covers the political and ideological evolution of the USSR and of Eastern Europe since 1956. Now that Yeltsin has made his professional coup d'йtat and that he has vehemently proclaimed capitalist restoration, our analysis still stands.

In fact, the last confused confrontations between Yanayev, Gorbachev and Yeltsin were mere convulsions, expressing decisions made during the Twenty-Eighth Congress in July 1990. We wrote at the time that this congress `clearly affirms a rupture with socialism and a return to capitalism'.

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Ibid. , p. 215.

A Marxist analysis of the events that occurred in the Soviet Union had already led in 1989 to the following conclusion:

`Gorbachev ... is implementing a slow and progressive, but systematic, evolution to capitalist restoration .... Gorbachev, his back to the wall, is seeking increasing political and economic support from the imperialist world. In return, he allows the West to do as it pleases in the Soviet Union.'

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Ibid. , p. 186.

A year later, at the end of 1990, we concluded our analysis as follows:

`Since 1985 Gorbachev has not firmly and consistenly defended any political position. In waves, the Right has attacked. Each new wave has dragged Gorbachev further to the Right. Confronted by further attacks by nationalists and fascists, supported by Yeltsin, it is not impossible that Gorbachev will again retreat, which will undoubtedly provoke the disintegration of the CPSU and the Soviet Union.'

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Ibid. , p. 253.

`The Balkanization of Africa and of the Arab world has ensured ideal conditions for imperialist domination. The more far-seeing in the West are now dreaming beyond capitalist restoration in the USSR. They are dreaming of its political and economic subjugation.'

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Ibid. , p. 245.

It is no accident that we recall these Marxist-Leninist conclusions from 1989 and 1990. The dynamiting of statues of Lenin was accompanied

by an explosion of propaganda claiming victory over Marxism-Leninism. However, only the Marxist analysis was correct, was capable of clarifying the real social forces working under the demagogic slogans of `freedom and democracy' and `glastnost and perestroika'.

In 1956, during the bloody counter-revolution in Hungary, statues of Stalin were destroyed. Thirty-five years later, statues of Lenin have been reduced to dust. The dismantling of statues of Stalin and Lenin marks the two basic breaks with Marxism. In 1956, Khrushchev attacked Stalin's achievements so that he could change the fundamental line of the Communist Party. The progressive disintegration of the political and economic system that followed led to the final break with socialism in 1990 by Gorbachev.

Of course, the media hark on every day about the clear failure of Communism around the world. But we must reiterate that, if there was a failure in the Soviet Union, it was a failure of revisionism, introduced by Khrushchev thirty-five years ago. This revisionism led to complete political failure, to capitulation to imperialism and to economic catastrophe. The current eruption of savage capitalism and of fascism in the USSR shows clearly what happens when the revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism are rejected.

For thirty-five years, the revisionists worked to destroy Stalin. Once Stalin was demolished, Lenin was liquidated with a flick of the wrist. Khrushchev fought mercilessly against Stalin. Gorbachev carried on by leading, during his five years of glastnost, a crusade against `Stalinism'. Notice that the dismantling of Lenin's statues was not preceded by a political campaign against his work. The campaign against Stalin was sufficient. Once Stalin's ideas were attacked, vilified and destroyed, it became clear that Lenin's ideas had suffered the same fate.

Khrushchev started his destructive work by criticizing Stalin's errors in order to `re-assert Leninism in its original form' and to improve the Communist system. Gorbachev made the same demagogic promises to confuse the forces of the Left. Today, things have been made crystal clear:

under the pretext of `returning to Lenin', the Tsar returns; under the pretext of `improving Communism', savage capitalism has erupted.

Most people on the Left have read a few books about the activities of the CIA and of Western secret services. They have learned that psychological and political warfare is a fundamental and extremely important part of modern total warfare. Slanders, brainwashing, provocation, manipulation of differences, exacerbation of contradictions, slandering of adversaries, and perpetration of crimes that are then blamed on the adversary are all normal tactics used by Western secret services in modern warfare.

But the wars that imperialism has waged with the greatest energy and with the most colossal resources are the anti-Communist wars. Military wars, clandestine wars, political wars and psychological wars. Isn't it obvious that the anti-Stalin campaign was at the heart of all ideological battles against socialism and Communism? The official spokesmen for the U.S. war machine, Kissinger and Brzezinski, praised the works of Solzhenitsyn and Conquest, who were, by coпncidence, two authors favored by Social-Democrats, Trotskyists and Anarchists. Instead of `discovering the truth about Stalin' among those specialists of anti-Communism, wouldn't it have been better to look for the strings of psychological warfare by the CIA?

It is truly not an accident that we can find today, in almost all stylish bourgeois and petit-bourgeois publications, the same slanders and lies about Stalin that were found in the Nazi press during the Second World War. This is a sign that the class struggle is becoming fierce throughout the world and that the world bourgeoisie is mobilizing all its forces to defend its `democracy'. During seminars about the Stalin period, we have often read a long anti-Stalin text and asked the audience what they thought of it. Almost invariably, they replied that the text, although virulently anti-Communist, clearly showed the enthusiasm of the young and poor for Bolshevism, as well as the technical achievements of the USSR; by and large, the text is nuanced. We then told the audience that this was a Nazi text, published in Signal 24 (1943), at the height of the war! The anti-Stalin campaigns conducted by the Western `democracies' in 1989--1991 were

often more violent and more slanderous than those conducted by the Nazis in 1930s: today, the great Communist achievements of the 1930s are no longer with us to counteract the slanders, and there are no longer any significant forces to defend the Soviet experience under Stalin.

When the bourgeoisie announces the definitive failure of Communism, it uses the pathetic failure of revisionism to reaffirm its hatred of the great work achieved in the past by Lenin and Stalin. Nevertheless, it is thinking much more about the future than about the past. The bourgeoisie wants people to think that Marxism-Leninism is buried once and for all, because it is quite aware of the accuracy and the vitality of Communist analysis. The bourgeoisie has a whole gamut of cadres capable of making scientific evaluations of the world's evolution. And so it sees major crises and upheavals on a planetary scale, and wars of all kinds. Since capitalism has been restored in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, each contradiction of the world imperialist system has been exacerbated. When the working masses throughout the world face the specters of unemployment, misery, exploitation and war, only Marxism-Leninism can show them the way out. Only Marxism-Leninism can provide arms to the working masses of the capitalist world and to the oppressed peoples of the Third World. Given these great, future struggles, all this rubbish about the end of Communism is intended to disarm the oppressed masses of the entire world.

Defending Stalin's work, essentially defending Marxism-Leninism, is an important, urgent task in preparing ourselves for class struggle under the New World Order.

Stalin is of vital importance in the former socialist countries

Since capitalist restoration in the USSR, Stalin's work has become important in understanding the mechanisms of recent class struggles under socialism.

There is a link between the capitalist restoration and the virulent campaign against Stalin that preceded it. The explosion of hatred against a man who died in 1953 might seem strange, if not incomprehensible. During the twenty years that preceded Gorbachev's rise to power, Brezhnev incarnated bureaucracy, stagnation, corruption and militarism. But neither in the Soviet Union nor in the `Free World' did we ever witness a violent, raging attack against Brezhnev similar to the ones against Stalin. It is obvious that over the last few years, in the USSR as well as in the rest of the world, all the fanatics of capitalism and of imperialism, to finish off what remained of socialism in the USSR, focused on Stalin as the target.

The disastrous turn taken by Khrushchev shows in fact the pertinence of most of Stalin's ideas. Stalin stressed that class struggle continues under socialism, that the old feudal and bourgeois forces never stopped their struggle for restoration and that the opportunists in the Party, the Trotskyists, the Bukharinists and the bourgeois nationalists, helped the anti-Socialist classes regroup their forces. Khrushchev declared that these theses were aberrations and that they led to arbitrary measures. But in 1993, the apparition of Tsar Boris stands out as a monument to the correctness of Stalin's judgment.

Adversaries of the dictatorship of the proletariat never stopped in insisting that Stalin represented not the dictatorship of the workers but his own autocratic dictatorship. The word Gulag means `Stalinist dictatorship'. But those who were in the Gulag during Stalin's era are now part of the bourgeoisie in power. To demolish Stalin was to give socialist democracy a new birth. But once Stalin was buried, Hitler came out of his tomb. And in Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Slovakia, etc., all the fascist heroes are resurrected, ilk such as Vlasov, Bandera, Antonescu, Tiso and other Nazi collaborators. The destruction of the Berlin Wall heralded the rise of neo-

Nazism in Germany. Today, when faced with the unleashing of capitalism and fascism in Eastern Europe, it is easier to understand that Stalin did in fact defend worker's power.

Stalin is at the center of political debates in socialist countries

The media never stop reminding us that there are still, unfortunately, a few Stalinist outposts on the planet. Fidŭl Castro holds his little island like a Stalinist dinosaur. Kim Il Sung surpassed Stalin in the area of the cult of the personality. The Chinese butchers of Tien An Men Square are worthy successors of Stalin. A few dogmatic Vietnamese still have pictures of Hф Chi Minh and of Stalin. In short, the four countries that still uphold a socialist line are excommunicated from the `civilized' world in the name of Stalin. This incessant clamor is designed to bring out and reinforce `anti-Stalinist' bourgeois and petit-bourgeois currents in these countries.

Stalin's work is of crucial importance in the Third World

At the same time, in the Third World, all the forces that oppose, in one way or another, imperialist barbarity, are hunted down and attacked in the name of the struggle against `Stalinism'.

So, according to the French newspaper Le Monde, the Communist Party of the Philippines has just been `seized by the Stalinist demon of the purges'.

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Patrice de Beer, `La lente йrosion'. Le Monde, 7 August 1991.

According to a tract from the Meisone group, the `Stalinists' of the Tigray People's Liberation Front have just seized power in Addis Ababa. In Peru as well, we hear of Mao-Stalinist ideas, `that stereotyped formal language of another era'.

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Marcel Niedergang, Le Monde.

We can even read that the Syrian Baath party leads `a closed society, almost Stalinist'!

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International Herald Tribune, 5 November 1991, p. 1.

Right in the middle of the Gulf War, a newspaper reported to us that a Soviet pamphlet compared photographs of Stalin and Saddam Hussein, and concluded that Saddam was an illegitimate son of the great Georgian. And the butchers that chased Father Aristide from Haiti seriously claimed that he had installed `a totalitarian dictatorship'.

Stalin's work is important for all peoples engaged in the revolutionary struggle for freedom from the barbaric domination of imperialism.

Stalin represents, just like Lenin, steadfastness in the fiercest and most merciless of class struggles. Stalin showed that, in the most difficult situations, only a firm and inflexible attitude towards the enemy can resolve the fundamental problems of the working masses. Conciliatory, opportunistic and capitulationist attitudes will inevitably lead to catastrophe and to bloody revenge by the reactionary forces.

Today, the working masses of the Third World find themselves in a very difficult situation, with no hope in sight, resembling conditions in the Soviet Union in 1920--1933. In Mozambique, the most reactionary forces in the country were used by the CIA and the South African BOSS to massacre 900,000 Mozambicans. The Hindu fundamentalists, long protected by the Congress Party and upheld by the Indian bourgeoisie, are leading India into bloody terror. In Colombia, the collusion between the reactionary army and police, the CIA and the drug traffickers is provoking a bloodbath among the masses. In Iraq, where criminal aggression killed more than 200,000, the embargo imposed by our great defenders of human rights continues to slowly kill tens of thousands of children.

In each of these extreme situations, Stalin's example shows us how to mobilize the masses for a relentless and victorious struggle against enemies ready to use any means.

But a great number of revolutionary parties of the Third World, engaged in merciless battles against barbaric imperialism, progressively deviated towards opportunism and capitulation, and this disintegration process almost always started with ideological attacks against Stalin. The evolution of parties such as the Farabundo Martн National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador is a prime example.

From about 1985, a right-opportunist tendency developed within the Communist Party of the Philippines. It wanted to end the popular war and to start a process of `national reconciliation'. Following Gorbachev, the

tendency virulently attacked Stalin. This same opportunism also had a `left' form. Wanting to come to power quickly, others proposed a militarist line and an urban political insurrection. In order to eliminate police infiltration, leaders of this tendency organized a purge within the Party in Mindanao: they executed several hundred persons, violating all of the Party's rules. But when the Central Committee decided to conduct an ideological and political rectification campaign, these opportunists all united against `the Stalinist purge'! Jose Maria wrote:

`(T)hose who oppose the rectification movement most bitterly are those who have been most responsible for the militarist viewpoint, the gross reduction of the mass base, witchhunts of monstrous proportions (violative of all sense of democracy and decency) and degeneration into gangsterism ....

`These renegades have in fact and in effect joined up with the intelligence and psywar agents of the U.S.--Ramos rйgime in an attempt to stop the CPP from strengthening itself ideologically, politically and organizationally.'

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Jose Maria Sison, Statement of Denial and Condemnation. 8 December 1992.

The journal Democratic Palestine, of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), also opened up a debate on Stalin:

`Negative aspects of the Stalin era which have been highlighted include: forced collectivization; repression of free expression and democracy in the party and in the society; ultracentralization of decision-making in the party, the Soviet state and the international Communist movement.'

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Democratic Palestine, July--August--September 1992, p. 31.

All these so-called `criticisms' of Stalin are nothing more than a verbatim rehash of old social-democratic anti-Communist criticisms. To choose this road and to follow it to its end means, ultimately, the end of the PFLP as a revolutionary organization. The experience of all those who have taken this road leaves no room for doubt.

The recent evolution of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) is instructive about this subject. In his interview of Fidйl Castro, Thomas Borge vigorously attacked `Stalinism': it is under this camouflage that the FSLN transformed itself into a bourgeois social-democratic entity.

Stalin's work takes on new meaning given the situation created since capitalist restoration in Central and Eastern Europe

Stalin's revolutionary work also takes on importance in the new European situation, with capitalist restoration in the East. The civil war in Yugoslavia shows the carnage that could spread to the whole of the European continent if the rising contradictions between imperialist powers provoked a new World War. Such a possibility can no longer be excluded. Today's map of the world strikingly resembles the situation between 1900 and 1914, when the imperialist powers vied for world economic domination. Today, the relations between the six imperialist centers, the U.S., Great Britain, Japan, Germany, Russia and France, are becoming very unstable. We have entered a period when alliances are done and undone and in which battles in the economic and commercial sphere are undertaken with increasing energy. The formation of new imperialist blocs that will violently confront each other becomes a real possibility. A war between big imperialist powers would make all of Europe into a giant Yugoslavia. Given such a possibility, Stalin's work deserves to be restudied.

In Communist Parties around the world, the ideological struggle around the Stalin question presents many common characteristics

In all capitalist countries, the economic, political and ideological pressure exerted by the bourgeoisie on Communists is incredibly strong. It is a permanent source of degeneration, of treason, of slow descent into the other camp. But every treacherous act requires ideological justification in the eyes of the one who is committing it. In general, a revolutionary who engages on the downward slope of opportunism `discovers the truth about Stalinism'. He or she takes, as is, the bourgeois and anti-Communist version of the history of the revolutionary movement under Stalin. In fact, the renegades make no discovery, they simply copy the bourgeoisie's lies. Why have so many renegades `discovered the truth about Stalin' (to improve the Communist movement, of course), but none among them has `discovered the truth about Churchill'? A discovery which would be much more important for `improving' the anti-imperialist struggle! Having a record of half a century of crimes in the service of the British Empire (Boer War in South Africa, terror in India, inter-imperialist First World War followed by military intervention against the new Soviet republic, war against Iraq, terror in Kenya, declaration of the Cold War, aggression against antifascist Greece, etc.), Churchill is probably the only bourgeois politician of this century to have equalled Hitler.

Every political and historical work is marked by the class position of its author. From the twenties to 1953, the majority of Western publications about the Soviet Union served the bourgeoisie's and the petit-bourgeoisie's attacks against Soviet socialism. Writings by Communist Party members and of Left intellectuals trying to defend the Soviet experience constituted a weak counter-current in defending the truth about the Soviet experience. But, from 1953--1956, Khrushchev and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union would take up, bit by bit, all the bourgeois historiography about the Stalin period.

Since then, revolutionaries in the Western world have been subject to a terrible and unending ideological onslaught about the crucial periods in

the rise of the Communist movement, particularly the Stalin era. If Lenin led the October Revolution and drew the main lines for building socialism, it was Stalin who actually put those lines into action for thirty years. The bourgeoisie's hatred is of course concentrated on the titanic task achieved under Stalin. A Communist who does not adopt a firm class position with respect to the misleading, one-sided, incomplete or false information that the bourgeoisie spreads around will be lost forever. For no other subject in recent history does the bourgeoisie denigrate its adversaries so fiercely. Every Communist must adopt a attitude of systematic mistrust towards all `information' furnished by the bourgeoisie (and the Khrushchevites) about the Stalin period. And he or she must do everything possible to discover the rare alternative sources of information that defend Stalin's revolutionary endeavor.

But opportunists in different parties dare not directly confront the anti-Stalin ideological offensive directly, despite its clear anti-Communist goal. The opportunists bend backwards under pressure, saying `yes to a criticism of Stalin', but pretending to criticize Stalin `from the Left'.

Today, we can sum up seventy years of `criticisms from the Left' formulated by the revolutionary experience of the Bolshevik Party under Stalin. There are hundreds of works available, written by social-democrats and Trotskyists, by Bukharinists and `independent' Left intellectuals. Their points of view have been taken up and developed by Khrushchevites and Titoists. We can better understand today the real class meaning of these works. Did any of these criticisms lead to revolutionary practices more important than the work under Stalin? Theories are, of course, judged by the social practice they engender. The revolutionary practice of the world Communist movement under Stalin shook the whole world and gave a new direction to the history of humanity. During the years 1985--1990, in particular, we have been able to see that all the so-called `Left critics' of Stalin have jumped onto the anti-Communist bandwagon, just countless cheerleaders. Social-democrats, Trotskyists, anarchists, Bukharinists, Titoists, ecologists, all found themselves in the movement for `liberty, democracy and human rights', which liquidated what remained of socialism in Eastern Europe and in the USSR. All these `Left criticisms' of Stalin had as final consequence the restoration of savage capitalism, the reinstatement

of a merciless dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the destruction of all social gains, cultural and political rights for the working masses and, in many cases, to the emergence of fascism and of reactionary civil wars.

When Khrushchev initiated the anti-Stalin campaigns in 1956, those Communists who resisted revisionism and defended Stalin were affected in a peculiar manner.

In 1956, the Chinese Communist Party had the revolutionary courage to defend Stalin's work. Its document, `Once more on the experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat', considerably helped Marxist-Leninists all over the world. Based on their own experience, the Chinese Communists criticized certain aspects of Stalin's work. This is perfectly normal and necessary in a discussion among Communists.

However, with the benefit of time, it seems that their criticisms were formulated too generally. This negatively influenced many Communists who lent credibility to all sorts of opportunistic criticisms.

For example, the Chinese comrades claimed that Stalin did not always clearly distinguish the two kinds of contradiction, those among the people, which can be overcome through education and struggle, and those between the people and the enemy, which require appropriate means of struggle. From this general criticism, some concluded that Stalin did not properly treat the contradictions with Bukharin, and ended up embracing Bukharin's social-democratic political line.

The Chinese Communists also stated that Stalin interfered in the affairs of other parties and denied them their independence. From this general criticism, some concluded that Stalin was wrong in condemning Tito's politics, ultimately accepting Titoism as a `specifically Yugoslav form of Marxism-Leninism'. The recent events in Yugoslavia allow one to better understand how Tito, since his break with the Bolshevik Party, followed a bourgeois-nationalist line and ultimately fell into the U.S. fold.

The ideological reticence and errors enumerated above about the Stalin question, occurred in almost all Marxist-Leninist parties.

A general conclusion can be drawn. In our judgment of all the episodes during the period 1923--1953, we must struggle to understand completely the political line held by the Bolshevik Party and by Stalin. We cannot accept any criticism of Stalin's work without verifying all primary data pertaining to the question under debate and without considering all versions of facts and events, in particular the version given by the Bolshevik leadership.

The young Stalin forges his arms

At the beginning of this century, the Tsarist rйgime was the most reactionary and the most oppressive of Europe. It was a feudal power, medieval, absolute, ruling over an essentially illiterate peasant population. The Russian peasantry lived in total ignorance and misery, in a chronic state of hunger. Periodically great famines occurred, resulting in hunger revolts.

Between 1800 and 1854, the country had thirty-five years of famine. Between 1891 and 1910, there were thirteen years of bad harvests and three years of famine.

The peasant worked small plots of land which, redistributed at regular intervals, became smaller and smaller. Often, they were little strips of land separated by great distances. A third of the households did not have a horse or an ox to work the soil. The harvest was done with a scythe. Compared to France or to Belgium, the majority of peasants lived in 1900 as in the fourteenth century.

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Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation? second edition (London: Victor Gollancz, 1937), p. 236.

During the first five years of this century, there were several hundred peasant revolts in the European part of Russia. Castles and buildings were burnt and landlords were killed. These struggles were always local and the police and the army crushed them mercilessly. In 1902, near-insurrectionary struggles occurred in Kharkov and Poltava. One hundred and eighty villages participated in the movement and eighty feudal domains were attacked. Commenting on the Saratov and Balashov peasant revolts, the military commander of the region noted:

`With astonishing violence, the peasants burned and destroyed everything; not one brick remained. Everything was pillaged --- the wheat, the stores, the furniture, the house utensils, the cattle, the metal from the

roofs --- in other words, everything that could be taken away was; and what remained was set aflame.'

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Ibid. , p. 531.

This miserable and ignorant peasantry was thrown into the First World War, during which the Tsar, still revered as a virtual God by the majority of peasants, intended to conquer new territories, particularly towards the Mediterranean. In Russia, the First World War killed about 2,500,000 people, particularly among the peasants conscripted to the army. The standard level of misery was compounded by the war's destruction and the countless dead.

But in this feudal Russia, new productive forces developed at the end of the nineteenth century. These included large factories, railroads and banks, owned for the most part by foreign capital. Fiercely exploited, highly concentrated, the industrial working class, under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, became the leading force in the anti-Tsarist struggle.

At the beginning of 1917, the main demand of all revolutionary forces was the end of this criminal war. The Bolsheviks called for immediate peace and the distribution of land. The old reactionary Tsarist system, completely undermined, collapsed suddenly in February 1917; the parties that wished to install a more modern bourgeois rйgime seized the reins of power. Their leaders were more closely linked to the English and French bourgeoisies that dominated the anti-German alliance.

As soon as the bourgeois government was installed, the representatives of the `socialist' parties entered it, one after the other. On February 27, 1917, Kerensky  was the only `socialist' among the eleven ministers of the old rйgime.

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Alexander Kerensky, Russia and History's Turning Point (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1965), p. 220.

On April 29, the Socialist Revolutionaries, the Mensheviks, the Popular Socialists and the Trudoviks voted to enter the government.

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Ibid. , p. 248.

The four parties more or less followed the European social-democratic movement. On May 5, Kerensky became Minister of War and of the Marine. In his memoirs, he summarized the program of his `socialist' friends:

`No army in the world can afford to start questioning the aim for which it is fighting .... To restore their fighting capacity we had to overcome their animal fear and answer their doubts with the clear and simple truth: You must make the sacrifice to save the country.'

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Ibid. , p. 277.

Sure enough, the `socialists' sent peasants and workers to be butchered, to be sacrificed for capital. Once again, hundreds of thousands were bayoneted.

In this context, the Bolsheviks touched the most profound needs of the working and peasant masses by organizing the insurrection of October 25 with the slogans `land to the peasants', `immediate peace' and `nationalization of banks and large industry'. The great October Revolution, the first socialist revolution, was victorious.

Stalin's activities in 1900—1917

Here, we would like to bring out certain aspects of Stalin's life and work between 1900 and 1917, to better understand the rфle that he would play after 1922.

We consider certain parts of Stalin's life, as presented in the book, Stalin, Man of History, by Ian Grey; it is, to the best of our knowledge, the best biography written by a non-Communist.

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Ian Grey, Stalin: Man of History (New York: Doubleday & Co, 1979).

Josef Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili was born on December 21, 1879, in Gori, Georgia. His father, Vissarion, a shoemaker, came from a family of peasant serfs. His mother, Ekaterina Georgievna Geladze, was also the daughter of serfs. Stalin's parents, poor and illiterate, came from the ordinary people. Stalin was one of the few Bolshevik leaders who came from modest origins. All of his life, he tried to write and to speak so that he could be understood by ordinary workers.

During his five years at the Gori primary school, Josef Dzhugashvili was noted for his intelligence and his exceptional memory. When he left in 1894, he was recommended as the `best student' for entrance in the Tiflis Seminary, the most important institution of higher learning in Georgia, as well as a center of opposition to Tsarism. In 1893, Ketskhoveli had led a strike there and 87 students had been expelled.

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Ibid. , pp. 14--18.

Stalin was 15 years old and was in his second year at the seminary when he first came into contact with clandestine Marxist circles. He spent a lot of time in a bookstore owned by a man named Chelidze; young radicals went there to read progressive books. In 1897, the assistant supervisor wrote a note saying that he had caught Dzhugashvili reading Letourneau's Literary Evolution of the Nations, before that Victor Hugo's Toilers of the Sea, then Hugo's Ninety-three; in fact, a total of thirteen times with banned books.

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Grey, op. cit. , pp. 20--21. Robert H. McNeal, Stalin: Man and Ruler (New York: New York University Press, 1988), p. 9.

In 1897, at the age of eighteen, Dzhugashvili joined the first Socialist organization in Georgia, led by Zhordania, Chkheidze and Tseretelli, who would later become famous Mensheviks. The next year, Stalin led a study circle for workers. At the time, Stalin was already reading Plekhanov's works, as well as Lenin's first writings.

In 1899, he was expelled from the Seminary. Here began his career of professional revolutionary.

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Grey, op. cit. , pp. 22--24.

Right from the start, Stalin showed great intelligence and a remarkable memory; by his own efforts, he acquired great political knowledge by reading widely.

To denigrate Stalin's work, almost all bourgeois authors repeat Trotsky's slanders: `(Stalin's) political horizon is restricted, his theoretical equipment primitive .... His mind is stubbornly empirical, and devoid of creative imagination'.

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Leon Trotsky, My Life (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), p. 506.

On May 1, 1900, Stalin spoke in front of an illegal gathering of 500 workers in the mountains above Tiflis. Under the portraits of Marx and Engels, they listened to speeches in Georgian, Russian and Armenian. During the three months that followed, strikes broke out in the factories and on the railroads of Tiflis; Stalin was one of the main instigators. Early in 1901, Stalin distributed the first issue of the clandestine newspaper Iskra, published by Lenin in Leipzig. On May 1, 1901, two thousand workers organized, for the first time, an open demonstration in Tiflis; the police intervened violently. Lenin wrote in Iskra that `the event ... is of historical importance for the entire Caucasus'.

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Grey, op. cit. , pp. 29--31.

During the same year, Stalin, Ketskhoveli and Krassin led the radical wing of social-democracy in Georgia. They acquired a printing press, reprinted Iskra and published the first clandestine Georgian newspaper, Brdzola (Struggle). In the first issue, they defended the supra-national unity of the Party and attacked the `moderates', who called for an independent Georgian party that would be associated with the Russian party.

.

Ibid. , p. 32.

In November 1901, Stalin was elected to the first Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party and sent to Batum, a city half of

whose population was Turkish. In February 1902, he had already organized eleven clandestine circles in the main factories of the city. On February 27, six thousand workers in the petroleum refinery marched through the city. The army opened fire, killing 15 and arresting 500.

.

Ibid. , pp. 34--35.

One month later, Stalin was himself arrested, imprisoned until April 1903, then condemned to three years in Siberia. He escaped and was back in Tiflis in February 1904.

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Ibid. , p. 38.

During his stay in Siberia, Stalin wrote to a friend in Leipzig, asking him for copies of the Letter to a Comrade on our Organizational Tasks and expressing his support for Lenin's positions. After the Congress of August 1903, the Social-Democratic Party was divided between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks; the Georgian delegates were among the latter. Stalin, who had read What is to be done?, supported the Bolsheviks without hesitation. `It was a decision demanding conviction and courage. Lenin and the Bolsheviks had little support in Transcaucasia', wrote Grey.

.

Ibid. , pp. 41--45.

In 1905, the leader of the Georgian Mensheviks, Zhordania, published a criticism of the Bolshevik theses that Stalin defended, thereby underscoring the importance of Stalin in the Georgian revolutionary movement. During the same year, in `Armed Uprising and Our Tactics',

Stalin defended, against the Mensheviks, the necessity of armed struggle to overthrow Tsarism.

.

Ibid. , p. 51.

Stalin was 26 years old when he first met Lenin at the Bolshevik Congress in Finland in December 1905.

.

Ibid. , p. 53.

Between 1905 and 1908, the Caucasus was the site of intense revolutionary activity; the police counted 1,150 `terrorist acts'. Stalin played an important rфle. In 1907--1908, Stalin led, together with Ordzhonikidze and Voroshilov, the secretary of the oil workers' union, a major legal struggle among the 50,000 workers in the oil industry in Baku. They attained the right to elect worker representatives, who could meet in a conference to discuss the collective agreement regarding salaries and working conditions. Lenin hailed this struggle, which took place at a time when most of the revolutionary cells in Russia had ceased their activities.

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Ibid. , pp. 59, 64.

In March 1908, Stalin was arrested a second time and condemned to two years of exile. But in June 1909, he escaped and returned to Baku, where he found the party in crisis, the newspaper no longer being published.

Three weeks after his return, Stalin had started up publication again; in an article he argued that `it would be strange to think that organs

published abroad, remote from Russian reality, could unify the work of the party'. Stalin insisted on maintaining the clandestine Party, asking for the creation of a coordinating committee within Russia and the publication of a national newspaper, also within Russia, to inform, encourage and re-establish the Party's direction. Feeling that the workers' movement was about to re-emerge, he repeated these proposals early in 1910.

.

Ibid. , pp. 65--69.

But while helping prepare a general strike of the oil industry, he was arrested for a third time in March 1910, sent to Siberia, and banished for five years. In February 1912, he escaped again and came back to Baku.

.

Ibid. , p. 70.

Stalin learned that at the Prague Conference, the Bolsheviks had created their independent party and that a Russian bureau, of which he was a member, had been created. On April 22, 1912, at St. Petersburg, Stalin published the first edition of the Bolshevik newspaper Pravda.

On the same day, he was arrested a fourth time, together with the editorial secretary, Molotov. They were denounced by Malinovsky, an agent provocateur elected to the Central Committee! Shernomazov, who replaced Molotov as secretary, was also a police agent. Banished for three years to Siberia, Stalin once again escaped and took up the leadership of Pravda.

Convinced of the necessity of a break with the Mensheviks, he differed with Lenin about tactics. The Bolshevik line had to be defended, without directly attacking the Mensheviks, since the workers sought unity.

Under his leadership, Pravda developed a record circulation of 80,000 copies.

.

Ibid. , pp. 71--73.

At the end of 1912, Lenin called Stalin and other leaders to Cracow to advocate his line of an immediate break with the Mensheviks, then sent Stalin to Vienna so that he could write Marxism and the National Question. Stalin attacked `cultural-national autonomy' within the Party, denouncing it as the road to separatism and to subordination of socialism to nationalism. He defended the unity of different nationalities within one centralized Party.

Upon his return to St. Petersburg, Malinovsky had him arrested a fifth time. This time, he was sent to the most remote regions of Siberia, where he spent five years.

.

Ibid. , pp. 75--79.

It was only after the February 1917 Revolution that Stalin was able to return to St. Petersburg, where he was elected to the Presidium of the Russian Bureau, taking up once again the leadership of Pravda. In April 1917, at the Party Conference, he received the third largest number of votes for the Central Committee. During the month of July, when Pravda was closed by the Provisional Government and several Bolshevik leaders were arrested, Lenin had to hide in Finland; Stalin led the Party. In August, at the Sixth Congress, he read the report in the name of the Central Committee; the political line was unanimously adopted by 267 delegates, with four abstentions. Stalin declared: `the possibility is not excluded that Russia will be the country that blazes the trail to socialism .... It is necessary to give up the outgrown idea that Europe alone can show us the way'.

.

Ibid. , pp. 88--96.

At the time of the October 25 insurrection, Stalin was part of a military revolutionary `center', consisting of five members of the Central Committee. Kamenev and Zinoviev publicly opposed the seizing of power by the Bolshevik Party; Rykov, Nogin, Lunacharsky and Miliutin supported them. But it was Stalin who rejected Lenin's proposal to expel Kamenev and Zinoviev from the Party. After the revolution, these `Right Bolsheviks' insisted on a coalition government with the Mensheviks and the Social-Revolutionaries. Once again threatened with expulsion, they toed the line.

.

Ibid. , pp. 97--98.

Stalin became the first People's Commissar for Nationality Affairs. Quickly grasping that the international bourgeoisie was supporting the local bourgeoisies among national minorities, Stalin wrote: `the right of self-determination (was the right) not of the bourgeoisie but of the toiling masses of a given nation. The principle of self-determination ought to be used as a means in the struggle for socialism, and it ought to be subordinated to the principles of socialism'.

.

Ibid. , pp. 103--104.

Between 1901 and 1917, right from the beginning of the Bolshevik Party until the October Revolution, Stalin was a major supporter of Lenin's line. No other Bolshevik leader could claim as constant or diverse activity

as Stalin. He had followed Lenin right from the beginning, at the time when Lenin only had a small number of adherents among the socialist intellectuals. Unlike most of the other Bolshevik leaders, Stalin was constantly in contact with Russian reality and with activists within Russia. He knew these militants, having met them in open and clandestine struggles, in prisons and in Siberia. Stalin was very competent, having led armed struggle in the Caucasus as well as clandestine struggles; he had led union struggles and edited legal and illegal newspapers; he had led the legal and parliamentary struggle and knew the national minorities as well as the Russian people.

Trotsky did his best to systematically denigrate the revolutionary past of Stalin, and almost all bourgeois authors repeat these slanders. Trotsky declared:

`Stalin ... is the outstanding mediocrity in the party'.

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Trotsky, My Life, p. 512.

Trotsky was trying to pull the wool over everyone's eyes, talking about `the party', because he had never belonged to the Bolshevik Party that Lenin, Zinoviev, Stalin, Sverdlov and others forged between 1901 and 1917. Trotsky joined the Party in July 1917.

Trotsky also wrote: `in routine work it was more convenient for Lenin to depend on Stalin, Zinoviev or Kamenev .... I was not suited for executing commissions .... Lenin needed practical, obedient assistants. I was unsuited to the rфle'.

.

Ibid. , p. 477.

These sentences say nothing about Stalin, but everything about Trotsky: he pinned onto Lenin his own aristocratic and Bonapartist concept of a party: a leader surrounded by docile assistants who deal with current affairs!

The `socialists' and revolution

The insurrection took place on October 25, 1917. The next day, the `socialists' made the Soviet of the Peasants' Deputies pass the first counter-revolutionary motion:

`Comrade Peasants! All the liberties gained with the blood of your sons and brothers are now in terrible, mortal jeopardy .... Again a blow is being inflicted upon the army, which defends the homeland and the revolution from external defeat. (The Bolsheviks) divide the forces of the toiling people .... The blow against the army is the first and the worst crime of the Bolshevik party! Second, they have started a civil war and have seized power by violence .... (The Bolshevik promises) will be followed not by peace but by slavery.'

.

Kerensky, op. cit. , pp. 450--451.

Hence, the day after the October Revolution, the `socialists' had already called for the perpetration of imperialist war and they were already accusing the Bolsheviks of provoking civil war and bringing violence and slavery!

Immediately, the bourgeois forces, the old Tsarist forces, in fact all the reactionary forces, sought to regroup and reorganize under the `socialist' vanguard. As early as 1918, anti-Bolshevik insurrections took place. Early in 1918, Plekhanov, an eminent leader of the Menshevik party, formed, along with Socialist Revolutionaries and Popular Socialists, as well as with the chiefs of the bourgeois Cadet (Constitutional Democrats) party, the `Union for the Resurrection of Russia'. `They believed,' wrote Kerensky, `that a national government had to be created on democratic principles in the broadest possible sense, and that the front against Germany had to be restored in cooperation with Russia's western Allies'.

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Ibid. , pp. 479--480.

On June 20, 1918, Kerensky showed up in London, representing this Union, to negotiate with the Allies. He announced to the Prime Minister, Lloyd George:

`It was the aim of the government now being formed ... to continue the war alongside the Allies, to free Russia from Bolshevik tyranny, and to restore a democratic system.'

Hence, more than seventy years ago, the bloodthirsty and reactionary bourgeoisie was already using the word `democracy' to cover up its barbaric domination.

In the name of the Union, Kerensky asked for an Allied `intervention' in Russia. Soon after, a Directorate was set up in Siberia, consisting of Socialist Revolutionaries, Popular Socialists, the Cadet bourgeois party and the Tsarist generals Alekseyev and Boldyrev. The British and French governments almost recognized it as the legal government before deciding to play the card of Tsarist general Kolchak.

.

Ibid. , pp. 492, 500--501, 506--507.

Hence the forces that had defended Tsarist reaction and the bourgeoisie during the civil war in Russia were all regrouped: the Tsarist forces, all of the bourgeoisie's forces, from the Cadets to the socialists, along with the invading foreign troops.

Sidney and Beatrice Webb wrote:

`In 1918 the authority of the Soviet Government was far from being firmly established. Even in Petrograd and Moscow, there was the very

smallest security of life and property .... The deliberate and long-continued blockade maintained by the British fleet, and supported by the other hostile governments, kept out alike food and clothing, and the sorely needed medicines and anaesthetics .... Presently came the armies of the governments of Great Britain, France, Japan, Italy and the United States, without any declaration of war, actually invading, at half a dozen points from Vladivostok and Batoum to Murmansk and Archangel, the territory of what had never ceased to be technically a ``friendly power''. The same governments, moreover, freely supplied officers, equipment and munitions to the mixed forces raised by Denikin, Kolchak, Jedenich (Yudenich) and Wrangle, who took up arms against the Soviet Government. Incidentally, the Germans and Poles ravaged the western provinces, whilst the army formed out of the Czecho-Slovakian prisoners of war held an equivocal position in its protracted passage through Siberia to the Pacific Ocean.'

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Webb, op. cit. , pp. 536--537.

From 1918 to 1921, the civil war killed nine million, most of them victims of famine. These nine million dead are attributable essentially to foreign invasions (British, French, Czechoslovakian, Japanese, Polish, etc.) and to the blockade organized by the Western powers. The Right would insidiously classify them as `victims of Bolshevism'!

It appears to be a miracle that the Bolshevik Party --- only 33,000 members in 1917 --- could succeed in mobilizing popular forces to such an extent that they defeated the superior forces of the bourgeoisie and the old Tsarist rйgime, upheld by the `socialists' and reinforced by the invading foreign armies. In other words, without a complete mobilization of the peasant and working masses, and without their tenaciousness and their strong will for freedom, the Bolsheviks could never have attained final victory.

Since the beginning of the Civil War, the Mensheviks denounced the `Bolshevik dictatorship', the `arbitrary, terrorist rйgime' of the

Bolsheviks, the `new Bolshevik aristocracy'. This was 1918 and there was no `Stalinism' in the air! `The dictatorship of the new aristocracy': it is in those terms that social-democracy attacked, right from the beginning, the socialist rйgime that Lenin wished to install. Plekhanov developed the theoretical basis needed to uphold these accusations by insisting that the Bolsheviks had established an `objectively reactionary' political line, going against the flow of history, a reactionary utopia consisting of introducing socialism in a country that was not ready. Plekhanov referred to traditional `peasant anarchy'. Nevertheless, when the foreign interventions occurred, Plekhanov was one of the few Menshevik leaders to oppose them.

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Jane Burbank, Intelligentsia and Revolution: Russian Views of Bolshevism, 1917--1922 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 13, 36, 42, 44.

The socialists' alliance with the bourgeoisie was based on two arguments. The first was the impossibility of `imposing' socialism in a backward country. The second was that since the Bolsheviks wanted to impose socialism `by force', they would bring `tyranny' and `dictatorship' and would constitute a `new aristocracy' above the masses.

These first `analyses', made by the counter-revolutionary social-democrats, who fought against socialism weapons in hand, are worth studying: these insidious attacks against Leninism would later be crudely amplified to become attacks on `Stalinism'.

Stalin during the Civil War

Let us come back for a moment to the rфle played by Stalin during the Civil War.

Many bourgeois publications place Trotsky, the `creator and organizer of the Red Army', on an equal level with Lenin, the two being responsible for the military victory of the Bolsheviks. Stalin's contribution to the struggle against the White Armies is generally neglected. However, between 1918 and 1920, Stalin, who was one of the main leaders of the Party, personally led the military struggle on many decisive fronts. At the military level, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Bukharin played no rфle.

In November 1917, the Central Committee created a smaller committee to deal with urgent affairs; its members were Lenin, Stalin, Sverdlov and Trotsky. Pestkovsky, Stalin's assistant, wrote: `In the course of the day (Lenin) would call Stalin out an endless number of times .... Most of the day Stalin spent with Lenin'.

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Grey, op. cit. , p. 105.

During the peace negotiations with Germany in December 1917, Lenin and Stalin, in order to preserve Soviet power, whatever the cost, insisted on accepting the humiliating concessions imposed by Germany. They thought that the Russian army was simply incapable of fighting. Bukharin and Trotsky wanted to refuse the conditions and declare `revolutionary war'. For Lenin, this ultra-nationalist line was a trap laid out by the bourgeoisie in order to precipitate the fall of the Bolsheviks. During the negotiations with Germany, Trotsky declared: `We are withdrawing our armies and our peoples from the war ... but we feel ourselves compelled to refuse to sign the peace treaty'. Stalin affirmed that there were no signs of a incipient revolution in Germany and that Trotsky's spectacular act was no policy. Germany again took up the offensive and the Bolsheviks were soon

forced to sign even worse peace conditions. In this affair, the Party was on the verge of catastrophe.

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Ibid. , pp. 106--109.

In January 1918, the Tsarist general Alekseev organized a volunteer army in Ukraine and in the Don region. In February, the German Army occupied Ukraine to `guarantee its independence'. In May 1918, thirty thousand Czechoslovakian soldiers occupied a large part of Siberia. During the summer, at the instigation of Winston Churchill, Great Britain, France, the United States, Italy, and Japan, among others, intervened militarily against the Bolsheviks.

Starting in March 1918, Trotsky was People's Commissar for War. His task was to organize a new army of workers and peasants, led by 40,000 officers from the old Tsarist army.

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Ibid. , pp. 115--117.

In June 1918, the North Caucasus was the only important grain-growing region in the hands of the Bolsheviks. It was threatened by Krasnov's army. Stalin was sent to Tsaritsyn, the future Stalingrad, to ensure grain delivery. He found complete chaos. On July 19, he wrote to Lenin, asking for military authority over the region: `I myself, without formalities, will remove those army commanders and (c)ommissars who are ruining things'. Stalin was named President of the Southern War Front Council. Later, Stalin would oppose the old Tsarist artillery general Sytin, named by Trotsky as Commander of the South Front, and the Commander-in-Chief, the old Tsarist colonel Vatsetis. Tsaritsyn was successfully defended.

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Ibid. , pp. 121--127.

`Lenin regarded `the measures decided on by Stalin' as a model'.

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McNeal, op. cit. , p. 157.

In October 1918, Stalin was appointed to the Military Council of the Ukrainian Front; its task was to overthrow Skoropadsky's rйgime, set up by Germany.

In December, when the situation dramatically deteriorated in the Urals, thanks to the advance of Kolchak's reactionary troops, Stalin was sent with full powers to put an end to the catastrophic state of the Third Army and to purge the incompetent commissars. In his inquiry, Stalin criticized the policies of Trotsky and Vatsetis. During the Eighth Congress in March 1919, Trotsky was criticized by many delegates `for his dictatorial manners, ... for his adoration of the specialists, and his torrent of ill-considered telegrams'.

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Grey, op. cit. , pp. 128--129.

In May 1919, Stalin was sent once again, with full powers, to organize the defence of Petrograd against Yudenich's army. On June 4, Stalin sent a telegram to Lenin, claiming, with support from seized documents, that many leading officers in the Red Army were working in secret for the White Armies.

.

Ibid. , pp. 129--130.

On the Eastern Front, a bitter conflict developed between its commander, S. S. Kamenev (not to be confused with L. B. Kamenev), and the Commander-in-Chief, Vatsetis. The Central Committee finally decided in favor of the former and Trotsky presented his resignation, which was refused. Vatsetis was arrested pending an inquiry.

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Ibid. , p. 131.

In August 1919, Denikin's White Army was moving forward towards Moscow in the Don, in Ukraine and in South Russia. From October 1919 to March 1920, Stalin led the Southern Front and defeated Denikin.

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Ibid. , pp. 132--133.

In May 1920, Stalin was sent to the Southwestern Front, where the Polish armies were threatening the city of Lvov, in Ukraine, and Wrangel's troops Crimea. The Poles occupied a large part of Ukraine, including Kiev. On the Western Front, Tukhachevsky counter-attacked, pushing back the aggressors to the limits of Warsaw. Lenin hoped to win the war with reactionary Poland and a temporary Polish Soviet government was formed. Stalin warned against such an act: `The class conflicts have not reached the strength to break through the sense of national unity'.

.

Ibid. , pp. 135--136.

Poorly coordinated, receiving contradictory orders, Tukhachevsky's troops were counter-attacked by the Polish troops on an unprotected flank and put to flight.

To the South, Wrangel's White Armies were liquidated at the end of 1920.

.

Ibid. , p. 139.

In November 1919, Stalin and Trotsky received the newly created Order of the Red Banner for their military successes. Lenin and the Central Committee estimated that Stalin's merits in leading the armed struggle in the most difficult areas equaled Trotsky's in organizing and leading the Red Army at the central level. But to make himself come out in a better light, Trotsky wrote: `Throughout the period of the Civil War, Stalin remained a third-rate figure'.

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Leon Trotsky, Stalin: An appraisal of the man and his influence (New York: Harper & Brother Publishers, 1941), p. 333.

McNeal, who is often prejudiced against Stalin, writes on this subject:

`Stalin had emerged ... as a political--military chief whose contribution to the Red victory was second only to Trotsky's. Stalin had played a smaller role than his rival in the overall organization of the Red Army, but he had been more important in providing direction on crucial fronts. If his reputation as a hero was far below Trotsky's, this had less to do with objective merit than with Stalin's lack of flair ... for self-advertisement.'

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McNeal, op. cit. , p. 63.

In December 1919, Trotsky proposed the `militarization of economic life' and wanted to mobilize the workers using methods he had applied for leading the army. With this line, the railroad workers were mobilized under military discipline. A wave of protests passed through the union movement. Lenin declared that Trotsky committed errors that endangered the dictatorship of the proletariat: by his bureaucratic harassment of the unions, he risked separating the Party from the masses.

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V. I. Lenin, The Trade Unions, the Present Situation, and Trotsky's Mistakes (30 December 1920). Collected Works (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1960--1970), vol. 32, pp. 19--42.

Trotsky's outrageous individualism, his open disdain for Bolshevik cadres, his authoritarian style of leadership and his taste for military discipline frightened many Party cadres. They thought that Trotsky could well play the rфle of a Napolйon Bonaparte, effecting a coup d'йtat and setting up a counter-revolutionary authoritarian rйgime.

Lenin's `Will'

Trotsky knew his brief hour of glory in 1919, during the Civil War. However, without question, in 1921--1923, it was Stalin who was the second in the Party, after Lenin.

Since the Eighth Congress in 1919, Stalin had been a member of the Politburo, beside Lenin, Kamenev, Trotsky and Krestinsky. This membership did not change until 1921. Stalin was also member of the Organizational Bureau, also composed of five members of the Central Committee.

Grey, op. cit. , p. 151.

When during the Eleventh Congress, in 1922, Preobrazhensky criticized the fact that Stalin led the People's Commissariat for Nationality Affairs as well as the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection (in charge of controlling the state apparatus), Lenin replied:

`(W)e need a man to whom the representatives of any of these nations can go and discuss their difficulties in all detail .... I don't think Comrade Preobrazhensky could suggest any better comrade than Comrade Stalin.

`The same thing applies to the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. This is a vast business; but to be able to handle investigations we must have at the head of it a man who enjoys high prestige, otherwise we shall become submerged in and overwhelmed by petty intrigue.'

Lenin, Closing Speech on the Political Report of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.). (28 March 1922). Works, vol. 33, p. 315.

On April 23, 1922, on Lenin's suggestion, Stalin was also appointed to head the secretariat, as General Secretary.

Grey, p. 159.

Stalin was the only person who was a member of the Central Committee, the Political Bureau, the Organizational Bureau and the Secretariat of the Bolshevik Party. At the Twelfth Congress in April 1923, he presented the main report.

Lenin had suffered his first stroke in May 1922. On December 16, 1922, he suffered another major attack. His doctors knew that he would not recover.

On December 24, the doctors told Stalin, Kamenev and Bukharin, the representatives of the Political Bureau, that any political controversy could provoke a new attack, this time fatal. They decided that Lenin `has the right to dictate every day for five or ten minutes .... He is forbidden [political] visitors. Friends and those around him may not inform him about political affairs'.

Ibid. , p. 171.

The Politburo made Stalin responsible for the relations with Lenin and the doctors. It was a thankless task since Lenin could only feel frustrated because of his paralysis and his distance from political affairs. His irritation would necessarily turn against the man who was responsible for interacting with him. Ian Grey writes:

`The journal of Lenin's secretaries, from November 21, 1922 to March 6, 1923, contained the day-by-day details of his work, visitors, and health, and after December 13 it recorded his smallest actions. Lenin, his right arm and leg paralyzed, was then confined to bed in his small apartment in the Kremlin, cut off from government business and, in fact, from the outside world. The doctors insisted that he should not be disturbed ....

`Unable to relinquish the habits of power, Lenin struggled to obtain the papers he wanted, relying on his wife, Krupskaya, his sister, Maria Ilyichna, and three or four secretaries.'

Ibid. , p. 172.

Used to leading the essential aspects of the life of Party and State, Lenin desperately tried to intervene in debates in which he could no longer physically master all the elements. His doctors refused to allow him any political work, which bothered him intensely. Feeling that his end was near, Lenin sought to resolve questions that he thought of paramount importance, but that he no longer fully understood. The Politburo refused to allow him any stressful political work, but his wife did her best to get hold of the documents that he sought. Any doctor having seen similar situations would say that difficult psychological and personal conflicts were inevitable.

Towards the end of December 1922, Krupskaya wrote a letter that Lenin had dictated to her. Having done that, she was reprimanded by telephone by Stalin. She complained to Lenin and to Kamenev. `I know better than all the doctors what can and what can not be said to Ilyich, for I know what disturbs him and what doesn't and in any case I know this better than Stalin'.

Ibid. , p. 173.

About this period, Trotsky wrote: `In the middle of December, 1922, Lenin's health again took a turn for the worse .... Stalin at once tried to capitalize on this situation, hiding from Lenin much of the information which was concentrating in the Party Secretariat .... Krupskaya did whatever she could to shield the sick man from hostile jolts by the Secretariat.'

Trotsky, Stalin, p. 374.

These are the unforgivable words of an intriguer. The doctors had refused to allow Lenin receipt of reports, and here is Trotsky, accusing Stalin for having made `hostile maneuvers' against Lenin and for having `hidden information'!

What enemies of Communism call `Lenin's will' was dictated in these circumstances during the period of December 23--25, 1922. These notes are

followed by a post-scriptum dated January 5, 1923.

Bourgeois authors have much focused on Lenin's so-called `will', which supposedly called for the elimination of Stalin in favor of Trotsky. Henri Bernard, Professor Emeritus at the Belgian Royal Military School, writes: `Trotsky should normally have succeeded Lenin .... (Lenin) thought of him as successor. He thought Stalin was too brutal'.

Henri Bernard, Le communisme et l'aveuglement occidental (Soumagne, Belgium: Йditions Andrй Grisard, 1982), p. 48.

The U.S. Trotskyist Max Eastman published this `will' in 1925, along with laudatory remarks about Trotsky. At the time, Trotsky had to publish a correction in the Bolshevik newspaper, where he wrote:

`Eastman says that the Central Committee `concealed' from the Party ... the so-called `will,' ... there can be no other name for this than slander against the Central Committee of our Party .... Vladimir Ilyich did not leave any `will,' and the very character of the Party itself, precluded the possibility of such a `will.' What is usually referred to as a `will' in the йmigrй and foreign bourgeois and Menshevik press (in a manner garbled beyond recognition) is one of Vladimir Ilyich's letters containing advice on organisational matters. The Thirteenth Congress of the Party paid the closest attention to that letter .... All talk about concealing or violating a `will' is a malicious invention.'

Quoted in Stalin, The Trotskyist Opposition Before and Now. Works (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954), pp. 179--180. Stalin's emphasis.

A few years later, the same Trotsky, in his autobiography, would clamor indignantly about `Lenin's ``Will'', which Stalin concealed from the party'.

Trotsky, My Life, p. 469.

Let us examine the three pages of notes dictated by Lenin between December 23, 1922 and January 5, 1923.

Lenin called for `increasing the number of C.C. members (to 50 to 100), I think it must be done in order to raise the prestige of the Central Committee, to do a thorough job of improving our administrative machinery and to prevent conflicts between small sections of the C.C. from acquiring excessive importance for the future of the Party. It seems to me that our Party has every right to demand from the working class 50 to 100 C.C. members'. These would be `measures against a split'. `I think that from this standpoint the prime factors in the question of stability are such members of the C.C. as Stalin and Trotsky. I think relations between them make the greater part of the danger of a split'.

Lenin, Letter to the Congress. Works, vol. 36, pp. 593--594.

So much for the `theoretical' part.

This text is remarkably incomprehensible, clearly dictated by a sick and diminished man. How could 50 to 100 workers added to the Central Committee `raise its prestige'? Or reduce the danger of split? Saying nothing about Stalin's and Trotsky's political concepts and visions of the Party, Lenin claimed that the personal relationships between these two leaders threatened unity.

Then Lenin `judged' the five main leaders of the Party. We cite them here:

`Comrade Stalin, having become Secretary-General, has unlimited authority concentrated in his hands; and I am not sure whether he will always be capable of using that authority with sufficient caution. Comrade Trotsky, on the other hand, as his struggle against the C.C. on the question of the People's Commissariat for Communications has already proved, is distinguished not only by exceptional abilities. He is personally perhaps the most capable man in the present C.C., but he has diplayed excessive preoccupation with the purely administrative side of the work.

`These two qualities of the two outstanding leaders of the present C.C. can inadvertently lead to a split ....

`I shall just recall that the October episode with Zinoviev and Kamenev was, of course, no accident, but neither can the blame for it be laid upon them personally, any more than non-Bolshevism can upon Trotsky ....

`Bukharin is not only a most valuable and major theorist of the Party; he is also rightly considered the favourite of the whole Party, but his theoretical views can be classified as fully Marxist only with great reserve, for there is something scholastic about him (he has never made a study of dialectics, and, I think, never fully understood it).'

Ibid. , pp. 594--595.

Note that the first leader to be named by Lenin was Stalin, who, in Trotsky's words, `always seemed a man destined to play second and third fiddle'.

Trotsky, My Life, p. 506.

Trotsky continued:

`Unquestionably, his object in making the will was to facilitate the work of direction for me'.

Ibid. , pp. 479--480.

Of course, there is nothing of the kind in Lenin's rough notes. Grey states quite correctly:

`Stalin emerged in the best light. He had done nothing to besmirch his party record. The only query was whether he could show good judgment in wielding the vast powers in his hands.'

Grey, op. cit. , p. 176.

With respect to Trotsky, Lenin noted four major problems: he was seriously wrong on several occasions, as was shown in his struggle against the Central Committee in the `militarization of the unions' affair; he had an exaggerated opinion of himself; his approach to problems was bureaucratic; and his non-Bolshevism was not accidental.

About Zinoviev and Kamenev, the only thing that Lenin noted was that their treason during the October insurrection was not accidental.

Bukharin was a great theoretician, whose ideas were not completely Marxist but, rather, scholastic and non-dialectic!

Lenin dictated his notes in order to avoid a split in the Party leadership. But the statements that he made about the five main leaders seem better suited to undermining their prestige and setting them against each other.

When he dictated these lines, `Lenin was not feeling well', wrote his secretary Fotieva, and `the doctors opposed discussions between Lenin and his secretary and stenographer'.

Fotieva, Souvenirs sur Lйnine (Moscow: Йditions Moscou, n.d.), pp. 152--153.

Then, ten days later, Lenin dictated an `addition', which appears to refer to a rebuke that Stalin had made twelve days earlier to Krupskaya.

`Stalin is too rude and this defect, although quite tolerable in our midst and in dealings among us Communists, becomes intolerable in a Secretary-General. That is why I suggest that the comrades think about a way of removing Stalin from that post and appointing another man in his stead who in all other respects differs from Comrade Stalin in having only one advantage, namely, that of being more tolerant, more loyal, more polite and more considerate to the comrades, less capricious, etc. This circumstance may appear to be a negligible detail. But I think that from the standpoint of

safeguards against a split and from the standpoint of what I wrote above about the relationship between Stalin and Trotsky it is not a detail, or it is a detail which can assume decisive importance.'

Lenin, Letter to the Congress, p. 596.

Gravely ill, half paralyzed, Lenin was more and more dependent on his wife. A few overly harsh words from Stalin to Krupskaya led Lenin to ask for the resignation of the General Secretary. But who was to replace him? A man who had all of Stalin's capacities and `one more trait': to be more tolerant, polite and attentive! It is clear from the text the Lenin was certainly not referring to Trotsky! Then to whom? To no one.

Stalin's `rudeness' was `entirely supportable in relations among us Communists', but was not `in the office of the General Secretary'. But the General Secretary's main rфle at the time dealt with questions of the Party's internal organization!

In February 1923, `Lenin's state worsened, he suffered from violent headaches. The doctor categorically refused to allow newspaper reading, visits and political information. Vladimir Ilyich asked for the record of the Tenth Congress of the Soviets. It was not given to him, which made him very sad'.

Fotieva, op. cit. , pp. 173--174.

Apparently, Krupskaya tried to obtain the documents that Lenin asked for. Dimitrievsky reported another altercation between Krupskaya and Stalin.

`When Krupskaya ... telephoned him ... once more for some information, Stalin ... upbraided her in the most outrageous language. Krupskaya, all in tears, immediately ran to complain to Lenin. Lenin's nerves, already strained to the breaking point by the intrigues, could not hold out any longer.'

Trotsky, Stalin, p. 374.

On March 5, Lenin dictated a new note:

`Respected Comrade Stalin. You had the rudeness to summon my wife to the telephone and reprimand her .... I do not intend to forget so easily what was done against me, and I need not stress that I consider what is done against my wife is done against me also. I ask therefore that you weigh carefully whether you are agreeable to retract what you said and to apologize or whether you prefer to sever relations between us. Lenin.'

Grey, op. cit. , p. 179.

It is distressing to read this private letter from a man who had reached his physical limits. Krupskaya herself asked the secretary not to forward the note to Stalin.

Ibid. .

These are in fact the last lines that Lenin was able to dictate: the next day, his illness worsened significantly and he was no longer able to work.

Fotieva, op. cit. , p. 175.

That Trotsky was capable of manipulating the words of a sick man, almost completely paralyzed, shows the utter moral depravity of this individual. Sure enough, like a good forgerer, Trotsky presented this text as the final proof that Lenin had designated him as successor! He wrote:

`That note, the last surviving Lenin document, is at the same time the final summation of his relations with Stalin.'

Trostky, Stalin, p. 375.

Years later, in 1927, the united opposition of Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev tried once again to use this `will' against the Party leadership. In a public declaration, Stalin said:

`The oppositionists shouted here ... that the Central Committee of the Party ``concealed'' Lenin's ``will.'' We have discussed this question several times at the plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission .... (A voice: ``Scores of times.'') It has been proved and proved again that nobody has concealed anything, that Lenin's ``will'' was addressed to the Thirteenth Party Congress, that this ``will'' was read out at the congress ( voices: ``That's right!''), that the congress unanimously decided not to publish it because, among other things, Lenin himself did not want it to be published and did not ask that it should be published.'

Stalin, The Trotskyist Opposition Before and Now, p. 178.

`It is said in that ``will'' Comrade Lenin suggested to the congress that in view of Stalin's ``rudeness'' it should consider the question of putting another comrade in Stalin's place as General Secretary. That is quite true. Yes, comrades, I am rude to those who grossly and perfidiously wreck and split the Party. I have never concealed this and do not conceal it now .... At the very first meeting of the plenum of the Central Committee after the Thirteenth Congress I asked the plenum of the Central Committee to release me from my duties as General Secretary. The congress discussed this question. It was discussed by each delegation separately, and all the delegations unanimously, including Trotsky, Kamenev and Zinoviev, obliged Stalin to remain at his post ....

`A year later I again put in a request to the plenum to release me, but I was obliged to remain at my post.'

Ibid. , pp. 180--181.

But Trotsky's intrigues around this `will' were not the worst that he had to offer. At the end of his life, Trotsky went to the trouble to accuse Stalin of

having killed Lenin!

And to make this unspeakable accusation, Trotsky used his `thoughts and suspicions' as sole argument!

In his book, Stalin, Trotsky wrote:

`What was Stalin's actual role at the time of Lenin's illness? Did not the disciple do something to expedite his master's death?'

Trotsky, Stalin, p. 372.

`(O)nly Lenin's death could clear the way for Stalin.'

Ibid. , p. 376.

`I am firmly convinced that Stalin could not have waited passively when his fate hung by a thread.'

Ibid. , p. 381.

Of course, Trotsky gave no proof whatsoever in support of his charge, but he did write that the idea came to him when `toward the end of February, 1923, at a meeting of the Politburo ..., Stalin informed us ... that Lenin had suddenly called him in and had asked him for poison. Lenin ... considered his situation hopeless, foresaw the approach of a new stroke, did not trust his physicians ..., he suffered unendurably.'

Ibid. , p. 376.

At the time, listening to Stalin, Trotsky almost unmasked Lenin's future assassin! He wrote:

`I recall how extraordinary, enigmatic and out of tune with the circumstances Stalin's face seemd to me .... a sickly smile was transfixed on his face, as on a mask.'

Ibid.

Let's follow Inspector Clousot-Trotsky in his investigation. Listen to this:

`(H)ow and why did Lenin, who at the time was extremely suspicious of Stalin, turn to him with such a request Lenin saw in Stalin the only man who would grant his tragic request, since he was directly interested in doing so .... (he) guessed ... how Stalin really felt about him.'

Ibid. , p. 377.

Just try to write, with this kind of argument, a book accusing Prince Albert of Belgium of having poisoned his brother King Beaudoin: `he was directly interested in doing so'. You would be sentenced to prison. But Trotsky allowed himself such unspeakable slanders against the main Communist leader, and the bourgeoisie hails him for his `unblemished struggle against Stalin'.

Bernard, op. cit. , p. 53.

Here is the high point of Trotsky's criminal enquiry:

`I imagine the course of affairs somewhat like this. Lenin asked for poison at the end of February, 1923 .... Toward winter Lenin began to improve slowly ...; his faculty of speech began to come back to him ....

`Stalin was after power .... His goal was near, but the danger emanating from Lenin was even nearer. At this time Stalin must have made up his mind that it was imperative to act without delay .... Whether Stalin sent the

poison to Lenin with the hint that the physicians had left no hope for his recovery or whether he resorted to more direct means I do not know.'

Ibid. , p. 381.

Even Trotsky's lies were poorly formulated: if there was no hope, why did Stalin need to `assassinate' Lenin?

From March 6, 1923 until his death, Lenin was almost completely paralyzed and deprived of speech. His wife, his sister and his secretaries were at his bedside. Lenin could not have taken poison without them knowing it. The medical records from that time explain quite clearly that Lenin's death was inevitable.

The manner in which Trotsky constructed `Stalin, the assassin', as well as the manner in which he fraudulously used the so-called `will', completely discredit all his agitation against Stalin.

Building socialism in one country

The great debate about building socialism in the USSR took place at the juncture between the Lenin and Stalin periods.

After the defeat of the foreign interventionists and the reactionary armies, working class power, with the support of the poor and middle peasantry, was firmly established.

The dictatorship of the proletariat had defeated its adversaries politically and militarily. But would it be possible to build socialism? Was the country `ready' for socialism? Was socialism possible in a backward and ruined country?

Lenin's formula is well known: `Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country'.

.

Lenin, Our Foreign and Domestic Position and the Tasks of the Party. Works, vol. 31, p. 419.

Working class power took form in the Soviets, which were allied to the peasant masses. Electrification was necessary for the creation of modern means of production. With these two elements, socialism could be built. Lenin expressed his confidence in socialist construction in the Soviet Union and his determination to see it through:

`(I)ndustry cannot be developed without electrification. This is a long-term task which will take at least ten years to accomplish .... Economic success, however, can be assured only when the Russian proletarian state effectively controls a huge industrial machine built on up-to-day technology .... This is an enormous task, to accomplish which will require a far longer period than was needed to defend our right to existence against invasion. However we are not afraid of such a period.'

.

Ibid. , p. 420.

According to Lenin, peasants would work initially as individual producers, although the State would encourage them towards cooperation. By regrouping the peasants, they could be integrated into the socialist economy. Lenin rejected the Menshevik argument that the peasant population was too barbaric and culturally backward to understand socialism. Now, said Lenin, that we have the power of the dictatorship of the proletariat, what is to prevent us from effecting among this `barbaric' people a real cultural revolution?

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Lenin, On Co-operation II. Works, vol. 33, pp. 472--475.

So Lenin formulated the three essential tasks for building a socialist society in the USSR: develop modern industry under the Socialist State, organize peasant cooperatives and start a cultural revolution, which would bring literacy to the peasant masses and raise the technical and scientific level of the population.

In one of his final texts, Lenin wrote:

`(T)he power of the state over all large-scale means of production, political power in the hands of the proletariat, the alliance of this proletariat with the many millions of small and very small peasants, the assured proletarian leadership of the peasantry, etc. --- is this not all that is necessary to build a complete socialist society out of co-operatives '

.

Lenin, On Co-operation I. Works, vol. 33, p. 468.

Thanks to this perspective, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party were able to draw great enthusiasm from the masses, particularly the worker masses. They created a spirit of sacrifice for the socialist cause and instilled confidence in the future of socialism. In November 1922, Lenin addressed the Moscow Soviet about the New Economic Policy (NEP):

` ``The New Economic Policy!" A strange title. It was called a New Economic Policy because it turned things back. We are now retreating, going back, as it were; but we are doing so in order, after first retreating, to take a running start and make a bigger leap forward.'

.

Lenin, Speech at a Plenary Session of the Moscow Soviet. Works, vol. 33, p. 437.

He finished as follows:

`NEP Russia will become socialist Russia.'

.

Ibid. , p. 443.

However, it was the question of whether socialism could be built in the Soviet Union that provoked a great ideological and political debate that lasted from 1922 to 1926--1927. Trotsky was on the front line in the attack against Lenin's ideas.

In 1919, Trotsky thought it opportune to republish Results and Prospects, one of his major texts, first published in 1906. In his 1919 preface, he noted: `I consider the train of ideas in its main ramifications very nearly approaches the conditions of our time'.

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Leon Trotsky, Results and Prospects. The Permanent Revolution & Results and Prospects (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1969), p. 35.

But what are the brilliant `ideas' found in his 1906 work, ideas that Trotsky wanted to see taken up by the Bolshevik Party? He noted that the peasantry was characterized by `political barbarism, social formlessness, primitiveness and lack of character. None of these features can in any way create a reliable basis for a consistent, active proletarian policy'. After the seizure of power,

`The proletariat will find itself compelled to carry the struggle into the villages .... (But) the insufficient degree of class differentiation will create obstacles to the introduction among the peasantry of developed class struggle, upon which the urban proletariat could rely ....

`The cooling-off of the peasantry, its political passivity, and all the more the active opposition of its upper sections, cannot but have an influence on a section of the intellectuals and the petty-bourgeoisie of the towns.

`Thus, the more definite and determined the policy of the proletariat in power becomes, the narrower and more shaky does the ground beneath its feet become.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 76--77.

The difficulties in building socialism that Trotsky enumerated were real. They explain the bitterness of the class struggle in the countryside when the Party launched collectivization in 1929. It would take Stalin's unshakeable resolve and organizational capacities for the socialist rйgime to pass through this terrible test. For Trotsky, the difficulties were

the basis for capitulationist and defeatist politics, along with some `ultra-revolutionary' calls for `world revolution'.

Let us return to Trotsky's political strategy, conceived in 1906 and reaffirmed in 1919.

`But how far can the socialist policy of the working class be applied in the economic conditions of Russia? We can say one thing with certainty --- that it will come up against political obstacles much sooner than it will stumble over the technical backwardness of the country. Without the direct State support of the European proletariat the working class of Russia cannot remain in power and convert its temporary domination into a lasting socialistic dictatorship. Of this there cannot for any moment be any doubt.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 104--105.

`Left to its own resource, the working class of Russia will inevitably be crushed by the counter-revolution the moment the peasantry turns its back on it. It will have no alternative but to link the fate of its political rule, and, hence, the fate of the whole Russian revolution, with the fate of the socialist revolution in Europe. That colossal state-political power given it by a temporary conjuncture of circumstances in the Russian bourgeois revolution will cast it into the scales of the class struggle of the entire capitalist world.'

.

Ibid. , p. 115.

To repeat these words in 1919 was already calling for defeatism: there was `no doubt' that the working class `cannot remain in power', it was certain that it `will inevitably be crushed' if the socialist revolution did not

triumph in Europe. This capitulationist thesis accompanied an adventurist call for `exporting revolution':

`(T)he Russian proletariat (must) on its own initiative carry the revolution on to European soil .... the Russian revolution will throw itself against old capitalist Europe.'

.

Ibid. , p. 108.

To show the extent to which he held on to his old anti-Leninist ideas, Trotsky published in 1922 a new edition of his book, The Year 1905, adding a preface in which he argued the correctness of his political line. After five years of socialist power, he stated:

`It was precisely during the interval between January 9 and the October strike of 1905 that the views on the character of the revolutionary development of Russia which came to be known as the theory of `permanent revolution' crystallized in the author's mind .... precisely in order to ensure its victory, the proletarian vanguard would be forced in the very early stages of its rule to make deep inroads not only into feudal property but into bourgeois property as well. In this it would come into hostile collision not only with all the bourgeois groupings which supported the proletariat during the first stages of its revolutionary struggle, but also with the broad masses of the peasantry with whose assistance it came into power. The contradictions in the position of a workers' government in a backward country with an overwhelmingly peasant population could be solved only on an international scale, in the arena of world proletarian revolution.'

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Quoted in Stalin, The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists. Leninism: Selected Writings (New York: International Publishers, 1942), p. 15. Stalin's emphasis.

For those who think that this contradicted the fact that the dictatorship of the proletariat had been maintained for five years, Trotsky responded in a 1922 `Postscript' to his pamphlet A Program of Peace:

`The fact that the workers' state has maintained itself against the entire world in a single and, moreover, backward country testifies to the colossal power of the proletariat which in other more advanced, more civilised countries, will truly be able to achieve miracles. But having defended ourselves as a state in the political and military sense, we have not arrived at, nor even approached socialist society .... Trade negotiations with bourgeois states, concessions, the Geneva Conference and so on are far too graphic evidence of the impossibility of isolated socialist construction within a national state-framework .... the genuine rise of socialist economy in Russia will become possible only after the victory of the proletariat in the most important countries of Europe.'

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Trotsky, Postscript 1922, What is A Peace Programme? (Columbo, Ceylon: Lanka Samasamaja, 1956), pp. 20-21. Also partially quoted in Stalin, The October Revolution, p. 21.

Here is the obvious meaning: the Soviet workers are not capable of accomplishing miracles by building socialism; but the day that Belgians, Dutch, Luxemburgers and other Germans rise up, then the world will see real marvels. Trotsky put all of his hope in the proletariat of the `more advanced and more civilized' countries. But he paid no particular attention to the fact that in 1922, only the Russian proletariat proved to be truly revolutionary, to the end, while the revolutionary wave that existed in 1918 in Western Europe was already, for the most part, history.

From 1902, and continually, Trotsky fought the line that Lenin had drawn for the democratic revolution and the socialist revolution in Russia. By reaffirming, just before Lenin died, that the dictatorship of the

proletariat had to come into open contradiction with the peasant masses and that, consequently, there was no salvation for Soviet socialism outside of the victorious revolution in the `more civilized' countries, Trotsky was trying to substitute his own program for Lenin's.

Behind the leftist verbiage of `world revolution', Trotsky took up the fundamental idea of the Mensheviks: it was impossible to build socialism in the Soviet Union. The Mensheviks openly said that neither the masses nor the objective conditions were ripe for socialism. As for Trotsky, he said that the proletariat, as class-in-itself, and the mass of individualist peasants, would inevitably enter into conflict. Without the outside support of a victorious European revolution, the Soviet working class would be incapable of building socialism. With this conclusion, Trotsky returned to the fold of his Menshevik friends.

In 1923, during his struggle for the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, Trotsky launched his second campaign. He tried to clear out the Bolshevik Party's old cadres and replace them with young ones, whom he hoped to be able to manipulate. In preparation for the seizure of the Party's leadership, Trotsky returned, almost to a word, to his 1904 anti-Leninist ideas for the Party.

At that time, Trotsky had attacked with the greatest vehemence Lenin's entire concept of the Bolshevik Party and its leadership. His 1923 attacks against the Bolshevik leadership are clear evidence of the persistence of his petit-bourgeois ideals.

In 1904, Trotsky the individualist fought virulently against the Leninist concept of the Party. He called Lenin a `fanatical secessionist', a `revolutionary bourgeois democrat', an `organization fetichist', a partisan of the `army mentality' and of `organizational pettiness', a `dictator wanting to substitute himself for the central committee', a `dictator wanting to impose dictatorship on the proletariat' for whom `any mixture of elements thinking differently is a pathological phenomenon'.

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Trotsky, Nos tвches politiques (Paris: Pierre Belfond, 1970), pp. 39--41, 128, 159, 195, 198, 204.

Note that this hatred was directed, not at the infamous Stalin, but, rather, at his revered master, Lenin. That book, published by Trotsky in 1904, is crucial to understanding his ideology. He made himself known as an unrepentent bourgeois individualist. All the slanders and insults that he would direct twenty-five years later against Stalin, he had already hurled in that work against Lenin.

Trotsky did everything he could to depict Stalin as a dictator ruling over the Party. Yet, when Lenin created the Bolshevik Party, Trotsky accused him of creating an `Orthodox theocracy' and an `autocratic-Asiatic centralism'.

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Ibid. , pp. 97, 170.

Trotsky always claimed that Stalin had adopted a cynical, pragmatic attitude towards Marxism, which he reduced to ready-made formulas. Writing about One step forward, two steps back, Trotsky wrote:

`One cannot show more cynicism for the ideological heritage of the proletariat as does Comrade Lenin! For him, Marxism is not a scientific method of analysis.'

.

Ibid. , p. 160.

In his 1904 work, Trotsky invented the term `substitutionism' to attack the Leninist party and its leadership.

`The ``professional revolutionary'' group acted in the place of the proletariat.'

.

Ibid. , p. 103.

`The organization substitutes itself for the Party, the Central Committee for the organization and its financing and the dictator for the Central Committee.'

.

Ibid. , p. 128.

So, in 1923, often using the same words that he used against Lenin, Trotsky attacked the Leninist concept of party and leadership: `the old generation accustomed itself to think and to decide, as it still does, for the party'. Trotsky noted `A certain tendency of the apparatus to think and to decide for the whole organization'.

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Leon Trotsky, The New Course. The Challenge of the Left Opposition (1923--1925) (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1975), pp. 71, 128.

In 1904, Trotsky attacked the Leninist concept of the Party by affirming that it `separated the conscious activity from the executive activity. (There is) a Center and, underneath, there are only disciplined executives of technical functions.' In his bourgeois individualist worldview, Trotsky rejected the hierarchy and the different levels of responsibility and

discipline. His ideal was `the global political personality, who imposes on all `centers' his will in all possible forms, including boycott'!

.

Trotsky, Nos tвches, pp. 140--141.

This is the motto of an individualist, of an anarchist.

Trotsky again used this criticism against the Party: `the apparatus manifests a growing tendency to counterpose a few thousand comrades, who form the leading cadres, to the rest of the mass, whom they look upon only as an object of action'.

.

Trotsky, The New Course, p. 71.

In 1904, Trotsky accused Lenin of being a bureaucrat making the Party degenerate into a revolutionary-bourgeois organization. Lenin was blinded by `the bureaucratic logic of such and such ``organizational plan'' ', but `the fiasco of organizational fetichism' was certain. `The head of the reactionary wing of our Party, comrade Lenin, gives social-democracy a definition that is a theoretical attack against the class nature of our Party.' Lenin `formulated a tendency for the Party, the revolutionary-bourgeois tendency'.

.

Trotsky, Nos tвches, pp. 192, 195, 204.

In 1923, Trotsky wrote the same thing against Stalin, but using a more moderate tone: `bureaucratization threatens to ... provoke a more or less opportunistic degeneration of the Old Guard'.

.

Trotsky, The New Course, p. 72.

In 1904, the bureaucrat Lenin was accused of `terrorizing' the Party:

`The task of Iskra (Lenin's newspaper) was to theoretically terrorize the intelligentsia. For social-democrats educated in this school, orthodoxy is something close to the absolute `Truth' that inspired the Jacobins (French revolutionary democrats). Orthodox Truth foresees everything. Those who contest are excluded; those who doubt are on the verge of being excluded.'

.

Trotsky, Nos tвches, p. 190.

In 1923, Trotsky called for `replacing the mummified bureaucrats' so that `from now on nobody will dare terrorize the party'.

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Trotsky, The New Course, pp. 126--127.

To conclude, this 1923 text shows that Trotsky was also unscrupulously ambitious. In 1923, to seize power in the Bolshevik Party, Trotsky wanted to `liquidate' the old Bolshevik guard, who knew only too well his fanatical struggle against Lenin's ideas. No old Bolshevik was ready to abandon Leninism for Trotskyism. Hence Trotsky's tactics: he declared the old Bolsheviks to be `degenerating' and flattered the youth who were not familiar with his anti-Leninist past. Under the slogan of

`democratization' of the party, Trotsky wanted to install youth who supported him in the leadership.

Yet, ten years later, when men such as Zinoviev and Kamenev would openly show their opportunistic personalities, Trotsky declared that they represented `the old Bolshevik guard' persecuted by Stalin: he allied himself with these opportunists, invoking the glorious past of the `old guard'!

Trotsky's position within the Party continued to weaken in 1924--1925, and he attacked the Party leadership with increasing rage.

Starting from the idea that it was impossible to build socialism in a single country, Trotsky concluded that Bukharin's 1925--1926 political line, the current focus of his hatred, represented kulak (rich peasants; see chapter 4) interests and the new bourgeois, called Nep-man. Power was becoming kulak power. Discussion started yet again about the `disintegration' of the Bolshevik Party. Since they were evolving towards disintegration and kulak power, Trotsky appropriated himself the right to create factions and to work clandestinely within the Party.

The debate was led openly and honestly for five years. When the discussion was closed in 1927 by a Party vote, those who defended the theses of impossibility of building socialism in the Soviet Union and the right to form factions received between one and one and a half per cent of the votes. Trotsky was expelled from the Party, sent to Siberia and, finally, banished from the Soviet Union.

Socialist industrialization

At the end of the Civil War, the Bolsheviks inherited a completely ruined country whose industry had been ravaged by eight years of military operations. The banks and large companies were nationalized and, with extraordinary effort, the Soviet Union reconstructed the industrial apparatus.

In 1928, the production of steel, coal, cement, industrial looms and machine tools had reached or surpassed the pre-war level. It was then that the Soviet Union set itself the impossible challenge: to lay down the basis of modern industry in a national Five Year Plan, essentially using the country's inner resources. To succeed, the country was set on a war footing to undertake a forced march towards industrialization.

Socialist industrialization was the key to building socialism in the Soviet Union. Everything depended on its success.

Industrialization was to lay the material basis for socialism. It would allow the radical transformation of agriculture, using machinery and modern techniques. It would offer material and cultural well-being to the workers. It would provide the means for a real cultural revolution. It would produce the infrastructure of a modern, efficient state. And it alone would give the working people the modern arms necessary to defend its independence against the most advanced imperialist powers.

On February 4, 1931, Stalin explained why the country had to maintain the extremely rapid rate of industrialization:

`Do you want our socialist fatherland to be beaten and lose its independence

`We are fifty to a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do this or they crush us.'

.

Stalin, The Tasks of Business Executives. Leninism, p. 200.

During the thirties, the German fascists, like the British and French imperialists, drew in full color the `terror' which accompanied the `forced industrialization'. They all sought revenge for their defeat in 1918--1921, when they intervened militarily in the Soviet Union. They all wanted a Soviet Union that was easy to crush.

In asking for extraordinary efforts from the workers, Stalin held his eye on the terrifying menace of war and imperialist aggression that hovered over the first socialist country.

The giant effort to industrialize the country during the years 1928--1932 was called Stalin's Industrial Revolution by Hirokai Kuromiya. It is also called `the second revolution' or the `revolution from above'. The most conscious and energetic revolutionaries were at the head of the State and, from this position, they mobilized and provided discipline to tens of millions of worker-peasants, who had up to that point been left in the shadows of illiteracy and religious obscurantism. The central thesis of Kuromiya's book is that Stalin succeeded in mobilizing the workers for an accelerated industrialization by presenting it as a class war of the oppressed against the old exploiting classes and against the saboteurs found in their own ranks.

To be able to direct this giant industrialization effort, the Party had to grow. The number of members rose from 1,300,000 in 1928 to 1,670,000 in 1930. During the same period, the percentage of members of working class background rose from 57 to 65 per cent. Eighty per cent of the new recruits were shock workers: they were in general relatively young workers who had received technical training, Komsomol activists, who had distinguished themselves as model workers, who helped rationalize production to obtain higher productivity.

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Hiroaki Kuromiya, Stalin's Industrial Revolution: Politics and Workers, 1928--1932 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 115, 319.

This refutes the fable of `bureaucratization' of the Stalinist party: the party reinforced its worker base and its capacity to fight.

Industrialization was accompanied by extraordinary upheavals. Millions of illiterate peasants were pulled out of the Middle Ages and hurled into the world of modern machinery. `(B)y the end of 1932, the industrial labor force doubled from 1928 to more than six million.'

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Ibid. , p. 290.

Over the same period of four years and for all sectors, 12.5 million people had found a new occupation in the city; 8.5 million among them had been former peasants.

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Ibid. , p. 306.

Heroism and enthusiasm

Despising socialism, the bourgeoisie loves to stress the `forced' character of the industrialization. Those who lived through or observed the socialist industrialization through the eyes of the working masses emphasize these essential traits: heroism at work and the enthusiasm and combative character of the working masses.

During the First Five Year Plan, Anna Louise Strong, a young U.S. journalist hired by the Soviet Moscow News newspaper, traveled the country. When in 1956, Khrushchev made his insidious attack on Stalin, she recalled certain essential facts. Speaking of the First Five Year Plan, she made the following judgment: `never in history was so great an advance so swift'.

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Anna Louise Strong, The Stalin Era (Publisher unknown, 1956), p. 33.

In 1929, first year of the Plan, the enthusiasm of the working masses was such that even an old specialist of ancient Russia, who spat out his spite for the Bolsheviks in 1918, had to recognize that the country was unrecognizable. Dr. Йmile Joseph Dillon had lived in Russia from 1877 to 1914 and had taught at several Russian universities. When he left in 1918, he had written:

`In the Bolshevik movement there is not the vestige of a constructive or social idea .... For Bolshevism is Tsardom upside down. To capitalists it metes out treatment as bad as that which the Tsars dealt to serfs.'

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Webb, op. cit. , p. 810.

Ten years later, in 1928, Dr. Dillon revisited the USSR, and was lost in amazement at what he saw:

`Everywhere people are thinking, working, combining, making scientific discoveries and industrial inventions .... Nothing like it; nothing approaching it in variety, intensity, tenacity of purpose has ever yet been witnessed. Revolutionary endeavour is melting colossal obstacles and fusing heterogeneous elements into one great people; not indeed a nation in the old-world meaning but a strong people cemented by quasi-religious enthusiasm .... The Bolsheviks then have accomplished much of what they aimed at, and more than seemed attainable by any human organisation under the adverse conditions with which they had to cope. They have mobilised well over 150,000,000 of listless dead-and-alive human beings, and infused into them a new spirit.'

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Ibid. , pp. 810--811.

Anna Louise Strong remembered how the miracles of industrialization took place.

`The Kharkov (Tractor) Works had a special problem. It was built ``outside the plan." (In 1929,) Peasants joined collective farms faster than expected. Kharkov, proudly Ukrainian, built its own plant ``outside the Five-Year Plan ...." All steel, bricks, cement, labor were already assigned for five years. Kharkov could get steel only by inducing some steel plant to produce ``above the plan." To fill the shortage of unskilled labor, tens of thousands of people --- office workers, students, professors --- volunteered on free days .... ``Every morning, at half-past six, we see the special train come in," said Mr. Raskin. ``They come with bands and banners, a different crowd each day and always jolly." It was said that half the unskilled labor that built the Plant was done by volunteers.'

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Strong, op. cit. , pp. 28--29.

In 1929, since agricultural collectivization had developed in an unexpected manner, the Kharkov Tractor Works was not the only `correction' to the Plan. The Putilov factory in Leningrad produced 1,115 tractors in 1927 and 3,050 in 1928. After heated discussions at the factory, a plan was drawn up to produce 10,000 tractors for 1930! In fact, 8,935 were produced.

The miracle of industrialization in a decade was influenced not only by the upheavals taking place in the backward countryside, but also by the growing menace of war.

The Magnitogorsk steel works was designed for annual production of 656,000 tonnes. In 1930, a plan was drawn up to produce 2,500,000.

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Kuromiya, op. cit. , p. 145.

But the plans for steel production were soon revised upwards: in 1931, the Japanese army occupied Manchuria and was threatening the Siberian borders. The next year, the Nazis, in power in Berlin, were publishing their claims to Ukraine. John Scott was a U.S. engineer, working in Magnitogorsk. He evoked the heroic efforts of workers and the decisive importance for the defence of the Soviet Union.

`By 1942 the Ural industrial district became the stronghold of Soviet resistance. Its mines, mills, and shops, its fields and forests, are supplying the Red Army with immense quantities of military materials of all kinds, spare parts, replacements, and other manufactured products to keep Stalin's mechanized divisions in the field.

`The Ural industrial region covers an area of some five hundred miles square almost in the center of the largest country in the world. Within

this area Nature placed rich deposits of iron, coal, copper, aluminum, lead, asbestos, manganese, potash, gold, silver, platinum, zinc, and petroleum, as well as rich forests and hundreds of thousands of acres of arable land. Until 1930 these fabulous riches were practically undeveloped. During the decade from 1930 to 1940 some two hundred industrial aggregates of all kinds were constructed and put into operation in the Urals. This herculean task was accomplished thanks to the political sagacity of Joseph Stalin and his relentless perseverance in forcing through the realization of his construction program despite fantastic costs and fierce difficulties ....

`(Stalin favored heavy industry.) He further asserted that new industries must be concentrated in the Urals and Siberia thousands of miles away from the nearest frontiers, out of reach of any enemy bombers. Whole new industries must be created. Russia had hitherto been dependent on other countries for almost its entire supply of rubber, chemicals, machine tools, tractors, and many other things. These commodities could and must be produced in the Soviet Union in order to ensure the technical and military independence of the country.

`Bukharin and many other old Bolsheviks disagreed with Stalin. They held that light industries should be built first; the Soviet people should be furnished with consumers' goods before they embarked on a total industrialization program. Step by step, one after another these dissenting voices were silenced. Stalin won. Russia embarked on the most gigantic industrialization plan the world had ever seen.

`In 1932 fifty-six per cent of the Soviet Union's national income was invested in capital outlay. This was an extraordinary achievement. In the United States in 1860--1870, when we were building our railroads and blast furnaces, the maximum recapitalization for any one year was in the neighborhood of twelve per cent of the national income. Moreover, American industrialization was largely financed by European capital, while the man power for the industrial construction world poured in from China, Ireland, Poland, and other European countries. Soviet industrialization was achieved almost without the aid of foreign capital.'

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John Scott, Behind the Urals: An American Worker in Russia's city of steel, enlarged edition (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press), pp. 256--257.

The hard life and the sacrifices of industrialization were consciously and enthusiastically accepted by the majority of workers. They had their noses to the grindstone, but they knew that it was for themselves, for a future with dignity and freedom for all workers. Hiroaki Kuromiya wrote:

`Paradoxical as it may appear, the forced accumulation was a source not only of privation and unrest but also of Soviet heroism .... Soviet youth in the 1930s found heroism in working in factories and on construction sites like Magnitogorsk and Kuznetsk.'

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Kuromiya, op. cit. , pp. 305--306.

`(T)he rapid industrialization drive of the First Five-Year Plan symbolized the grandiose and dramatic goal of building a new society. Promoted against the background of the Depression and mass unemployment in the West, the Soviet industrialization drive did evoke heroic, romantic, and enthusiastic ``superhuman'' efforts. ``The word `enthusiasm,' like many others, has been devalued by inflation,'' Ilya Ehrenburg has written, ``yet there is no other word to fit the days of the First Five Year Plan; it was enthusiasm pure and simple that inspired the young people to daily and spectacular feats.'' According to another contemporary, ``those days were a really romantic, intoxicating time'': ``People were creating by their own hands what had appeared a mere dream before and were convinced in practice that these dreamlike plans were an entirely realistic thing.'' '

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Ibid. , p. 316.

Class war

Kuromiya showed how Stalin presented industrialization as a class war of the oppressed against the old ruling classes.

This idea is correct. Nevertheless, through untold numbers of literary and historical works, we are told to sympathize with those who were repressed during the class wars of industrialization and collectivization. We are told that repression is `always inhuman' and that a civilized nation is not allowed to hurt a social group, even if it was exploiting.

What can be said against this so-called `humanist' argument?

How did the industrialization of the `civilized world' made? How did the London and Paris bankers and industries create their industrial base? Could their industrialization have been possible without the pillage of the India? Pillage accompanied by the extermination of more than sixty million American Indians? Would it have been possible without the slave trade in Africans, that monstrous bloodbath? UNESCO experts estimate the African losses at 210 million persons, killed during raids or on ships, or sold as slaves. Could our industrialization have been possible without colonization, which made entire peoples prisoners in their own native lands?

And those who industrialized this little corner of the world called Europe, at the cost of millions of `indigenous' deaths, tell us that the Bolshevik repression against the possessing classes was an abomination? Those who industrialized their countries by chasing peasants off the land with guns, who massacred women and children with working days of fourteen hours, who imposed slave wages, always with the threat of unemployment and famine, they dare go on at book length about the `forced' industrialization of the Soviet Union?

If Soviet industrialization could only take place by repressing the rich and reactionary five per cent, capitalist industrialization consisted of the terror exercised by the rich five per cent against the working masses, both in their own countries and in dominated ones.

Industrialization was a class war against the old exploiting classes, which did everything they possibly could to prevent the success of the socialist experience. It was often accomplished through bitter struggle within the working class itself: illiterate peasants were torn out of their traditional world and hurled into modern production, bringing with them all their prejudices and their retrograde concepts. The old reflexes of the working class itself, used to being exploited by a boss and used to resisting him, had to be replaced by a new attitude to work, now that the workers themselves were the masters of society.

On this subject, we have vivid testimony about the class struggle inside one of the Soviet factories, written by a U.S. engineer, John Scott, who worked long years at Magnitogorsk.

Scott was not Communist and often criticized the Bolshevik system. But when reporting what he experienced in the strategic complex of Magnitogorsk, he made us understand several essential problems that Stalin had to confront.

Scott described the ease with which a counter-revolutionary who served in the White Armies but showed himself to be dynamic and intelligent could pass as a proletarian element and climb the ranks of the Party. His work also showed that the majority of active counter-revolutionaries were potential spies for imperialist powers. It was not at all easy to distinguish conscious counter-revolutionaries from corrupted bureaucrats and `followers' who were just looking for an easy life.

Scott also explained that the 1937--1938 purge was not solely a `negative' undertaking, as it is presented in the West: it was mostly a massive political mobilization that reinforced the antifascist conscience of the workers, that made bureaucrats improve the quality of their work and that allowed a considerable development of industrial production. The purge was part of the great preparation of the popular masses for resisting the coming imperialist invasions. The facts refute Khrushchev's slanderous declaration that Stalin did not adequately prepare the country for war.

Here is John Scott's testimony about Magnitogorsk.

`Shevchenko ... was running (in 1936) the coke plant with its two thousand workers. He was a gruff man, exceedingly energetic, hard-hitting, and often rude and vulgar ....

`With certain limitations ..., Shevchenko was not a bad plant director. The workers respected him, and when he gave an order they jumped ....

`Shevchenko came from a little village in the Ukraine. In 1920, Denikin's White Army occupied the territory, and young Shevchenko, a youth of nineteen, was enlisted as a gendarme. Later Denikin was driven back into the Black Sea, and the Reds took over the country. In the interests of self-preservation Shevchenko lost his past, moved to another section of the country, and got a job in a mill. He was very energetic and active, and within a surprisingly short time had changed from the pogrom-inspiring gendarme into a promising trade-union functionary in a large factory. He was ultra-proletarian, worked well, and was not afraid to cut corners and push his way up at the expense of his fellows. Then he joined the party, and one thing led to another --- the Red Directors Institute, important trade-union work, and finally in 1931 he was sent to Magnitogorsk as assistant chief of construction work ....

`In 1935 ... a worker arrived from some town in the Ukraine and began to tell stories about Shevchenko's activities there in 1920. Shevchenko gave the man money and a good job, but still the story leaked out ....

`One night he threw a party which was unprecedented in Magnitogorsk .... Shevchenko and his pals were busy the rest of the night and most of the next consuming the remains ....

`One day ... Shevchenko was removed from his post, along with a half-dozen of his leading personnel .... Shevchenko was tried fifteen months later and got ten years.

`Shevchenko was at least fifty per cent bandit --- a dishonest and unscrupulous careerist. His personal aims and ideals differed completely from those of the founders of Socialism. However, in all probability, Shevchenko was not a Japanese spy, as his indictment stated, did not have terrorist intentions against the leaders of the party and the government, and did not deliberately bring about the explosion (that killed four workers in 1935).

`The `Shevchenko' band was composed of some twenty men, all of who received long sentences. Some, like Shevchenko, were crooks and careerists. Some were actual counter-revolutionaries who set out deliberately to do what they could to overthrow the Soviet power and were not particular with whom they cooperated. Others were just unfortunate in having worked under a chief who fell foul of the NKVD.

`Nicolai Mikhailovich Udkin, one of Shevchenko's colleagues, was the eldest son in a well-to-do Ukrainian family. He felt strongly that the Ukraine had been conquered, raped, and was now being exploited by a group of Bolsheviks ... who were ruining the country .... He felt, furthermore, that the capitalist system worked much better than the Socialist system ....

`Here was a man who was at least a potential menace to the Soviet power, a man who might have been willing to cooperate with the Germans for the `liberation of the Ukraine' in 1941. He, also, got ten years.'

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Scott, op. cit. , pp. 175--180.

`During the course of the purge hundreds of thousands of bureaucrats shook in their boots. Officials and administrators who had formerly come to work at ten, gone home at four-thirty, and shrugged their shoulders at complaints, difficulties, and failures, began to stay at work from dawn till dark, to worry about the success or failure of their units, and to fight in a very real and earnest fashion for plan fulfillment, for economy,

and for the well-being of their workers and employees, about whom they had previously lost not a wink of sleep.'

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Ibid. , pp. 195--196.

`By and large, production increased from 1938 to 1941. By late 1938 the immediate negative effects of the purge had nearly disappeared. The industrial aggregates of Magnitogorsk were producing close to capacity, and every furnace, every mill, every worker, was being made to feel the pressure and the tension which spread through every phase of Soviet life after Munich. `The capitalist attack on the Soviet Union, prepared for years, is about to take place ...' boomed the Soviet press, the radio, schoolteachers, stump speakers, and party, trade-union, and Komsomol functionaries, at countless meetings.

`Russia's defence budget nearly doubled every year. Immense quantities of strategic materials, machines, fuels, foods, and spare parts were stored away. The Red Army increased in size from roughly two million in 1938 to six or seven million in the spring of 1941. Railroad and factory construction work in the Urals, in Central Asia, and in Siberia was pressed forward.

`All these enterprises consumed the small but growing surplus which the Magnitogorsk workers had begun to get back in the form of bicycles, wrist watches, radio sets, and good sausage and other manufactured food products from 1935 till 1938.'

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Ibid. , pp. 253--254.

An economic miracle

During the industrialization, the Soviet workers achieved economic miracles that still stagger the imagination.

Here is how Kuromiya concluded his study of the Stalinist industrialization:

`The breakthrough wrought by the revolution of 1928--31 laid the foundations of the remarkable industrial expansion in the 1930s that would sustain the country in the Second World War. By the end of 1932 ..., the gross industrial output ... had more than doubled since 1928 .... as the capital projects of the First Five-Year Plan were brought into operation one after another in the mid-1930s, industrial production expanded enormously. During 1934--36 ..., ``the official index showed a rise of 88 per cent for total gross industrial production ...." In the decade from 1927/28 to 1937 ..., gross industrial production leapt from 18,300 million rubles to 95,500 million; pig iron output rose from 3.3 million tons to 14.5; coal from 35.4 million metric tons to 128.0; electric power from 5.1 billion kilowatt hours to 36.2; machine tools from 2,098 units to 36,120. Even discounting the exaggeration, it may be safely said that the achievements were dazzling.'

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Kuromiya, op. cit. , p. 287.

Lenin expressed his confidence in the capacity of the Soviet people to build socialism in one country by declaring, `Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country'.

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Lenin, Our Foreign and Domestic Position and the Tasks of the Party. Works, vol. 31, p. 419.

With this viewpoint, in 1920 Lenin proposed a general plan of electrification that foresaw, over the next fifteen years, the construction of 30 electrical power plants generating 1.75 million kW. But, thanks to the will and tenacity of Stalin and the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, in 1935, the Soviet Union had a generating capacity of 4.07 million kW. Lenin's ambitious dream had been surpassed by 133 per cent by Stalin!

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L'Office central de statistique prиs le Conseil des ministres de l'U.R.S.S. Les Progrиs du pouvoir soviйtique depuis 40 ans en chiffres: Recueil statistique (Moscow: Йditions en langues йtrangиres, 1958), p. 75.

Incredible rebuttal to all those educated renegades who read in scientific books that socialist construction in one country, particularly a peasant one, is not possible. The theory of the `impossibility of socialism in the USSR', spread by the Mensheviks and the Trotskyists was a mere lamentation showing the pessimism and the capitulationist spirit among the petite bourgeoisie. As the socialist cause progressed, their hatred for real socialism, that thing that should not exist, only sharpened.

The increase in fixed assets between 1913 and 1940 gives a precise idea of the incredible effort supplied by the Soviet people. Starting from an index of 100 for the year preceding the war, the fixed assets for industry reached 136 at the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan in 1928. On the eve of the Second World War, twelve years later, in 1940, the index had risen to 1,085 points, i.e. an eight-fold increase in twelve years. The fixed assets for agriculture evolved from 100 to 141, just before the collectivization in 1928, to reach 333 points in 1940.

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Ibid. , p. 26.

For eleven years, from 1930 to 1940, the Soviet Union saw an average increase in industrial production of 16.5 per cent.

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Ibid. , p. 30.

During industrialization, the main effort was focused on creating the material conditions for freedom and independence for the Socialist homeland. At the same time, the socialist rйgime laid down the basis for future well-being and prosperity. The greatest part of the increase in national revenue was destined for accumulation. One could hardly think about improving the material standard of living in the short term. Yes, the life for workers and peasants was hard.

Accrued capital passed from 3.6 billion rubles in 1928, representing 14.3 per cent of the national revenue, to 17.7 billion in 1932, i.e. 44.2 per cent of the national revenue! Consumer spending, on the other hand, slightly dropped: from 23.1 billion in 1930 to 22.3 billion two years later. According to Kuromiya, `The real wages of Moscow industrial workers in 1932 were only 53 percent of the 1928 level'.

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Kuromiya, op. cit. , pp. 304--305.

While industrial assets increased ten-fold from the pre-war period, the housing construction index had only reached 225 points in 1940. Housing conditions had hardly improved.

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Progrиs, op. cit. , p. 26.

It is not true that industrialization took place at the cost of a `feudal-military exploitation of the peasantry', as claimed Bukharin: socialist industrialization, which clearly could not take place through the exploitation of colonies, was achieved through the sacrifices of all workers, industrial, peasant and intellectual.

Was Stalin `unfeeling towards the terrible difficulties of the life of workers'? Stalin understood perfectly well the primary need of the physical survival of the Socialist homeland and of its people before a substantial and lasting improvement of the standard of living could take place. Build housing? The Nazi aggressors destroyed and burnt 1,710 cities and towns and more than 70,000 villages and hamlets, leaving 25 million people without shelter.

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Ibid. , p. 31.

In 1921, the Soviet Union was a ruined country, its independence under threat from all the imperialist powers. After twenty years of titanic efforts, the workers built a country that could stand up to the most developed capitalist power in Europe, Hitler's Germany. That old and future Nazis lash out against the `forced' industrialization and the `terrible suffering imposed on the people' is quite understandable. But what person in India, Brazil, Nigeria or Egypt would not stop to think? Since the independences from the colonial powers, what has been the lot of the ninety per cent of workers in the Third World? And who profited from this suffering? Did the workers in these countries knowingly accept these sacrifices, as was the case in the Soviet Union? And did the sacrifices of the Indian, Brazilian, Nigerian or Egyptian worker allow the creation of an independent economic system, capable of resisting the most vicious imperialism, as did the Soviet worker in the twenties and thirties?

Collectivization

The collectivization that began in 1929 was an extraordinary period of bitter and complex class struggles. It decided what force would run the countryside: the rural bourgeoisie or the proletariat. Collectivization destroyed the economic basis for the last bourgeois class in the Soviet Union, the class that was constantly re-emerging out of small-scale production and the rural free markets. Collectivization meant an extraordinary political, economic and cultural upheaval, putting the peasant masses on the road to socialism.

From rebuilding production to social confrontation

To understand the collectivization, the prevailing situation in the Soviet countryside in the twenties must be recalled.

From 1921, the Bolsheviks had concentrated their efforts on the principal objective, which was the re-establishment of industry on a socialist footing.

At the same time, they attempted to rebuild the productive forces in the countryside, by encouraging individual production and small-scale capitalism, which they tried to control and lead towards various co-operative forms.

These objectives were obtained towards 1927--1928. Davies noted:

`Between 1922 and 1926, the New Economic Policy, by and large, was a brilliant success .... The production of the peasant economy in 1926 was equal to that of the whole of agriculture, including the landowners' estates, before the revolution. Grain production reached approximately the pre-war level, and the production of potatoes apparently exceeded that level by as much as 75 per cent .... The number of livestock ... in 1928 exceeded (the 1914 level) by 7--10 per cent in the case of cattle and pigs .... the proportion of sown area and of gross agricultural production devoted to grain was lower in 1928 than in 1913 --- a good general indicator of agricultural progress.'

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R. W. Davies, The Industrialisation of Soviet Russia I: The Socialist Offensive; The Collectivisation of Soviet Agriculture, 1929--1930 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980), pp. 4--5.

The socialist revolution had brought great gains to the peasant masses. The peasants without land had received plots. Overly large families were able to divide. In 1927, there were 24 to 25 million peasant families, as opposed to 19.5 in 1917. The number of persons per family had dropped from 6.1 to 5.3. Direct taxes and rent were significantly lower than under the old rйgime. The peasants kept and consumed a much greater share of their harvests. `Grain for the towns, the army, industry and export in 1926/27 amounted to only 10 million tons as compared with 18.8 million tons in 1909--13 (average).'

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Ibid. , pp. 16--18.

At the same time the Bolsheviks encouraged the peasants to form all sorts of co-operatives and they created the first experimental kolkhozy (collective farms). The point was to determine how, in the future, peasants could be led to socialism, although the schedule was still unclear. However, on the whole, there existed by 1927 very few socialistic elements in the countryside, where the dominant presence were the peasants individually working their plots of land. In 1927, 38 per cent of the peasants had been regrouped in consumers' co-operatives, but it was the rich peasants who led them. These co-operatives received 50 per cent of the farm subsidies, the rest being invested in private holdings, in general kulak.

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Lynne Viola, The Best Sons of the Fatherland: Workers in the Vanguard of Soviet Collectivisation (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 22.

Weakness of the party in the countryside

It must be understood that at the beginning of socialist construction, the Bolshevik Party had little hold on the countryside.

In 1917, there were, in the whole of the USSR, 16,700 Bolshevik peasants. During the next four years of Civil War, a large number of young peasants were admitted into the Party to lead the peasant masses. In 1921, there were 185,300. But they were mostly sons of peasants who had enlisted in the Red Army. Once peace prevailed, the political ideas of these young fighters had to be checked. Lenin organized the first verification purge, as a necessary extension of the first massive recruitment campaign. It had to be determined who corresponded to the minimal definition of a Communist. Of 200,000 peasants, 44.7 per cent were excluded.

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Ibid. , p. 13.

On October 1, 1928, of 1,360,000 party members or candidate members, 198,000 (14.5 per cent) were peasants or agricultural workers by present occupation.

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Davies, op. cit. , p. 51.

In the countryside, there was one Party member for every 420 inhabitants, and 20,700 Party cells, one for every four villages. This small figure takes on real significance when it is compared to the `cadres' of Tsarist reaction, the Orthodox pops and other religious members at that time, as they numbered 60,000!

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Ibid. , p. 54.

The rural youth formed the greatest reserve of the Party. In 1928, there were a million young peasants in Komsomol.

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Ibid. , p. 52.

The soldiers who had served in the Red Army during the Civil War and the 180,000 sons of peasants who, each year, entered the army, where they received a Communist education, were in general supporters of the rйgime.

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Ibid. , p. 53.

The character of the Russian peasant

Here was the problem that the Bolshevik Party had to confront.

The countryside was still essentially controlled by the privileged classes and by Tsarist and Orthodox ideology. The peasant masses remained in their state of backwardness and continued to work mostly with wooden tools. Often the kulaks would seize power in the co-operatives, credit pools and even rural Soviets. Under Stolypin, bourgeois agricultural specialists had set themselves up in the countryside. They continued to have great influence as proponents of modern private agricultural production. Ninety per cent of the land continued to be run according to the traditional communal village system, in which the rich peasants predominated.

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Viola, op. cit. , pp. 19, 22.

The extreme poverty and extreme ignorance that characterized the peasant masses were among the worst `enemies' of the Bolsheviks. It was relatively simple to defeat the Tsar and the landowners. But how could barbarism, mental exhaustion and superstition be defeated? The Civil War had completely disrupted the countryside; ten years of socialist rйgime had introduced the first elements of mass culture and a minimal Communist leadership. But the traditional characteristics of the peasantry were still there, as influential as ever.

Dr. Йmile Joseph Dillon lived in Russia from 1877 to 1914. Professor at several Russian universities, he was also the chief editor of a Russian newspaper. He had traveled to all areas of the empire. He knew the ministers, the nobility, the bureaucrats and the successive generations of revolutionaries. His testimony about the Russian peasantry warrants a few thoughts.

He first described the material misery in which the majority of the peasantry lived:

`(T)he Russian peasant ... goes to bed at six and even five o'clock in the winter, because he cannot afford money to buy petroleum enough for artificial light. He has no meat, no eggs, no butter, no milk, often no cabbage, and lives mainly on black bread and potatoes. Lives? He starves on an insufficient quantity of them.'

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Йmile Joseph Dillon, quoted in Webb, op. cit. , p. 809.

Then Dillon wrote about the cultural and political backwardnesss in which the peasants were held:

`(T)he agricultural population ... was mediaeval in its institutions, Asiatic in its strivings and prehistoric in its conceptions of life. The peasants believed that the Japanese had won the Manchurian campaign by assuming the form of microbes, getting into the boots of the Russian soldiers, biting their legs, and bringing about their death. When there was an epidemic in a district they often killed the doctors `for poisoning the wells and spreading the disease'. They still burn witches with delight, disinter the dead to lay a ghost, strip unfaithful wives stark naked, tie them to carts and whip them through the village .... And when the only restraints that keep such a multitude in order are suddenly removed the consequences to the community are bound to be catastrophic .... Between the people and anarchism for generations there stood the frail partition formed by its primitive ideas of God and the Tsar; and since the Manchurian campaign these were rapidly melting away.'

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Ibid. , pp. 808--809.

New class differentiation

In 1927, after the spontaneous evolution of the free market, 7 per cent of peasants, i.e. 2,700,000 peasants, were once again without land. Each year, one quarter of a million poor lost their land. Furthermore, the landless men were no longer accepted in the traditional village commune. In 1927, there were still 27 million peasants who had neither horse nor cart. These poor peasants formed 35 per cent of the peasant population.

The great majority were formed of middle peasants: 51 to 53 per cent. But they still worked with their primitive instruments. In 1929, 60 per cent of families in the Ukraine had no form of machinery; 71 per cent of the families in the North Caucasus, 87.5 per cent in the Lower Volga and 92.5 per cent in the Central Black-Earth Region were in the same situation. These were the grain-producing regions.

In the whole of the Soviet Union, between 5 and 7 per cent of peasants succeeded in enriching themselves: these were the kulaks.

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Jean Elleinstein, Le socialisme dans un seul pays (Paris: Йditions Sociales, 1973), vol. 2, pp. 67--69. Davies, opcit, pp. 9, 171.

After the 1927 census, 3.2 per cent of families had on average 2.3 draft animals and 2.5 cows, compared to an average of between 1 and 1.1. There was a total of 950,000 families (3.8 per cent) who hired agricultural workers or rented out means of production.

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Davies, op. cit. , pp. 25--26.

Who controlled the market wheat?

The supply of market wheat had to be guaranteed to ensure that the rapidly expanding cities could be fed and that the country could be industrialized.

Since most of the peasants were no longer exploited by the landowners, they consumed a large part of their wheat. The sales on extra-rural markets were only 73.2 per cent of what they were in 1913.

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Ibid. , p. 17.

But the source of commercial grain had also undergone tremendous change. Before the revolution, 72 per cent of the grain had come from large exploitations (landowners and kulaks). In 1926, on the other hand, the poor and middle peasants produced 74 per cent of the market wheat. In fact, they consumed 89 per cent of their production, bringing only 11 per cent to market. The large socialist enterprises, the kolkhozy (collective farms) and the sovkhozy (state farms) only represented 1.7 per cent of the total wheat production and 6 per cent of the market wheat. But they sold 47.2 per cent of their production, almost half of their harvest.

In 1926, the kulaks, a rising force, controlled 20 per cent of the market wheat.

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Stalin, On the Grain Front. Leninism, p. 59.

According to another statistic, in the European part of the USSR, the kulaks and the upper part of the middle peasants, i.e. about 10 to 11 per cent of families, made 56 per cent of the sales in 1927--1928.

.

Davies, op. cit. , p. 27.

In 1927, the balance of forces between the socialist economy and the capitalist economy could be summed up as follows: collectivized agriculture brought 0.57 million tonnes of wheat to market, the kulaks 2.13 million.

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Stalin, Problems of Agrarian Policy in the U.S.S.R. Leninism, p. 155.

The social force controling the market wheat could dictate whether workers and city dwellers could eat, hence whether industrialization could take place. The resulting struggle became merciless.

Towards confrontation

To accrue sufficient assets for industrialization, the State had paid a relatively low price for wheat since the beginning of the twenties.

In the fall of 1924, after a quite meager harvest, the State did not succeed in buying the grain at a fixed rate. The kulaks and private merchants bought the grain on the open market, speculating on a price hike in the spring and summer.

In May 1925, the State had to double its buying prices of December 1924. That year, the USSR had a good harvest. Industrial development in the cities increased the demand for grain. Buying prices paid by the State remained high from October to December 1925. But since there was a lack of light machinery products, the better-off peasants refused to sell their wheat. The State was forced to capitulate, abandoning its plans for grain exports, reducing industrial equipment imports and reducing industrial credit.

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Davies, op. cit. , pp. 29--30.

These were the first signs of a grave crisis and of a confrontation between social classes.

In 1926, the grain harvest reached 76.8 million tonnes, compared to 72.5 the previous year. The State bought grain at a lower price than in 1925.

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Ibid. , pp. 31, 419.

In 1927, the grain harvest fell to the 1925 level. In the cities, the situation was hardly positive. Unemployment was high and increased with

the arrival of ruined peasants. The differences between worker and technician salaries increased. Private merchants, who still controlled half the meat sold in the city, blatantly enriched themselves. The Soviet Union was once again threatened with war, after London's decision to break diplomatic ties with Moscow.

Bukharin's position

The social struggle to come was reflected inside the Party. Bukharin, at the time Stalin's main ally in the leadership, stressed the importance of advancing socialism using market relations. In 1925, he called on peasants to `enrich themselves', and admitted that `we shall move forward at a snail's pace'. Stalin, in a June 2, 1925 letter to him, wrote: `the slogan enrich yourself is not ours, it is wrong .... Our slogan is socialist accumulation'.

.

Ibid. , p. 32.

The bourgeois economist Kondratiev was at the time the most influential specialist in the People's Commissariats for Agriculture and for Finance. He advocated further economic differentiation in the countryside, lower taxes for the rich peasants, reduction in the `insupportable rate of development of industry' and reorientation of resources from heavy industry to light industry.

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Ibid. , p. 33.

Shayanov, a bourgeois economist belonging to another school, called for `vertical co-operatives', first for the sale, then for the industrial processing of agricultural products, instead of an orientation towards production co-operatives, i.e. kolkhozy. This political line would have weakened the economic basis of socialism and would have developed new capitalist forces in the countryside and in light industry. By protecting capitalism at the production level, the rural bourgeoisie would have also dominated the sales co-operatives.

Bukharin was directly influenced by these two specialists, particularly when he declared in February 1925, `collective farms are not

the main line, not the high road, not the chief path by which the peasant will come to socialism'.

.

Ibid. , p. 34.

In 1927, the countryside saw a poor harvest. The amount of grain sold to the cities dropped dramatically. The kulaks, who had reinforced their position, hoarded their wheat to speculate on shortages so that they could force a significant price hike. Bukharin thought that the official buying prices should be raised and that industrialization should be slowed down. According to Davies, `Nearly all of the non-party economists supported these conclusions'.

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Ibid. , p. 41.

Betting on the kolkhoz ...

Stalin understood that socialism was threatened from three sides. Hunger riots could take place in the cities. The kulaks in the countryside could strengthen their position, thereby making socialist industrialization impossible. Finally, foreign military interventions were in the offing.

According to Kalinin, the Soviet President, a Politburo commission on the kolkhozy established in 1927 under Molotov's leadership brought about a `mental revolution'.

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Ibid. , p. 38.

Its work led to the adoption of a resolution by the Fifteenth Congress of the Party, in December 1927:

`Where is the way out? The way out is in the passing of small disintegrated peasant farms into large-scaled amalgamated farms, on the basis of communal tillage of the soil; in passing to collective tillage of the soil on the basis of the new higher technique. The way out is to amalgamate the petty and tiny peasant farms gradually but steadily, not by means of pressure but by example and conviction, into large-scale undertakings on the basis of communal, fraternal collective tillage of the soil, applying scientific methods for the intensification of agriculture.'

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Webb, op. cit. , p. 245, n. 1.

Again in 1927, it was decided to focus on the political line of limiting the exploiting tendencies of the rural bourgeoisie. The government imposed new taxes on the revenues of the kulaks. The latter had to meet higher quotas during grain collection. The village Soviet could seize their unused land. The number of workers they could hire was limited.

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Davies, op. cit. , pp. 46, 49--50. Nicolaп Boukharine, uvres choisies en un volume (Moscow: Йditions du Progrиs, 1988), p. 424.

... or betting on the individual peasant?

In 1928, as in 1927, the grain harvest was 3.5 to 4.5 million tonnes less than in 1926, due to very bad climatic conditions. In January 1928, the Politburo unanimously decided to take exceptional measures, by seizing wheat from the kulaks and the well-to-do peasants, to avoid famine in the cities. `Worker discontent was increasing. Tension was rising in the countryside. The situation seemed hopeless. Whatever the cost, the city needed bread', wrote two Bukharinists in 1988.

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G. Bourdiougov and V. Kozlov, Йpisodes d'une biographie politique. Introduction to Boukharine, op. cit. , p. 15.

The Party leadership around Stalin could see only one way out: develop the kolkhozian movement as fast as possible.

Bukharin was opposed. On July 1, 1928, he sent a letter to Stalin. The kolkhozy, he wrote, could not be the way out, since it would take several years to put them in place, particularly since they cannot be immediately supplied with machines. `Individual peasant holdings must be encouraged and relations must be normalized with the peasantry'.

.

Ibid. , p. 16.

The development of individual enterprise became the basis for Bukharin's political line. He claimed to agree that the State should expropriate a part of individual production to further the development of industry, but that this should take place using market mechanisms. Stalin would state in October of that year: `there are people in the ranks of our party who are striving, perhaps without themselves realizing it, to adapt our socialist construction to the tastes and needs of our ``Soviet'' bourgeoisie.'

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Stalin, The Right Danger. Leninism, p. 79.

The situation in the cities was getting worse. In 1928 and 1929, bread had to be rationed, then sugar, tea and meat. Between October 1, 1927 and 1929, the prices of agricultural products rose by 25.9 per cent. The price of wheat on the free market rose by 289 per cent.

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Davies, op. cit. , p. 47.

Early in 1929, Bukharin spoke of the links in the single chain of socialist economy, and added:

`(T)he kulak co-operative nests will, similarly, through the banks, etc., grow into the same system ....

`Here and there the class struggle in the rural districts breaks out in its former manifestations, and, as a rule, the outbreaks are provoked by the kulak elements. However, such incidents, as a rule, occur in those places where the local Soviet apparatus is weak. As this apparatus improves, as all the lower units of the Soviet government become stronger, as the local, village party and Young Communist organizations improve and become stronger, such phenomena, it is perfectly obvious, will become more and more rare and will finally disappear leaving no trace.'

.

Stalin, The Right Danger, pp. 95, 99.

Bukharin was already following a social-democratic policy of `class peace' and was blind to the relentless struggle of the kulaks to oppose

collectivization by all means. He saw the `weaknesses' of the Party and State apparatuses as the reason for the class war, without understanding that they were heavily infiltrated and influenced by the kulaks. The purge of these apparatuses would itself be a class struggle linked to the offensive against the kulaks.

At the Central Committee Plenary in April 1929, Bukharin proposed to import wheat, putting an end to the exceptional measures against `the peasantry', to increase the prices for agricultural products, to uphold `revolutionary legality', to reduce the rate of industrialization and to accelerate the development of the means of agricultural production. Kaganovich responded:

`You have made no new propositions, and you are incapable since they are non-existent, because we are facing a class enemy that is attacking us, that refuses to give its wheat surplus for the socialist industrialization and that declares: give me a tractor, give me electoral rights, and then you will get wheat.'

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Bourdiougov and Kozlov, op. cit. , pp. 26--27.

The first wave of collectivization

Stalin decided to take up the gauntlet, to bring the socialist revolution to the countryside and to engage in the final struggle against the last capitalist class in the Soviet Union, the kulaks, the agrarian bourgeoisie.

The kulak

The bourgeoisie has always maintained that the Soviet collectivization `destroyed the dynamic forces in the countryside' and caused a permanent stagnation of agriculture. It describes the kulaks as individual `dynamic and entrepeneurial' peasants. This is nothing but an ideological fable destined to tarnish socialism and glorify exploitation. To understand the class struggle that took place in the USSR, it is necessary to try to have a more realistic image of the Russian kulak.

At the end of the nineteenth century, a specialist on Russian peasant life wrote as follows:

`Every village commune has always three or four regular kulaks, as also some half dozen smaller fry of the same kidney .... They want neither skill nor industry; only promptitude to turn to their own profit the needs, the sorrows, the sufferings and the misfortunes of others.

`The distinctive characteristic of this class ... is the hard, unflinching cruelty of a thoroughly educated man who has made his way from poverty to wealth, and has come to consider money-making, by whatever means, as the only pursuit to which a rational being should devote himself.'

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Stepniak, quoted in Webb, op. cit. , pp. 563--564.

And Й. J. Dillon, from the U.S., who had a profound knowledge of old Russia, wrote:

`And of all the human monsters I have ever met in my travels, I cannot recall so malignant and odious as the Russian kulak.'

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Dillon, quoted in Webb, op. cit. , p. 565.

The kolkhozy surpass the kulaks

If the kulaks, who represented already 5 per cent of the peasantry, had succeeded in extending their economic base and definitively imposing themselves as the dominant force in the countryside, the socialist power in the cities would not have been able to maintain itself, faced with this encirclement by bourgeois forces. Eighty-two per cent of the Soviet population was peasant. If the Bolshevik Party had no longer succeeded in feeding the workers at relatively low prices, the very basis of working class power would have been threatened.

Hence it was necessary to accelerate the collectivization of certain sectors in the countryside in order to increase, on a socialist basis, the production of market wheat. It was essential for the success of accelerated industrialization that a relatively low price for market wheat be maintained. A rising rural bourgeoisie would never have accepted such a policy. Only the poor and middle peasants, organized in co-operatives, could support it. And only industrialization could ensure the defence of the first socialist country. Industrialization would allow the modernization of the countryside, increasing productivity and improving the cultural level. To give a solid material base for socialism in the countryside would require building tractors, trucks and threshers. To succeed would imply increasing the rate of industrialization.

On October 1, 1927, there were 286,000 peasant families in the kolkhozy. They numbered 1,008,000 on June 1, 1929.

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Davies, op. cit. , p. 109.

During the four months of June through October, the percentage of kolkhoz peasants rose from 4 per cent to 7.5 per cent.

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Viola, op. cit. , p. 27.

During 1929, collectivized agriculture produced 2.2 million tonnes of market wheat, as much as the kulaks did two years previously. Stalin foresaw that during the course of the next year, it would bring 6.6 million tonnes to the cities.

`Now we are able to carry on a determined offensive against the kulaks, to break their resistance, to eliminate them as a class and substitute for their output the output of the collective farms and state farms.'

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Stalin, Problems of Agrarian Policy in the U.S.S.R., p. 163.

A fiery mass movement

Once the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party had called for accelerating the collectization, a spontaneous movement developed, brought to the regions by activists, youth, old soldiers of the Red Army and the local apparatuses of the Party.

Early in October, 7.5 per cent of the peasants had already joined kolkhozy and the movement was growing. The Party, which had given the general direction towards collectivization, became conscious of a mass movement, which it was not organizing:

`The main fact of our social-economic life at the present time ..., is the enormous growth of the collective farm movement.

`Now, the kulaks are being expropriated by the masses of poor and middle peasants themselves, by the masses who are putting solid collectivization into practice.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 145, 163.

During the ratification of the First Five-Year Plan, in April, the Party had planned on a collectivization level of 10 per cent by 1932-1933. The kolkhozy and the sovkhozy would then produce 15.5 per cent of the grain. That would suffice to oust the kulaks.

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Davies, op. cit. , p. 112.

But in June, the Party Secretary in North Caucasus, Andreev, affirmed that already 11.8 per cent of families had entered kolkhozy and that a number of 22 per cent could be reached by the end of 1929.

.

Ibid. , p. 121.

On January 1, 1930, 18.1 per cent of the peasant families were members of a kolkhoz. A month later, they accounted for 31.7 per cent.

.

Ibid.

`Collectivization quickly assumed a dynamic of its own, achieved largely as a result of the initiative of rural cadres. The center was in peril of losing control of the campaign'.

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Viola, op. cit. , p. 91.

The objectives set by the Central Committee in its January 5, 1930 resolution were strongly `corrected' in the upward direction by regional committees. The district committees did the same and set a breath-taking pace. In January 1930, the regions of Ural, Lower Volga and Middle Volga already registered collectivization figures between 39 and 56 per cent. Several regions adopted a plan for complete collectivization within one year, some within a few months.

.

Ibid. , pp. 93--94.

A Soviet commentator wrote: `If the centre intended to include 15 per cent of households, the region raised the plan to 25 per cent, the okrug to 40 per cent and the district posed itself the task of reaching 60 per cent'.

.

Davies, op. cit. , p. 218.

(The okrug was an administrative entity that disappeared in 1930. There were, at the beginning of that year, 13 regions divided into 207 okrugs, subdivided into 2,811 districts and 71,870 village Soviets.)

.

Ibid. , p. xx.

The war against the kulak

This frenetic race towards collectivization was accompanied by a `dekulakization' movement: kulaks were expropriated, sometimes exiled. What was happening was a new step in the fierce battle between poor peasants and rich peasants. For centuries, the poor had been systematically beaten and crushed when, out of sheer desperation, they dared revolt and rebel. But this time, for the first time, the legal force of the State was on their side. A student working in a kolkhoz in 1930 told the U.S. citizen Hindus:

`This was war, and is war. The koolak had to be got out of the way as completely as an enemy at the front. He is the enemy at the front. He is the enemy of the kolkhoz.'

.

Ibid. , p. 173.

Preobrazhensky, who had upheld Trotsky to the hilt, now enthusiastically supported the battle for collectivization:

`The working masses in the countryside have been exploited for centuries. Now, after a chain of bloody defeats beginning with the peasant uprisings of the Middle Ages, their powerful movement for the first time in human history has a chance of victory.'

.

Ibid. , p. 274.

It should be said that the radicalism in the countryside was also stimulated by the general mobilization and agitation in the country undergoing industrialization.

The essential rǫle of the most oppressed masses

Numerous anti-Communist books tell us that the collectivization was `imposed' by the leadership of the Party and by Stalin and implemented with terror. This is a lie. The essential impulse during the violent episodes of collectivization came from the most oppressed of the peasant masses. A peasant from the Black-Earth region declared:

`I have lived my whole life among the batraks (agricultural workers). The October revolution gave me land, I got credit from year to year, I got a poor horse, I can't work the land, my children are ragged and hungry, I simply can't manage to improve my farm in spite of the help of the Soviet authorities. I think there's only one way out: join a tractor column, back it up and get it going.'

.

Ibid. , p. 160.

Lynne Viola wrote:

`Although centrally initiated and endorsed, collectivization became, to a great extent, a series of ad hoc policy responses to the unbridled initiatives of regional and district rural party and government organs. Collectivization and collective farming were shaped less by Stalin and the central authorities than by the undisciplined and irresponsible activity of rural officials, the experimentation of collective farm leaders left to fend for themselves, and the realities of a backward countryside.'

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Viola, op. cit. , pp. 215--216.

Viola correctly emphasizes the base's internal dynamic. But her interpretation of the facts is one-sided. She misses the mass line consistently followed by Stalin and the Bolshevik Party. The Party set the general direction, and, on this basis, the base and the intermediate cadres were allowed to experiment. The results from the base would then serve for the elaboration of new directives, corrections and rectifications.

Viola continued:

`The state ruled by circular, it ruled by decree, but it had neither the organizational infrastructure nor the manpower to enforce its voice or to ensure correct implementation of its policy in the administration of the countryside .... The roots of the Stalin system in the countryside do not lie in the expansion of state controls but in the very absence of such controls and of an orderly system of administration, which, in turn, resulted as the primary instrument of rule in the countryside.'

.

Ibid. , p. 216.

This conclusion, drawn from a careful observation of the real progress of collectivization, requires two comments.

The thesis of `Communist totalitarianism' exercised by an `omnipresent Party bureaucracy' has no real bearing with the actual Soviet power under Stalin. It is a slogan showing the bourgeoisie's hatred of real socialism. In 1929--1933, the Soviet State did not have the technical means, the required qualified personnel, nor the sufficient Communist leadership to direct collectivization in a planned and orderly manner: to describe it as an all-powerful and totalitarian State is absurd.

In the countryside, the essential urge for collectivization came from the most oppressed peasants. The Party prepared and initiated the collectivization, and Communists from the cities gave it leadership, but this gigantic upheaval of peasant habits and traditions could not have succeeded

if the poorest peasants had not been convinced of its necessity. Viola's judgment according to which `repression became the principal instrument of power' does not correspond to reality. The primary instrument was mobilization, consciousness raising, education and organization of the masses of peasants. This constructive work, of course, required `repression', i.e. it took place and could not have taken place except through bitter class struggle against the men and the habits of the old rйgime.

Be they fascists or Trotskyists, all anti-Communists affirm that Stalin was the representative of an all-powerful bureaucracy that suffocated the base. This is the opposite of the truth. To apply its revolutionary line, the Bolshevik leadership often called on the revolutionary forces at the base to short-circuit parts of the bureaucratic apparatus.

`The revolution was not implemented through regular administrative channels; instead the state appealed directly to the party rank and file and key sectors of the working class in order to circumvent rural officialdom. The mass recruitments of workers and other urban cadres and the circumvention of the bureaucracy served as a breakthrough policy in order to lay the foundations of a new system.'

.

Ibid. , p. 215.

The organizational line on collectivization

How did Stalin and the leadership of the Bolshevik Party react to the spontaneous and violent collectivization and `dekulakization' tide?

They basically tried to lead, discipline and rectify the existing movement, both politically and practically.

The Party leadership did everything in its power to ensure that the great collectivization revolution could take place in optimal conditions and at the least cost. But it could not prevent deep antagonisms from bursting or `blowing up', given the countryside's backward state.

The Party apparatus in the countryside

To understand the Bolshevik Party's line during the collectivization, it is important to keep in mind that on the eve of 1930, the State and Party apparatus in the countryside was extremely weak --- the exact opposite of the `terrible totalitarian machine' imagined by anti-Communists. The weakness of the Communist apparatus was one of the conditions that allowed the kulaks to throw all their forces into a vicious battle against the new society.

On January 1, 1930, there were 339,000 Communists among a rural population of about 120 million people! Twenty-eight Communists for a region of 10,000 inhabitants.

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Ibid. , p. 29.

Party cells only existed in 23,458 of 70,849 village Soviets and, according to the Central Volga Regional Secretary, Khataevich, some village Soviets were `a direct agency of the kulaks'.

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Davies, op. cit. , p. 226.

The old kulaks and the old Tsarist civil servants, who better understood how public life took place, had done their best to infiltrate the Party. The Party nucleus was composed of young peasants who had fought in the Red Army during the Civil War. This political experience had fixed their way of seeing and acting. They had the habit of commanding and hardly knew what political education and mobilization meant.

`The rural administrative structure was burdensome, the line of command confused, and the demarcation of responsibility and function blurred and poorly defined. Consequently, rural policy implementation

often tended either to the extreme of inertia or, as in the civil war days, to campaign-style polities.'

.

Viola, op. cit. , p. 29.

It was with this apparatus, which often sabotaged or distorted the instructions of the Central Committee, that the battle against the kulaks and the old society had to take place. Kaganovich pointed out that `if we formulate it sharply and strongly, in essence we have to create a party organization in the countryside, capable of managing the great movement for collectivization'.

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Davies, op. cit. , pp. 225--226.

Extraordinary organizational measures

Faced with the base's radicalism, with a violent wave of anarchistic collectivization, the Party leadership first tried to get a firm grasp of what exactly was happening.

Given the weaknesses and the untrustworthiness of the Party apparatus in the countryside, the Central Committee took several extraordinary organizational measures.

First at the central level.

Starting mid-February 1930, three members of the Central Committee, Ordzhonikidze, Kaganovich and Yakovlev, were sent to the countryside to conduct inquiries.

Then, three important national assemblies were called, under the leadership of the Central Committee, to focus the accumulated experience. The February 11 assembly dealt with problems of collectivization in regions with national minorities. The February 21 assembly dealt with regions with a deficit of wheat. Finally, the February 24 assembly analyzed the errors and excesses that took place during collectivization.

Then, at the base level, in the countryside.

Two hundred and fifty thousand Communists were mobilized in the cities to go to the countryside and help out with collectivization.

These militants worked under the leadership of the `headquarters' of collectivization, specially created at the okrug and district levels. The `headquarters' were in turn advised by officials sent by the Regional Committee or the Central Committee.

.

Ibid. , p. 205.

For example, in the Tambov okrug, militants would participate in conferences and short courses at the okrug level, then at the district level, before entering the field. According to their instructions, militants had to follow `methods of mass work': first convince local activists, village Soviets and meetings of poor peasants, then small mixed groups of poor and middle peasants and, finally, organize a general meeting of the village, excluding, of course, the kulaks. A firm warning was given that `administrative compulsion must not be used to get the middle peasants to join the kolhoz'.

.

Ibid. , p. 206.

In the same Tambov okrug, during the winter of 1929--30, conferences and courses lasting from 2 to 10 days were organized for 10,000 peasants, kolkhozian women, poor peasants and Presidents of Soviets.

During the first few weeks of 1930, Ukraine organized 3,977 short courses for 275,000 peasants. In the fall of 1929, thirty thousand activists were trained on Sundays, during their time off, by the Red Army, which took on another contingent of 100,000 people during the first months of 1930. Furthermore, the Red Army trained a large number of tractor drivers, agricultural specialists and cinema and radio operators.

.

Ibid. , pp. 206--207.

Most of the people coming from the towns worked for a few months in the countryside. Hence, in February 1930, the mobilization of 7,200 urban Soviet members was decreed, to work at least one year in the countryside. But men in the Red Army and industrial workers were permanently transferred to the kolkhozes.

It was in November 1929 that the most famous campaign, the `25,000', was launched.

The 25,000

The Central Committee called on 25,000 experienced industrial workers from the large factories to go to the countryside and to help out with collectivization. More than 70,000 presented themselves and 28,000 were selected: political militants, youth who had fought in the Civil War, Party and Komsomol members.

These workers were conscious of the leading rфle of the working class in the socialist transformations in the countryside. Viola writes:

`(They) looked to the Stalin revolution for the final victory of socialism after years of war, hardship, and deprivation .... They saw the revolution as a solution to backwardness, seemingly endemic food shortages, and capitalist encirclement.'

.

Viola, op. cit. , p. 211.

Before leaving, it was explained to them that they were the eyes and the ears of the Central Committee: thanks to their physical presence on the front lines, the leadership hoped to acquire a materialist understanding of the upheavals in the countryside and the problems of collectivization. They were also told to discuss with the peasants their organizational experience, acquired as industrial workers, since the old tradition of individual work constituted a serious handicap for the collective use of the land. Finally, they were told that they would have to judge the Communist quality of the Party functionaries and, if necessary, purge the Party of foreign and undesirable elements.

It was during the month of January 1930 that the 25,000 arrived on the front line of collectivization. The detailed analysis of their activities and of the rфle that they played can give a realistic idea of the collectivization, that great revolutionary class struggle. These workers maintained regular

correspondence with their factories and their unions; these letters give a precise idea of what was happening in the villages.

The 25,000 against the bureaucracy

Upon arrival, the 25,000 immediately had to fight against the bureaucracy of the local apparatus and against the excesses committed during the collectivization.

Viola wrote:

`Regardless of their position, the 25,000ers were unanimous in their criticism of district-level organs participating in collectivization .... The workers claimed that it was the district organs which were responsible for the race for percentages in collectivization.'

.

Ibid. , p. 103.

Zakharov, one of the 25,000, wrote that no preparatory work had been done among the peasants. Consequently, they were not prepared for collectivization.

.

Ibid.

Many complained of the illegal acts and of the brutality of rural cadres. Makovskaya attacked `the bureaucratic attitude of the cadres towards the peasants', and she said that the functionaries spoke of collectivization `with revolver in hand'.

.

Ibid. , p. 109.

Baryshev affirmed that a great number of middle peasants had been `dekulakized'. Naumov allied himself with the peasants attacking the

Party cadres who `appropriated for themselves the goods confiscated from the kulaks'. Viola concluded that the 25,000ers `viewed rural officials as crude, undisciplined, often corrupt, and, in not a few cases, as agents or representatives of socially dangerous class aliens'.

.

Ibid. , p. 141.

By opposing the bureaucrats and their excesses, they succeeded in winning the confidence of the peasant masses.

.

Ibid. , p. 135.

These details are important, since these workers can be considered to have been direct envoys from Stalin. It was precisely the `Stalinists' who fought bureaucracy and excesses most consistently and who defended a correct line for collectivization.

The 25,000 against the kulaks

Next, the 25,000 played a leading rфle in the struggle against the kulaks.

They first confronted the terrible army of rumors and defamations, called `kulak agit-prop'. The illiterate peasant masses, living in barbaric conditions, subject to the influence of the pops (Orthodox priests), could easily be manipulated. The Pop claimed that the Reign of the Anti-Christ had come. The Kulak added that those who entered the kolkhoz made a pact with the Anti-Christ.

.

Ibid. , p. 154.

Among the 25,000, many were attacked and beaten. Several dozen were murdered, shot or finished off with an axe by the kulaks.

The 25,000 and the organization of agricultural production

But the essential contribution of the 25,000 in the countryside was the introduction of a completely new system of production management, way of life and style of work.

The poor peasants, on the frontline for collectivization, did not have the slightest idea about the organization of collective production. They hated their exploitation and, for that reason, were solid allies of the working class. But as individual producers, they could not create a new mode of production: this is one of the reasons that the dictatorship of the proletariat was necessary. The dictatorship of the proletariat expressed itself through the ideological and organizational leadership of the working class and of the Communist Party over the poor and middle peasants.

The workers introduced regular work days, with morning roll call. They invented systems of payment by piecework and wage levels. Everywhere, they had to introduce order and discipline. Often, a kolkhoz did not even know its borders. There was no inventory of machinery, tools or spare parts. Machines were not maintained, there were no stables, nor fodder reserves. The workers introduced production conferences where the kolkhozians exchanged practical knowledge, they organized Socialist Competition between different brigades, and they set up workers' tribunals where violations of rules and negligence were judged.

The 25,000 workers were also the living link between the proletariat and the kolkhozian peasantry. At the request of `their' worker, large factories would send agricultural equipment, spare parts, generators, books, newspapers and other items impossible to find in the countryside. Worker brigades came from the city to do certain technical or reparatory tasks or to help with the harvest.

The worker also became schoolmaster. He taught technical knowledge. Often, he had to accomplish accounting tasks while training, on the job, new accountants. He gave elementary political and agricultural courses. Sometimes he looked after literacy campaigns.

The contribution of the 25,000 to collectivization was enormous. During the twenties, `Poverty, illiteracy and a chronic predisposition to periodic famine characterized much of the rural landscape'.

.

Ibid. , p. 172.

The 25,000 helped elaborate the organizational structures of socialist agriculture for the next quarter century to come. `(A) new system of agricultural production was indeed established, and this, although not without its problems, did end the periodic crises which characterized earlier market relations between the cities and the countryside'.

.

Ibid. , p. 216.

The political direction of collectivization

At the same time as these organizational measures, the Central Committee elaborated political measures and directives to give direction to the collectivization.

It is first important to note that vivid and prolonged discussions took place within the Party about the speed and scale of collectivization.

In October 1929, the Khoper okrug in the Lower Volta Region, which had registered 2.2 per cent of collectivized families in June, had already reached 55 per cent. A Kolkhoztsentr (the Union of kolkhozy) commission, which was suspicious of the speed and scale of the collectivization, was sent to conduct an enquiry. Baranov, its vice-president, declared:

`The local authorities are operating a system of shock-work and a campaign approach. All the work of setting up kolkhozy is carried out under the slogan `The more the better'. The directives of the okrug are sometimes twisted into the slogan `Those who do not join the kolkhoz are enemies of Soviet power'. There has been no extensive activity among the masses .... In some cases sweeping promises of tractors and loans were made --- `You'll get everything --- join the kolkhoz'.'

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Davies, op. cit. , pp. 152--153.

On the other hand, in Pravda, Sheboldaev, the Party Secretary for the Lower Volta Region, defended the rapid expansion of the Khoper collectivization. He `hailed the ``tremendous uplift and enthusiasm'' of collective ploughing, and declared that only 5 to 10 per cent opposed collectivization', which had become `a big mass movement, going far beyond the framework of our notions of work on collectivization'.

.

Ibid. , p. 154.

Contradictory opinions existed in all units, included in this Khoper vanguard unit. On November 2, 1929, the newspaper Krasnyi Khoper reported with enthusiasm the collective ploughing and the formation of new kolkhozy. But in the same issue, a article warned against hurried collectivization and the use of threats to push poor peasants into the kolkhozy. Another article affirmed that in certain areas, kulaks had pushed an entire village into the kolkhoz to discredit collectivization.

.

Ibid. , p. 155.

During the November 1929 Central Committee Plenum, Sheboldaev defended the Khoper experience with its `horse columns'. Given the absence of tractors, `simple unification and aggregation of farms would increase labor productivity'. He declared that the Khoper collectivization was `a spontaneous movement of the masses of poor and middle peasants' and that only 10 to 12 per cent voted against.

`(T)he party cannot take the attitude of `restraining' this movement. This would be wrong from a political and an economic point of view. The party must do everything possible to put itself at the head of this movement and lead it into organised channels. At present this mass movement has undoubtedly overwhelmed the local authorities, and hence there is a danger that it will be discredited.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 161--162.

Sheboldaev affirmed that 25 per cent of the families were already collectivized and that towards the end of 1930 or mid-1931, collectivization would essentially be complete.

.

Ibid.

Kossior, who spoke at the Plenum about the situation in Ukraine, reported that in dozens of villages, collectivization was `blown up and artificially created; the population did not participate in it and knew nothing about it'. But ` ``the very many dark sides'' (could not) block from view the general picture of collectivization as a whole'.

.

Ibid. , p. 165.

It is therefore clear that many contradictory opinions were expressed within the Party, at the time that the movement for collectivization was started up in the countryside. Revolutionaries had the duty to find and protect the wish of the most oppressed masses to get rid of their age-old political, cultural and technical backwardness. The masses had to be encouraged to advance in the struggle, the only method to weaken and destroy the deeply rooted social and economic relations. Right opportunism did everything it possibly could to slow down this difficult and contradictory consciousness-raising. Nevertheless, it was also possible to push collectivization too fast, by rejecting in practice all the Party's principles. This tendency not only included leftism, which came from habits picked up during the Civil War --- when it was normal to `command' the Revolution --- but also bureaucracy, which wanted to please the leadership with `great achievements'; in addition the exaggerations could also come from the counter-revolution, which wanted to compromise collectivization by pushing it to the absurd.

The November 1929 resolution

The Central Committee Resolution of November 17, 1929, officially launching the collectivization, summarized discussions within the Party.

It began by noting that the number of peasant families in the kolkhozy rose from 445,000 in 1927--1928 to 1,040,000 one year later. The share of the kolkhozy in market grain rose from 4.5 per cent to 12.9 per cent in the same period.

`This unprecedented rate of collectivization, which exceeds the most optimistic projections attests to the fact that the true masses of the middle peasant household, convinced in practice of the advantages of the collective forms of agriculture, have joined the movement ....

`The decisive breakthrough in the attitude of the poor and middle peasant masses toward the kolkhozes ... signifies a new historical stage in the building of socialism in our country.'

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Robert H. McNeal, editor, Resolutions and decisions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Volume 3, The Stalin Years: 1929--1953 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), p. 23.

The progress of collectivization was made possible by putting into practice the Party's line for building socialism on all fronts.

`These significant successes of the kolkhoz movement are a direct result of the consistent implementation of the general party line, which has secured a powerful growth of industry, a strengthening of the union of the working class with the basic masses of the peasantry, the formation of a co-operative community, the strengthening of the masses' political activism, and the growth of the material and cultural resources of the proletarian state.'

.

Ibid. , p. 29.

Reject Bukharin's opportunism

The Central Committee insisted that this impressive advance was not made `in all tranquility', but that it was taking place with the most bitter class struggle.

`(T)he intensification of the class struggle and the stubborn resistance of capitalist elements against an advancing socialism in a situation of capitalist encirclement of our country, are reinforcing the pressure of petty bourgeois elements on the least stable element of the party, giving rise to an ideology of capitulation in the face of difficulties, to desertion, and attempts to reach an understanding with the kulak and capitalist elements of town and countryside ....

`This is precisely what is at the root of the Bukharin group's complete incomprehension of the intensification of the class struggle that has taken place; the underestimation of the kulak and the NEP-man elements' power to resist, the anti-leninist theory of the kulak's `growing' into socialism, and resistance to the policy of attacking the capitalist elements in the countryside.'

.

Ibid. , p. 27.

`The rightists declared the planned rates for collectivization and for building sovkhozes to be unrealistic; they declared that the necessary material and technical prerequisistes were lacking and that the poor and middle peasantry did not want to switch to collective forms of agriculture. In actual fact, we are experiencing such a turbulent growth of collectivization and such a headlong rush to socialist forms of agriculture on the part of the poor and middle peasant holdings that the kolkhoz movement has already reached the point of transition to total collectivization of entire districts ....

`(T)he right opportunists ..., objectively speaking, were serving as spokesmen for the economic and political interests of petty bourgeois elements and kulak-capitalist groups.'

.

Ibid. , p. 25.

The Central Committee indicated that changes in the form of class struggle had to be followed carefully: if, before, the kulaks did everything they possibly could to prevent the kolkhoz movement from starting up, now they sought to destroy it from within.

`The widespread development of the kolkhoz movement is taking place in a situation of intensified class struggle in the countryside and of a change in its forms and methods. Along with the kulaks' intensification of their direct and open struggle against collectivization, which has gone to the point of outright terror (murder, arson, and wrecking), they are increasingly going over to camouflaged and covert forms of struggle and exploitation, penetrating the kolkhozes and even the kolkhoz management bodies in order to corrupt and explode them from the inside.'

.

Ibid. , p. 29.

For this reason, profound political work had to be undertaken to form a hard kernel that could lead the kolkhoz down the socialist path.

`(T)he party must assure through persistent and regular work the rallying of a farm labourer and poor peasant nucleus on the kolkhozes.'

.

Ibid.

New difficulties, new tasks

These successes could not make the Party forget the `new difficulties and short-comings' to be resolved. The plenum enumerated them:

`(T)he low level of the kolkhozes' technical base; the inadequate standards of organization and low labour productivity at kolkhozes; the acute shortage of kolkhoz cadres and the near total lack of the needed specialists; the blighted social make-up at a portion of the kolkhoz; the fact that the forms of management are poorly adapted to the scale of the kolkhoz movement, that direction lags behind the rate and the scope of the movement, and the fact that the agencies directing the kolkhoz movement are often patently unsatisfactory.'

.

Ibid.

The Central Committee decided upon the immediate startup of the construction of two new tractor factories with a capacity of 50,000 units each and of two new combine factories, the expansion of factories making complex agricultural equipment and of chemical factories, and the development of Machine Tractor Stations.

.

Ibid. , pp. 30--31.

`Kolkhoz construction is unthinkable without a rigorous improvement in the cultural standards of the kolkhoz populace'. This is what had to be done: intensify literacy campaigns, build libraries, intensify kolkhoz courses and various types of study by correspondence, enroll children in schools, intensify cultural and political work among women, organize crиches and public kitchens to reduce their burden, build roads and

cultural centers, introduce radio and cinema, telephone and mail services to the countryside, publish a general press and a specialized press designed for the peasants, etc.

.

Ibid. , p. 34.

Finally, the Central Committee evoked the danger of Left deviations. The radicalism of poor peasants may lead to an underestimation of the alliance with the middle peasants.

.

Ibid. , p. 28.

`(T)he Central Committee plenum warns against underestimating the difficulties of kolkhoz construction and in particular against a formal and bureaucratic approach to it and to the evaluation of its results'.

.

Ibid. , p. 37.

The January 5, 1930 resolution

Six weeks later, the Central Committee met again to evaluate the incredible development of the kolkhozian movement. On January 5, 1930, it adopted an important decision, entitled, `On the Rate of Collectivization and State Assistance to Kolkhoz Construction'.

.

Ibid. , pp. 40--43.

It first remarked that more than 30 million hectares were already sown on a collective basis, already surpassing the 24 million hectares that were sought at the end of the Five-Year Plan. `Thus we have the material basis for replacing large-scale kulak production by large-scale production in the kolkhozes .... we can resolve the task of collectivizing the overwhelming majority of the peasant farms' by the end of the First Plan. The collectivization of the most important grain-growing regions could be finished between autumn 1930 and spring 1932.

.

Ibid. , pp. 40--41.

The Party had to support the spontaneous movement at the base and actively intervene to lead and to guide. `The party organizations must head and shape the kolkhoz movement, which is developing spontaneously from below, so as to ensure the organization of genuinely collective production in the kolkhozes'.

.

Ibid. , p. 42.

The resolution warned against leftist errors. One should not `underestimate the role of the horse' and get rid of horses in the hope of receiving tractors.

.

Ibid. , p. 41.

Not everything had to be collectivized. `(T)he artel is the most widespread form of kolkhoz, in which the basic instruments of production (livestock and dead stock, farm buildings, commercial herds) are collectivized'.

.

Ibid. , p. 42.

Finally:

`(T)he Central Committee with all seriousness warns party organizations against guiding the kolkhoz movement `by decree' from above; this could give rise to the danger of replacing genuine socialist emulation in the organization of kolkhozes by mere playing at collectivization.'

.

Ibid. , p. 43.

`Dekulakization'

For collectivization to succeed, the poor and middle peasants had to be convinced of the superiority of collective work of the soil, which would allow the wide-scale introduction of machinery. Furthermore, socialist industry had to be capable of producing the tractors and machines that would constitute the material support for collectivization. Finally, a correct attitude had to be defined for the kulaks, the irreconcilable adversaries of socialism in the countryside. This last problem led to significant discussions within the Party.

The question was posed as follows, just before the political changes in favor of the kolkhozy. Mikoyan said on March 1, 1929:

`In spite of the political authority of the party in the countryside the kulak in the economic sphere is more authoritative: his farm is better, his horse is better, his machines are better and he is listened to on economic matters .... the middle peasant leans towards the economic authority of the kulak. And his authority will be strong as long as we have no large kolkhozy.'

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Davies, op. cit. , p. 62.

Kulak rumors and indoctrination

Kulak authority was based to a great extent on the cultural backwardness, illiteracy, superstition and medieval religious beliefs of the majority of peasants. Hence, the kulak's most powerful weapon, also the most difficult to confront, was rumor and indoctrination.

In 1928--1929, identical rumors were found throughout the Soviet territory. In the kolkhoz, women and children would be collectivized. In the kolkhoz, everyone would sleep under a single gigantic blanket. The Bolshevik government would force women to cut their hair so that it could be exported. The Bolsheviks would mark women on the forehead for identification. They would Russify local populations.

.

Viola, op. cit. , p. 154.

All sorts of other terrifying `information' was heard. In the kolkhozy, a special machine would burn the old so that they would not eat any more wheat. Children would be taken away from their parents and sent to crиches. Four thousand women would be sent to China to pay for the Chinese Eastern Railway. The kolkhozians would be the first ones sent in a war. Then a rumor announced that soon the White Armies would return. Believers were told about the next coming of the Anti-Christ and that the world would end in two years.

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Viola, op. cit. , p. 154. Davies, op. cit. , pp. 212--213.

In the Tambov okrug, the kulaks carefully mixed rumor and political propaganda. They said that

`(S)etting up the kolkhozy is a kind of serf labour (barshchina) where the peasant will again have to work under the rod ...; the Soviet

government should enrich the peasants first and then push through the establishment of kolkhozy, and not do what it is doing now, which is to try to make a rich farm out of ruined farms which have no grain.'

.

Davies, op. cit. , p. 221.

Here we see the budding alliance between the kulaks and Bukharin: the kulaks did not openly oppose Soviet power nor even the kolkhozy: but, the peasants should first be allowed to enrich themselves, and we can always see later about collectivization. Just as Bukharin spoke of the `feudal exploitation of the peasantry', the kulaks denounced `serfdom'.

What should be done with the kulaks?

How should the kulak be treated? In June 1929, Karpinsky, a senior member of the Party, wrote that the kulaks should be allowed to join kolkhozy when collectivization included the majority of families, if they put all their means of production into the indivisible fund. This position was upheld by Kaminsky, the president of the All-Union Kolkhoz Council. The same point of view was held by the leadership. But the majority of delegates, local Party leaders, were `categorically opposed' to the admission of kulaks into kolkhozy. A delegate stated:

`(I)f he gets into the kolkhoz somehow or other he will turn an association for the joint working of the land into an association for working over Soviet power.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 138--139.

In July 1929, the Secretary for the Central Volga Region, Khataevich, declared that

`(I)ndividual kulak elements may be admitted to collective associations if they completely renounce their personal ownership of means of production, if the kolkhozy have a solid poor-peasant and middle-peasant nucleus and if correct leadership is assured.'

.

Ibid. , p. 140.

However, there were already several cases that were going in the opposite direction. In Kazakhstan, in August 1928, 700 bai, semi-feudal lords, and their families, were exiled. Each family owned at least one hundred cattle, which were distributed to the already-constituted kolkhozy

and to peasants who were being encouraged to join kolkhozy. In February 1929, a Siberian regional Party conference decided not to allow kulaks. In June, the North Caucasus made the same decision.

.

Ibid. , pp. 140--141.

The September 17 issue of Pravda presented a major report on the kolkhoz Red Land Improver in Lower Volga. Established in 1924, this model kolkhoz received 300,000 rubles, credit from the State. But in 1929, its socialized property amounted to only 1,800 rubles. The funds had been used for personal gain. The president of the kolkhoz was a Socialist Revolutionary; the leadership included former traders, the son of a priest and four other former Socialist Revolutionaries.

.

Ibid. , p. 144.

Molotov summarized the affair by; `kulak-SR elements will often hide behind the kolkhoz smokescreen'; a `merciless struggle' was necessary against the kulak, as was the improvement of the organization of the poor peasants and of the alliance between the poor and middle peasants.

.

Ibid. , p. 145.

In November 1929, Azizyan, a journalist specializing in agriculture, analyzed the motivations kulaks had for entering kolkhozy: they wanted to avoid being taxed and having to make obligatory shipments of wheat; to keep the best land; to keep their tools and machines; and to ensure the education of their children.

.

Ibid. , p. 183.

At the same time, another journalist reported that `the weak half of the human race' sympathized with the kulaks while collective farmers were quite uncompromising, saying `send them out of the village into the steppe' and `put them in quarantine for fifty years'.

.

Ibid. , p. 184.

The Central Committee resolution of January 5, 1930 drew conclusions from these debates and affirmed that it was now capable of `passing in its practical work from a policy of limiting the exploitative tendencies of the kulaks to a policy of liquidating the kulaks as a class .... the inadmissibility of allowing kulaks to join kolkhozes (was presupposed).

.

McNeal, op. cit. , pp. 41--42.

Struggle to the end

After this resolution, which announced the end of capitalist relations in the countryside, the kulaks threw themselves into a struggle to the end. To sabotage collectivization, they burnt crops, set barns, houses and other buildings on fire and killed militant Bolsheviks.

Most importantly, the kulaks wanted to prevent collective farms from starting up, by killing an essential part of the productive forces in the countryside, horses and oxen. All the work on the land was done with draft animals. The kulaks killed half of them. Rather than cede their cattle to the collectives, they butchered them and incited the middle peasants to do the same.

Of the 34 million horses in the country in 1928, there remained only 15 million in 1932. A terse Bolshevik spoke of the liquidation of the horses as a class. Of the 70.5 million head of cattle, there only remained 40.7 million in 1932. Only 11.6 million pigs out of 26 million survived the collectivization period.

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Charles Bettelheim. L'йconomie soviйtique (Paris: Йditions Recueil Sirey, 1950), p. 87.

This destruction of the productive forces had, of course, disastrous consequences: in 1932, there was a great famine, caused in part by the sabotage and destruction done by the kulaks. But anti-Communists blame Stalin and the `forced collectivization' for the deaths caused by the criminal actions of the kulaks.

The resolution on dekulakization

In January 1930, a spontaneous movement to expropriate the kulaks began to take place. On January 28, 1930, Kosior described it as ` ``a broad mass movement of poor peasants, middle peasants and batraks", called upon party organisations not to restrain it but to organise it to deliver ``a really crushing blow against the political influence, and particularly against the economic prospects, of the kulak stratum of the village." '

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Davies, op. cit. , p. 228.

A few days before, Odintsev, vice-chairman of the Kolkhoztsentr of the Russian Republic, said: `We must deal with the kulak like we dealt with the bourgeoisie in 1918'.

.

Ibid. , pp. 232--233.

Krylenko admitted a month later that `a spontaneous movement to dekulakization took place locally; it was properly organized only in a few places'.

.

Ibid. , p. 231.

On January 30, 1930, the Central Committee took important decisions to lead the spontaneous dekulakization by publishing a resolution entitled, `On Measures for the Elimination of Kulak Households in Districts of Comprehensive Collectivisation'.

.

Ibid. , p. 233.

The total number of kulak families, divided into three categories, was at most 3--5 per cent in the grain-growing regions and 2--3 per cent in the other regions.

(I)

`The counter-revolutionary activ'. Whether a kulak belonged this category was to be determined by the OGPU (political police), and the resolution set a limit of 63,000 for the whole of the USSR. Their means of production and personal property were to be confiscated; the heads of families were to be sentenced on the spot to imprisonment or confinement in a concentration camp; those among them who were `organisers of terrorist acts, counter-revolutionary demonstrations and insurrectionary organisations' could be sentenced to death. Members of their families were to be exiled as for Category II.

(II)

`The remaining elements of the kulak aktiv', especially the richest kulaks, large-scale kulaks and former semi-landowners. They `manifested less active opposition to the Soviet state but were arch-exploiters and naturally supported the counter-revolutionaries'. Lists of kulak households in this category were to be prepared by district soviets and approved by okrug executive committees on the basis of decisions by meetings of collective farmers and of groups of poor peasants and batraks, guided by instructions from village soviets, within an upper limit for the whole USSR of 150,000 households. The means of production and part of the property of the families on these lists were to be confiscated; they could retain the most essential domestic goods, some means of production, a minimum amount of food and up to 500 rubles per family. They were then to be exiled to remote areas of the Northern region, Siberia, the Urals and Kazakhstan, or to remote districts of their own region.

(III)

The majority of kulaks were probably `reliable in their attitude to Soviet power'. They numbered between 396,000 and 852,000 households.

Only part of the means of production were confiscated and they were installed in new land within the administrative district.

.

Ibid. , pp. 235--236.

The next day, on January 31, a Bolshevik editorial explained that the liquidation of the kulaks as a class was `the last decisive struggle with internal capitalism, which must be carried out to the end; nothing must stand in the way; the kulaks as a class will not leave the historical stage without the most savage opposition'.

.

Ibid. , p. 228.

The kulak offensive picks up strength

In Siberia, one thousand acts of terrorism by kulaks were recorded in the first six months of 1930. Between February 1 and March 10, 19 `insurrectionary counter-revolutionary organisations' and 465 `kulak anti-Soviet groupings', including more than 4,000 kulaks, were exposed. According to Soviet historians, `in the period from January to March 15, 1930, the kulaks organised in the whole country (excluding Ukraine) 1,678 armed demonstrations, accompanied by the murder of party and soviet officials and kolkhoz activists, and by the destruction of kolkhozy and collective farmers'. In the Sal'sk okrug in the North Caucausus, riots took place for one week in February 1930. Soviet and Party buildings were burnt down and collective stores were destroyed. The kulaks who were waiting to leave for exile put forward the slogan: `For Soviet power, without communists and kolkhozy'. Calls were made for the dissolution of Party cells and kolkhozy, as well as the liberation of arrested kulaks and the restitution of their confiscated property. Elsewhere, slogans of `Down with the kolkhoz' and `Long live Lenin and Soviet power' were shouted.

.

Ibid. , pp. 258--259.

By the end of 1930, in the three categories, 330,000 kulak families had been expropriated; most of this took place between February and April. We do not know the number of category I kulaks that were exiled, but it is likely that the 63,000 `criminal elements' were the first to be hit; the number of executions of this category is not known either. The exiled from category II numbered 77,975 at the end of 1930.

.

Ibid. , pp. 247--248.

The majority of the expropriations were in the third category; some were reinstalled in the same village, most in the same district.

Kautsky and the `kulak revolution'

When the kulaks threw themselves into their final struggle against socialism, they received unexpected international support. In 1930, Belgian, German and French social-democracy mobilized against Bolshevism, just as a catastrophic crisis was hitting the imperialist countries. In 1930, Kautsky wrote Bolshevism at a Deadlock, in which he affirmed that a democratic revolution was necessary in the Soviet Union, against the `Soviet aristocracy'.

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Karl Kautsky, Bolshevism at a Deadlock (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1931), pp. 97--98.

He hoped for a `victorious peasant revolt against the Bolshevik rйgime' in the Soviet Union.

.

Ibid. , p. 150.

He wrote of the `degeneration of Bolshevism into ... Fascism ... in the last twelve years'!

.

Ibid. , pp. 139--140.

Hence, starting from 1930, social democracy was already toying with the theme `'. This was the same social-democracy that upheld colonialism, that did its utmost to save capitalism after the 1929 crisis, that sustained and organized anti-worker and antipopular repression and, most significantly, that later collaborated with the Nazis!

Kautsky made a `claim for democracy for all'.

.

Ibid. , p. 124.

He called for a wide united front with the Russian right for a `democratic, Parliamentary Republic', claiming that `middle-class democracy in Russia has less interest in capitalism than Western Europe'.

.

Ibid. , p. 173.

Kautsky perfectly summarized the social-democratic line of the 1930s, struggling against the Soviet Union: a `democratic revolution' against the `Soviet aristocracy', against the `fascist disintegration of Bolshevism', for `democracy for all', for a `democratic, Parliamentary Republic'. Those who followed the debates in 1989 will recognize the program and the slogans used by the right-wing forces in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

`Dizzy with success'

By March 1, 1930, 57.2 per cent of all peasant families had joined kolkhozy. In the Central Black Earth Region, the figure reached 83.3 per cent, in the North Caucasus 79.4 per cent and in the Ural 75.6 per cent. The Moscow Region counted 74.2 per cent of collectivized families; Bauman, the Party Secretary, called for complete collectivization for March 10. The Lower Volga counted 70.1 per cent collectivized families, Central Volga 60.3 per cent and Ukraine 60.8 per cent.

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Davies, op. cit. , pp. 262--263, 442.

This impulsive development of the kolkhozian movement, as well as the violent reaction of the kulaks, who were followed by some of the middle peasants, once again provoked violent discussions and encouraged opposing opinions within the Party.

No later than January 31, Stalin and Molotov sent a telegram to the Party bureau in Central Asia, instructing, `advance cause of collectivization to extent that masses really involved'.

.

Ibid. , p. 239.

On February 4, on orders from the Central Committee, the Central Volga Committee sent instructions to local organizations, stating that `collectivization must be carried out on the basis of the development of broad mass work among poor peasants and middle peasants, with a decisive struggle against the slightest attempts to drive the middle and poor peasants into the kolkhozy by the use of administrative methods'.

.

Ibid. , p. 240.

On February 11, during the Central Committee conference of leading party officials from Central Asia and Transcaucasus, Molotov warned against `kolkhozy on paper'. Following that conference, the administrative methods used in Uzbekistan and in the Chechen region were criticized, as was the lack of preparation of the masses.

.

Ibid. , p. 265.

On February 13, the North Caucasus Committee replaced a number of heads of districts and village soviets, accusing them of `the criminal use of administrative methods, distortion of the class line, completely ignoring directives of the higher organs of power, impermissibly weak work of the soviets and complete absence of mass work, crudeness and a high-handed attitude in dealing with the population'. On February 18, the Committee criticized the complete and forced collectivization of cows, chickens, gardens and child daycare centers, as well as the disobedience to instructions about dekulakization. These criticisms were approved by Stalin.

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Ibid. , p. 264.

Stalin corrects

On March 2, 1930, Stalin published an important article entitled, `Dizzy with success'.

Stalin affirmed that in certain cases, an `anti-Leninist frame of mind' ignored the `voluntary character of the collective farm movement'. Peasants had to be persuaded, through their own experience, `of the power and importance of the new, collective organization of farming'.

.

Stalin, Dizzy with Success: Problems of the Collective Farm Movement. Leninism, p. 170.

In Turkestan, there had been threats of using the army if the peasants refused to enter the kolkhozy. Furthermore, the different conditions in different regions had not been taken into account.

`(N)ot infrequently efforts are made to substitute for preparatory work in organizing collective farms the bureaucratic decreeing of a collective farm movement from above, paper resolutions on the growth of collective farms, the formation of collective farms on paper --- of farms which do not yet exist, but regarding the ``existence'' of which there is a pile of boastful resolutions.'

.

Ibid. , p. 171.

In addition, some had tried to `socialize' everything, and had made `ludicrous attempts to lift oneself by one's own bootstraps'. This `stupid and harmful precipitancy' could only `in practice bring grist to the mill of our class enemies'.

.

Ibid. , pp. 171--172.

The main form of the kolkhozian movement should be the agricultural artel.

`In the agricultural artel the principal means of production, chiefly those used in grain growing, are socialized; labor, the use of the land, machines and other implements, draught animals, farm buildings. But in the artel, household land (small vegetable gardens, small orchards), dwellings, a certain part of the dairy cattle, small livestock, poultry, etc., are not socialized. The artel is the main link of the collective farm movement because it is the most expedient form for solving the grain problem. And the grain problem is the main link in the whole system of agriculture.'

.

Ibid. , p. 172.

On March 10, a Central Committee resolution took up these points, indicating that `in some districts the percentage of `dekulakized' has risen to 15 per cent'.

.

Davies, op. cit. , p. 273.

A Central Committee resolution examined the cases of `dekulakized' sent to Siberia. Of the 46,261 examined cases, six per cent had been improperly exiled. In three months, 70,000 families were rehabilitated in the five regions for which we have information.

.

Ibid. , pp. 280--281.

This figure should be compared with the 330,000 families that had been expropriated, in the three categories, by the end of 1930.

Rectify and consolidate

Hindus, a U.S. citizen of Russian origin, was in his native village when Stalin's article arrived. Here is his testimony:

`In the market places peasants gathered in groups and read it aloud and discussed it long and violently, and some of them were so overjoyed that they bought all the vodka they could pay for and got drunk.'

.

Ibid. , p. 271.

`Stalin became a temporary folk hero with the appearance of his ``Dizzyness with success''.'

.

Viola, op. cit. , p. 116.

At the time that Stalin wrote his article, 59 per cent of the peasants had joined kolkhozy. He obviously hoped that most would remain. `Hence the task of our party: to consolidate the successes achieved and to utilize them systematically for the purpose of advancing further'.

.

Stalin, Dizzy with Success, p. 169.

A decree dated April 3 included several special measures destined to consolidate the existing kolkhozy. The collective farmers could keep a certain number of animals and work a plot of land for themselves. Credit of 500 million rubles was set aside for the kolkhozy for that year alone. Some

debts and payments of kolkhozy and kolkhozians were dropped. Tax reductions were announced for the next two years.

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Davies, op. cit. , p. 281.

In the end of March, Molotov warned against retreat. He insisted that, as far as possible, the level of collectivization be retained while the errors were rectified: `Our approach ... is to manoeuvre, and by securing a certain level of organization not entirely voluntarily, consolidate the kolkhozy'. Molotov underlined that the `Bolshevik voluntary principle' differed from the `SR-kulak voluntary principle', which presupposed equality of conditions for the kolkhoz and for individual peasants.

.

Ibid. , p. 276.

But it was necessary to firmly correct leftist and bureaucratic errors. On April 4, Bauman, the Moscow Committee Secretary, one of the bastions of `leftism', resigned from the Politburo. His replacement, Kaganovich, then replaced 153 district and okrug leaders.

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Ibid. , p. 280.

Right opportunism rears its head

In a rural world dominated by small producers, Stalin's criticism of such blatant errors was clearly dangerous. Enthusiasm easily transformed itself into defeatism, and right opportunism, always present, reared its head when leftist errors were criticized. For many local leaders, there was a feeling of panic and disarray; their morale and their confidence was severely shaken. Some claimed that Stalin's article had destroyed several viable kolkhozy, that he made too many concessions to the kulaks and that he was taking a step backwards towards capitalism.

.

Ibid. , pp. 319--320.

Within the party as a whole, right-opportunist tendencies, beaten in 1929--1930, were still present. Some, afraid of the bitterness and the violence of the class struggle in the countryside, took advantage of the criticism of the excesses of collectivization to start criticizing, once again, the very concept of collectivization. Syrtsov had belonged to Bukharin's right-opportunist group in 1927--1928. In July 1930, he was promoted to the rank of substitute member of the Politburo. On February 20, 1930, he wrote of the `production apathy and production nihilism which have appeared with a considerable section of the peasantry on entering the kolkhozy'. He attacked the `centralization and bureaucratism' prevalent in the kolkhoz movement, called for `developing the initiative of the peasant on a new basis'.

.

Ibid. , p. 300.

This capitulationist position favored a change of course that would help the kulaks. In August 1930, Syrtsov warned against further collectivization and stated that the kolkhozy were not worth anything if they did not have a solid technical basis. At the same time, he stated his

skepticism about the perspectives of the Stalingrad tractor factory. In December 1930, he was expelled from the Central Committee.

.

Ibid. , p. 375.

The anti-Communists attack

All the anti-Party and counter-revolutionary elements tried to change the criticism of the excesses into a criticism of Stalin and the Party leadership. Alternately attacking the Leninist leadership with right-wing and `leftist' arguments, they tried to put forward anti-Communist positions.

During a meeting of the Timiryazev Agriculture Academy in Moscow, a man cried out, `Where was the CC during the excesses?' A Pravda editorial dated May 27 `condemned as `demagogy' all attempts to `discredit the Leninist leadership of the party' '.

.

Ibid. , pp. 322--323.

A man named Mamaev, during a discussion period, wrote: `the question involuntarily arises --- whose head got dizzy? ... one should speak about one's own disease, not teach the lower party masses about it'. Mamaev denounced `the mass application of repressive measures to the middle and poor peasants'. The countryside would only be ready for collectivization when mechanization was possible. He then criticized the `comprehensive bureaucratisation' in the party and condemned the `artificial inflaming of the class struggle'. Mamaev was correctly denounced as `an agent of the kulaks within the party'.

.

Ibid. , pp. 325--327.

Expelled from the Soviet Union, Trotsky systematically chose positions opposed to those taken by the Party. In February 1930, he denounced the accelerated collectivization and dekulakization as a `bureaucratic adventure'. Attempting to establish socialism in one country, based on the equipment of a backward peasant, is doomed to failure, he

cried out. `In March, he condemned Stalin for failing to admit that the `utopian reactionary character of ``100 per cent collectivisation'' ' lay in `the compulsory organisation of huge collective farms without the technological basis that could alone insure their superiority over small ones' '. He asserted that the kolkhozy `will fall apart while waiting for the technical base'.

.

Ibid. , pp. 327--328.

Trotsky's `leftist' criticisms were no longer distinguishable from those of the right opportunists.

Rakovsky, the main Trotskyist who remained in the Soviet Union, in internal exile, called for the overthrow of the `centrist leadership' headed by Stalin. The kolkhozians would explode and would constitute one front of the campaign against the socialist state. The kulak should not be discouraged from producing by limiting his means. Industrial products should be imported for the peasants and the Soviet industrialization program should be slowed down. Rakovsky recognized that his propositions resembled those of the right-wing, but `the distinction between ourselves and the Rights is the distinction between an army retreating in order and deserters fleeing from the battlefield'.

.

Ibid. , pp. 335--336.

Retreats and advances

Finally, the collectivization rate fell from 57.2 per cent on March 1, 1930 to 21.9 per cent on August 1, rising again to 25.9 per cent in January 1931.

In the Central Black Earth Region, the numbers fell from 83.3 per cent on March 1 to 15.4 per cent on July 1. The Moscow Region saw a drop from 74.2 per cent to 7.5 per cent on May 1. The quality of political and ideological work was clearly reflected in the number of peasants who withdrew from the kolkhozy. Lower Volga, starting from 70.1 per cent on March 1, dropped to 35.4 per cent on August 1 and rose again to 57.5 per cent on January 1, 1931. North Caucasus obtained the best results: 79.4 per cent on March 1, 50.2 per cent on July 1 and 60.0 per cent on January 1, 1931.

.

Ibid. , pp. 442--443, Table 17.

However, for the most part, the gains of the first large wave of collectivization were remarkable.

The collectivization rate greatly exceeded what was planned for the end of the first Five-Year Plan, in 1933. In May 1930, after the massive departures from kolkhozy, there were still six million families, as opposed to one million in June 1929. The typical kolkhoz contained 70 families instead of 18 in June 1929. The collectivization rate was higher, and the kolkhoz were for the most part artels, instead of TOZy (Associations for the Joint Cultivation of Land). The number of dairy cattle increased from 2.11 million in January 1930 to 4.77 million in May 1930. In the kolkhozy, there were 81,957 Party members on June 1, 1929; they numbered 313,200 in May 1930. With the great collectivization wave, the kolkhozy consisted mainly of landless and poor peasants. However, a large number of middle peasants had joined. In May, 32.7 per cent of the leading members were former middle peasants.

.

Ibid. , pp. 285--286, 288.

In May 1930, the fixed assets of the kolkhozes were valued at 510 million rubles, 175 million coming from the expropriation of the kulaks.

.

Ibid. , p. 251.

Remarkable results

Despite the major upheavals provoked by collectivization, the 1930 harvest was excellent. Good climactic conditions had contributed, and these might have led the Party into under-estimating the difficulties still to come.

Grain production amounted to, depending on the figures, between 77.2 and 83.5 million tonnes, compared to 71.7 in 1929.

.

Ibid. , p. 419.

Thanks to national planning, mechanized agriculture, particularly of cotton and beets, rose by 20 per cent. However, because of the slaughter of a large number of animals, animal production decreased from 5.68 million rubles to 4.40, a drop of 22 per cent.

In 1930, the entire collective sector (kolkhozy, sovkhozy and individual plots of kolkhozians) generated 28.4 per cent of the gross agricultural production, compared to 7.6 per cent the previous year.

.

Ibid. , pp. 337--339.

Grain delivery to the cities increased from 7.47 million tonnes in 1929--1930 to 9.09 million in 1930--1931, i.e. 21.7 per cent. But, given the tremendous development of industry, the number of people receiving bread rations increased from 26 to 33 million, i.e. 27 per cent.

.

Ibid. , pp. 360--361.

The consumption of agricultural products slightly decreased in the countryside, passing from 60.55 rubles per person in 1928, to 61.95 in 1929, and to 58.62 in 1930. But the consumption of industrial products passed from 28.29 rubles in 1928, to 32.30 the next year, and to 32.33 in 1930. The total consumption of the rural population evolved from an index of 100 in 1928, to 105.4 in 1929, and to 102.4 in 1930. The standard of living in the countryside therefore slightly increased, while it had decreased similarly in the city. The total consumption per person in the city evolved from 100 in 1928, to 97.6 in 1929, and to 97.5 the following year.

.

Ibid. , pp. 369--370.

These figures contradict the accusations made by Bukharin and the right wing, according to whom Stalin had organized `the feudal-bureaucratic exploitation' of the peasantry: the entire working population made enormous sacrifices to build socialism and to industrialize, and the sacrifices asked of the workers were often greater than the sacrifices asked of the peasants.

To feed the cities and succeed with the industrialization, the Soviet state followed a policy of extremely low prices for grain. But in 1930, peasant revenues considerably increased from sales on free markets and from seasonal work. As Davies wrote:

`The state secured essential supplies of agricultural products at prices far below the market level. But, taking collections and market sales together, the prices received by the agricultural producer increased far more rapidly than the prices of industrial goods. The terms of trade turned in favour of agriculture.'

.

Ibid. , p. 369.

`The centralized control of agricultural production seemed to have had some success in its primary aim of securing food supplies for the urban population and agricultural raw materials for industry.'

.

Ibid. , p. 371.

The rise of socialist agriculture

In October 1930, 78 per cent of peasant families were still individual producers, directed towards the market. The October 21 issue of Pravda wrote:

`(I)n the circumstances of the present autumn when there has been a good harvest ... in the circumstances of high speculative prices for grain, meat and vegetables at the markets, certain middle peasant households are rapidly transformed into well-to-do and kulak house-holds.'

.

Ibid. , p. 358.

The second wave of collectivization

Between September and December 1930, a propaganda campaign for the kolkhozy was launched. The leadership of kolkhozy distributed activity reports to individual peasants in their area. Special meetings were called for those who had left the kolkhozy in March. In September, 5,625 `recruitment commissions', composed of kolkhozians, went to districts with low collectivization rates to persuade the peasants. In the Central Black Earth region, 3.5 million individual peasants were invited to general assemblies of kolkhozy, where annual reports were presented.

Kulaks who were sabotaging the collectivization continued to be exiled, particularly in Ukraine, where, in the beginning of 1931, the total number of exiled of the three categories was 75,000.

.

Ibid. , pp. 378--379.

But the fall 1930 collectivization campaign was carefully led by the Party leadership: it was not led with the same rigor and forcefulness as the first wave, and there was no centralized campaign to exile the kulaks.

.

Ibid. , p. 380.

From September 1 to December 31, 1930, 1,120,000 families joined the kolkhozy, just over half in the grain producing regions. So 25.9 per cent of families opted for collectivized agriculture.

.

Ibid. , pp. 441--442.

By allocating the best land and different kinds of benefits to the kolkhozians, the economic pressure on the individual peasants increased during 1931 and 1932. At the same time, the kulaks made their last desperate attempts to destroy the kolkhozy.

The second great wave of collectivization took place in 1931 and brought the number of collectivized families from 23.6 per cent to 57.1 per cent. During the next three years, there was a slight annual increase of 4.6 per cent.

From 1934 to 1935, the collectivization level passed from 71.4 per cent to 83.2 per cent, essentially finishing the collectivization of agriculture.

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Bettelheim, op. cit. , p. 66.

Economic and social creativity

It is often claimed that the 1930 collectivization was imposed by force on the peasant masses. We wish to underscore the extraordinary social and economic creativity of this period, a revolutionary creativity shown by the masses, intellectual cadres and Party leaders. Most of the basic traits of the socialist agricultural system were `invented' during the 1929--1931 struggle. Davies recognized this:

`This was a learning process on a vast scale, and in an extremely brief period of time, in which party leaders and their advisers, local party officials, the peasants and economic regularities all contributed to the outcome .... Major features of the kolkhoz system established in 1929--30 endured until Stalin's death, and for some time after it.'

.

R. W. Davies, The Industrialisation of Soviet Russia II: The Soviet Collective Farm, 1929--1930 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980), pp. 13--14.

First, the kolkhoz was conceived as the organizational form that would allow the introduction of large-scale mechanized production in a backward agricultural country. The kolkhozy were designed for grain production and industrial agriculture, particularly cotton and beets. The production from the kolkhozy was supplied to the state at very low prices, which helped with the socialist industrialization: the sums spent by the state to feed the city populations and to supply industry with agricultural raw materials were kept very low. The kolkhozians received compensation, thanks to the considerable revenue generated by sale on the free market and by supplementary work.

Next, the Tractor Machine Station system was created to introduce machines in the countryside. Bettelheim wrote:

`Given the juridical basis for collectivization, agriculture benefited from massive investments that totally transformed the technical conditions of farms.

`This complete upheaval of agricultural technique was only possible thanks to the replacement of small- and medium-scale agriculture by large-scale agriculture.'

.

Bettelheim, op. cit. , p. 73.

But how were modern techniques introduced in the kolkhozy? The question was not simple.

During the summer of 1927, Markevich created at Shevchenko an original system, the Tractor Machine Stations (TMS), that centralized control of machines and made them available to the kolkhozy.

In the beginning of 1929, there were two Tractor Machine Stations, both state property, with 100 tractors. There were also 50 `tractor columns', belonging to grain cooperatives, each with 20 tractors. The 147 large kolkhozy had 800 tractors; the majority of the 20,000 tractors were dispersed on the small kolkhozy.

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Davies, op. cit. , p. 15.

In July 1929, most of the tractors were therefore in the hands of agricultural cooperatives or kolkhozy. During a conference, some proposed that tractors and machines be sold to the kolkhozy: if the peasants did not directly own the tractors, then they would not mobilize to find the funds. But the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection criticized in August 1929 the experiences with tractors belonging to cooperatives. This system made it

impossible to do serious planning, the population was not adequately prepared, and, since there were not sufficient repair shops, breakdowns often occurred due to lack of maintenance.

.

Ibid. , pp. 20--21.

In February 1930, the Party abandoned the giant kolkhozy experience, popular until then among the activists, to take up the village--kolkhoz as the basis for collectivization. In September 1930, the Party decided to centralize the tractors used in kolkhozy by creating Tractor Machine Stations, which would be state property.

.

Ibid. , pp. 25, 27.

Markevich proposed to use 200 tractors for every 40 to 50,000 hectares of arable land, along with a repair shop. He underlined that it was necessary for agricultural technology to be managed by a `unified organizational centre' for the entire Soviet Union. Important districts had to be chosen, technology used around the world had to be studied in order to find the best kind of machines, machines had to be standardized and the management of machines had to be centralized. The TMS should be the property of this center.

.

Ibid. , pp. 16--18.

As early as spring 1930, this system showed its superiority. The TMS only served 8 per cent of the kolkhozy, but 62 per cent of the peasants in those kolkhozy remained during the `retreat'. The centralized harvest was

greatly simplified by this system, since the kolkhozy simply gave one quarter of their harvest to the TMS as payment.

.

Ibid. , p. 28--29.

TMS workers were considered industrial workers. Representing the working class in the countryside, they had great influence among the kolkhozians in the areas of political and technical education and of organization. In 1930, 25,000 tractor drivers received their education. In the spring of 1931, courses were organized for 200,000 young peasants who would enter the TMS, including 150,000 tractor drivers.

.

Ibid. , pp. 29, 32.

Third, an ingenious system for payment of the kolkhozians was devised, called `work-days'.

A decree dated February 28, 1933 placed the different agricultural tasks in seven different renumeration categories, whose value, expressed in `work-days', varied from 0.5 to 1.5. In other words, the most difficult or arduous work was paid three times as dearly as the easiest or lightest work. The kolkhoz' revenue was distributed, at the end of the year, to the kolkhozians according to the number of work-days they had effected. The average revenue per family, in the cereal regions, was 600.2 kilograms of grain and 108 rubles in 1932. In 1937, it was 1,741.7 kilograms of grain and 376 rubles.

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Bettelheim, op. cit. , pp. 102, 112.

Finally, a balance was found between collective labor and the individual activity of the kolkhozian peasants. The legal status of the kolkhozy, made official on February 7, 1935, fixed the basic principles, defined through five years of struggle and experience.

.

Ibid. , pp. 61--65.

In 1937, the individual parcels of land cultivated by kolkhozians represented 3.9 per cent of the cultivated surface, but the kolkhozians derived 20 per cent of their revenue from them. Each family could own three horned animals, one of which could be a cow, one sow with piglets, ten sheep and an unlimited number of foul and rabbits.

.

Ibid. , pp. 67--68.

Investments in the countryside

At the end of 1930, the Tractor Machine Stations controlled 31,114 tractors. According to the Plan, they should have controlled 60,000 in 1931. This figure was not attained, but by 1932, the TMS did have 82,700 tractors. The rest of the 148,500 units were on the sovkhozy.

The total number of tractors increased steadily during the thirties: from 210,900 in 1933, to 276,400 in 1934, jumping to 360,300 in 1935, and to 422,700 in 1936. In 1940, the USSR had 522,000 tractors.

.

Ibid. , pp. 76--78.

Another statistic indicates the number of tractors in units of 15 horsepower. It shows the extraordinary efforts made during the years 1930--1932.

In the beginning of 1929, the rural part of the Soviet Union held 18,000 tractors --- counted as units of 15 horsepower ---, 14 000 trucks and 2 (two!) combines. At the beginning of 1933, there were 148,000 tractors, 14,000 trucks and as many combines. At the beginning of the war, in 1941, the kolkhozy and the sovkhozy used, using the same units, 684,000 tractors, 228,000 trucks and 182,000 combines.

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Progrиs, op. cit. , p. 142.

Despite all the bourgeoisie's hue and cry about the repression suffered by the rich peasants during the collectivization, in less than one decade, the Russian peasants left the Middle Ages and joined the twentieth century. Their cultural and technical development was phenomenal.

This progress properly reflected the sustained rise in investment in agriculture. It increased from 379 million rubles in 1928, to 2,590 million in 1930, to 3,645 million in 1931, stayed at the same level for two years, reaching its highest levels at 4,661 million in 1934 and 4,983 million in 1935.

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Bettelheim, op. cit. , p. 74.

These figures deny the theory according to which Soviet agriculture was `exploited' by the city: never could a capitalist economy have made such large investments in the countryside. Agriculture's share in the total investment increased from 6.5 per cent in 1923--1924 to 20 per cent during the crucial years 1931 and 1932; in 1935, its share was 18 per cent.

.

Ibid.

The breakthrough of socialist agriculture

Starting in 1933, agricultural production rose most years. The year before collectivization, the cereal harvest attained 71.7 million tonnes. In 1930, there was an exceptional harvest of 83.5 million tonnes. In 1931 and 1932, the Soviet Union was in the depth of the crisis, due to socio-economic upheavals, to desperate kulak resistance, to the little support that could be given to peasants in these crucial years of industrial investment, to the slow introduction of machines and to drought. Grain production fell to 69.5 and to 69.9 million tonnes. Then, there were three successive harvests from 1933 to 1935 of 89.8, 89.4 and 90.1 million tonnes. Particularly bad climactic conditions produced the worst harvest, in 1936, of 69.3 million tonnes, but its effects were mitigated by reserves and good planning of distribution. The next year, there was a record harvest of 120.9 million tonnes, followed by high levels of 95.0, 105.0 and 118.8 million between 1938 and 1940.

.

Ibid. , p. 82.

Socialist agriculture dramatically rose as soon as the considerable industrial and agricultural investments had an effect. The total value of agricultural production stagnated between 1928 and 1934, oscillating between 13.1 billion rubles and 14.7 billion rubles. Then it rose to 16.2 billion in 1935, to 20.1 billion in 1937, and 23.2 billion in 1940.

.

Ibid. , p. 89.

A peasant population rising from 120.7 to 132 million people between 1926 and 1940 was able to feed an urban population that increased from 26.3 to 61 million in the same period.

.

Ibid. , p. 93.

The kolkhozian consumption in 1938 had increased, in terms of percentage of peasant consumption under the former rйgime, to: bread and flour, 125; potatoes, 180; fruit and vegetables, 147; milk and dairy products, 148; meat and sausage, 179.

.

Ibid. , p. 113, n. 1.

`Colossal support'

The collectivization of the countryside halted the spontaneous tendency of small-scale merchant production to polarize society into rich and poor, into exploiters and exploited. The kulaks, the rural bourgeois, were repressed and eliminated as a social class. The development of a rural bourgeoisie in a country where 80 per cent of the population still lived in the countryside would have asphyxiated and killed Soviet socialism. The collectivization prevented that from happening.

Collectivization and a planned economy allowed the Soviet Union to survive the total, barbaric war waged against it by the German Nazis. During the first years of the war, wheat consumption was reduced by one half but, thanks to planning, the available quantities were equitably distributed. The regions occupied and ravaged by the Nazis represented 47 per cent of the area of cultivated land. The fascists destroyed 98,000 collective enterprises. But between 1942 and 1944, 12 million hectares of newly cultivated land were sown in the eastern part of the country.

.

Ibid. , p. 83, 90.

Thanks to the superiority of the socialist system, agricultural production was able to reach the 1940 level by 1948.

.

Ibid. , p. 85.

In a few years, a completely new system of organization of work, a complete upheaval of technique and a profound cultural revolution won the hearts of the peasants. Bettelheim noted:

`(T)he overwhelming majority of peasants were very attached to the new system of exploitation. The proof came during the war, since in the regions occupied by the German troops, despite the efforts made by the Nazi authorities, the kolkhozian form of exploitation was maintained.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 113--114.

This opinion by someone who favored the Communist system can be completed with the testimony of Alexander Zinoviev, an opponent of Stalin. As a child, Zinoviev was a witness to the collectivization.

`When I returned to the village, even much later, I often asked my mother and other kolkhozians if they would have accepted an individual farm if they were offered the possibility. They all refused categorically.'

.

Zinoviev, op. cit. , p. 53.

`(The village school) had only seven grades, but acted as the bridge to the region's technical schools, which trained the veterinarians, agronomists, mechanics, tractor drivers, accountants and other specialists needed for the new `agriculture'. In Chukhloma, there was a secondary school with ten grades that offered better perspectives to its finishing students. All these institutions and professions were the result of an unprecedented cultural revolution. The collectivization directly contributed to this upheaval. Besides these more or less trained specialists, the villages hosted technicians from the cities; these technicians had a secondary or higher education. The structure of the rural population became closer to that of urban society .... I was a witness to this evolution during my childhood .... This extremely rapid change of rural society gave the new system huge support from the masses of the population. All this despite the horrors of the collectivization and the industrialization.'

.

Ibid. , p. 56.

The extraordinary achievements of the Soviet rйgime ensured it `a colossal support' from the workers and `a disgust of the horrors' from the exploiting classes: Zinoviev constantly wavers between these two positions. Student after the war, Zinoviev recalls a discussion that he had with another anti-Communist student:

`If there had been no collectivization and no industrialization, could we have won the war against the Germans?

`No.

`Without the Stalinist hardships, could we have have kept the country in an orderly state?

`No.

`If we had not built up industry and armaments, could we have preserved the security and independence of our State?

`No.

`So, what do you propose?

`Nothing.'

.

Ibid. , p. 236.

The collectivization `genocide'

During the eighties, the Right took up several themes that the Nazis had developed during the pyschological war against the Soviet Union. Since 1945, efforts to rehabilitate Nazism have generally started with affirmations such as `Stalinism was at least as barbaric as Nazism'. Ernst Nolte, followed by Jьrgen Habermas, claimed in 1986 that the extermination of the kulaks by Stalin could be compared to the extermination of the Jews by Hitler!

`Auschwitz is not primarily a result of traditional anti-semitism. It was in its core not merely a `genocide' but was above all a reaction born out of the anxiety of the annihilating occurrences of the Russian Revolution. This copy was far more irrational than the original.'

.

Stefan Merl, „Ausrottung`` der Bourgeoisie und der Kulaken in Sowjetruss land? Geschichte und Gesellschaft 13 (1987), p. 368.

Hence the Nazis were tormented by the `anxiety' that the Stalinist crimes created; and the extermination of the Jews was a `reaction' to this `anxiety'. Hitler, in his time, made similar declarations: the invasion of the Soviet Union was a `self-defence' measure against Judeo-Bolshevism. And some still wonder why fascism is rising in Germany.

The Soviet term, `liquidation of the kulaks as a class', indicates perfectly clearly that it is the capitalist exploitation organized by the kulaks that is to be eliminated and not the physical liquidation of the kulaks as persons. Playing with the word `liquidation', academic hacks such as Nolte and Conquest claim that the exiled kulaks were `exterminated'.

Stefan Merl, a German researcher, describes the precarious conditions in which the first kulaks were expropriated and sent to Siberia, during the first wave of collectivization in January--March 1930.

`With the beginning of spring, the situation in the receiving camps aggravated. Epidemics were widespread, leaving many victims, particularly among the children. For this reason, all children were removed from the camps in April 1930 and sent back to their native villages. At that time, some 400,000 persons had already been deported to the North; until the summer of 1930, probably 20,000 to 40,000 persons died'.

.

Ibid. , p. 376.

Here, Merl informs us that a great number of the `victims of the Stalinist terror during the collectivization' died because of epidemics and that the Party promptly reacted to protect children.

Merl estimated that the fall 1930 transports `took place in less barbaric conditions'. The majority were sent to Siberia and Kazakhstan, `regions where there existed a considerable deficit of labor ....'

.

Merl, op. cit. , p. 377.

During the years 1930--1935, the Soviet Union was short of labor, especially in newly developed regions. The rйgime tried to use all available forces. It is difficult to see why it would have `killed' men who had been working the land in Siberia or Kazakhstan for the previous year or two. Nevertheless, Merl estimates that the 100,000 heads of family of the first category, sent to the Gulag system, are all dead. But the Party only placed 63,000 kulaks in the first category and only those guilty of terrorist and counter-revolutionary acts should be executed. Merl continues:

`Another 100,000 persons probably lost their lives, at the beginning of 1930, due to expulsion from their houses, deportation towards the North and executions'. Then he adjusts the number by another 100,000

persons, `dead in the deportation regions at the end of the thirties'. Once again, no precision or indication.

.

Ibid.

Merl's number of 300,000 dead is based on very approximate estimates and many of these deaths were the result of natural causes, old age and disease, and general conditions in the country.

Nevertheless, he is forced to defend these `weak' estimates when confronted by a crypto-fascist such as Conquest, who `calculated' that 6,500,000 kulaks were `massacred' during the collectivization, 3,500,000 in the Siberian camps!

.

Robert Conquest, The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivisation and the Terror-Famine (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 306. Stefan Merl, Wie viele Opfer forderte die ,,Liquidierung der Kulaken als Klasse``? Geschichte und Gesellschaft 14 (1988), p. 534.

Conquest is a major `authority' in the right wing. But Merl noted that Conquest's writings show a `frightening lack of criticism of sources'. Conquest `uses writings from obscure ŭmigrŭs taking up information transmitted by second or third hand .... Often, what he presents as `facts' are only verified by a single questionable source.'

.

Ibid. , p. 535.

`The number of victims put forward by Conquest is more than double the number of deportees, according to his ``proof''.'

.

Ibid. , p. 537.

For a long time, writings by authors who are not Communists, such as Merl, allowed one to refute Conquest's gross slanders.

But in 1990, Zemskov and Dugin, two Soviet historians, published detailed statistics of the Fulag. Hence the exact figures are now available and they refute most of Conquest's lies.

During the most violent period of the collectivization, in 1930--1931, the peasants expropriated 381,026 kulaks and sent their families to unplowed land to the East. These included 1,803,392 persons. As of 1 January 1932, there were 1,317,022 people in the new establishments. The difference is of 486,000. The disorganization helping, many of the deported were able to escape during the trip, which often took three months or more. (To give an idea, of the 1,317,022 settled, 207,010 were able to flee during the year 1932.)

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Nicolas Werth, `Goulag: les vrais chiffres'. L'Histoire 169 (September 1993), pp. 38--51. More details can be found in J. Arch Getty, Gбbor T. Rittersporn and Viktor N. Zemskov. Victims of the Soviet Penal System in the Pre-war Years: A First Approach on the Basis of Archival Evidence. The America Historical Review, October 1993, pp. 1017--1049.

Others, whose case was reviewed, were allowed to return home. An undetermined number, that we have estimated at 100,000, died during the travels, mainly because of epidemics. The considerable number of deaths during displacements must be seen in the context of that epoch: a weak administration, precarious living conditions for the entire population, sometimes chaotic class struggles among the peasant population overtaken by leftism. Of course, for each death during displacement, the Right affirms that the guilty party is the Party, is Stalin. But in fact the contrary is true.

The Party's position is clearly stated in one of the numerous reports about this problem, this one dated 20 December 1931 by the person responsible for a work camp at Novossibirsk.

`The high mortality observed for convoys nos 18 to 23 coming from the North Caucasus --- 2,421 persons out of 10,086 upon departure --- can be explained by the following reasons:

`1. A negligent, criminal approach to the selection of deported contingents, among whom were many children, aged over 65 years of age and sick people;

`2. The non-respect of directives about the right for deportees to bring with them provisions for two months of transfer.

`3. The lack of clean water, which forced the deported to drink unclean water. Many are dead of dysentery and of other epidemics.'

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Werth, op. cit. , p. 44.

All these deaths are classed under the heading `Stalinist crimes'. But this report shows that two of the causes of death were linked to the non-respect of Party directives and the third had to do with the deplorable sanitary conditions and habits in the entire country.

Conquest `calculated' that 3,500,000 kulaks were `exterminated' in the camps.

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Conquest, op. cit. , p. 306.

But the total number of dekulakized in the colonies never exceeded 1,317,022! And between 1932 and 1935, the number of departures exceeded by 299,389 the number of arrivals. From 1932 to the end of 1940, the exact number of deaths, essentially due to natural causes, was 389,521. And this number does not just include dekulakized, since after 1935 other categories were in the colonies as well.

What can one say about Conquest's affirmation of 6,500,000 `massacred' kulaks during the different phases of the collectivization? Only part of the 63,000 first category counter-revolutionaries were executed. The number of dead during deportations, largely due to famine and epidemics, was approximately 100,000. Between 1932 and 1940, we can estimate that 200,000 kulaks died in the colonies of natural causes. The executions and these deaths took place during the greatest class struggle that the Russian countryside ever saw, a struggle that radically transformed a backward and primitive countryside. In this giant upheaval, 120 million peasants were pulled out of the Middle Ages, of illiteracy and obscurantism. It was the reactionary forces, who wanted to maintain exploitation and degrading and inhuman work and living conditions, who received the blows. Repressing the bourgeoisie and the reactionaries was absolutely necessary for collectivization to take place: only collective labor made socialist mechanization possible, thereby allowing the peasant masses to lead a free, proud and educated life.

Through their hatred of socialism, Western intellectuals spread Conquest's absurd lies about 6,500,000 `exterminated' kulaks. They took up the defence of bourgeois democracy, of imperialist democracy. In Mozambique, Renamo, organized by the CIA and the security services of South Africa, has massacred and starved 900,000 villagers since 1980. The goal: prevent Mozambique from becoming an independent country with a socialist direction. In Mozambique, Western intellectuals did not need to invent cadavers, all they needed to do was write about imperialist barbarity. But these 900,000 deaths are a non-fact: no-one talks about them.

Unita, also openly financed and supported by the CIA and South Africa, killed more than one million Angolans during the civil war against

the MPLA nationalist government. After having lost the 1992 elections, Savimbi, the CIA man, took up his destructive war yet again.

`The Angolan tragedy threatens the life of 3 million people .... Savimbi refused to accept the government's electoral victory of 129 seats against 91 and has plunged Angola yet again in a ferocious conflict that has taken another 100,000 lives (in the last twelve months).'

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Time, 18 October 1993, European edition, p. 50. Translated from the French translation.

One hundred thousand Africans, of course, are nothing. How many Western intellectuals who still like to scream about the collectivization have simply not noticed that two million Mozambican and Angolan peasants were massacred by the West to prevent these countries from becoming truly independent and escaping from the clutches of international capital?

Collectivization and the `Ukrainian Holocaust'

Lies about the collectivization have always been, for the bourgeoisie, powerful weapons in the psychological war against the Soviet Union.

We analyze the development of one of the most `popular' lies, the holocaust supposedly perpetrated by Stalin against the Ukrainian people. This brilliantly elaborated lie was created by Hitler. In his 1926 Mein Kampf, he had already indicated that Ukraine belonged to German `lebensraum'. The campaign waged by the Nazis in 1934--1935 about the Bolshevik `genocide' in Ukraine was to prepare people's minds for the planned `liberation' of Ukraine. We will see why this lie outlived its Nazi creators to become a U.S. weapon. Here are how fabrications of `millions of victims of Stalinism' are born.

On February 18, 1935, the Hearst press in the U.S. began the publication of a series of articles by Thomas Walker. (Hearst was a huge press magnate and a Nazi sympathizer.) Great traveler and journalist, Walker had supposedly crisscrossed the Soviet Union for several years. The February 25 headline of the Chicago American read, `Six Million Perish in Soviet Famine: Peasants' Crops Seized, They and Their Animals Starve.' In the middle of the page, another headline read, `Reporter Risks Life to Get Photographs Showing Starvation.' At the bottom of the page, `Famine --- Crime Against Humanity'.

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Douglas Tottle, Fraud, Famine and Fascism: The Ukrainian Genocide Myth from Hitler to Harvard (Toronto: Progress Books, 1987), pp. 5--6.

At the time, Louis Fischer was working in Moscow for the U.S. newspaper The Nation. This scoop by a completely unknown colleague intrigued him greatly. He did some research and shared his findings with the newspaper's readers:

`Mr. Walker, we are informed, ``entered Russia last spring,'' that is the spring of 1934. He saw famine. He photographed its victims. He got heartrending, first-hand accounts of hunger's ravages. Now hunger in Russia is ``hot'' news. Why did Mr. Hearst keep these sensational articles for ten months before printing them ....

`I consulted Soviet authorities who had official information from Moscow. Thomas Walker was in the Soviet Union once. He received a transit visa from the Soviet Consul in London on September 29, 1934. He entered the USSR from Poland by train at Negoreloye on October 12, 1934. (Not the spring of 1934 as he says.) He was in Moscow on the thirteenth. He remained in Moscow from Saturday, the thirteenth, to Thursday, the eighteenth, and then boarded a trans-Siberian train which brought him to the Soviet-Manchurian border on October 25, 1934 .... It would have been physically impossible for Mr. Walker, in the five days between October 13 and October 18, to cover one-third of the points he ``describes'' from personal experience. My hypothesis is that he stayed long enough in Moscow to gather from embittered foreigners the Ukrainian ``local color'' he needed to give his articles the fake verisimilitude they possess.'

Fischer had a friend, Lindsay Parrott, also American, who visited the Ukraine in the beginning of 1934. He noticed no traces of the famine mentioned in Hearst's press. On the contrary, the 1933 harvest was successful. Fischer concluded:

`The Hearst organizations and the Nazis are beginning to work more and more closely together. But I have not noticed that the Hearst press printed Mr. Parrott's stories about a prosperous Soviet Ukraine. Mr. Parrott is Mr. Hearst's correspondent in Moscow.'

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The Nation 140 (36), 13 March 1935, quoted in Tottle, op. cit. , p. 8.

Underneath a photograph of a little girl and a `frog-like' child, Walter wrote:

`FRIGHTFUL --- Below Kharhov (sic), in a typical peasant's hut, dirt floor, thatched roof and one piece of furniture, a bench, was a very thin girl and her 2 1/2 year old brother (shown above). This younger child crawled about the floor like a frog and its poor little body was so deformed from lack of nourishment that it did not resemble a human being.'

.

Tottle, op. cit. , p. 9.

Douglas Tottle, a Canadian union worker and journalist, found the picture of this same `frog-like' child, dated spring 1934, in a 1922 publication about the famine of that year.

Another photo by Walker was identified as that of a soldier in the Austrian cavalry, beside a dead horse, taken during the First World War.

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James Casey, Daily Worker, 21 February 1935, quoted in Tottle, op. cit. , p. 9.

Poor Walker: his reporting was fake, his photographs were fake, even his name was assumed. His real name was Robert Green. He had escaped from the Colorado state prison after having done two years out of eight. Then he went to do his false reporting in the Soviet Union. Upon his return to the States, he was arrested, where he admitted in front of the court that he had never set foot in the Ukraine.

The multi-millionnaire William Randolph Heast met Hitler at the end of the summer of 1934 to finalize an agreement under which Germany would buy its international news from the Hearst-owned company

International News Service. At the time, the Nazi press had already started up a propaganda campaign about the `Ukrainian famine'. Hearst took it up quickly, thanks to his great explorer, Walker.

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Tottle, op. cit. , pp. 13, 15.

Other similar reports on the famine would show up in Hearst's press. For example, Fred Beal started to write. A U.S. worker sentenced to twenty years of prison after a strike, he fled to the Soviet Union in 1930 and worked for two years in the Kharkov Tractor Works. In 1933, he wrote a little book called Foreign workers in a Soviet Tractor Plant, favorably describing the efforts of the Soviet people. At the end of 1933, he returned to the U.S., where unemployment and prison awaited him. In 1934, he started to write about the Ukrainian famine, and soon his prison sentence was dramatically reduced. When his `eyewitness account' was published by Hearst in June 1935, J. Wolynec, another U.S. worker who had worked for five years in the same Kharkov factory, exposed the lies that showed up throughout the text. Although Beal pretended to have heard several conversations, Wolynec noted that Beal spoke neither Russian nor Ukrainian. In 1948, Beal offered his services to the far-right as an eyewitness against Communists, in front of the McCarthy Committee.

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Ibid. , pp. 19--21.

A book from Hitler

In 1935, Dr. Ewald Ammende published a book, Muss Russland hungern? (1936 English title: Human Life in Russia) Its sources: the German Nazi press, the Italian fascist press, the Ukrainian йmigrй press and `travelers' and `experts', cited with no details. He published photos that he claimed `are among the most important sources for the actual facts of the Russian position'.

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Ibid. , pp. 23--24.

There are also photos belonging to Dr. Ditloff, who was until August 1933 Director of the German Government Agricultural Concession --- Drusag in the North Caucasus. Ditloff claimed to have taken the photos in the summer of 1933 `and they demonstrate the conditions ... (in) the Hunger Zone'.

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Ibid. , p. 25.

Given that he was by then a civil servant of the Nazi government, how could Ditloff have freely moved from the Caucasus to the Ukraine to hunt pictures? Among Ditloff's photos, seven, including that of the `frog-like' child, had also been published by Walker. Another photo presented two skeletal-like boys, symbols of the 1933 Ukrainian famine. The same picture was shown in Peter Ustinov's televised series Russia: it comes from a documentary film about the 1922 Russian famine! Another of Ammende's photos was published by the Nazi paper Volkischer Beobachter, dated August 18, 1933. This photo was also identified among books dating back to 1922.

Ammende had worked in the Volga region in 1913. During the 1917--1918 Civil War, he had held positions in the pro-German counter-revolutionary governments of Estonia and Latvia. Then he worked in

liaison with the Skoropadsky government set up by the German army in the Ukraine in March 1918. He claimed to have participated in the humanitarian aid campaigns during the 1921--1922 Russian famine, hence his familiarity with the photos of the period. For years, Ammende served as General Secretary of the so-called European Nationalities Congress, close to the Nazi Party, which included regrouped йmigrйs from the Soviet Union. At the end of 1933, Ammende was appointed Honorary Secretary of the Interconfessional and International Relief Committee for the Russian Famine Areas, which was led by the pro-fascist Cardinal Innitzer of Vienna. Ammende was therefore closely tied to the Nazi anti-Soviet campaign.

When Reagan started up his anti-Communist crusade at the beginning of the eighties, Professor James E. Mace of Harvard University thought it opportune to re-edit and re-publish Ammende's book under the title Human Life in Russia. That was in 1984. So all the Nazi lies and the fake photographic evidence, including Walker's pseudo-reporting on the Ukraine, were granted the `academic respectability' associated with the Harvard name.

The preceding year, far-right Ukrainian йmigrйs in the U.S. published The Great Famine in Ukraine: The Unknown Holocaust. Douglas Tottle was able to check that the photos in this book dated to 1921--1922. Hence the photo on the cover comes from Dr. F. Nansen's International Committee for Russian Relief publication Information 22, Geneva, April 30, 1922, p. 6!

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Ibid. , pp. 4--31.

Neo-Nazi revisionism around the world `revises' history to justify, above all, the barbaric crimes of fascism against Communists and the Soviet Union. First, it denies the crimes that they themselves committed against the Jews. Neo-Nazis deny the existence of extermination camps where millions of Jews were slaughtered. They then invent `holocausts', supposedly perpetrated by Communists and by Comrade Stalin. With this

lie, they justify the bestial crimes that the Nazis committed in the Soviet Union. For this, revisionism at the service of the anti-Communist struggle, they receive the full support of Reagan, Bush, Thatcher and company.

A book from McCarthy

Thousands of Ukrainian Nazi collaborators succeeded in entering the U.S. after the Second World War. During the McCarthy period, they testified as victims of `communist barbary'. They reinvented the famine-genocide myth in a two-volume book, Black Deeds of the Kremlin, published in 1953 and 1955 by the Ukrainian Association of Victims of Russian Communist Terror and the Democratic Organization of Ukrainians Formerly Persecuted by the Soviet Regime in the USA. This book, dear to Robert Conquest, who cites it regularly, contains a glorification of Petliura, responsible for the massacre of tens of thousands of Jews in 1918--1920, as well as a homage to Shukhevych, the fascist commander of the Nazi-organized Nachtigall Battalion and later the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA).

Black Deeds also contains a series of photos of the 1932--1933 famine-genocide. They are all fakes. Deliberate fakes. One picture is captioned `A little cannibal'. It appeared in issue 22 of the Information bulletin of the International Committee for Russian Relief in 1922, with the original caption `Cannibal from Zaporozhe: has eaten his sister'. On page 155, Black Deeds included a picture of four soldiers and an officer who had just executed some men. The caption reads `The Execution of Kurkuls [Kulaks]'. Small detail: the soldiers are wearing Tsarist uniforms! Hence, Tsarist executions are given as proof of the `crimes of Stalin'.

.

Ibid. , pp. 38--44.

One of the authors of volume I of Black Deeds was Alexander Hay-Holowko, who was Minister of Propaganda for Bandera's `government' of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) in Western Ukraine. During the brief existence of this fascist clique, Nationalist mobs and Ukrainian auxiliary troops killed some thousands of Jews, Poles and Bolsheviks in the Lvov region. Hay-Holowko, who now resides in Vancouver, also served in the SS.

Among the persons cited as `sponsors' of the book is Anatole Bilotserkiwsky, alias Anton Shpak, a former officer in the Nazi police at Bila Tserkva. According to witnesses and documents Shpak/Bilotserkiwsky and others personally took part in the execution of two thousand predominantly Jewish civilians.

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Ibid. , p. 41.

Between 1 and 15 Million Dead

In January 1964, Dana Dalrymple published an article in Soviet Studies, entitled `The Soviet Famine of 1932--1934'. He claimed that there were 5,500,000 dead, the average of 20 various estimates.

One question immediately comes to mind: what are these sources of the `estimates' used by the professor?

One of the sources is Thomas Walker, who made the famous `trip' to Ukraine, where he `presumably could speak Russian', according to Dalrymple.

Another source was Nicolas Prychodko, a Nazi collaborator who worked for the Nazi-controlled `Minister of Culture and Education' in Kiev. Prychodko was evacuated West by the Nazis during their retreat from Ukraine. He provided the figure of seven million dead.

These are followed by Otto Schiller, Nazi civil servant charged with the reorganization of agriculture in Nazi-occupied Ukraine. His text, published in Berlin in 1943 and claiming 7,500,000 dead, was cited by Dalrymple.

The next source was Ewald Ammende, the Nazi who had not been in Russia since 1922. In two letters published in July and August 1934 in the New York Times, Ammende spoke of 7,500,000 dead and pretended that in July of that year, people were dying in the streets of Kiev. A few days later, the NYT correspondent, Harold Denny, gave the lie to Ammende: `Your correspondent was in Kiev for several days last July about the time people were supposed to be dying there, and neither in the city, nor in the surrounding countryside was there hunger.' Several weeks later, Denny reported: `Nowhere was famine found. Nowhere even the fear of it. There is food, including bread, in the local open markets. The peasants were smiling too, and generous with their foodstuffs'.

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New York Times, quoted in Tottle, op. cit. , p. 50.

Next, Frederick Birchall spoke of more than four million dead in a 1933 article. At that moment, he was, in Berlin, one of the first U.S. journalists to publicly support the Hitler rйgime.

Sources six through eight are William H. Chamberlin, twice, and Eugene Lyons, both anti-Communist journalists. After the war both were prominent members of the American Committee for the Liberation from Bolshevism (AMCOMLIB), better known as Radio Liberty. AMCOMLIB funds were raised by `Crusade for Freedom', which received 90 per cent of its funds from the CIA. Chamberlin gave a first estimate of four million and a second one of 7,500,000 dead, the latter number based on an `estimate of foreign residents in Ukraine'. Lyons' five million dead were also the result of noise and rumors, based on `estimates made by foreigners and Russians in Moscow'.

The highest figure (ten million) was provided, with no details, by Richard Stallet of Hearst's pro-Nazi press. In 1932, the Ukrainian population was 25 million inhabitants.

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Tottle, op. cit. , p. 51.

Among the twenty sources in Dalrymple's `academic' work, three come from anti-Soviet articles in Hearst's pro-Nazi press and five come from far-right publications from the McCarthy era (1949--1953). Dalrymple used two German fascist authors, a former Ukrainian collaborator, a right-wing Russian йmigrй, two CIA collaborators, and a journalist who liked Hitler. A great number of the figures come from unidentified `foreign residents in the Soviet Union'.

The two lowest estimates, dated 1933, came from U.S. journalists in Moscow, known for their professionalism, Ralph Barnes of the New

York Herald Tribune and Walter Duranty of the New York Times. The first spoke of one million and the second of two million dead of famine.

Two professors to the rescue of Ukrainian Nazis

To help the new anti-Communist crusade and to justify their insane military buildup, U.S. right-wingers promoted in 1983 a great commemoration campaign of the `50th anniversary of famine-genocide in Ukraine'. To ensure that the terrifying menace to the West was properly understood, proof was needed that Communism meant genocide. This proof was provided by the Nazis and collaborators. Two U.S. professors covered them up with their academic credentials: James E. Mace, co-author of Famine in the Soviet Ukraine, and Walter Dushnyck, who wrote 50 Years Ago: The Famine Holocaust in Ukraine --- Terror and Misery as Instruments of Soviet Russian Imperialism, prefaced by Dana Dalrymple. The Harvard work contains 44 alleged 1932--1933 famine photos. Twenty-four come from two Nazi texts written by Laubenheimer, who credited most of the photos to Ditloff and began his presentation with a citation from Hitler's Mein Kampf:

`If, with the help of his Marxist creed, the Jew is victorious over the other peoples of the world, his crown will be the funeral wreath of humanity and this planet will, as it did millions of years ago, move through the ether devoid of men.'

.

Ibid. , p. 61.

The majority of the Ditloff--Laubenheimer pictures are utter fakes coming from the immediate World War I era and the 1921--1922 famine, or else portray misrepresented and undocumented scenes which do not describe conditions of famine-holocaust.

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Ibid.

The second professor, Dushnyck, participated as a cadre in the fascist Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, which became active at the end of the thirties.

`Scientific' calculations

Dushnyck invented a `scientific' method to calculate the dead during the `famine-genocide'; Mace followed his method:

`(T)aking the data according to the 1926 census ... and the January 17, 1939 census ... and the average increase before the collectivization ... (2.36 per cent per year), it can be calculated that Ukraine ... lost 7,500,000 people between the two censuses.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 69--71.

These calculations are meaningless.

The world war, the civil wars and the great famine of 1920--1922 all provoked a drop in the birth rate. The new generation born in that period reached physical maturity, 16 years of age, around 1930. The structure of the population would necessarily lead to a drop in the birthrate in the thirties.

Free abortion had also dramatically reduced the birthrate during the thirties, to the point where the government banned it in 1936 to increase the population.

The years 1929--1933 were characterized by great, violent struggles in the countryside, accompanied by times of famine. Economic and social conditions of this kind reduce the birthrate.

The number of people registered as Ukrainians changed through inter-ethnic marriages, changes in the declared nationality and by migrations.

The borders of the Ukraine were not even the same in 1926 and 1939. The Kuban Cossaks, between 2 and 3 million people, were registered

as Ukrainian in 1926, but were reclassified as Russian at the end of the twenties. This new classification explains by itself 25 to 40 per cent of the `victims of the famine-genocide' calculated by Dushnyck--Mace.

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Ibid. , p. 71.

Let us add that, according to the official figures, the population of Ukraine increased by 3,339,000 persons between 1926 and 1939. Compare those figures with the increase of the Jewish population under real genocidal conditions, organized by the Nazis.

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Ibid. , p. 74.

To test the validity of the `Dushnyck method', Douglas Tottle tried out an exercise with figures for the province of Saskatchewan in Canada, where the thirties saw great farmers' struggles. The repression was often violent. Tottle tried to `calculate' the number of statistical `victims' of the `depression-genocide', caused by the 1930's Great Depression and Western Canadian drought, complicated by the right-wing Canadian governments' policies and use of force:

This `scientific method', which any respectable person would call a grotesque farce for Canada, is widely accepted in right-wing publications as

`proof' of the `Stalinist terror'.

B-movies

The `famine-genocide' campaign that the Nazis started in 1933 reached its apogee half a century later, in 1983, with the film Harvest of Despair, for the masses, and in 1986, with the book Harvest of Sorrow, by Robert Conquest, for the intelligentsia.

The films Harvest of Despair, about the Ukrainian `genocide', and The Killing Fields, about the Kampuchean `genocide', were the two most important works created by Reagan's entourage to instill in people's minds that Communism is synonymous with genocide.

Harvest of Despair won a Gold Medal and the Grand Trophy Award Bowl at the 28th International Film and TV Festival in New York in 1985.

The most important eyewitness accounts about the `genocide' appearing in the film are made by German Nazis and their fomer collaborators.

Stepan Skrypnyk was the editor-in-chief of the Nazi journal Volyn during the German occupation. In three weeks, with the blessing of the Hitlerite authorities, he was promoted from simple layman to bishop in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and in the name of `Christian morality', put forward vicious propaganda for Die Neue Ordnung, the Hitlerite New Order. Fleeing the Red Army, he sought refuge in the U.S.

The German Hans von Herwath, another eyewitness, worked in the Soviet Union in the service that recruited, among the Soviet prisoners, mercenaries for General Vlasov's Russian Nazi army.

His compatriot Andor Henke, also appearing in the film, was a Nazi diplomat.

To illustrate the `famine-genocide' of 1932--1933, the authors used sequences from pre-1917 news films, bits of the films Czar Hunger (1921-

-1922) and Arsenal (1929), then sequences from Siege of Leningrad, filmed during the Second World War.

When the film's producers were publicly attacked by Tottle in 1986, Marco Carinnik, who was behind the film and had done most of the research, made a public declaration, quoted in the Toronto Star:

`Carynnik said that none of the archival footage is of the Ukrainian famine and that very few photos from `32-33' appear that can be traced as authentic. A dramatic shot at the film's end of an emaciated girl, which has also been used in the film's promotional material, is not from the 1932--1933 famine, Carynnik said.

` ``I made the point that this sort of inaccuracy cannot be allowed," he said in an interview. ``I was ignored." '

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Ibid. , p. 79.

Harvest of Sorrow: Conquest and the reconversion of Ukrainian Nazi collaborators

In January 1978, David Leigh published an article in the London Guardian, in which he revealed that Robert Conquest had worked for the disinformation services, officially called the Information Research Department (IRD), of the British secret service. In British embassies, the IRD head is responsible for providing `doctored' information to journalists and public figures. The two most important targets were the Third World and the Soviet Union. Leigh claimed:

`Robert Conquest ... frequently critical of the Soviet Union was one of those who worked for IRD. He was in the FO [Foreign Office] until 1956.'

.

Ibid. , p. 86.

At the suggestion of the IRD, Conquest wrote a book about the Soviet Union; one third of the edition was bought by Praeger, which regularly publishes and distributes books at the request of the CIA.

In 1986, Conquest contributed significantly to Reagan's propaganda campaign for ordinary U.S. citizens about a possible occupation of the U.S. by the Red Army! Conquest's book, co-authored by Manchip White, was entitled, What To Do When the Russians Come: A Survivalist's Handbook.

In his book The Great Terror (1968, revised 1973), Conquest estimated the number of dead during the 1932-1933 collectivization at five to six million, half in Ukraine. During the Reagan years, anti-Communist hysteria needed figures exceeding those of the six million Jews exterminated by the Nazis. In 1983, Conquest thought it opportune to extend the famine conditions to 1937 and to revise his `estimates' to 14 million dead.

His 1986 book Harvest of Sorrow is a pseudo-academic version of history, as presented by the Ukrainian far-right and Cold warriors.

Conquest claims that the Ukrainian far-right led an `anti-German and anti-Soviet' struggle, repeating the lie that these criminal gangs invented after their defeat as they sought to emigrate to the U.S.

Conquest, dealing with Ukrainian history, mentions the Nazi occupation in one sentence, as a period between two waves of Red terror!

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Conquest, The Harvest of Sorrow, op. cit. , p. 334.

He completely erased from his history the bestial terror that the Ukrainian fascists undertook during the German occupation, since they are the best sources for the `famine-genocide'.

Roman Shukhevych was the commander of the Nachtigall Batallion, composed of Ukrainian nationalists wearing the German uniform. This battallion occupied Lvov on June 30, 1941 and took part in the three-day massacre of Jews in the region. In 1943 Shukhevyvh was named commander of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (the Banderivtsy, or UPA), armed henchmen of the OUN fascist Stepan Bandera, who after the war pretended that they had fought Germans and Reds.

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Tottle, op. cit. , pp. 111-112.

All their `tales' of battles that they had fought against the Germans turned out to be false. They claimed to have executed Victor Lutze, the Chief of Staff of the German SA. But, in fact, he was killed in an automobile accident near Berlin.

.

Ibid. , p. 112.

They claimed to have done battle against 10,000 German soldiers in Volnia and Polyssa, during the summer of 1943. Historian Reuben Ainsztein proved that during the course of this battle, 5000 Ukrainian nationalists had participated at the sides of 10,000 German soldiers, in the great campaign of encirclement and attempted annihilation of the partisan army led by the famous Bolshevik Alexei Fyodorov !

.

Ibid. , p. 113.

Ainsztein noted:

`(T)he UPA gangs, which became known as the Banderovtsy, proved themselves under the command of Shukhevych, now known as Taras Chuprynka, the most dangerous and cruel enemies of surviving Jews, Polish peasants and settlers, and all anti-German partisans.'

.

Ibid.

The Ukrainian, 14th Waffen SS Galizien Division (also known as the Halychyna Division), was created in May 1943. In his call to Ukrainians to join it, Kubijovych, the head of the Nazi-authorized Ukrainian Central Committee, declared:

`The long-awaited moment has arrived when the Ukrainian people again have the opportunity to come out with guns to give battle with its most grievous foe --- Muscovite--Jewish Bolshevism. The Fuehrer of the

Great German Reich has agreed to the formation of a separate Ukrainian volunteer military unit.'

.

Ibid. , p. 115.

Before, the Nazis had imposed their direct authority on Ukraine, leaving no autonomy to their Ukrainian allies. It was on the basis of this rivalry between German and Ukrainian fascists that the Ukrainian nationalists would later build their myth of `opposition to the Germans'.

Pushed back by the Red Army, the Nazis changed tactics in 1943, giving a more important rфle to the Ukrainian killers. The creation of a `Ukrainian' division of the Waffen SS was seen as a victory for `Ukrainian nationalism'.

On May 16, 1944, the head of the SS, Himmler, congratulated the German officers of the Galizien Division for having cleansed Ukraine of all its Jews.

Wasyl Veryha, a veteran of the 14th Waffen SS Division, wrote in 1968:

`(T)he personnel trained in the division [14th Waffen SS] had become the backbone of the UPA, ... the UPA command also sent groups of its people to the division to receive proper training .... This reinforced the UPA which was left on the Native land [after the Nazi retreat], in particular its commanders and instructors.'

.

Ibid. , p. 118.

Although the Melnyk and Bandera tendencies of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists were at odds with each other and even fought each other, we can see here how they collaborated against the Communists under the leadership of the German Nazis.

The Nazi officer Scholtze revealed in front of the Nuremberg tribunal that Kanaris, the head of German intelligence, had `personally instructed the Abwehr to set up an underground network to continue the struggle against Soviet power in the Ukraine. Competent agents were left behind specially to direct the Nationalist movement'.

.

Ibid.

Note that Mandel's Trotskyist group always supported the `anti-Stalinist' armed struggle that the OUN fascist thugs led between 1944 and 1952.

After the war, John Loftus was an attorney for the U.S. Justice Department Office of Special Investigations, in charge of detecting Nazis who were trying to enter the United States. In his book The Belarus Secret, he affirms that his service was opposed to the entry of Ukrainian Nazis. But Frank Wisner, in charge of the U.S. administration's Office of Policy Coordination, a particularly important secret service at the time, systematically allowed former Ukrainian, Croatian and Hungarian Nazis to enter. Wisner, who would later play an important rфle at the head of the CIA, asserted: `The OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists) and the partisan army it created in 1942 (sic), UPA, fought bitterly against both the Germans and the Soviet Russians'.

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Ibid. , pp. 121--122.

Here one sees how the U.S. intelligence services, immediately after the war, took up the Ukrainian Nazis' version of history in order to use the anti-Communists in the clandestine struggle against the Soviet Union. Loftus commented:

`This was a complete fabrication. The CIC (U.S. Counter-Intelligence Corps) had an agent who photographed eleven volumes of the secret internal files of OUN--Bandera. These files clearly show how most of its members worked for the Gestapo or SS as policemen, executioners, partisan hunters and municipal officials.'

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Ibid. , p. 122.

In the United States, former Ukrainian Nazi collaborators created `research institutes' from which they spread their revision of the history of the Second World War. Loftus wrote:

`Funding for these `research institutes,' which were little more than front groups for ex-Nazi intelligence officers, came from the American Committee for Liberation from Bolshevism, now known as Radio Liberty. The committee was actually a front for OPC.'

.

Ibid. , p. 128.

`Against Hitler and against Stalin': it was around these words that former Hitlerites and the CIA united their efforts. For uninformed people, the formula `against fascism and against communism' may seem to be a `third path', but it surely is not. It is the formula that united, after the defeat of the Nazis, former partisans of the disintegrating Greater Germany and their U.S. successors, who were striving for world hegemony. Since Hitler was now just part of the past, the far-right in Germany, Ukraine, Croatia,

etc., joined up with the U.S. far-right. They united their efforts against socialism and against the Soviet Union, which had borne the brunt of the anti-fascist war. To rally the bourgeois forces, they spread lies about socialism, claiming that it was worse than Nazism. The formula `against Hitler and against Stalin' served to invent Stalin's `crimes' and `holocausts', to better cover up and even deny Hitler's monstrous crimes and holocausts. In 1986, the Veterans of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, the very ones who pretended to have fought `against Hitler and against Stalin', published a book entitled, Why is One Holocaust Worth More than Others?, written by a former member of the UPA, Yurij Chumatskyj. Regretting that `revisionist historians who claim there was no plan to exterminate Jews, there were no mass gassings and that fewer than one million Jews died of all causes during World War II, are persecuted', Chumatskyj continues:

`(A)ccording to Zionists' statements Hitler killed six million Jews but Stalin, supported by the Jewish state apparatus, was able to kill ten times more Christians'.

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Ibid. , p. 129.

Conquest's fascist sources

The title of the crucial part --- Chapter 12 --- of Harvest of Sorrow is `The Famine Rages'. It contains an impressive list of 237 references. A more careful look shows that more than half of the these references come from extreme-right-wing Ukrainian ймigrйs. The Ukrainian fascist book Black Deeds of the Kremlin is cited 55 times! No wonder that Conquest uses the version of history provided by Ukrainian Nazi collaborators and the U.S. secret services.

In the same chapter, Conquest cites 18 times the book The Ninth Circle by Olexa Woropay, published in 1953 by the youth movement of Stepan Bandera's fascist organization. The author presents a detailed biography for the thirties, but does not mention what he did during the Nazi occupation! A barely concealed admission of his Nazi past. He took up his biography again in 1948, in Muenster, where many Ukrainian fascists took refuge. It is there that he interviewed Ukrainians about the famine-genocide of 1932--1933. None of the `witnesses' is identified, which makes the book worthless from a scientific point of view. Given that he said nothing about what he did during the war, it is probable that those who `revealed the truth about Stalin' were Ukrainian Nazi collaborators who had fled.

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Ibid. , pp. 58--59.

Beal, who wrote for Hearst's pro-Nazi 1930's press, and later collaborated with the Cold War McCarthyite House Committee on Un-American Activities, was cited five times.

Kravchenko, the anti-Communist ймigrй, is a source ten times; Lev Kopelev, another Russian ймigrй, five times.

Among the included `scientific' references is Vasily Grossman's novel, referenced by Conquest fifteen times!

Then, Conquest cites interviews from Harvard's Refugee Interview Project, which was financed by the CIA. He cites the McCarthy-era Congressional Commission on Communist Aggression as well as Ewald Ammende's 1935 Nazi book. Conquest also refers five times to Eugene Lyons and to William Chamberlin, two men who, following World War II, were on the Board of Trustees of Radio Liberty, the CIA Central European radio network.

On page 244, Conquest wrote: `One American, in a village twenty miles south of Kiev, found ... they were cooking a mess that defied analysis'. The reference given is the New York Evening Journal, February 28, 1933. In fact, it is a Thomas Walker article in Hearst's press, published in 1935! Conquest deliberately ante-dated the newspaper to make it correspond to the 1933 famine. Conquest did not name the American: he was afraid that some might recall that Thomas Walker was a fake who never set foot in Ukraine. Conquest is a forgerer.

To justify the use of ймigrй books recording rumors, Conquest claimed `truth can thus only percolate in the form of hearsay' and that `basically the best, though not infallible, source is rumor'.

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J. Arch Getty, Origins of the Great Purges: The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933--1938 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 5.

This statement gives fascist slanders, disinformation and lies academic respectability.

The causes of famine in the Ukraine

There was famine in the Ukraine in 1932--1933. But it was provoked mainly by the struggle to the bitter end that the Ukrainian far-right was leading against socialism and the collectivization of agriculture.

During the thirties, the far-right, linked with the Hitlerites, had already fully exploited the propaganda theme of `deliberately provoked famine to exterminate the Ukrainian people'. But after the Second World War, this propaganda was `adjusted' with the main goal of covering up the barbaric crimes committed by German and Ukrainian Nazis, to protect fascism and to mobilise Western forces against Communism.

In fact, since the beginning of the fifties, the reality of the extermination of six million Jews had imposed itself on the world conscience. The world right-wing forces needed a greater number of deaths `caused by communist terror'. So in 1953, the year of triumphant McCarthyism, a spectacular increase in the number of deaths in Ukraine took place, twenty years previous. Since the Jews had been killed in a scientific, deliberate and systematic manner, the `extermination' of the Ukrainian people also had to take the form of a genocide committed in cold blood. And the far-right, which vehemently denies the holocaust of the Jews, invented the Ukrainian genocide!

The 1932-1933 Ukrainian famine had four causes.

First of all, it was provoked by civil war led by the kulaks and the nostalgic reactionary elements of Tsarism against the collectivization of agriculture.

Frederick Schuman traveled as a tourist in Ukraine during the famine period. Once he became professor at Williams College, he published a book in 1957 about the Soviet Union. He spoke about famine.

`Their [kulak] opposition took the initial form of slaughtering their cattle and horses in preference to having them collectivized. The result was a grievous blow to Soviet agriculture, for most of the cattle and horses were

owned by the kulaks. Between 1928 and 1933 the number of horses in the USSR declined from almost 30,000,000 to less than 15,000,000; of horned cattle from 70,000,000 (including 31,000,0000 cows) to 38,000,000 (including 20,000,000 cows); of sheep and goats from 147,000,000 to 50,000,000; and of hogs from 20,000,000 to 12,000,000. Soviet rural economy had not recovered from this staggering loss by 1941.

`... Some [kulaks] murdered officials, set the torch to the property of the collectives, and even burned their own crops and seed grain. More refused to sow or reap, perhaps on the assumption that the authorities would make concessions and would in any case feed them.

`The aftermath was the ``Ukraine famine'' of 1932--33 .... Lurid accounts, mostly fictional, appeared in the Nazi press in Germany and in the Hearst press in the United States, often illustrated with photographs that turned out to have been taken along the Volga in 1921 .... The ``famine'' was not, in its later stages, a result of food shortage, despite the sharp reduction of seed grain and harvests flowing from special requisitions in the spring of 1932 which were apparently occasioned by fear of war in Japan. Most of the victims were kulaks who had refused to sow their fields or had destroyed their crops.'

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Tottle, op. cit. , pp. 93--94.

It is interesting to note that this eyewitness account was confirmed by a 1934 article by Isaac Mazepa, leader of the Ukrainian Nationalist movement, former Premier under Petliura in 1918. He boasted that in Ukraine, the right had succeeded in 1930--1932 in widely sabotaging the agricultural works.

`At first there were disturbances in the kolkhosi [collective farms] or else the Communist officials and their agents were killed, but later a system of passive resistance was favored which aimed at the systematic frustation of the Bolsheviks' plans for the sowing and gathering of the

harvest .... The catastrophe of 1932 was the hardest blow that Soviet Ukraine had to face since the famine of 1921--1922. The autumn and spring sowing campaigns both failed. Whole tracts were left unsown, in addition when the crop was being gathered ... in many areas, especially in the south, 20, 40 and even 50 per cent was left in the fields, and was either not collected at all or was ruined in the threshing.'

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Ibid. , p. 94.

The second cause of the famine was the drought that hit certain areas of Ukraine in 1930, 1931 and 1932. For Professor James E. Mace, who defends the Ukrainian far-right line at Harvard, it is a fable created by the Soviet rйgime. However, in his A History of Ukraine, Mikhail Hrushevsky, described by the Nationalists themselves as `Ukraine's leading historian', writing of the year 1932, claimed that `Again a year of drought coincided with chaotic agricultural conditions'.

.

Ibid. , p. 91.

Professor Nicholas Riasnovsky, who taught at the Russian Research Center at Harvard, wrote that the years 1931 and 1932 saw drought conditions. Professor Michael Florinsky, who struggled against the Bolsheviks during the Civil War, noted: `Severe droughts in 1930 and 1931, especially in the Ukraine, aggravated the plight of farming and created near famine conditions'.

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Ibid. , p. 92.

The third cause of the famine was a typhoid epidemic that ravaged Ukraine and North Caucausus. Dr. Hans Blumenfeld, internationally respected city planner and recipient of the Order of Canada, worked as an architect in Makayevka, Ukraine during the famine. He wrote:

`There is no doubt that the famine claimed many victims. I have no basis on which to estimate their number .... Probably most deaths in 1933 were due to epidemics of typhus, typhoid fever, and dysentery. Waterborne diseases were frequent in Makeyevka; I narrowly survived an attack of typhus fever.'

.

Ibid. , p. 96.

Horsley Grant, the man who made the absurd estimate of 15 million dead under the famine --- 60 per cent of an ethnic Ukrainian population of 25 million in 1932 --- noted at the same time that `the peak of the typhus epidemic coincided with the famine .... it is not possible to separate which of the two causes was more important in causing casualties.'

.

Ibid. , p. 97.

The fourth cause of the famine was the inevitable disorder provoked by the reorganization of agriculture and the equally profound upheaval in economic and social relations: lack of experience, improvization and confusion in orders, lack of preparation and leftist radicalism among some of the poorer peasants and some of the civil servants.

The numbers of one to two million dead for the famine are clearly important. These human losses are largely due to the ferocious opposition of the exploiting classes to the reorganization and modernization of

agriculture on a socialist basis. But the bourgeoisie would make Stalin and socialism responsible for these deaths. The figure of one to two million should also be compared to the nine million dead caused by the 1921--1922 famine, essentially provoked by the military intervention of eight imperialist powers and by the support that they gave to reactionary armed groups.

The famine did not last beyond the period prior to the 1933 harvest. Extraordinary measures were taken by the Soviet government to guarantee the success of the harvest that year. In the spring, thirty-five million poods of seeds, food and fodder were sent to Ukraine. The organization and management of kolkhozy was improved and several thousand supplementary tractors, combines and trucks were delivered.

Hans Blumenfeld presented, in his autobiography, a rйsumй of what he experienced during the famine in Ukraine:

`[The famine was caused by] a conjunction of a number of factors. First, the hot dry summer of 1932, which I had experienced in northern Vyatka, had resulted in crop failure in the semiarid regions of the south. Second, the struggle for collectivization had disrupted agriculture. Collectivization was not an orderly process following bureaucratic rules. It consisted of actions by the poor peasants, encouraged by the Party. The poor peasants were eager to expropriate the ``kulaks,'' but less eager to organize a cooperative economy. By 1930 the Party had already sent out cadres to stem and correct excesses .... After having exercised restraint in 1930, the Party put on a drive again in 1932. As a result, in that year the kulak economy ceased to produce, and the new collective economy did not yet produce fully. First claim on the inadequate product went to urban industry and to the armed forces; as the future of the entire nation, including the peasants, depended on them, it could hardly be otherwise ....

`In 1933 rainfall was adequate. The Party sent its best cadres to help organize work in the kolkhozes. They succeeded; after the harvest of 1933 the situation improved radically and with amazing speed. I had the feeling that we had been pulling a heavy cart uphill, uncertain if we would

succeed; but in the fall of 1933 we had gone over the top and from then on we could move forward at an accelerating pace.'

.

Ibid.

Hans Blumenfeld underscored that the famine also struck the Russian regions of Lower Volga and North Caucasus.

`This disproves the ``fact'' of anti-Ukrainian genocide parallel to Hitler's anti-semitic holocaust. To anyone familiar with the Soviet Union's desperate manpower shortage in those years, the notion that its leaders would deliberately reduce that scarce resource is absurd ....'

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Ibid. , p. 100.

Ukraine under Nazi occupation

The Japanese armies occupied Manchuria in 1931 and took up position along the Soviet border. Hitler came to power in 1933.

The programs of industrial and agricultural reorganization undertaken by the Soviet Union in 1928--1933 came just in time. Only their success, at a cost of total mobilization of all forces, allowed the victorious resistance to the Nazis.

One of history's ironies is that the Nazis started to believe their own lies about the Ukrainian genocide and about the fragility of the Soviet system.

Historian Heinz Hohne wrote:

`Two sobering years of bloody war in Russia provided cruel proof of the falsity of the tale about sub-humans. As early as August 1942 in its ``Reports from the Reich" the SD (Sicherheits Dienst) noted that the feeling was growing among the German people that we have been victims of delusion. The main and startling impression is of the vast mass of Soviet weapons, their technical quality, and the gigantic Soviet effort of industrialization --- all in sharp contrast to the previous picture of the Soviet Union. ``People are asking themselves how Bolshevism has managed to produce all this." '

.

Ibid. , p. 99.

The U.S. professor William Mandel wrote in 1985:

`In the largest eastern portion of the Ukraine, which had been Soviet for twenty years loyalty was overwhelming and active. There were half a million organized Soviet guerillas ... and 4,500,000 ethnic Ukrainians fought in the Soviet army. Clearly that army would have been

fundamentally weakened if there had been basic disaffections among so large a component.'

.

Ibid. , p. 101.

Historian Roman Szporluk admits that the `zones of operation' of `organized Ukrainian Nationalism ... was limited to the former Polish territories', i.e. to Galicia. Under Polish occupation, the fascist Ukrainian movement had a base until 1939.

.

Ibid.

The Ukrainian holocaust lie was invented by the Hitlerites as part of their preparation of the conquest of Ukranian territories. But as soon as they set foot on Ukrainian soil, the Nazi `liberators' met ferocious resistance. Alexei Fyodorov led a group of partisans that eliminated 25,000 Nazis during the war. His book The Underground Committee Carries On admirably shows the attitude of the Ukrainian people to the Nazis. Its reading is highly recommended as an antidote to those who talk about the `Stalinist Ukrainian genocide'.

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Alexei Fyodorov, The Underground Committee Carries On (Moscow: Progress Publishers).

The struggle against bureaucracy

Trotsky invented the infamous term `Stalinist bureaucracy'. While Lenin was still living, late in 1923, he was already maneuvering to seize power within the Party:

`[B]ureaucratization threatens to ... provoke a more or less opportunistic degeneration of the Old Guard'.

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Trotsky, The New Course, p. 72.

In his opposition platform, written in July 1926, his foremost attack was against `unbridled bureaucratism'.

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Trotsky, The New Course, p. 85.

And once the Second World War had begun, Trotsky spent his time provoking the Soviet people in `acting against the Stalinist bureaucracy as it did previously against the Tsarist bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie.'

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Trotsky, Lettres aux travailleurs d'URSS (May 1940). La lutte antibureaucratique en URSS II: La rйvolution nйcessaire 1933--1940 (Paris: Union gйnйrale d'йditions, 1975), pp. 301--302.

Trotsky always used the word `bureaucracy' to denigrate socialism.

Given this context, it might come as some surprise that throughout the thirties, the Party leaders, principally Stalin, Kirov and Zhdanov, devoted a lot of energy to the struggle against the bureaucratic elements within the Party and State apparatus.

How did the struggle against bureaucratization and bureaucracy define itself in the thirties?

Anti-Communists against `bureaucracy'

First we should make sure that we agree about the meaning of terms.

As soon as the Bolsheviks seized power, the Right used the word `bureaucracy' to describe and denigrate the revolutionary rйgime itself. For the Right, any socialist and revolutionary enterprise was detestable, and automatically received the defamatory label of `bureaucratic'. Right from October 26, 1917, the Mensheviks declared their irreconcilable hostility with the `bureaucratic' Bolshevik rйgime, the result of a `coup d'йtat', a rйgime that could not be socialist because most of the country was peasant, a rйgime characterized by `state capitalism' and by the `dictatorship against the peasants'. This propaganda clearly intended the reversal of the dictatorship of the proletariat imposed under the Bolshevik rйgime.

But, in 1922, faced with the destruction of the productive forces in the countryside and trying to preserve the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Bolsheviks were forced to back off, to make concessions to the individual peasants, to allow them the freedom to buy and sell. The Bolsheviks wanted to create in the countryside a kind of `state capitalism', i.e. the development of a small capitalism constrained and controlled by the (Socialist) State. At the same time, the Bolsheviks declared war on bureaucracy: they combatted the unchanged habits of the old bureaucratic apparatus and the tendency of new Soviet civil servants to adapt to it.

The Mensheviks sought then to return to the political scene by stating: `You, the Bolsheviks, you are now against bureaucracy and you admit to building state capitalism. This is what we said, what we have always said. We were correct.' Here is Lenin's answer:

`[T]he sermons ... the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries preach express their true nature --- ``The revolution has gone too far. What you are saying now we have been saying all the time, permit us to say again." But we say in reply: ``Permit us to put you before a firing squad for saying that. Either you refrain from expressing your views, or, if you insist on expressing your political views publicly in the present

circumstances, when our position is far more difficult than it was when the whiteguards were directly attacking us, then you will have only yourselves to blame if we treat you as the worst and most pernicious whiteguard elements." '

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Lenin, Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.). Works. vol. 33, p. 283.

As can be seen above, Lenin vehemently dealt with counter-revolutionaries attacking the so-called `bureaucracy' to overthrow the socialist rйgime.

Bolsheviks against bureaucratization

Lenin and the Bolsheviks always led a revolutionary struggle against the bureaucratic deviations that, in a backward country, inevitably occurred within the apparatus of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They estimated that the dictatorship was also menaced `from inside' by the bureaucratization of the Soviet state apparatus.

The Bolsheviks had to `retake' part of the old Tsarist state apparatus, which had only been partially transformed in the socialist sense.

Futhermore, the Party and government apparatus in the countryside posed great problems, throughout the country. Between 1928 and 1931, the Party accepted 1,400,000 new members. Among this mass, many were in fact political illiterates. They had revolutionary sentiments, but no real Communist knowledge. Kulaks, old Tsarist officers and other reactionaries easily succeeded in infiltrating the Party. All those who had a certain capacity for organization were automatically accepted into the Party, as there were so few cadres. Between 1928 and 1938, the weight of the Party in the countryside remained weak, and its members were heavily influenced by the upper strata that intellectually and economically dominated the rural world. These factors all lead to problems of bureaucratic degeneration.

The first generation of revolutionary peasants had experienced the Civil War, when they were fighting the reactionary forces. The War Communism spirit, giving and receiving orders, maintained itself and gave birth to a bureaucratic style of work that was little based on patient political work.

For all these reasons, the struggle against the bureaucracy was always considered by Lenin and Stalin as a struggle for the purity of the Bolshevik line, against the influences of the old society, the old social classes and oppressive structures.

Under Lenin as under Stalin, the Party sought to concentrate the best revolutionaries, the most far-seeing, active, firm and organically tied to

the masses, within the Central Committee and the leading organs. The leadership of the Party always sought to mobilize the masses to implement the tasks of socialist construction. It was at the intermediate levels, most notably in the Republic apparatuses, that bureaucratic elements, careerists and opportunists could most easily set up and hide. Throughout the period in which Stalin was the leader of the Party, Stalin called for the leadership and the base to mobilize to hound out the bureaucrats from above and from below. Here is a 1928 directive, typical of Stalin's view.

`Bureaucracy is one of the worst enemies of our progress. It exists in all our organizations .... The trouble is that it is not a matter of the old bureaucrats. It is a matter of the new bureaucrats, bureaucrats who sympathize with the Soviet Government and finally, communist bureaucrats. The communist bureaucrat is the most dangerous type of bureaucrat. Why? Because he masks his bureaucracy with the title of Party member.'

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Stalin, Speech delivered at the Eighth Congress of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League. Selected Works, p. 286.

After having presented several grave cases, Stalin continued:

`What is the explanation of these shameful instances of corruption and moral deterioration in certain of our Party organizations? The fact that Party monopoly was carried to absurd lengths, that the voice of the rank and file was stifled, that inner-Party democracy was abolished and bureaucracy became rife .... I think that there is not and cannot be any other way of combating this evil than by organizing control from below by the Party masses, by implanting inner-Party democracy. What objection can there be to rousing the fury of the mass of the Party membership against these corrupt elements and giving it the opportunity to send these elements packing?'

.

Ibid. , p. 287.

`There is talk of crit(i)cism from above, criticism by the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, by the Central Committee of the Party and so on. That, of course, is all very good. But it is still far from enough. More, it is by no means the chief thing now. The chief thing now is to start a broad tide of criticism against bureaucracy in general, against shortcomings in our work in particular. Only (then) ... can we count on waging a successful struggle against bureaucracy and on rooting it out.'

.

Ibid. , p. 288.

Reinforce public education

First, to struggle against bureaucracy, Stalin and the leadership of the Bolshevik Party reinforced public education.

At the beginning of the thirties, they created Party schools to give elementary courses to people in the rural world who had never had a basic political education. The first systematic course about the history of the Party was published in 1929 by Yaroslavsky: History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It is a well written book. In 1938, a second shorter version, was written under Stalin's supervision: History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): Short Course.

Between 1930 and 1933, the number of Party schools increased from 52,000 to more than 200,000 and the number of students from one million to 4,500,000. It was a remarkable effort to give a minimum of political coherence to hundreds of thousands who had just entered the Party.

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Getty, op. cit. , p. 22.

Regularly purge the Party

One of the most effective methods in the struggle against bureaucratic disintegration is the verification-purge.

In 1917, the Party had 30,000 members. In 1921, there were almost 600,000. In 1929, there were 1,500,000. In 1932, they were 2,500,000. After each massive recruitment wave, the leadership had to sort. The first verification campaign was conducted in 1921, under Lenin. At that moment, 45 per cent of the Party members in the countryside were excluded, 25 per cent in the entire Party. It was the largest purge campaign that was ever done. One fourth of the members did not meet the most elementary criteria.

In 1929, 11 per cent of the members left the Party during a second verification campaign.

In 1933, there was a new purge. It was thought that it would last four months. In fact, it lasted two years. The Party structures, the control mechanisms and the actual control of the central leadership were so lacking that it was not even possible to plan and to effect a verification campaign. Eventually, 18 per cent of the members would be expelled.

What were the criteria for expulsion?

-- Those who were expelled were people who had once been kulaks, white officers or counter-revolutionaries.

-- Corrupt or overly ambitious people, or unrepentant bureaucrats.

-- People who rejected Party discipline and simply ignored directives of the Central Committee.

-- People who had committed crimes or sexually abused others, drunkards.

During the verification campaign of 1932--1933, the leadership remarked that not only did it have a difficult time in ensuring that its instructions were followed, but also that the Party's administration in the countryside was quite deficient. No one knew who was a member and who was not. There were 250,000 lost and stolen cards and more than 60,000 blank cards had disappeared.

At this time, the situation was so critical that the central leadership threatened to expel regional leaders who were not personally implicated in the campaign.

But the carefree attitude of regional keaders often transformed into bureaucratic interventionism: members of the base were purged without any careful political inquiry. This problem was regularly discussed at the highest level between 1933 and 1938. The January 18, 1938 issue of Pravda published a Central Committee directive, putting forth one more time this theme of Stalin's:

`Certain of our Party leaders suffer from an insufficiently attentive attitude toward people, toward party members, toward workers. What is more, they do not study the party workers, do not know how they are coming along and how they are developing, do not know their cadres at all .... And precisely because they do not take an individualized approach to the evaluation of party members and party workers they usually act aimlessly --- either praising them indiscriminately and beyond measure, or chastising them also indiscriminately and beyond measure, expelling them from the party by the thousands and tens of thousands .... But only persons who are in essence profoundly anti-party can take such an approach to party members.'

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On Deficiencies in Party Work and Measures for Liquidating Trotskyites and Other Double Dealers. McNeal, op. cit. , p. 183.

In this document, Stalin and the rest of the leadership deal with the correct means for purging the Party of undesirable elements who infiltrated the base. But the text was already outlining a completely new form of purge: the one that would clean out the Party leadership of the most bureaucratized elements. Two of Stalin's preoccupations can be found therein: an individual approach must be adopted towards all cadres and members, and one must know personally and in depth one's collaborators and subordinates. In the chapter on the anti-fascist work, we will show how Stalin himself undertook these tasks.

The struggle for revolutionary democracy

To finish with bureaucracy, the leadership began a struggle for democracy within the Party.

It is on this basis of difficulties in applying the instructions during the purification campaign that on December 17, 1934, the Central Committee focused for the first time on more fundamental problems. It criticized `bureaucratic methods of leadership', where essential questions are treated by small groups of cadres without any participation from the base.

On March 29, 1935, Zhdanov passed a resolution in Leningrad, criticizing certain leaders for neglecting education work and only doing economic tasks. Ideological tasks disappeared in paperwork and bureaucracy. The resolution underscored that the leaders must know the qualities and capacities of their subordinates. Evaluation reports of their work were needed, as were closer contacts between leaders and cadres and a political line of promoting new cadres.

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Ibid. , p. 99.

On May 4, Stalin spoke about this subject. He condemned

`(T)he outrageous attitude towards people, towards cadres, towards workers, which we not infrequently observe in practice. The slogan ``Cadres decide everything" demands that our leaders should display the most solicitous attitude towards our workers, ``little" and ``big," assisting them when they need support, encouraging them when they show their first successes, promoting them, and so forth. Yet in practice we meet in a number of cases with a soulless, bureaucratic, and positively outrageous attitude towards workers.'

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Stalin, Address to the Graduates of the Red Army Academies. Leninism, p. 364.

Arch Getty, in his brilliant study, Origins of the great purges, makes the following comment.

`The party had become bureaucratic, economic, mechanical, and administrative to an intolerable degree. Stalin and other leaders at the center perceived this as an ossification, a breakdown, and a perversion of the party's function. Local party and government leaders were no longer political leaders but economic administrators. They resisted political control from both above and below and did not want to be bothered with ideology, education, political mass campaigns, or the individual rights and careers of party members. The logical extension of this process would have been the conversion of the party apparatus into a network of locally despotic economic administrations. The evidence shows that Stalin, Zhdanov, and others preferred to revive the educational and agitational functions of the party, to reduce the absolute authority of local satraps, and to encourage certain forms of rank-and-file leadership.'

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Getty, op. cit. , p. 105.

The Party elections in 1937: a `revolution'

Finally, in February 1937, a crucial meeting of the Central Committee addressed the question of democracy and the struggle against bureaucratization. It was that same meeting that decided upon the organization of the purge against enemy elements.

It is important to note that several days of the February 1937 Central Committee dealt with the problem of democracy within the Party, democracy which should reinforce the revolutionary character of the organization, hence its capacity to discover enemy elements that had infiltrated it. Reports by Stalin and Zhdanov dealt with the development of criticism and self-criticism, about the necessity of cadres to submit reports to their respective bases. For the first time, secret elections were organized in the Party, with several candidates and after a public discussion of all candidatures. The February 27, 1937 Central Committee resolution indicates:

`The practice of co-opting members of party committees must be liquidated .... each party member must be afforded an unlimited right of recalling candidates and criticizing them.'

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The Preparation of Party Organizations for Elections to the USSR Supreme Soviet under the New Electoral System and the Corresponding Reorganization of Party Political Work (27 February 1937). McNeal, p. 187.

When the German fascists occupied the Soviet Union, they discovered all the archives of the Party Committee for the Western Region of Smolensk. All the meetings, all the discussions, all the Regional Committee and Central Committee directives, everything was there. The archive contains the proceedings of the electoral meetings that followed the Central Committee meeting of February 1937. It is therefore possible to know how things actually took place, at the local level.

Arch Getty described a number of typical examples of the 1937 elections in the Western Region. For the positions of district committee, thirty-four candidates were first presented for seven positions. There was a discussion of each candidate. Should a candidate wish to withdraw, a vote was made to see if the members accepted. All votes were secret.

Finally, during the May 1937 electoral campaign, for the 54,000 Party base organizations for which we have data, 55 per cent of the directing committees were replaced. In the Leningrad region, 48 per cent of the members of the local committees were replaced.

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Ibid. , p. 158.

Getty noted that this was the most important, most general and most effective antibureaucratic campaign that the Party ever effected.

But at the Regional level, which constituted the main level of decision-making, very little changed. In the Regions, since the beginning of the twenties, individuals and clans had solidly entrenched themselves and held a virtual power monopoly. Even this massive antibureaucratic campaign could not budge them. The Smolensk archives contain the written proof.

The Party Secretary of the Western Region Committee was named Rumiantsev. He was a Central Committee member, as were several other regional leaders. The report of the meeting electing the Regional Secretary is in the Smolensk archive. Five pages state that the situation was good and satisfactory. Then follow nine pages of harsh criticism that indicate that nothing was working well. All the criticisms that the Central Committee had formulated against bureaucracy within the Party were taken up by the base against Rumiantsev: arbitrary expulsions, worker complaints that were never treated by the Regional Committee, lack of attention to the economic development of the region, leadership with no connection with the base, etc. The two opposing lines within the meeting were clearly expressed in the

proceedings. The document shows that the base was able to express itself, but that it was incapable of getting rid of the clans that held a firm grip on the regional apparatus.

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Ibid. , p. 162.

The same thing took place in almost all the big cities. Krinitskii, the first secretary of Saratov, had been criticized by name in the Party press by Zhdanov. However, he succeeded in getting himself re-elected. Under fire from both the central leadership of the Party and from the base, the regional `fiefdoms' were able to hold on.

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Ibid. , p. 164.

They would be destroyed by the Great Purge of 1937--1938.

The Great Purge

No episode in Soviet history has provoked more rage from the old bourgeois world than the purge of 1937--1938. The unnuanced denunciation of the purge can be read in identical terms in a neo-Nazi pamphlet, in a work with academic pretentions by Zbigniew Brzezinski, in a Trotskyist pamphlet or in a book by the Belgian army chief ideologue.

Let us just consider the last, Henri Bernard, a former Belgian Secret Service officer, professor emeritus at the Belgian Royal Military College. He published in 1982 a book called Le communisme et l'aveuglement occidental (Communism and Western Blindness). In this work, Bernard mobilizes the sane forces of the West against an imminent Russian invasion. Regarding the history of the USSR, Bernard's opinion about the 1937 purge is interesting on many counts:

`Stalin would use methods that would have appalled Lenin. The Georgian had no trace of human sentiment. Starting with Kirov's assassination (in 1934), the Soviet Union underwent a bloodbath, presenting the spectacle of the Revolution devouring its own sons. Stalin, said Deutscher, offered to the people a rйgime made of terror and illusions. Hence, the new liberal measures corresponded with the flow of blood of the years 1936--1939. It was the time of those terrible purges, of that `dreadful spasm'. The interminable series of trials started. The `old guard' of heroic times would be annihilated. The main accused of all these trials was Trotsky, who was absent. He continued without fail to lead the struggle against Stalin, unmasking his methods and denouncing his collusion with Hitler.'

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Bernard, op. cit. , pp. 50, 52--53.

So, the historian of the Belgian Army likes to quote Trotsky and Trotskyists, he defends the `old Bolshevik guard', and he even has a kind

word for Lenin; but under Stalin, the inhuman monster, blind and dreadful terror dominated.

Before describing the conditions that led the Bolsheviks to purge the Party in 1937--1938, let us consider what a bourgeois specialist who respects the facts knows about this period of Soviet history.

Gбbor Tamбs Rittersporn, born in Budapest, Hungary, published a study of the purges in 1988 (English version, 1991), under the title Stalinist Simplifications and Soviet Complications. He forthrightly states his opposition to communism and states that `we have no intention of denying in any way, much less of justifying, the very real horrors of the age we are about to treat of; we would surely be among the first to bring them to light if that was still necessary'.

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Gбbor Tamбs Rittersporn, Stalinist Simplifications and Soviet Complications: Social Tensions and Political Conflict in the USSR, 1933--1953 (Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991), p. 23.

However, the official bourgeois version is so grotesque and its untruthfulness so obvious that in the long run it could lead to a complete rejection of the standard Western interpretation of the Soviet Revolution. Rittersporn admirably defined the problems he encountered when trying to correct some of the most grotesque bourgeois lies.

`If ... one tries to publish a tentative analysis of some almost totally unknown material, and to use it to throw new light on the history of the Soviet Union in the 1930s and the part that Stalin played in it, one discovers that opinion tolerates challenges to the received wisdom far less than one would have thought .... The traditional image of the ``Stalin phenomenon'' is in truth so powerful, and the political and ideological value-judgments which underlie it are so deeply emotional, that any attempt to correct it must also inevitably appear to be taking a stand for or against the generally accepted norms that it implies ....

`To claim to show that the traditional representation of the ``Stalin period'' is in many ways quite inaccurate is tantamount to issuing a hopeless challenge to the time-honoured patterns of thought which we are used to applying to political realities in the USSR, indeed against the common patterns of speech itself .... Research of this kind can be justified above all by the extreme inconsistency of the writing devoted to what historical orthodoxy considers to be a major event --- the ``Great Purge'' of 1936--1938.

`Strange as it may seem, there are few periods of Soviet history that have been studied so superficially.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 1--2.

`There is ... every reason to believe that if the elementary rules of source analysis have tended to be so long ignored in an important area of Soviet studies, it is because the motives of delving in this period of the Soviet past have differed markedly from the usual ones of historical research.

`In fact even the most cursory reading of the ``classic'' works makes it hard to avoid the impression that in many respects these are often more inspired by the state of mind prevailing in some circles in the West, than by the reality of Soviet life under Stalin. The defence of hallowed Western values against all sorts of real or imaginary threats from Russia; the assertion of genuine historical experiences as well as of all sorts of ideological assumptions.'

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Ibid. , p. 23.

In other words, Rittersporn is saying: Look, I can prove that most of the current ideas about Stalin are absolutely false. But to say this requires a giant hurdle. If you state, even timidly, certain undeniable truths about the Soviet Union in the thirties, you are immediately labeled `Stalinist'. Bourgeois propaganda has spread a false but very powerful image of Stalin, an image that is almost impossible to correct, since emotions run so high as soon as the subject is broached. The books about the purges written by great Western specialists, such as Conquest, Deutscher, Schapiro and Fainsod, are worthless, superficial, and written with the utmost contempt for the most elementary rules learnt by a first-year history student. In fact, these works are written to give an academic and scientific cover for the anti-Communist policies of the Western leaders. They present under a scientific cover the defence of capitalist interests and values and the ideological preconceptions of the big bourgeoisie.

Here is how the purge was presented by the Communists who thought that it was necessary to undertake it in 1937--1938. Here is the central thesis developed by Stalin in his March 3, 1937 report, which initiated the purge.

Stalin affirmed that certain Party leaders `proved to be so careless, complacent and naive',

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J. V. Stalin, Report and Speech in Reply to Debate at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. (3--5 March 1937). Works (London: Red Star Press, 1976), vol. 14, p. 241.

and lacked vigilance with respect to the enemies and the anti-Communists infiltrated in the Party. Stalin spoke of the assassination of Kirov, number two in the Bolshevik Party at the time:

`The foul murder of Comrade Kirov was the first serious warning which showed that the enemies of the people would resort to duplicity, and resorting to duplicity would disguise themselves as Bolsheviks, as Party

members, in order to worm their way into our confidence and gain access to our organizations ....

`The trial of the ``Zinovievite--Trotskyite bloc" (in 1936) broadened the lessons of the preceding trials and strikingly demonstrated that the Zinovievites and Trotskyites had united around themselves all the hostile bourgeois elements, that they had become transformed into an espionage, diversionist and terrorist agency of the German secret police, that duplicity and camouflage are the only means by which the Zinovievites and Trotskyites can penetrate into our organizations, that vigilance and political insight are the surest means of preventing such penetration.'

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Ibid. , pp. 242--243.

`(T)he further forward we advance, the greater the successes we achieve, the greater will be the fury of the remnants of the defeated exploiting classes, the more ready will they be to resort to sharper forms of struggle, the more will they seek to harm the Soviet state, and the more will they clutch at the most desperate means of struggle as the last resort of the doomed.'

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Ibid. , p. 264.

How did the class enemy problem pose itself?

So, in truth, who were these enemies of the people, infiltrated in the Bolshevik Party? We give four important examples.

Boris Bazhanov

During the Civil War that killed nine million, the bourgeoisie fought the Bolsheviks with arms. Defeated, what could it do? Commit suicide? Drown its sorrow in vodka? Convert to Bolshevism? There were better options. As soon as it became clear that the Bolshevik Revolution was victorious, elements of the bourgeoisie consciously infiltrated the Party, to combat it from within and to prepare the conditions for a bourgeois coup d'йtat.

Boris Bazhanov wrote a very instructive book about this subject, called Avec Staline dans le Kremlin (With Stalin in the Kremlin). Bazhanov was born in 1900, so he was 17 to 19 years old during the revolution in Ukraine, his native region. In his book, Bazhanov proudly published a photocopy of a document, dated August 9, 1923, naming him assistant to Stalin. The decision of the organization bureau reads: `Comrade Bazhanov is named assistant to Comrade Stalin, Secretary of the CC'. Bazhanov made this comment: `Soldier of the anti-Bolshevik army, I had imposed upon myself the difficult and perilous task of penetrating right into the heart of the enemy headquarters. I had succeeded'.

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Boris Bajanov, Avec Staline dans le Kremlin (Paris: Les Йditions de France, 1930), pp. 2--3.

The young Bazhanov, as Stalin's assistant, had become Secretary of the Politburo and had to take notes of the meetings. He was 23 years old. In his book, written in 1930, he explained how his political career started, when he saw the Bolshevik Army arrive in Kiev. He was 19 years old.

`The Bolsheviks seized it in 1919, sowing terror. To spit at them in their face would have only given me 10 bullets. I took another path. To save the йlite of my city, I covered myself with the mask of communist ideology.'

.

Ibid. , p. 7.

`Starting in 1920, the open struggle against the Bolshevik plague ended. To fight against it from outside had become impossible. It had to be mined from within. A Trojan Horse had to be infiltrated into the communist fortress .... All the threads of the dictatorship converged in the single knot of the Politburo. The coup d'йtat would have to come from there.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 4--5.

During the years 1923--1924, Bazhanov attended all the meetings of the Politburo. He was able to hold on to different positions until his flight in 1928.

Many other bourgeois intellectuals had the genius of this young nineteen-year-old Ukrainian.

The workers and the peasants who made the Revolution by shedding their blood had little culture or education. They could defeat the bourgeoisie with their courage, their heroism, their hatred of oppression. But to organize the new society, culture and education were necessary. Intellectuals from the old society, both young and old, sufficiently able and flexible people, recognized the opportunities. They decided to change arms and battle tactics. They would confront these uncouth brutes by working for them. Boris Bazhanov's path was exemplary.

George Solomon

Consider another testimonial work. The career of its author, George Solomon, is even more interesting. Solomon was a Bolshevik Party cadre, named in July 1919 assistant to the People's Commissar for Commerce and Industry. He was an intimate friend of Krassin, an old Bolshevik, who was simultaneously Commissar of Railroads and Communications and Commissar of Commerce and Industry. In short, we have two members of the `old guard of the heroic times' so dear to Henri Bernard of the Belgian Military Academy.

In December 1919, Solomon returned from Stockholm to Petrograd, where he hurried to see his friend Krassin and ask him about the political situation. According to Solomon, the response was:

`You want a rйsumй of the situation? ... it is ... the immediate installation of socialism ... an imposed utopia, including the most extreme of stupidities. They have all become crazy, Lenin included! ... forgotten the laws of natural evolution, forgotten our warnings about the danger of trying the socialist experience under the actual conditions .... As for Lenin ... he suffers from permanent delirium .... in fact we are living under a completely autocratic rйgime.'

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George Solomon, Parmi les maotres rouges, Sйrie Anticommuniste du Centre International de Lutte Active Contre le Communisme (Paris: Йditions Spes, 1930), p. 19.

This analysis in no way differs from that of the Mensheviks: Russia is not ready for socialism, and those who want to introduce it will have to use autocratic methods.

In the beginning of 1918, Solomon and Krassin were together in Stockholm. The Germans had started up the offensive and had occupied Ukraine. Anti-Bolshevik insurrections were more and more frequent. It was

not at all clear who was going to rule Russia, the Bolsheviks or the Mensheviks and their industrialist friends. Solomon summarized his conversations with Krassin.

`We had understood that the new rйgime had introduced a series of absurd measures, by destroying the technical forces, by demoralizing the technical experts and by substituting worker committees for them .... we understood that the line of annihilating the bourgeoisie was no less absurd .... This bourgeoisie was destined to still bring us many positive elements .... this class ... needed to fill its historic and civilizing rфle.'

.

Ibid. , p 36.

Solomon and Krassin appeared to hesitate as to whether they should join the `real' Marxists, the Mensheviks, with whom they shared concern for the bourgeoisie, which was to bring progress. What could be done without it? Surely not develop the country with `factories run by committees of ignorant workers'?

.

Ibid. , p. 19.

But Bolshevik power stabilized:

`(A) gradual change ... took place in our assessment of the situation. We asked ourselves if we had the right to remain aloof .... Should we not, in the interests of the people that we wanted to serve, give the Soviets our support and our experience, in order to bring to this task some sane elements? Would we not have a better chance to fight against this policy of general destruction that marked the Bolsheviks' activity We could also oppose the total destruction of the bourgeoisie .... We thought that the restoration of normal diplomatic relations with the West ... would

necessarily force our leaders to fall in line with other nations and ... that the tendency towards immediate and direct communism would start to shrink and ultimately disappear forever ....

`Given these new thoughts, we decided, Krassin and myself, to join the Soviets.'

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Ibid. , pp. 36--37.

So, according to Solomon, he and Krassin formulated a secret program that they followed by reaching the post of Minister and vice-Minister under Lenin: they opposed all measures of the dictatorship of the proletariat, they protected as much as they could the bourgeoisie and they intended to create links with the imperialist world, all to `progressively and completely erase' the Communist line of the Party! Good Bolshevik, Comrade Solomon.

On August 1, 1923, during a visit to Belgium, he joined the other side. His testimony appeared in 1930, published by the Belgo-French `International Centre for the Active Struggle Against Communism' (CILACC). Solomon the old Bolshevik now had set ideas:

`(T)he Moscow government (is) formed of a small group of men who, with the help of the G.P.U., inflicts slavery and terror on our great and admirable country ....'

.

Ibid. , p. 348.

`Already the Soviet despots see themselves as surrounded everywhere by anger, the great collective anger. Seized by crazed terror ....

They become more and more vicious, shedding rivers of human blood.'

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Ibid. , p. 351.

These are the same terms used by the Mensheviks a few years earlier. They would soon be taken up by Trotsky and, fifty years later, the Belgian Army's chief ideologue would say things no better. It is important to note that the terms `crazed terror', `slavery' and `rivers of blood' were used by the `old Bolshevik' Solomon to describe the situation in the Soviet Union under Lenin and during the liberal period of 1924--1929, before collectivization. All the slanders of `terrorist and bloodthirsty rйgime', hurled by the bourgeoisie against the Soviet rйgime under Stalin, were hurled, word for word, against Lenin's Soviet Union.

Solomon presented an interesting case of an `old Bolshevik' who was fundamentally opposed to Lenin's project, but who chose to disrupt and `distort' it from the inside. Already in 1918, some Bolsheviks had, in front of Lenin, accused Solomon of being a bourgeois, a speculator and a German spy. Solomon denied everything in a self-righteous manner. But it is interesting to note that as soon as he left the Soviet Union, he publicly declared himself to be an avowed anti-Communist.

Frunze

Bazhanov's book, mentioned above, contains another particularly interesting passage. He spoke of the contacts that he had with superior officers in the Red Army:

`(Frunze) was perhaps the only man among the communist leaders who wished the liquidation of the rйgime and Russia's return to a more human existence.

`At the beginning of the revolution, Frunze was Bolshevik. But he entered the army, fell under the influence of old officers and generals, acquired their traditions and became, to the core, a soldier. As his passion for the army grew, so did his hatred for communism. But he knew how to shut up and hide his thoughts ....

`(H)e felt that his ambition was to replay in the future the rфle of Napoleon ....

`Frunze had a well defined plan. He sought most of all to eliminate the Party's power within the Red Army. To start with, he succeeded in abolishing the commissars who, as representatives of the Party, were above the commanders .... Then, energetically following his plans for a Bonapartist coup d'йtat, Frunze carefully chose for the various commander positions real military men in whom he could place his trust .... so that the army could succeed in its coup d'йtat, an exceptional situation was required, a situation that war, for example, might have brought ....

`His ability to give a Communist flavor to each of his acts was remarkable. Nevertheless, Stalin found him out.'

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Bajanov, op. cit. , pp. 105--109.

It is difficult to ascertain whether Bazhanov's judgment of Frunze was correct. But his text clearly showed that in 1926, people were already speculating about militarist and Bonapartist tendencies within the army to put an end to the Soviet rйgime. Tokaev would write in 1935, `the Frunze Central Military Aerodrome (was) one of the centres of (Stalin's) irreconcilable enemies'.

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G. A. Tokaev, Comrade X (London: The Harvill Press, 1956), p. 33.

When Tukhachevsky was arrested and shot in 1937, he was accused of exactly the same intentions that were imputed to Frunze by Bazhanov in 1930.

Alexander Zinoviev

In 1939, Alexander Zinoviev, a brilliant student, was seventeen years old. `I could see the differences between the reality and the ideals of communism, I made Stalin responsible for this difference'.

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Zinoviev, op. cit. , p. 105.

This sentence perfectly describes petit-bourgeois idealism, which is quite willing to accept Communist ideals, but abstracts itself from social and economic reality, as well as from the international context under which the working class built socialism. Petit-bourgeois idealists reject Communist ideals when they must face the bitterness of class struggle and the material difficulties they meet when building socialism. `I was already a confirmed anti-Stalinist at the age of seventeen', claimed Zinoviev.

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Ibid. , p. 104.

`I considered myself a neo-anarchist'.

.

Ibid. , p. 126.

He passionately read Bakunin and Kropotkin's works, then those of Zheliabov and the populists.

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Ibid. , pp. 110, 118.

The October Revolution was made in fact `so that apparatchiks ... could have their state car for personal use, live in sumptuous apartments

and dachas;' it aimed at `setting up a centralized and bureaucratic State'.

.

Ibid. , pp. 111, 113.

`The idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat was nonsense'.

.

Ibid. , p. 115.

Zinoviev continued:

`The idea of killing Stalin filled my thoughts and feelings .... I already had a penchant for terrorism .... We studied the ``technical'' possibilities of an attack ...: during the parade in Red Square ... we would provoke a diversion that would allow me, armed with a pistol and grenades, to attack the leaders.'

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Ibid. , pp. 118, 120.

Soon after, with his friend Alexey, he prepared a new attack `programmed for November 7, 1939'.

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Ibid. , p. 122.

Zinoviev entered a philosophy department in an йlite school.

`Upon entry ... I understood that sooner or later I would have to join the CP .... I had no intention of openly expressing my convictions: I would only get myself in trouble ....

`I had already chosen my course. I wanted to be a revolutionary struggling for a new society .... I therefore decided to hide myself for a time and to hide my real nature from my entourage, except for a few intimate friends.'

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Ibid. , p. 116.

These four cases give us an idea of the great difficulty that the Soviet leadership had to face against relentless enemies, hidden and acting in secret, enemies that did everything they possibly could to undermine and destroy the Party and Soviet power from within.

The struggle against opportunism in the Party

During the twenties and thirties, Stalin and other Bolshevik leaders led many struggles against opportunist tendencies within the Party. The refutation of anti-Leninist ideas coming from Trotsky, then Zinoviev and Kamenev, finally Bukharin, played a central rфle. These ideological and political struggles were led correctly, according to Leninist principles, firmly and patiently.

The Bolshevik Party led a decisive ideological and political struggle against Trotsky during the period 1922--1937, over the question of the possibility of building socialism in one country, the Soviet Union. Using `leftist' ideology, Trotsky pretended that socialist construction was impossible in the Soviet Union, given the absence of a victorious revolution in a large industrialized country. This defeatist and capitulationist thesis was the one held since 1918 by the Mensheviks, who had concluded that it was impossible to build socialism in a backward peasant country. Many texts by Bolshevik leaders, essentially by Stalin and Bukharin, show that this struggle was correctly led.

In 1926--1927, Zinoviev and Kamenev joined Trotsky in his struggle against the Party. Together, they formed the United Opposition. The latter denounced the rise of the kulak class, criticized `bureaucratism' and organized clandestine factions within the Party. When Ossovsky defended the right to form `opposition parties', Trotsky and Kamenev voted in the Politburo against his exclusion. Zinoviev took up Trotsky's `impossibility of building socialism in one country', a theory that he had violently fought against only two years previous, and spoke of the danger of the degeneration of the Party.

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Edward Hallett Carr. Foundations of a Planned Economy, 1926--1929, Volume 2 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1971), pp. 7, 10--12, 20.

Trotsky invented in 1927 the `Soviet thermidor', analogous with the French counter-revolution where the right-wing Jacobins executed the left-wing Jacobins.

Then Trotsky explained that at the beginning of World War I, when the German army was 80 kilometres (50 miles) from Paris, Clйmenceau overthrew the weak government of Painlevй to organize an effective defence without concessions. Trotsky was insinuating that in the case of imperialist attack, he would implement a Clйmenceau-like coup d'йtat.

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Ibid. , pp. 28--29.

Through these acts and his writings, the opposition was thoroughly discredited and, during a vote, received only 6000 votes as against 725,000.

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Ibid. , p. 42.

On December 27, 1927, the Central Committee declared that the opposition had allied itself with anti-Soviet forces and that those who held its positions would be expelled from the Party. All the Trotskyist and Zinovievite leaders were expelled.

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Ibid. , p. 49.

However, in June 1928, several Zinovievites recanted and were re-integrated, as were their leaders Zinoviev, Kamenev and Evdokimov.

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Ibid. , p. 60.

A large number of Trotskyists were also re-integrated, including Preobrazhensky and Radek.

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Ibid. , p. 67.

Trotsky, however, maintained his irreconcilable opposition to the Party and was expelled from the Soviet Union.

The next great ideological struggle was led against Bukharin's rightist deviation during the collectivization. Bukharin put forward a social-democratic line, based on the idea of class re-conciliation. In fact, he was protecting the development of the kulaks in the countryside and represented their interests. He insisted on a slowing down of the industrialization of the country. Bukharin was torn asunder by the bitterness of the class struggle in the countryside, whose `horrors' he described and denounced.

During this struggle, former `Left Opposition' members made unprincipled alliances with Bukharin in order to overthrow Stalin and the Marxist-Leninist leadership. On July 11, 1928, during the violent debates that took place before the collectivization, Bukharin held a clandestine meeting with Kamenev. He stated that he was ready to `give up Stalin for Kamenev and Zinoviev', and hoped for `a bloc to remove Stalin'.

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Ibid. , p. 65.

In September 1928, Kamenev contacted some Trotskyists, asking them to rejoin the Party and to wait `till the crisis matures'.

.

Ibid. , p. 73, n. 3.

After the success of the collectivization of 1932--1933, Bukharin's defeatist theories were completely discredited.

By that time, Zinoviev and Kamenev had started up once again their struggle against the Party line, in particular by supporting the counter-revolutionary program put forward by Riutin in 1931--1932 (see page). They were expelled a second time from the Party and exiled in Siberia.

From 1933 on, the leadership thought that the hardest battles for industrialization and collectivization were behind them. In May 1933, Stalin and Molotov signed a decision to liberate 50 per cent of the people sent to work camps during the collectivization. In November 1934, the kolkhoz management system took its definite form, the kolkhozians having the right to cultivate for themselves a private plot and to raise livestock.

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Getty, op. cit. , p. 94.

The social and economic atmosphere relaxed throughout the country.

The general direction of the Party had proven correct. Kamenev, Zinoviev, Bukharin and a number of Trotskyists recognized that they had erred. The Party leadership thought that the striking victories in building socialism would encourage these former opposition leaders to criticize their wrong ideas and to accept Leninist ones. It hoped that all the leading cadres would apply Leninist principles of criticism and self-criticism, the materialist and dialectical method that allows each Communist to improve their political education and to assess their understanding, in order to reinforce the political unity of the Party. For that reason, almost all the leaders of the three opportunist movements, the Trotskyists Pyatakov, Radek, Smirnov and Preobrazhensky, as well as Zinoviev and Kamenev

and Bukharin, who in fact had remained in an important position, were invited to the 17th Congress, where they made speeches.

That Congress was the congress of victory and unity.

In his report to the Seventeenth Congress, presented on January 26, 1934, Stalin enumerated the impressive achievements in industrialization, collectivization and cultural development. After having noted the political victory over the Trotskyist group and over the bourgeois nationalists, he stated:

`The anti-Leninist group of the Right deviators has been smashed and scattered. Its organizers have long ago renounced their views and are now trying in every way to expiate the sins they committed against the Party.'

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Stalin, Report to the Seventeenth Party Congress on the Work of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B.). Selected Works, p. 404.

During the congress, all the old opponents acknowledged the tremendous successes achieved since 1930. In his concluding speech, Stalin stated:

`(I)t has been revealed that there is extraordinary ideological, political and organizational solidarity in the ranks of the Party.'

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Stalin, Instead of a Reply to the Discussion, Works, vol. 13, p. 404.

Stalin was convinced that the former deviationists would in the future work loyally to build socialism.

`We have smashed the enemies of the Party .... But remnants of their ideology still live in the minds of individual members of the Party, and not infrequently they find expression.'

And he underscored the persistence of `the survivals of capitalism in economic life' and `Still less ... in the minds of people'. `That is why we cannot say that the fight is ended and that there is no longer any need for the policy of the socialist offensive.'

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Stalin, Report, op. cit. , pp. 405--406.

A detailed study of the ideological and political struggle that took place in the Bolshevik leadership from 1922 to 1934 refutes many well-ingrained lies and prejudices. It is patently false that Stalin did not allow other leaders to express themselves freely and that he ruled like a `tyrant' over the Party. Debates and struggles took place openly and over an extended period of time. Fundamentally different ideas confronted each other violently, and socialism's very future was at stake. Both in theory and in practice, the leadership around Stalin showed that it followed a Leninist line and the different opportunist factions expressed the interests of the old and new bourgeoisies. Stalin was not only careful and patient in the struggle, he even allowed opponents who claimed that they had understood their errors to return to the leadership. Stalin really believed in the honesty of the self-criticisms presented by his former opponents.

The trials and struggle against revisionism and enemy infiltration

On December 1, 1934, Kirov, number two in the Party, was assassinated in his office in the Party Headquarters in Leningrad. The assassin, Nikolayev, had entered simply by showing his Party card. He had been expelled from the Party, but had kept his card.

The counter-revolutionaries in the prisons and in the camps started up their typical slanderous campaign:

`It was Stalin who killed Kirov'! This `interpretation' of Kirov's murder was spread in the West by the dissident Orlov in 1953. At the time, Orlov was in Spain! In a book that he published after he left for the West in 1938, Orlov wrote about hearsay that he picked up during his brief stays in Moscow. But it was only fifteen years later, during the Cold War, that the dissident Orlov would have sufficient insight to make his sensational revelation.

Tokaev, a member of a clandestine anti-Communist organization, wrote that Kirov was killed by an opposition group and that he, Tokaev, had carefully followed the preparations for the assassination. Liuskov, a member of the NKVD who fled to Japan, confirmed that Stalin had nothing to do with this assassination.

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Ibid. , p. 207.

Kirov's assassination took place just as the Party leadership thought that the most difficult struggles were behind them and that Party unity had been re-established. Stalin's first reaction was disorganized and reflected panic. The leadership thought that the assassination of the number two man in the Party meant the beginning of a coup d'йtat. A new decree was immediately published, calling for the use of summary procedures for

the arrest and execution of terrorists. This draconian measure was the result of the feeling of mortal danger for the socialist rйgime.

At first, the Party looked for the guilty within traditional enemy circles, the Whites. A few of them were executed.

Then, the police found Nikolayev's journal. In it, there was no reference to an opposition movement that had prepared the attack. The inquiry finally concluded that Zinoviev's group had `influenced' Nikolayev and his friends, but found no evidence of direct implication of Zinoviev, who was sent back to internal exile.

The Party's reaction showed great disarray. The thesis by which Stalin `prepared' the attack to implement his `diabolical plan' to exterminate the opposition is not verified by the facts.

The trial of the Trotskyite-Zinovievist Centre

The attack was followed by a purge from the Party of Zinoviev's followers. There was no massive violence. The next few months focused on the great preparations for the new Constitution, based on the concept of socialist democracy.

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Ibid. , pp. 95, 111-112, 115--116.

Only sixteen months later, in June 1936, the Kirov dossier was re-opened with the discovery of new information. It turned out that in October 1932, a secret organization, including Zinoviev and Kamenev, had been formed.

The police had proof that Trotsky had sent, early in 1932, clandestine letters to Radek, Sokolnikov, Preobrazhensky and others to incite them to more energetic actions against Stalin. Getty found traces to these letters in Trotsky's archives.

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Ibid. , p. 119; p. 245, n. 20.

In October 1932, the former Trotskyist Goltsman clandestinely met Trotsky's son, Sedov, in Berlin. They discussed a proposal by Smirnov to create a United Opposition Block, including Trotskyists, Zinovievites and Lominadze's followers. Trotsky insisted on `anonynimity and clandestinity'. Soon after, Sedov wrote to his father that the Bloc was officially created and that the Safarov--Tarkhanov group was being courted.

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Ibid. , pp. 119--120.

Trotsky's Bulletin published, using pseudonyms, Goltsman's and Smirnov's reports.

Hence, the leadership of the Party had irrefutable proof that a plot existed to overthrow the Bolshevik leadership and to put into power a gang of opportunists walking in step with the old exploiting classes.

The existence of this plot was a major alarming sign.

Trotsky and counter-revolution

It was clear in 1936 to anyone who was carefully analyzing the class struggle on the international scale that Trotsky had degenerated to the point where he was a pawn of all sorts of anti-Communist forces. Full of himself, he assigned himself a planetary and historic rфle, more and more grandiose as the clique around him became insignificant. All his energy focused on one thing: the destruction of the Bolshevik Party, thereby allowing Trotsky and the Trotskyists to seize power. In fact, knowing in detail the Bolshevik Party and its history, Trotsky became one of the world's specialists in the anti-Bolshevik struggle.

To show his idea, we present here some of the public declarations that Trotsky made before the re-opening of the Kirov affair in June 1936. They throw new light on Zinoviev, Kamenev, Smirnov and all those who plotted with Trotsky.

`Destroy the communist movement'

Trotsky declared in 1934 that Stalin and the Communist Parties were responsible for Hitler's rise to power; to overthrow Hitler, the Communist Parties had to be destroyed `mercilessly'!

`Hitler's victory ... (arose) ... by the despicable and criminal policy of the Cominterm. ``No Stalin --- no victory for Hitler." '

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Leon Trotsky, Are There No Limits to the Fall? A Summary of the Thirteenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (18 January 1934). Writings of Leon Trotsky (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1973), vol. 6, p. 210.

`(T)he Stalinist Cominterm, as well as the Stalinist diplomacy, assisted Hitler into the saddle from either side.'

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Ibid. , p. 215.

`(T)he Cominterm bureaucracy, together with social-democracy, is doing everything it possibly can to transform Europe, in fact the entire world, into a fascist concentration camp.'

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Leon Trotsky, Que signifie la capitulation de Rakovsky? (31 March 1934). La lutte, pp. 59--60.

`(T)he Cominterm provided one of the most important conditions for the victory of fascism. ... to overthrow Hitler it is necessary to finish

with the Cominterm.'

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Trotsky, Are There No Limits to the Fall?, p. 212.

`Workers, learn to despise this bureaucratic rabble!'

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Ibid. , p. 216.

`(The workers must) drive the theory and practice of bureaucratic adventurism out of the ranks of the workers' movement!'

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Ibid. , p. 217.

So, early in 1934, Hitler in power less than a year, Trotsky claimed that to overthrow fascism, the international Communist movement had to be destroyed! Perfect example of the `anti-fascist unity' of which Trotskyists speak so demagogically. Recall that during the same period, Trotsky claimed that the German Communist Party had refused `the policies of the united front with the Social Democracy'

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Ibid. , p. 211.

and that, consequently, it was responsible, by its `outrageous sectarism', for Hitler's coming to power. In fact, it was the German Social-Democratic Party that, because of its policy of unconditional defence of the German capitalist rйgime, refused any anti-fascist and anti-capitalist unity.

And Trotsky proposed to `mercilessly extirpate' the only force that had truly fought against Nazism!

Still in 1934, to incite the more backward masses against the Bolshevik Party, Trotsky put forward his famous thesis that the Soviet Union resembled, in numerous ways, a fascist state.

`(I)n the last period the Soviet bureaucracy has familiarized itself with many traits of victorious fascism, first of all by getting rid of the control of the party and establishing the cult of the leader.'

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Trotsky, On the Eve of the Seventeenth Congress (20 January 1934). Writings, vol. 6, pp. 223-224.

Capitalist restoration is impossible

In the beginning of 1935, Trotsky's position was the following: the restoration of capitalism in the USSR is impossible; the economic and political base of the Soviet rйgime is safe, but the summit, i.e. the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, is the most corrupt, the most anti-democratic and the most reactionary part of society.

Hence, Trotsky took under his wing all the anti-Communist forces that were struggling `against the most corrupt part' of the Bolshevik Party. Within the Party, Trotsky systematically defended opportunists, careerists and defeatists whose actions undermined the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Here is what Trotsky wrote at the end of 1934, just after Kirov's assassination, just after Zinoviev and Kamenev were excluded from the Party and sentenced to internal exile.

`(H)ow could it come to pass that at a time like this, after all the economic successes, after the ``abolition'' --- according to official assurances --- of classes in the USSR and the ``construction'' of the socialist society, how could it come to pass that Old Bolsheviks ... could have posed for their task the restoration of capitalism

`Only utter imbeciles would be capable of thinking that capitalist relations, that is to say, the private ownership of the means of production, including the land, can be reestablished in the USSR by peaceful methods and lead to the rйgime of bourgeois democracy. As a matter of fact, even if it were possible in general, capitalism could not be regenerated in Russia except as the result of a savage counterrevolutionary coup d'etat that would cost ten times as many victims as the October Revolution and the civil war.'

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Trotsky, The Stalinist Bureaucracy and the Kirov Assassination: A Reply to Friends in America (28 December 1934). Writings, vol. 7, p. 116.

This passage leads one to think. Trotsky led a relentless struggle from 1922 to 1927 within the leadership of the Party, claiming that it was impossible to build socialism in one country, the Soviet Union. But, this unscrupulous individual declared in 1934 that socialism was so solidly established in the Soviet Union that overthrowing it would claim tens of millions of lives!

Then, Trotsky claimed to defend the `Old Bolsheviks'. But the `Old Bolsheviks' Zinoviev and Kamenev were diametrically opposed to the `Old Bolsheviks' Stalin, Kirov, Molotov, Kaganovich and Zhdanov. The latter showed that in the bitter class struggle taking place in the Soviet Union, the opportunist positions of Zinoviev and Kamenev opened up the way for the old exploiting classes and for the new bureaucrats.

Trotsky used the age-old bourgeois argument: `he is an old revolutionary, how could he have changed sides?' Khrushchev would take up this slogan in his Secret Report.

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Nikita S. Khrushchev. The Crimes of the Stalin Era: Special Report to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Secret Report). The New Leader (New York), 1957, p. S32.

However, Kautsky, once hailed as the spiritual child of Marx and Engels, became, after the death of the founders of scientific socialism, the main Marxist renegade. Martov was one of the Marxist pioneers in Russia and participated in the creation of the first revolutionary organizations; nevertheless, he became a Menshevik leader and fought against socialist revolution right from October 1917. And what about the `Old Bolsheviks' Khrushchev and Mikoyan, who effectively set the Soviet Union on the path of capitalist restoration.

Trotsky claimed that counter-revolution was impossible without a bloodbath that would cost tens of million lives. He pretended that capitalism

could not be retored `from inside', by the internal political degeneration of the Party, by enemy infiltration, by bureaucratization, by the social-democratization of the Party. However, Lenin insisted on this possibility.

Politically, Kamenev and Zinoviev were precursors of Khrushchev. Nevertheless, to ridicule the vigilance against opportunists such as Kamenev, Trotsky used an argument that would be taken up, almost word for word, by Khrushchev in his `Secret Report':

`(The) ``liquidation'' (of the former ruling classes) concurrently with the economic successes of the new society must necessarily lead to the mitigation and the withering away of the dictatorship'.

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Trotsky, The Stalinist Bureaucracy and the Kirov Assassination, p. 117.

Just as a clandestine organization succeeded in killing the number two of the socialist rйgime, Trotsky declared that the dictatorship of the proletariat should logically begin to disappear. At the same time that he was pointing a dagger at the heart of the Bolsheviks who were defending the Soviet rйgime, Trotsky was calling for leniency toward the plotters.

In the same essay, Trotsky painted the terrorists in a favorable light. Trotsky declared that Kirov's assassination was `a new fact that must be considered of great symptomatic importance'. He explained:

`(A) terrorist act prepared beforehand and committed by order of a definite organization is ... inconceivable unless there exists a political atmosphere favorable to it. The hostility to the leaders in power must have been widespread and must have assumed the sharpest forms for a terrorist group to crystallize out within the ranks of the party youth ....

`If ... discontent is spreading within the masses of the people ... which isolated the bureaucracy as a whole; if the youth itself feels that it is

spurned, oppressed and deprived of the chance for independent development, the atmosphere for terroristic groupings is created.'

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Ibid. , pp. 121--122.

Trotsky, while keeping a public distance from individual terrorism, said all he could in favor of Kirov's assassination! You see, the plot and the assassination were proof of a `general atmosphere of hostility that isolated the entire bureaucracy'. Kirov's assassination proved that `the youth feels oppressed and deprived of the chance for independent development' --- this last remark was a direct encouragement for the reactionary youth, who did in fact feel `oppressed' and `deprived of the chance for independent development'.

In support of terror and insurrection

Trotsky finished by calling for individual terrorism and armed insurrection to destroy the `Stalinist' power. Hence, as early as 1935, Trotsky acted as an open counter-revolutionary, as an irreconcilable anti-Communist. Here is a portion of a 1935 text, which he wrote one and a half years before the Great Purge of 1937.

`Stalin ... is the living incarnation of a bureaucratic Thermidor. In his hands, the terror has been and still remains an instrument designed to crush the Party, the unions and the Soviets, and to establish a personal dictatorship that only lacks the imperial crown ....

`The insane atrocities provoked by the bureaucratic collectivization methods, or the cowardly reprisals against the best elements of the proletarian vanguard, have inevitably provoked exasperation, hatred and a spirit of vengeance. This atmosphere generates a readiness among the youth to commit individual acts of terror ....

`Only the successes of the world proletariat can revive the Soviet proletariat's belief in itself. The essential condition of the revolution's victory is the unification of the international revolutionary vanguard under the flag of the Fourth International. The struggle for this banner must be conducted in the Soviet Union, with prudence but without compromise .... The proletariat that made three revolutions will lift up its head one more time. The bureaucratic absurdity will try to resist? The proletariat will find a big enough broom. And we will help it.'

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Leon Trotsky, Pour sa propre sauvegarde, la bureaucratie entretient la terreur (26 September 1935). L'appareil policier du stalinisme (Paris: Union gйnйrale d'йditions, 1976), pp. 85--87.

Hence, Trotsky discretely encouraged `individual terror' and openly called for `a fourth revolution'.

In this text, Trotsky claimed that Stalin `crushed' the Bolshevik Party, the unions and the Soviets. Such an `atrocious' counter-revolution, declared Trotsky, would necessarily provoke hatred among the youth, a spirit of vengeance and terrorism. This was a thinly veiled call for the assassination of Stalin and other Bolshevik leaders. Trotsky declared that the activity of his acolytes in the Soviet Union had to follow the strictest rules of a conspiracy; it was clear that he would not directly call for individual terror. But he made it clear that such individual terror would `inevitably' be provoked by the Stalinist crimes. For conspiratorial language, difficult to be clearer.

If there were any doubt among his followers that they had to follow the armed path, Trotsky added: in Russia, we led an armed revolution in 1905, another one in February 1917 and a third one in October 1917. We are now preparing a fourth revolution against the `Stalinists'. If they should dare resist, we will treat them as we treated the Tsarists and the bourgeois in 1905 and 1917. By calling for an armed revolution in the Soviet Union, Trotsky became the spokesperson for all the defeated reactionary classes, from the kulaks, who had suffered such `senseless atrocities' at the hands of the `bureaucrats' during the collectivization, to the Tsarists, including the bourgeois and the White officers! To drag some workers into his anti-Communist enterprise, Trotsky promised them `the success of the world proletariat' that would `give back the confidence to the Soviet proletariat'.

After reading these texts, it is clear that any Soviet Communist who learned of clandestine links between Trotsky and existing members of the Party would have to immediately denounce those members to the state security. All those who maintained clandestine relations with Trotsky were part of a counter-revolutionary plot aiming to destroy the very foundations of Soviet power, notwithstanding the `leftist' arguments they used to justify their anti-Communist subversion.

The Zinoviev--Kamenev--Smirnov counter-revolutionary group

Let us come back to the discovery, in 1936, of links between Zinoviev--Kamenev--Smirnov and Trotsky's anti-Communist group outside the country.

The trial of the Zinovievites took place in August 1936. It essentially dealt with elements that had been marginal in the Party for several years. The repression against Trotskyists and Zinovievites left the Party structures intact. During the trial, the accused referred to Bukharin. But the prosecutor felt that there was not sufficient proof implicating Bukharin and did not pursue investigations in this direction, i.e. towards the leading cadre circles of the Party.

Nevertheless, the radical tendency within the Party leadership published in July 1936 an internal letter that focused on the fact that enemies had penetrated the Party apparatus itself, that they were hiding their real intentions and that their were noisily showing their support for the general line in order to better sabotage. It was very difficult to unmask them, the letter noted.

The July letter also contained this affirmation: `Under present conditions, the inalienable quality of every Bolshevik must be the ability to detect the enemy of the party, however well he may be masked'.

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Getty, op. cit. , p. 123.

This sentence may appear to some as a summary of `Stalinist' paranoia. They should carefully read the admission of Tokaev, a member of an anti-Communist organization within the CPSU. Tokaev described his reaction to Zinoviev during a Party assembly at the Zhukovsky Military Academy, where he occupied an important position.

`In this atmosphere, there was only one thing for me to do: go with the tide .... I concentrated on Zinoviev and Kameniev. I avoided all mention of Bukharin. But the chairman would not let this pass: did I or did I not approve of the conclusions Vishinsky had drawn in regard to Bukharin? ....

`I said that Vishinsky's decision to investigate the activity of Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsky and Uglanov had the approval of the people and the Party, and that I `completely agreed' --- that the `peoples of the Soviet Union and our Party had the right to know about the two-faced intrigues of Bukharin and Rykov ....

`(F)rom this statement alone my other readers will grasp in what a turgid atmosphere, in what an ultra-conspiratorial manner --- not even knowing one another's characters --- we oppositionists of the U.S.S.R. have to work.'

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Tokaev, op. cit. , pp. 60--61.

It is therefore clear that at the time of the trial of the Trotskyist--Zinovievite Bloc, Stalin did not support the radical tendency and kept his faith in the head of the NKVD, Yagoda. The latter was able to orient the trial and significantly restricted the scope of the purge that took place after the discovery of the plot.

However, there was already doubt about Yagoda. Several people, including Van Heijenoort, Trotsky's secretary, and Orlov, an NKVD turncoat, have since affirmed that Mark Zborowsky, Sedov's closest collaborator, worked for the Soviet secret services.

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Getty, op. cit. , pp. 121--122.

Under these conditions, could Yagoda really have known nothing about the existence of the Trotsky--Zinoviev bloc until 1936? Or did he hide it? Some within the Party were already asking this question. For this reason, in the beginning of 1936, Yezhov, a member of the radical tendency, was named Yagoda's second.

The trial of Pyatakov and the Trotskyists

On September 23, 1936 a wave of explosions hit the Siberian mines, the second in nine months. There were 12 dead. Three days later, Yagoda became Commissar of Communications and Yezhov chief of the NKVD. At least until that time, Stalin had sustained the more or less liberal policies of Yagoda.

Investigations in Siberia led to the arrest of Pyatakov, an old Trotskyist, assistant to Ordzhonikidze, Commissar of Heavy Industry since 1932. Close to Stalin, Ordzhonikidze had followed a policy of using and re-educating bourgeois specialists. Hence, in February 1936, he had amnestied nine `bourgeois engineers', condemned in 1930 during an major trial on sabotage.

On the question of industry, there had been for several years debates and divisions within the Party. Radicals, led by Molotov, opposed most of the bourgeois specialists, in whom they had little political trust. They had long called for a purge. Ordzhonikidze, on the other hand, said that they were needed and that their specialties had to be used.

This recurring debate about old specialists with a suspect past resurfaced with the sabotage in the Siberian mines. Inquiries revealed that Pyatakov, Ordzhonikidze's assistant, had widely used bourgeois specialists to sabotage the mines.

In January 1937, the trial of Pyatakov, Radek and other old Trotskyists was held; they admitted their clandestine activities. For Ordzhonikidze, the blow was so hard that he committed suicide.

Of course, several bourgeois authors have claimed that the accusations of systematic sabotage were completely invented, that these were frameups whose sole rфle was to eliminate political opponents. But there was a U.S. engineer who worked between 1928 and 1937 as a leading cadre in the mines of Ural and Siberia, many of which had been sabotaged. The testimony of this apolitical technician John Littlepage is interesting on many counts.

Littlepage described how, as soon as he arrived in the Soviet mines in 1928, he became aware of the scope of industrial sabotage, the method of struggle preferred by enemies of the Soviet rйgime. There was therefore a large base fighting against the Bolshevik leadership, and if some well-placed Party cadres were encouraging or simply protecting the saboteurs, they could seriously weaken the rйgime. Here is Littlepage's description.

`One day in 1928 I went into a power-station at the Kochbar gold-mines. I just happened to drop my hand on one of the main bearings of a large Diesel engine as I walked by, and felt something gritty in the oil. I had the engine stopped immediately, and we removed from the oil reservoir about two pints of quartz sand, which could have been placed there only by design. On several other occasions in the new milling plants at Kochkar we found sand inside such equipment as speed-reducers, which are entirely enclosed, and can be reached only by removing the hand-hold covers.

`Such petty industrial sabotage was --- and still is --- so common in all branches of Soviet industry that Russian engineers can do little about it, and were surprised at my own concern when I first encountered it ....

`Why, I have been asked, is sabotage of this description so common in Soviet Russia, and so rare in most other countries? Do Russians have a peculiar bent for industrial wrecking?

`People who ask such questions apparently haven't realized that the authorities in Russia have been --- and still are --- fighting a whole series of open or disguised civil wars. In the beginning they fought and dispossessed the aristocracy, the bankers and landowners and merchants of the Tsarist rйgime .... they later fought and dispossessed the little independent farmers and the little retail merchants and the nomad herders in Asia.

`Of course it's all for their own good, say the Communists. But many of these people can't see things that way, and remain bitter enemies of the Communists and their ideas, even after they have been put back to work in State industries. From these groups have come a considerable number of

disgruntled workers who dislike Communists so much that they would gladly damage any of their enterprises if they could.'

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John D. Littlepage and Demaree Bess, In Search of Soviet Gold (London: George E. Harrap & Co., 1939), pp. 188-189.

Sabotage in the Urals

During his work in the Kalata mines, in the Ural region, Littlepage was confronted by deliberate sabotage by engineers and Party cadres. It was clear to him that these acts were a deliberate attempt to weaken the Bolshevik rйgime, and that such blatant sabotage could only take place with the approval of the highest authorities in the Ural Region. Here is his important summary:

`Conditions were reported to be especially bad in the copper-mines of the Ural Mountain region, at that time Russia's most promising mineral-producing area, which had been selected for a lion's share of the funds available for production. American mining engineers had been engaged by the dozens for use in this area, and hundreds of American foremen had likewise been brought over for instructional purposes in mines and mills. Four or five American mining engineers had been assigned to each of the large copper-mines in the Urals, and American metallurgists as well.

`These men had all been selected carefully; they had excellent records in the United States. But, with very few exceptions, they had proved disappointing in the results they were obtaining in Russia. When Serebrovsky was given control of copper- and lead-mines, as well as gold, he wanted to find out why these imported experts weren't producing as they should; and in January 1931 he sent me off, together with an American metallurgist and a Russian Communist manager, to investigate conditions in the Ural mines, and try to find out what was wrong and how to correct it ....

`We discovered, in the first place, that the American engineers and metallurgists were not getting any co-operation at all; no attempt had been made to provide them with competent interpreters .... They had carefully surveyed the properties to which they were assigned and drawn up recommendations for exploitation which could have been immediately useful if applied. But these recommendations had either never been translated into Russian or had been stuck into pigeonholes and never brought out again ....

`The mining methods used were so obviously wrong that a first-year engineering student could have pointed out most of their faults. Areas too large for control were being opened up, and ore was being removed without the proper timbering and filling. In an effort to speed up production before suitable preparations had been completed several of the best mines had been badly damaged, and some ore bodies were on the verge of being lost beyond recovery ....

`I shall never forget the situation we found at Kalata. Here, in the Northern Urals, was one of the most important copper properties in Russia, consisting of six mines, a flotation concentrator, and a smelter, with blast and reverberatory furnaces. Seven American mining engineers of the first rank, drawing very large salaries, had been assigned to this place some time before. Any one of them, if he had been given the opportunity, could have put this property in good running order in a few weeks.

`But at the time our commission arrived they were completely tied down by red tape. Their recommendations were ignored; they were assigned no particular work; they were unable to convey their ideas to Russian engineers through ignorance of the language and lack of competent interpreters .... Of course, they knew what was technically wrong with the mines and mills at Kalata, and why production was a small fraction of what it should have been with the amount of equipment and personnel available.

`Our commission visited practically all the big copper-mines in the Urals and gave them a thorough inspection ....

`(I)n spite of the deplorable conditions I have described there had been few howls in the Soviet newspapers about ``wreckers'' in the Ural copper-mines. This was a curious circumstance, because the Communists were accustomed to attribute to deliberate sabotage much of the confusion and disorder in industry at the time. But the Communists in the Urals, who controlled the copper-mines, had kept surprisingly quiet about them.

`In July 1931, after Serebrovsky had examined the report of conditions made by our commission, he decided to send me back to Kalata as chief engineer, to see if we couldn't do something with this big property.

He sent along with me a Russian Communist manager, who had no special knowledge of mining, but who was given complete authority, and apparently was instructed to allow me free rein ....

`The seven American engineers brightened up considerably when they discovered we really had sufficient authority to cut through the red tape and give them a chance to work. They ... went down into the mines alongside their workmen, in the American mining tradition. Before long things were picking up fast, and within five months production rose by 90 per cent.

`The Communist manager was an earnest fellow; he tried hard to understand what we were doing and how we did it. But the Russian engineers at these mines, almost without exception, were sullen and obstructive. They objected to every improvement we suggested. I wasn't used to this sort of thing; the Russian engineers in gold-mines where I had worked had never acted like this.

`However, I succeeded in getting my methods tried out in these mines, because the Communist manager who had come with me supported every recommendation I made. And when the methods worked the Russian engineers finally fell into line, and seemed to get the idea ....

`At the end of five months I decided I could safely leave this property .... Mines and plant had been thoroughly reorganized; there seemed to be no good reason why production could not be maintained at the highly satisfactory rate we had established.

`I drew up detailed instructions for future operations .... I explained these things to the Russian engineers and to the Communist manager, who was beginning to get some notion of mining. The latter assured me that my ideas would be followed to the letter.'

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Ibid. , pp. 89--94.

`(I)n the spring of 1932 ... Soon after my return to Moscow I was informed that the copper-mines at Kalata were in very bad condition; production had fallen even lower than it was before I had reorganized the mines in the previous year. This report dumbfounded me; I couldn't understand how matters could have become so bad in this short time, when they had seemed to be going so well before I left.

`Serebrovsky asked me to go back to Kalata to see what could be done. When I reached there I found a depressing scene. The Americans had all finished their two-year contracts, which had not been renewed, so they had gone home. A few months before I arrived the Communist manager ... had been removed by a commission which had been sent in from Sverdlovsk, Communist headquarters in the Urals. The commission had reported that he was ignorant and inefficient, although there was nothing in his record to show it, and had appointed the chairman of the investigating commission to succeed him --- a curious sort of procedure.

`During my previous stay at the mines we had speeded up capacity of the blast furnaces to seventy-eight metric tons per square metre per day; they had now been permitted to drop back to their old output of forty to forty-five tons. Worst of all, thousands of tons of high-grade ore had been irretrievably lost by the introduction into two mines of methods which I had specifically warned against during my previous visit ....

`But I now learned that almost immediately after the Russian engineers were sent home the same Russian engineers whom I had warned about the danger had applied this method in the remaining mines (despite his written opposition, as the method was not universally applicable), with the result that the mines caved in and much ore was lost beyond recovery ....

`I set to work to try to recover some of the lost ground ....

`Then one day I discovered that the new manager was secretly countermanding almost every order I gave ....

`I reported exactly what I had discovered at Kalata to Serebrovsky ....

`In a short time the mine manager and some of the engineers were put on trial for sabotage. The manager got ten years ... and the engineers lesser terms ....

`I was satisfied at the time that there was something bigger in all this than the little group of men at Kalata; but I naturally couldn't warn Serebrovsky against prominent members of his own Communist Party .... But I was so sure that something was wrong high up in the political administration of the Ural Mountains ....

`It seemed clear to me at the time that the selection of this commission had their conduct at Kalata traced straight back to the Communist high command in Sverdlovsk, whose members must be charged either with criminal negligence or actual participation in the events which had occurred in these mines.

`However, the chief secretary of the Communist Party in the Urals, a man named Kabakoff, had occupied this post since 1922 ... he was considered so powerful that he was privately described as the ``Bolshevik Viceroy of the Urals." ....

`(T)here was nothing to justify the reputation he appeared to have. Under his long rule the Ural area, which is one of the richest mining regions in Russia, and which was given almost unlimited capital for exploitation, never produced anything like what it should have done.

`This commission at Kalata, whose members later admitted they had come there with wrecking intentions, had been sent directly from Kabakoff's headquarters .... I told some of my Russian acquaintances at the time that it seemed to me there was a lot more going on in the Urals than had yet been revealed, and that it came from somewhere high up.

`All these incidents became clearer, so far as I was concerned, after the conspiracy trial in January 1937, when Piatakoff, together with several

of his associates, confessed in open court that they had engaged in organized sabotage of mines, railways, and other industrial enterprises since the beginning of 1931. A few weeks after this trial ... the chief secretary of the Party in the Urals, Kabakoff, who had been a close associate of Piatakoff's, was arrested on charges of complicity in this same conspiracy.'

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Ibid. , pp. 97--101.

The opinion given here by Littlepage about Kabakov is worth remembering, since Khrushchev, in his infamous 1956 Secret Report, cited him as an example of worthy leader, `who had been a party member since 1914' and victim of `repressions ... which were based on nothing tangible'!

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Khrushchev, Secret Report, op. cit. , p. S32.

Sabotage in Kazakhstan

Since Littlepage visited so many mining regions, he was able to notice that this form of bitter class struggle, industrial sabotage, had developed all over the Soviet Union.

Here is how he described what he saw in Kazakhstan between 1932 and 1937, the year of the purge.

`(In October 1932,) An SOS had been sent out from the famous Ridder lead-zinc mines in Eastern Kazakstan, near the Chinese border ....

`(I was instructed) to take over the mines as chief engineer, and to apply whatever methods I considered best. At the same time the Communist managers apparently received instructions to give me a free hand and all possible assistance.

`The Government had spent large sums of money on modern American machinery and equipment for these mines, as for almost all others in Russia at that time .... But ... the engineers had been so ignorant of this equipment and the workmen so careless and stupid in handling any kind of machinery that much of these expensive importations were ruined beyond repair.'

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Littlepage and Bess, op. cit. , pp. 106--107.

`Two of the younger Russian engineers there impressed me as particularly capable, and I took a great deal of pains to explain to them how things had gone wrong before, and how we had managed to get them going along the right track again. It seemed to me that these young fellows, with the training I had been able to give them, could provide the leadership necessary to keep the mines operating as they should.'

.

Ibid. , p. 111.

`The Ridder mines ... had gone on fairly well for two or three years after I had reorganized them in 1932. The two young engineers who had impressed me so favorably had carried out the instructions I had left them with noteworthy success ....

`Then an investigating commission had appeared from Alma Ata ...\ similar to the one sent to the mines at Kalata. From that time on, although the same engineers had remained in the mines, an entirely different system was introduced throughout, which any competent engineer could have foretold would cause the loss of a large part of the ore body in a few months. They had even mined pillars which we had left to protect the main working shafts, so that the ground close by had settled ....

`(T)he engineers of whom I had spoken were no longer at work in the mines when I arrived there in 1937, and I understood they had been arrested for alleged complicity in a nation-wide conspiracy to sabotage Soviet industries which had been disclosed in a trial of leading conspirators in January.

`When I had submitted my report I was shown the written confessions of the engineers I had befriended in 1932. They admitted that they had been drawn into a conspiracy against the Stalin rйgime by opposition Communists who convinced them that they were strong enough to overthrow Stalin and his associates and take over control of the Soviet Government. The conspirators proved to them, they said, that they had many supporters among Communists in high places. These engineers, although they themselves were not Communists, decided they would have to back one side or the other, and they picked the losing side.

`According to their confessions, the `investigating commission' had consisted of conspirators, who traveled around from mine to mine lining up supporters. After they had been persuaded to join the conspiracy the engineers at Ridder had taken my written instructions as the basis for

wrecking the mines. They had deliberately introduced methods which I had warned against, and in this way had brought the mines close to destruction.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 112--114.

`I never followed the subtleties of political ideas and man uvres .... (But) I am firmly convinced that Stalin and his associates were a long time getting round to the discovery that disgruntled Communist revolutionaries were the most dangerous enemies they had ....

`My experience confirms the official explanation which, when it is stripped of a lot of high-flown and outlandish verbiage, comes down to the simple assertion that `outs' among the Communists conspired to overthrow the `ins', and resorted to underground conspiracy and industrial sabotage because the Soviet system has stifled all legitimate means for waging a political struggle.

`This Communist feud developed into such a big affair that many non-Communists were dragged into it, and had to pick one side or the other .... Disgruntled little persons of all kinds were in a mood to support any kind of underground opposition movement, simply because they were discontented with things as they stood.'

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Ibid. , pp. 274--275.

Pyatakov in Berlin

During the January 1937 Trial, Pyatakov, the old Trotskyist, was convicted as the most highly placed person responsible of industrial sabotage. In fact, Littlepage actually had the opportunity to see Pyatakov implicated in clandestine activity. Here is what he wrote:

`In the spring of 1931 ..., Serebrovsky ... told me a large purchasing commission was headed for Berlin, under the direction of Yuri Piatakoff, who ... was then the Vice-Commissar of Heavy Industry ....

`I ... arrived in Berlin at about the same time as the commission ....

`Among other things, the commission had put out bids for several dozen mine-hoists, ranging from one hundred to one thousand horse-power. Ordinarily these hoists consist of drums, shafting, beams, gears, etc., placed on a foundation of I- or H-beams.

`The commission had asked for quotations on the basis of pfennigs per kilogramme. Several concerns put in bids, but there was a considerable difference --- about five or six pfennigs per kilogramme --- between most of the bids and those made by two concerns which bid lowest. The difference made me examine the specifications closely, and I discovered that the firms which had made the lowest bids had substituted cast-iron bases for the light steel required in the original specifications, so that if their bids had been accepted the Russians would have actually paid more, because the cast-iron base would be so much heavier than the lighter steel one, but on the basis of pfennigs per kilogramme they would appear to pay less.

`This seemed to be nothing other than a trick, and I was naturally pleased to make such a discovery. I reported my findings to the Russian members of the commission with considerable self-satisfaction. To my astonishment the Russians were not at all pleased. They even brought considerable pressure upon me to approve the deal, telling me I had misunderstood what was wanted ....

`I ... wasn't able to understand their attitude ....

`It might very well be graft, I thought.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 95--96.

During his trial, Pyatakov made the following declarations to the tribunal:

`In 1931 I was in Berlin of official business .... In the middle of the summer of 1931 Ivan Nikitich Smirnov told me in Berlin that the Trotskyite fight against the Soviet government and the Party leadership was being renewed with new vigour, that he --- Smirnov --- had had an interview in Berlin with Trotsky's son, Sedov, who on Trotsky's instruction gave him a new line ....

`Smirnov ... conveyed to me that Sedov wanted very much to see me ....

`I agreed to this meeting ....

`Sedov said ... that there was being formed, or already been formed ... a Trotskyite centre .... The possibility was being sounded of restoring the united organization with the Zinovievites.

`Sedov also said that he knew for a fact the Rights also, in the persons of Tomsky, Bukharin and Rykov, had not laid down their arms, that they had only quietened down temporarily, and that the necessary connections should be established with them too ....

`Sedov said that only one thing was required of me, namely that I should place as many orders as possible with two German firms, Borsig and Demag, and that he, Sedov, would arrange to receive the necessary sums from them, bearing in mind that I would not be particularly exacting as to prices. If this were deciphered it was clear that the additions to prices that

would be made on the Soviet orders would pass wholly or in part into Trotsky's hands for his counter-revolutionary purposes.'

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People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R. Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre (Moscow, 1937), pp. 21--27.

Littlepage made the following comment:

`This passage in Piatakoff's confession is a plausible explanation, in my opinion, of what was going on in Berlin in 1931, when my suspicions were roused because the Russians working with Piatakoff tried to induce me to approve the purchase of mine-hoists which were not only too expensive, but would have been useless in the mines for which they were intended. I had found it hard to believe that these men were ordinary grafters .... But they had been seasoned political conspirators before the Revolution, and had taken risks of the same degree for the sake of their so-called cause.'

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Littlepage and Bess, op. cit. , p. 102.

Sabotage in Magnitogorsk

Another American engineer, John Scott, who worked at Magnitogorsk, recorded similar events in his book Behind the Urals. When describing the 1937 Purge, he wrote that there was serious, sometimes criminal negligence on the part of the people responsible. The machines at Magnitogorsk were deliberately sabotaged by ex-kulaks who had become workers. A bourgeois engineer, Scott analyzed the purge as follows:

`Many people in Magnitogorsk, arrested and indicted for political crimes, were just thieves, embezzlers, and bandits ....'

.

Scott, op. cit. , p. 184.

`The purge struck Magnitogorsk in 1937 with great force. Thousands were arrested ....

`The October Revolution earned the enmity of the old aristocracy, the officers of the old Czarist army and of the various White armies, State employees from pre-war days, business men of all kinds, small landlords, and kulaks. All of these people had ample reason to hate the Soviet power, for it had deprived them of something which they had before. Besides being internally dangerous, these men and women were potentially good material for clever foreign agents to work with ....

`Geographical conditions were such that no matter what kind of government was in power in the Soviet Union, poor, thickly populated countries like Japan and Italy and aggressive powers like Germany would leave no stone unturned in their attempts to infiltrate it with their agents, in order to establish their organizations and assert their influence .... These agents bred purges ....

`A large number of spies, saboteurs, and fifth-columnists were exiled or shot during the purge; but many more innocent men and women

were made to suffer.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 188--189.

The trial of the Bukharinist social-democratic group

The February 1937 decision to purge

Early in 1937, a crucial meeting of the Bolshevik Party Central Committee took place. It decided that a purge was necessary and how it should be carried out. Stalin subsequently published an important document. At the time of the plenum, the police had gathered sufficient evidence to prove that Bukharin was aware of the conspiratorial activities of the anti-Party groups unmasked during the trials of Zinoviev and Pyatakov. Bukharin was confronted with these accusations during the plenum. Unlike the other groups, Bukharin's group was at the very heart of the Party and his political influence was great.

Some claim that Stalin's report sounded the signal that set off `terror' and `arbitrary criminality'. Let us look at the real contents of this document.

His first thesis claimed that lack of revolutionary vigilance and political naпvetй had spread throughout the Party. Kirov's murder was the first serious warning, from which not all the necessary conclusions had been drawn. The trial of Zinoviev and the Trotskyists revealed that these elements were ready to do anything to destroy the rйgime. However, economic successes had created within the Party a feeling of self-satisfaction and victory. Cadres had forgotten capitalist encirclement and the increasing bitterness of the class struggle at the international level. Many had become submerged by little management questions and no longer preoccupied themselves with the major lines of national and international struggle.

Stalin said:

`Comrades, from the reports and the debates on these reports heard at this Plenum it is evident that we are dealing with the following three main facts.

`First, the wrecking, diversionists and espionage work of the agents of foreign countries, among who, a rather active role was played by the Trotskyites, affected more or less all, or nearly all, our organisations --- economic, administrative and Party.

`Second, the agents of foreign countries, among them the Trotskyites, not only penetrated into our lower organisations, but also into a number of responsible positions.

`Third, some of our leading comrades, at the centre and in the districts, not only failed to discern the real face of these wreckers, diversionists, spies and assassins, but proved to be so careless, complacent and naive that not infrequently they themselves helped to promote agents of foreign powers to responsible positions.'

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Stalin, Report and Speech in Reply to Debate at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., p. 241.

From these remarks, Stalin drew two conclusions.

First, political credulity and naпvetй had to be eliminated and revolutionary vigilance had to be reinforced. The remnants of the defeated exploiting classes would resort to sharper forms of class struggle and would clutch at the most desperate forms of struggle as the last resort of the doomed.

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Ibid. , p. 264.

In 1956, in his Secret Report, Khrushchev referred to this passage. He claimed that Stalin justified `mass terror' by putting forth the

formulation that `as we march forward toward socialism class war must ... sharpen'.

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Khrushchev, op. cit. , p. S24.

This is a patent falsehood. The most `intense' class struggle was the generalized civil war that drew great masses against each other, as in 1918--1920. Stalin talked about the remnants of the old classes that, in a desperate situation, would resort to the sharpest forms of struggle: attacks, assassinations, sabotage.

Stalin's second conclusion was that to reinforce vigilance, the political education of Party cadres had to be improved. He proposed a political education system of four to eight months for all cadres, from cell leaders all the way to the highest leaders.

Stalin's first report, presented on March 3, focused on the ideological struggle so that members of the Central Committee could take note of the gravity of the situation and understand the scope of subversive work that had taken place within the Party. His speech on March 5 focused on other forms of deviation, particularly leftism and bureaucracy.

Stalin began by explicitly warning against the tendency to arbitrarily extend the purge and repression.

`Does that mean that we must strike at and uproot, not only real Trotskyites, but also those who at some time or other wavered in the direction of Trotskyism and then, long ago, abandoned Trotskyism; not only those who, at some time or other, had occasion to walk down a street through which some Trotskyite had passed? At all events, such voices were heard at this Plenum .... You cannot measure everyone with the same yardstick. Such a wholesale approach can only hinder the fight against the real Trotskyite wreckers and spies.'

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Stalin, op. cit. , p. 278.

In preparation for the war, the Party certainly had to be purged of infiltrated enemies; nevertheless, Stalin warned against an arbitrary extension of the purge, which would harm the struggle against the real enemies.

The Party was not just menaced by the subversive work of infiltrated enemies, but also by serious deviations by cadres, in particular the tendency to form closed cliques of friends and to cut oneself off from militants and from the masses through bureaucratic methods.

First, Stalin attacked the `family atmosphere', in which `there can be no place for criticism of defects in the work, or for self-criticism by leaders of the work'.

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Ibid. , p. 280.

`Most often, workers are not chosen for objective reasons, but for causal, subjective, philistine, petty-bourgeois reasons. Most often, so-called acquaintances, friends, fellow-townsmen, personally devoted people, masters in the art of praising their chiefs are chosen.'

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Ibid. , pp. 279--280.

Finally, Stalin criticized bureaucracy, which, on certain questions, was `positively unprecedented'.

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Ibid. , p. 296.

During investigations, many ordinary workers were excluded from the Party for `passivity'. Most of these expulsions were not justified and should have been annuled a long time ago. Yet, many leaders held a bureaucratic attitude towards these unjustly expelled Communists.

.

Ibid. , p. 294.

`(S)ome of our Party leaders suffer from a lack of concern for people, for members of the Party, for workers .... because they have no individual approach in appraising Party members and Party workers they usually act in a haphazard way .... only those who are in fact profoundly anti-Party can have such an approach to members of the Party.'

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Ibid. , pp. 292--293.

Bureucracy also prevented Party leaders from learning from the masses. Nevertheless, to correctly lead the Party and the country, Communist leaders had to base themselves on the experiences of the masses.

Finally, bureaucracy made the control of leaders by Party masses impossible. Leaders had to report on their work at conferences and listen to criticisms from their base. During elections, several candidates had to be presented and, after a discussion of each, the vote should take place with a secret ballot.

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Ibid. , pp. 282--283.

The Riutin affair

During 1928--1930, Bukharin was bitterly criticized for his social-democratic ideas, particularly for his opposition to the collectivization, his policy of `social peace' with the kulaks and his attempt to slow down the industrialization efforts.

Pushing even further than Bukharin, Mikhail Riutin formed an openly counter-revolutionary group in 1931--1932. Riutin, a former substitute member of the Central Committee, was Party Secretary for a Moscow district until 1932. He was surrounded by several well-known young Bukharinists, including Slepkov, Maretsky and Petrovsky.

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Stephen F. Cohen. Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Political Biography, 1888--1938 (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), p. 343.

In 1931, Riutin wrote up a 200-page document, a real program for the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. Here are a few passages:

`Already in 1924--1925, Stalin was planning to organize his `Eighteenth Brumaire'. Just as Louis Bonaparte swore in front of the house his faithfulness to the constitution, while at the same time preparing his proclamation as emperor .... Stalin was preparing his `bloodless' Eighteenth Brumaire by amputating one group after another .... Those who do not know how to think in a Marxist manner think that the elimination of Stalin would at the same time mean the reversal of Soviet power .... The dictatorship of the proletariat will inevitably perish because of Stalin and his clique. By eliminating Stalin, we will have many chances to save it.

`What should be done?

`The Party.

`1. Liquidate the dictatorship by Stalin and his clique.

`2. Replace the entire leadership of the Party apparatus.

`3. Immediately convoke an extraordinary congress of the Party.

`The Soviets.

`1. New elections excluding nomination.

`2. Replacing the judicial machine and introduction of a rigorous legality.

`3. Replacement and purge of the Ogpu apparatus.

`Agriculture.

`1. Dissolution of all kolkhozes created by force.

`2. Liquidation of all unprofitable sovkhozes.

`3. Immediate halt to the pillage of the peasants.

`4. Rules allowing the exploitation of land by private owners and the return of land to these owners for an extended period.'

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Nouvelles de Moscou 21, 27 May 1990.

Riutin's `communist' program in no way differed from that of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie: liquidate the Party leadership, dismantle the state security apparatus and re-establish private farms and the kulaks. All counter-revolutionaries, from Khrushchev to Gorbachev and Yeltsin, would adhere to this program. But in 1931, Riutin, like Trotsky, was forced to hide this program in `leftist' rhetoric: he wanted the restoration of

capitalism, you see, to save the dictatorship of the proletariat and to stop the counter-revolution, i.e. the `Eighteenth Brumaire' or the `Thermidor'.

During his 1938 trial, Bukharin stated that the young Bukharinists, with the accord and initiative of Slepkov, organized a conference at the end of the summer of 1932 in which Riutin's platform was approved.

`I fully agreed with this platform and I bear full responsibility for it.'

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People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R. Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet ``Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites'' (Moscow, 1938), p. 390.

Bukharin's revisionism

Starting from 1931, Bukharin played a leading rфle in the Party work among intellectuals. He had great influence in the Soviet scientific community and in the Academy of Sciences.

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Cohen, op. cit. , p. 352.

As the chief editor of the government newspaper Isvestiia, Bukharin was able to promote his political and ideological line.

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Ibid. , p. 355.

At the Inaugural Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934, Bukharin praised at length the `defiantly apolitical' Boris Pasternak.

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Ibid. , p. 356.

Bukharin remained the idol of the rich peasants and also became the standard bearer for the technocrats. Stephen F. Cohen, author of the biography Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution, claimed that Bukharin supported Stalin's leadership to better struggle against it:

`It was evident to Bukharin that the party and the country were entering a new period of uncertainty but also of possible changes in Soviet domestic and foreign policy. To participate in and influence these events, he, too, had to adhere to the facade of unanimity and uncritical acceptance of Stalin's past leadership behind which the muted struggle over the country's future course was to be waged.'

.

Ibid. , p. 354.

In 1934--1936, Bukharin often wrote about the fascist danger and about the inevitable war with Nazism. Speaking of measures that had to be taken to prepare the country for a future war, Bukharin defined a program that brought his old right-opportunist and social-democratic ideas up-to-date. He said that the `enormous discontent among the population', primarily among the peasantry, had to be eliminated. Here was the new version of his old call for reconciliaton with the kulaks --- the only really `discontent' class in the countryside, during those years. To attack the collectivization experience, Bukharin developed propaganda around the theme of `socialist humanism', where the `criterion is the freedom of maximal development of the maximum number of people'.

.

Ibid. , p. 362.

In the name of `humanism', Bukharin preached class conciliation and `freedom of maximal development' for old and new bourgeois elements. To fight fascism, `democratic reforms' had to be introduced to offer a `prosperous life' to the masses. At this time, the country was being menaced by the Nazis and, given the necessity of great sacrifices to prepare resistance, the promise of a `prosperous life' was sheer demagoguery. Nevertheless, in this relatively underdeveloped country, the technocrats and the bureaucrats wanted `democracy' for their nascent bourgeois tendency and a `prosperous life' at the expense of the working masses. Bukharin was their spokesperson.

The basis of the Bukharinist program was halting the class struggle, ending political vigilance against anti-socialist forces, demagogically promising an immediate improvement in the standard of living, and democracy for opportunist and social-democratic tendencies.

Cohen, a militant anti-Communist, is not mistaken when he calls this program a precursor of Khrushchev's.

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Ibid. , pp. 361, 363.

Bukharin and the enemies of Bolshevism

Bukharin was sent to Paris to meet the Menshevik Nikolayevsky, who had some manuscripts of Marx and Engels. The Soviet Union wanted to buy them. Nikolayevsky reported on his discussions with Bukharin.

`Bukharin seemed to be longing for calm, far from the fatigue imposed on him by his life in Moscow. He was tired'.

.

Yannick Blanc and David Kaisergruber, L'affaire Boukharine ou Le recours de la мйmoire (Paris: Franзois Maspйro, 1979), p. 64.

`Bukharin let me know indirectly that he had acquired a great pessimism in Central Asia and had lost the will to live. However, he did not want to commit suicide'.

.

Ibid. , p. 79.

The Menshevik Nikolayevsky continued: `I knew the Party order preventing Communists from talking to non-members about relationships within the Party, so I did not broach the subject. However, we did have several conversations about the internal situation in the Party. Bukharin wanted to talk'.

.

Ibid. , p. 65.

Bukharin the `old Bolshevik' had violated the most elementary rules of a Communist party, faced with a political enemy.

`Fanny Yezerskaya ... tried to persuade him to stay abroad. She told him that it was necessary to form an opposition newspaper abroad, a newspaper that would be truly informed about what was happening in Russia and that could have great influence. She claimed that Bukharin was the only one with the right qualifications. But she gave me Bukharin's answer, ``I don't think that I could live without Russia. We are all used to what is going on and to the tension that reigns." '

.

Ibid. , p. 64.

Bukharin allowed himself to be approached by enemies who were plotting to overthrow the Bolshevik rйgime. His evasive answer shows that he did not take a principled stand against the provocative proposition to direct an anti-Bolshevik newspaper abroad.

Nikolayevsky continued: `When we were in Copenhagen, Bukharin reminded me that Trotsky was close by, in Oslo. With the wink of an eye, he suggested: ``Suppose we took this trunk ... and spent a day with Trotsky", and continued: ``Obviously we fought to the bitter end but that does not prevent me from having the greatest respect for him." '

.

Ibid. , pp. 64--65.

In Paris, Bukharin also paid a visit to the Menshevik leader Fedor Dan, to whom he confided that, in his eyes, Stalin was `not a man, a devil'.

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Cohen, op. cit. , p. 365.

In 1936, Trotsky had become an irreconcilable counter-revolutionary, calling for terrorism, and a partisan of an anti-Bolshevik

insurrection. Dan was one of the main leaders of the social-democratic counter-revolution. Bukharin had become closer politically to these individuals.

Nikolayevsky:

`He asked me one day to procure him Trotsky's bulletin so that he could read the last issues. I also gave him socialist publications, including Sotsialistichevsky Vestnik .... An article in the last issue contained an analysis of Gorky's plan aiming to regroup the intelligentsia in a separate party so that it could take part in the elections. Bukharin responded: `A second party is necessary. If there is only one electoral list, without opposition, that's equivalent to Nazism'.'

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Blanc and Kaisergruber, op. cit. , p. 72.

`Bukharin pulled his pen from his pocket and showed it to me: `Look carefully. It is with this pen that the New Soviet Constitution was written, from the first to the last word.' .... Bukharin was very proud of this Constitution .... On the whole, it was a good framework for the pacific transfer from the dictatorship of one party to a real popular democracy.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 75--76.

`Interested' by the ideas of the social-democrats and Trotsky, Bukharin even took up their main thesis of the necessity of an opposition anti-Bolshevik party, which would necessarily become the rallying point of all reactionary forces.

Nikolayevsky:

`Bukharin's humanism was due in great part to the cruelty of the forced collectivization and the internal battle that it set off within the Party .... `They are no longer human beings,' Bukharin said. `They have truly become the cogs in a terrible machine. A complete dehumanization of people takes place in the Soviet apparatus'.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 72--73.

`Bogdanov had predicted, at the beginning of the Bolshevik Revolution, the birth of the dictatorship of a new class of economic leaders. Original thinker and, during the 1905 revolution, second in importance among the Bolsheviks, Bogdanov played a leading rфle in Bukharin's education .... Bukharin was not in agreement with Bogdanov's conclusions, but he did understand that the great danger of `early socialism' --- what the Bolsheviks were creating --- was in the creation of the dictatorship of a new class. Bukharin and I discussed this question at length.'

.

Ibid. , p. 76.

During 1918--1920, given the bitterness of the class struggle, all the bourgeois elements of the workers' movement passed over to the side of the Tsarist and imperialist reaction in the name of `humanism'. Upholding the Anglo-French intervention, hence the most terrorist colonialist rйgimes, all these men, from Tsereteli to Bogdanov, had denounced the `dictatorship' and the `new class of Bolshevik aristocrats' in the Soviet Union.

Bukharin followed the same line, despite the conditions of class struggle in the thirties.

Bukharin and the military conspiracy

In 1935--1936, Bukharin developed closer links with the groups of military conspirators who were plotting the overthrow of the Party leadership.

On July 28, 1936, a clandestine meeting of the anti-Communist organization that included Colonel Tokaev was held. The agenda included a discussion of the different proposals on the new Soviet Constitution. Tokaev noted:

`Stalin aimed at one party dictatorship and complete centralisation. Bukharin envisaged several parties and even nationalist parties, and stood for the maximum of decentralisation. He was also in favour of vesting authority in the various constituent republics and thought that the more important of these should even control their own foreign relations. By 1936, Bukharin was approaching the social democratic standpoint of the left-wing socialists of the West.'

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Tokaev, op. cit. , p. 43.

`Bukharin had studied the alternative draft (of the Constitution) prepared by Demokratov (a member of Tokaev's clandestine organization) and ... among the documents were now included a number of important observations based on our work.'

.

Ibid. , p. 61.

The military conspirators of Tokaev's group claimed that they were close to the political positions defended by Bukharin.

`Bukharin wanted to go slowly with the peasants, and delay the ending of the NEP ... he also held that the revolution need not take place everywhere by armed uprising and force .... Bukharin thought that every country should develop on its own lines ....

`(Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky) succeeded in publishing (the) main points (of their program): (1) Not to end the NEP but to continue it for at least ten years ...; (4) While pursuing industrialisation, to remember that the Revolution was made for the ordinary man, and that, therefore far more energy must be given to light industry --- socialism is made by happy, well-fed men, not starving beggars; (5) To halt the compulsory collectivisation of agriculture and the destruction of kulaks.'

.

Ibid. , p. 86.

This program was designed to protect the bourgeoisie in agriculture, commerce and light industry, as well as to slow down industrialization. If it had been implemented, the Soviet Union would no doubt have been defeated in the anti-fascist war.

Bukharin and the question of the coup d'йtat

During his trial, Bukharin admitted in front of the tribunal that in 1918, after the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, that there was a plan to arrest Lenin, Stalin and Sverdlov, and to form a new government composed of `left-communists' and Social Revolutionaries. But he firmly denied that there was also a plan to execute them.

.

Court Proceedings ... ``Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites'', op. cit. , pp. 377--378.

So Bukharin was ready to arrest Lenin at the time of the Brest-Litovsk crisis in 1918.

Eighteen years later, in 1936, Bukharin was a completely demoralized man. With the world war just over the horizon, tension was extreme. Coup d'йtat attempts against the Party leadership were more and more probable. Bukharin, with his prestige of `Old Bolshevik'; Bukharin, the only `rival' of the same stature as Stalin; Bukharin, who detested the `extreme hardness' of Stalin's rйgime; who was afraid that the `Stalinists' would form a `new aristocracy'; who thought that only `democracy' could save the Soviet Union; how would he not have accepted to cover with his authority a possible `democratic' anti-Stalinist coup d'йtat? How could the man who was ready to arrest Lenin in 1918 not be ready, at a much more tense and dramatic time, to cover up the arrests of Stalin, Zhdanov, Molotov and Kaganovich?

The problem was exactly that. A demoralized and politically finished man, Bukharin clearly had no more energy to lead an important struggle against Stalin. But others, right-wing revolutionaries, were ready to act. And Bukharin could be useful for legitimacy. Colonel Tokaev's book helps understand this division of labor.

In 1939, Tokaev and five of his companions, all superior officers, met in the apartment of a professor of the Budyenny Military Academy. They discussed a plan to overthrow Stalin in case of war. `Schmidt (a member of the Voroshilov Leningrad Military Academy) regretted a lost opportunity: had we moved at the time of the trial of Bukharin the peasants would have risen in his name. Now we had no one of his stature to inspire the people'. One of the conspirators suggested giving the position of Prime Minister to Beria, given his popularity because he had liberated many people arrested by Yezhov.

.

Tokaev, op. cit. , p. 159.

This passage clearly shows that the military conspirators needed, at least at the beginning, a `Bolshevik flag' to succeed with their anti-Communist coup d'ĭtat. Having good relations with Bukharin, these right-wing military were convinced that he would have accepted the fait accompli if Stalin had been eliminated.

In fact, in 1938, during Bukharin's trial, Tokaev and his group already had this strategy in mind. When Radek confessed after his arrest, Comrade X succeeded in reading the report. Tokaev wrote:

`(Radek) provided the culminating `evidence' on which Bukharin was arrested, tried and shot ....

`We had known of Radek's treachery at least a fortnight before (Bukharin's arrest on October 16, 1936), and we tried to save Bukharin. A precise and unambiguous offer was made to him: `After what Radek has now said against you in writing, Yezhov and Vishinsky will soon have you arrested in preparation for yet another political trial. Therefore we suggest that you should ``vanish'' without delay. Here is how we propose to effect this ....

`No political conditions were attached to the offer; it was made ... because it would be a mortal blow if the NKVD transformed Bukharin on trial into another Kameniev, Zinoviev or Radek. The very conception of opposition would have been discredited throughout the U.S.S.R.

`Bukharin expressed his warm gratitude for the offer but refused it.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 68--69.

`If (Bukharin) could not stand up to this and prove the charges false, it would be a tragedy: through Bukharin all the other moderate opposition movements would be tarnished.'

.

Ibid. , p. 85.

Before Bukharin's arrest, the military conspirators thought of using Bukharin as their flag. At the same time, they understood the danger of a public trial against Bukharin. Kamenev, Zinoviev and Radek had admitted their conspiratorial activity, they had `betrayed' the opposition's cause. If Bukharin admitted in front of a tribunal that he was implicated in attempts to overthrow the rйgime, the anti-Communist opposition would suffer a fatal blow. Such was the implication of Bukharin's trial, as it was understood at the time by Bolshevism's worst enemies, infiltrated in the Party and the Army.

At the time of the Nazi invasion, Tokaev analyzed the atmosphere in the country and within the army: `we soon realised that the men at the top had lost their heads. They knew only too well that their reactionary rйgime was totally devoid of real popular support. It was based on terror and mental automatism and depended on peace; war had changed all that'. Then

Tokaev described the reactions of several officers. Beskaravayny proposed to divide the Soviet Union: an independent Ukraine and an independent Caucasus would fight better! Klimov proposed to get rid of the Politburo, then the people would save the country. Kokoryov thought that the Jews were the source of all the problems.

.

Ibid. , pp. 174--175.

`(O)ur problem as revolutionary democrats was very much in our minds. Was not this perhaps the very moment to attempt to overthrow Stalin? Many factors had to be considered'.

.

Ibid. , p. 187.

In those days Comrade X was convinced that it was touch and go for Stalin. The pity of it was that we could not see Hitler as a liberator. Therefore, said Comrade X, `we must be prepared for Stalin's rйgime to collapse, but we should do nothing whatever to weaken it'.

.

Ibid. , p. 188.

It is clear that the great disarray and the extreme confusion provoked by the first defeats against the Nazi invader created a very precarious political situation. Bourgeois nationalists, anti-Communists and anti-Jewish racists all thought that their time had come. What would have happened if the purge had not been firmly carried out, if an opportunist opposition had held important positions at the head of the Party, if a man such as Bukharin had remained available for a `change of rйgime'? In those moments of extreme tension, the military conspirators and opportunists

would have been in a strong position to risk everything and put into action the coup d'йtat for which they had so long planned.

Bukharin's confession

During his trial, Bukharin made several confessions and, during confrontations with other accused, gave details about certain aspects of the conspiracy. Joseph Davies, U.S. ambassador to Moscow and well-known lawyer, attended every session of the trial. He was convinced, as were other competent foreign observers, that Bukharin had spoken freely and that his confessions were sincere. On March 17, 1938, Davies send a confidential message to the Secretary of State in Washington.

`Notwithstanding a prejudice arising from the confession evidence and a prejudice against a judicial system which affords practically no protection for the accused, after daily observation of the witnesses, their manner of testifying, the unconscious corroboration which developed, and other facts in the course of the trial, together with others of which a judicial notice could be taken, it is my opinion so far as the political defendants are concerned sufficient crimes under Soviet law, among those charged in the indictment, were established by the proof and beyond a reasonable doubt to justify the verdict of guilty by treason and the adjudication of the punishment provided by Soviet criminal statutes. The opinion of those diplomats who attended the trial most regularly was general that the case had established the fact that there was a formidable political opposition and an exceedingly serious plot.'

.

Joseph E. Davies, Mission to Moscow, (New York: Garden City Publishing Co., 1943), p. 163.

During the trial's dozens of hours, Bukharin was perfectly lucid and alert, discussing, contesting, sometimes humorous, vehemently denying certain accusations. For those who attended the trial, as for those of us who can read the trial proceedings, it is clear that the `show trial' theory, widely diffused by anti-Communists, is unrealistic. Tokaev stated that the rйgime `may have hesitated to torture him, lest he shout the truth the world in court'.

.

Tokaev, p. 96.

Tokaev described Bukharin's acid replies to the trial attorney and its courageous denials, concluding as follows:

`Bukharin displayed supreme courage.'

.

Ibid.

`Vishinsky was defeated. At last he knew that it had been a cardinal error to bring Bukharin into open court.'

.

Ibid. , p. 98.

The trial proceedings, eight hundred pages long, are very instructive reading. They leave an indelible mark on the mind, a mark that cannot be erased by the standard tirades against those `horrible trials'. Bukharin appears as an opportunist who was beaten politically and criticized ideologically on repeated occasions. Rather than tranforming his petit-bourgeois world view, he became a bitter man who dared not openly oppose the Party's line and its impressive achievements. Remaining close to the head of the Party, he hoped to overthrow the leadership and impose his viewpoint through intrigues and backroom maneuvers. He colluded with all sorts of clandestine opponents, some of who were dedicated anti-Communists. Incapable of leading an open political struggle, Bukharin placed his hopes in a coup d'йtat resulting from a military plot or that might result from a mass revolt.

Reading the proceedings allows one to clarify the relations between the political degeneration of Bukharin and his friends and actual criminal activity: assassinations, insurrections, spying, collusion with foreign powers. As early as 1928--2929, Bukharin had taken revisionist positions expressing the interests of the kulaks and other exploiting classes. Bukharin received support from political factions representing those classes, both within and without the Party. As the class struggle became more intense, Bukharin allied himself to those forces. The coming World War increased all tensions and opponents to the Party leadership began to prepare violent acts and a coup d'ĭtat. Bukharin admitted his ties to these people, although he vehemently denied having actually organized assassinations and espionage.

When Vishinsky asked of him: `you have said nothing about connections with the foreign intelligence service and fascist circles', Bukharin replied: `I have nothing to testify on this subject.'

.

Court Proceedings ... ``Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites", , op. cit. , p. 429.

Nevertheless, Bukharin had to recognize that within the bloc that he led, some men had established ties to fascist Germany. Below is an exchange from the trial on this subject. Bukharin explains that some leaders in the conspiracy thought the confusion resulting from military defeats in the case of war with Germany would create ideal conditions for a coup dĭtat.

`Bukharin: (I)n 1935 ... Karakhan left without a preliminary conversation with the members of the leading centre, with the exception of Tomsky ....

`As I remember, Tomsky told me that Karakhan had arrived at an agreement with Germany on more advantageous terms than Trotsky ....

`Vyshinsky: When did you have a conversation about opening the front to the Germans?

`Bukharin: When I asked Tomsky how he conceived the mechanics of the coup he said this was the business of the military organization, which was to open the front.

`Vyshinsky: So Tomsky was preparing to open the front?

`Bukharin: He did not say that ....

`Vyshinsky: Tomsky said, ``Open the front''?

`Bukharin: I will put it exactly.

`Vyshinsky: What did he say?

`Bukharin: Tomsky said that this was a matter for the military organization, which was to open the front.

`Vyshinsky: Why was it to open the front?

`Bukharin: He did not say.

`Vyshinsky: Why was it to open the front?

`Bukharin: From my point of view, it ought not to open the front ....

`Vyshinsky: Were they to open the front from the point of view of Tomsky, or not?

`Bukharin: From the point of view of Tomsky? At any rate, he did not object to this point of view.

`Vyshinsky: He agreed?

`Bukharin: Since he did not object, it means that most likely he three-quarters agreed.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 432--433.

In his declarations, Bukharin recognized that his revisionist line pushed him to seek illegal ties with other opponents, that he was hoping that revolts within the country would bring him to power, and that he changed his tactics to terrorism and a coup d'йtat.

In his biography of Bukharin, Cohen tries to correct the `widespread misconception --- that Bukharin willingly confessed to hideous, preposterous crimes in order ... to repent sincerely his opposition to Stalinism, and thereby to perform a ``last service'' to the party'.

.

Cohen, op. cit. , p. 372.

Cohen claims that `Bukharin's plan ... was to turn his trial into a counter-trial ... of the Stalinist regime'. `(H)is tactic would be make sweeping confessions that he was ``politically responsible'' for everything ... while at the same time flatly denying ... any actual crime.' Cohen claims that when Bukharin was using terms such as `counter-revolutionary organization' or `anti-Soviet bloc', he really meant the `Old Bolshevik Party': `He would accept the symbolic role of representative Bolshevik: ``I bear responsibility for the bloc,'' that is for Bolshevism.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 375--376.

Not bad. Cohen, as spokesperson for U.S. interests, can do such pirouettes, since few readers will actually go and check the trial proceedings.

But it is highly instructive to study the key passages of Bukharin's testimony at the trial about his political evolution. Bukharin was sufficiently lucid to understand the steps in his own political degeneration and to understand how he got caught up in a counter-revolutionary plot. Cohen and the bourgeoisie can do their utmost to whitewash Bukharin the `Bolshevik'. To Communists, Bukharin's confessions provide important lessons about the mechanisms of slow degeneration and anti-socialist subversion. These confessions allow one to understand the later appearance of figures such as Khrushchev and Mikoyan, Brezhnev and Gorbachev.

Here is the text. Bukharin is speaking.

`The Right counter-revolutionaries seemed at first to be a ``deviation'' .... Here we went through a very interesting process, an over-estimation of individual enterprise, a crawling over to its idealization, the idealization of the property-owner. Such was the evolution. Our program was --- the prosperous peasant farm of the individual, but in fact the kulak became an end into itself .... collective farms were music of the future. What was necessary was to develop rich property-owners. This was the tremendous change that took place in our standpoint and psychology .... I myself in 1928 invented the formula about the military-feudal exploitation of the peasantry, that is, I put the blame for the costs of the class struggle not on the class which was hostile to the proletariat, but on the leaders of the proletariat itself.'

.

Court Proceedings ... ``Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites'', , op. cit. , pp. 380--381.

`If my program stand were to be formulated practically, it would be, in the economic sphere, state capitalism, the prosperous muzhik

individual, the curtailment of the collective farms, foreign concessions, surrender of the monopoly of foreign trade, and, as a result --- the restoration of capitalism in the country.'

.

Ibid. , p. 381.

`Inside the country our actual program ... was a lapse into bourgeois-democratic freedom, coalition, because from the bloc with the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the like, it follows that there would be freedom of parties, freedom of coalition, and follows quite logically from the combination of forces for struggle, because if allies are chosen for overthrowing the government, on the day after the possible victory they would be partners in power.'

.

Ibid. , p. 382.

`My rapprochement with Tomsky and Rykov dates approximately to 1928--1929 --- then contacts and sounding out the then members of the Central Committee, illegal conferences which were illegal in respect of the Central Committee.'

.

Ibid. , p. 386.

`Here began the quest for blocs. Firstly, my meeting with Kamenev at his apartment. Secondly, a meeting with Pyatakov in the hospital, at which Kamenev was present. Thirdly, a meeting with Kamenev at Schmidt's country house.'

.

Ibid.

`The next stage in the development of the counter-revolutionary organization of the Rights began in 1930--1931. At that time there was a great sharpening of the class struggle, of kulak sabotage, kulak resistance to the policy of the Party, etc....

`The (Bukharin--Rykov--Tomsky) trio became an illegal centre and therefore, whereas before this trio had been at the head of the opposition circles, now it became the centre of an illegal counter-revolutionary organization ....

`Close to this illegal center was Yekudnize, who had contact with this centre through Tomsky ....

`(A)pproximately towards the end of 1931, the members of the so-called school were transferred to work outside of Moscow --- to Voronezh, Samara, Leningrad, Novosibirsk --- and this transfer was utilized for counter-revolutionary purposes even then.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 387--388.

`About the autumn of 1932 the next stage in the development of the Right organization began, namely the transition to tactics of a forcible overthrow of Soviet power.'

.

Ibid. , p. 388.

`I make note of the time when the so-called Ryutin platform was formulated .... the Ryutin platform (was) the platform of the Right counter-revolutionary organization.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 388--389.

`The Ryutin platform was approved on behalf of the Right center. The essential points of the Ryutin platform were: a ``palace coup'', terrorism, steering a course for a direct alliance with the Trotskyites. Around this time the idea of a ``palace coup'' was maturing in the Right circles, and not only in the upper circles, but also, as far as I can remember, among a section of those working outside of Moscow. At first this idea came from Tomsky, who was in contact with Yenukidze .... who had charge of the Kremlin guard at the time ....

`Consequently ..., the recruiting of people for a ``palace coup''. This was when the political bloc with Kamenev and Zinoviev originated. In this period we had meetings also with Syrtsov and Lominadze.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 390--391.

`(I)n the summer of 1932, Pyatakov told me of his meeting with Sedov concerning Trotsky's policy of terrorism. At that time Pyatakov and I considered that these were not our ideas, but we decided that we could find a common language very soon and that our differences in the struggle against Soviet power would be overcome.'

.

Ibid. , p. 391.

`The formation of the group of conspirators in the Red Army relates to that period. I heard of it from Tomsky, who was directly informed of it by Yenukidze, with whom he had personal connections ....

`I was informed by Tomsky and Yenukidze, who told me that in the upper ranks of the Red Army the Rights, Zinovievites and Trotskyites had then united their forces; names were mentioned to me --- I don't vouch that I remember them all exactly --- but those I have remembered are Tukhachevsky, Kork, Primakov and Putna.

`Thus the connections with the centre of the Rights followed the line of: the military group, Yenukidze, Tomsky and the rest.'

.

Ibid. , p. 393.

`In 1933--34 the kulaks were already smashed, an insurrectionary movement ceased to be a real possibility, and therefore in the centre of the Right organization a period again set in when the orientation toward a counter-revolutionary conspiratorial coup became the central idea ....

`The forces of the conspiracy were: the forces of Yenukidze plus Yagoda, their organizations in the Kremlin and in the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs; Yenukidze also succeeded around that time in enlisting, as far as I can remember, the former commandant of the Kremlin, Peterson, who, a propos, was in his time the commandant of Trotsky's train.

`Then there was the military organization of the conspirators: Tukhachevsky, Kork and others.'

.

Ibid. , p. 419.

`During the period preceding the Seventeenth Party Congress, Tomsky broached the idea that the coup d'йtat with the help of the armed counter-revolutionary forces should be timed exactly for the opening of the Seventeenth Party Congress. According to Tomsky's idea, an integral part of this coup was to be a monstrous crime --- the arrest of the Seventeenth Party Congress.

`This idea of Tomsky's was subjected to a discussion, though a very cursory one; but objections to this idea were raised on all hands ....

`Pyatakov objected to this idea not for considerations of principle, but for considerations of tactics, because that would have aroused extreme indignation among the masses .... But the fact alone that this idea was conceived and that it was subjected to a discussion speaks sufficiently clearly of the whole monstrosity and criminality of an organization of this sort.'

.

Ibid. , p. 425.

`In the summer of 1934 Radek told me that directions had been received from Trotsky, that Trotsky was conducting negotiations with the Germans, that Trotsky had already promised the Germans a number of territorial concessions, including the Ukraine ....

`I must say that then, at that time, I remonstrated with Radek. Radek confirms this in his testimony, just as he confirmed at a confrontation with me that I objected to this, that I considered it essential that he, Radek, should write and tell Trotsky that he was going too far in these negotiations, that he might compromise not only himself, but all his allies, us Right conspirators in particular, and that this meant certain disaster for all of us. It seemed to me that with the growth of mass patriotism, which

is beyond all doubt, this point of view of Trotsky's was politically and tactically inexpedient.'

.

Ibid. , p. 430.

`I advanced the argument that since this was to be a military coup, then by virtue of the logic of the things the military group of the conspirators would have extraordinary influence, and, as always happens in these cases, it would be just that section of the joint upper group of the counter-revolutionary circles that would command great material forces, and consequently political forces, and that hence a peculiar Bonapartist danger might arise. And Bonapartists --- I was thinking particularly of Tukhachevsky --- would start out by making short shrift of their allies and so-called inspirers in Napoleon style. In my conversations I always called Tukhachevsky a ``potential little Napoleon,'' and you know how Napoleon dealt with the so-called ideologists.

`Vyshinsky: And you considered yourself an ideologist?

`Bukharin: Both an ideologist of a counte-revolutionary coup and a practical man. You, of course, would prefer to hear that I consider myself a spy, but I never considered myself a spy, nor do I now.

`Vyshinsky: It would be more correct if you did.

`Bukharin: That is your opinion, but my opinion is different.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 431--432.

When it was time for his last statement, Bukharin already knew that he was a dead man. Cohen can read in this speech a `fine defence of

real Bolshevism` and a `denunciation of Stalinism'. On the other hand, a Communist hears a man who struggled for many years against socialism, who took irrevocable revisionist positions, and who, facing his grave, realized that in the context of bitter national and international class struggles, his revisionism had led him to treason.

`This naked logic of the struggle was accompanied by a degeneration of ideas, a degeneration of psychology ....

`And on this basis, it seems to me probable that every one of us sitting here in the dock suffered from a peculiar duality of mind, an incomplete faith in his counter-revolutionary cause .... Hence a certain semi-paralysis of the will, a retardation of reflexes .... The contradiction that arose between the acceleration of our degeneration and these retarded reflexes expressed the position of a counter-revolutionary, or a developing counter-revolutionary, under the conditions of developing socialist construction. A dual psychology arose ....

`Even I was sometimes carried away by the eulogies I wrote of socialist construction, although on the morrow I repudiated this by practical actions of a criminal character. There arose what in Hegel's philosophy is called a most unhappy mind. This unhappy mind differed from the ordinary unhappy mind only in the fact that it was also a criminal mind.

`The might of the proletarian state found its expression not only in the fact that it smashed the counter-revolutionary bands, but also in the fact that it disintegrated its enemies from within, that it disorganized the will of its enemies. Nowhere else is this the case, nor can it be in any capitalist country ....

`Repentance is often attributed to diverse and absolutely absurd things like Thibetan powders and the like. I must say of myself that in prison, where I was confined for over a year, I worked, studied, and retained my clarity of mind. This will serve to refute by facts all fables and absurd counter-revolutionary tales.

`Hypnotism is suggested. But I conducted my own defence in Court from the legal standpoint too, orientated myself on the spot, argued with the State Prosecutor; and anybody, even a man who has little experience in this branch of medicine, must admit that hypnotism of this kind is altogether impossible ....

`I shall now speak of myself, of the reasons for my repentance. Of course, it must be admitted that incriminating evidence plays a very important part. For three months I refused to say anything. Then I began to testify. Why? Because while in prison I made a revaluation of my entire past. For when you ask yourself: ``If you must die, what are you dying for?'' --- an absolutely black vacuity suddenly rises before you with startling vividness. There was nothing to die for, if one wanted to die unrepented. And, on the contrary, everything positive that glistens in the Soviet Union acquires new dimensions in a man's mind. This in the end disarmed me completely and led me to bend my knees before the Party and the country ....

`The point, of course, is not this repentance, or my personal repentance in particular. The Court can pass its verdict without it. The confession of the accused is not essential. The confession of the accused is a medieval principle of jurisprudence. But here we also have the internal demolition of the forces of the counter-revolution. And one must be a Trotsky not to lay down one's arms.

`I feel it my duty to say here that in the parallelogram of forces which went to make up the counter-revolutionary tactics, Trotsky was the principal motive force. And the most acute methods --- terrorism, espionage, the dismemberment of the U.S.S.R. and wrecking --- proceeded primarily from this source.

`I may infer a priori that Trotsky and my other allies in crime, as well as the Second International, all the more since I discussed this with Nicolayevsky, will endeavour to defend us, especially and particularly myself. I reject this defence, because I am kneeling before the country, before the Party, before the whole people.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 776--779.

From Bukharin to Gorbachev

The anti-Communist author Stephen F. Cohen wrote in 1973 a very favorable biography of Bukharin, who was presented as `the last Bolshevik'. It is touching to see how a confirmed anti-Communist `mourned the end of Bukharin and Russian Bolshevism'!

.

Cohen, op. cit. , p. 381.

Another follower of Bukharin, Roy Medvedev, did the same in an epigraph:

`Stalinism cannot be regarded as the Marxism-Leninism or the Communism of three decades. It is the perversions that Stalin introduced into the theory and practice of the Communist movement ....

`The process of purifying the Communist movement, of washing out all the layers of Stalinist filth, is not yet finished. It must be carried through to the end.'

.

Ibid. , p. 382.

Hence the two anti-Communists, Cohen and Medvedev, presented Stalin's following the Leninist line as a `perversion' of Leninism and then, as irreconcilable adversaries of Communism, proposed the `purification of the Communist movement'! Of course, this is a tactic that has been well developed over the decades: once a revolution has triumphed and consolidates itself, its worst enemies present themselves as the best defenders of the `authentic revolution' that `was betrayed right from the beginning' by its leaders. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Cohen and Medvedev's theses were taken up by almost all the Khrushchevites. Even Fidйl Castro, himself influenced by Khrushchev's theories, has not always

escaped this temptation. Yet, the same tactic was used by U.S. specialists against the Cuban revolution. Right from 1961, the CIA started an offensive for the `defence of the Cuban revolution' against the `usurper Fidйl Castro' who had `betrayed'. In Nicaragua, Eden Pastora joined the CIA to defend `the original Sandinist program'.

Yugoslavia was, right from 1948, the first socialist country to veer towards Bukharinism and Trotskyism. Tito received massive aid from the United States. Then Titoist ideas infiltrated themselves in most of Eastern Europe.

During the seventies, Cohen's book Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution, as well as the one published by British social-democrat Ken Coates, president of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation,

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Ken Coates, The Case of Nikolai Bukharin (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1978).

served as the international basis for the rehabilitation of Bukharin, who united the revisionists from the Italian and French Communist Parties, the Social-Democrats --- from Pйlikan to Gilles Martinet --- and, of course, the different Trotskyist sects. These same currents followed Gorbachev right to the very end. All these anti-Communists united in the seventies to rehabilitate Bukharin, the `great Bolshevik' that Lenin called `the favorite of the whole party'. All claimed that Bukharin represented an `alternative' Bolshevism and some even claimed him as a precursor of Eurocommunism.

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Blanc and Kaisergruber, op. cit. , pp. 11, 16.

Already, in 1973, the direction of this campaign was set by the openly anti-Communist Cohen:

`Bukharinist-style ideas and policies have revived. In Yugoslavia, Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, Communist reformers have become advocates of market socialism, balanced economic planning and growth, evolutionary development, civil peace, a mixed agricultural sector, and tolerance of social and cultural pluralism within the framework of the one-party state.'

.

Cohen, op. cit. , p. 384.

`This is a perfect definition of the velvet counter-revolution that finally triumphed during the years 1988--1989 in Central and Eastern Europe.

`If ... reformers succeed in creating a more liberal communism, a ``socialism with a human face," Bukharin's outlook and the NEP-style order he defended may turn out to have been, after all, the true prefiguration of the Communist future --- the alternative to Stalinism after Stalin.'

.

Ibid. , p. 386.

Gorbachev, basing himself on these `vanguard experiences' of the Eastern European countries during the sixties and the seventies, himself adopted Bukharin's program. It goes without saying that Cohen was welcomed with open arms by Gorbachev's Soviet Union as the great precursor of `new thought' and `socialist renewal'.

Note also that the `Bukharin school' has much influence in Deng Xiaoping's China.

The Tukhachevsky trial and the anti-Communist conspiracy within the army

On May 26, 1937, Marshal Tukhachevsky and Commanders Yakir, Uborevich, Eideman, Kork, Putna, Feldman and Primakov were arrested and tried in front of a military tribunal. Their execution was announced on July 12.

They had been under suspicion since the beginning of May. On May 8, the political commissar system, used during the Civil War, was reintroduced in the army. Its reintroduction reflected the Party's fear of Bonapartist tendencies within the army.

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Getty, op. cit. , p. 167.

A May 13, 1927 Commissar of Defence directive ended the control that the political commissars had over the highest officers. The military commander was given the responsibility for `general political leadership for the purpose of complete coordination of military and political affairs in the unit'. The `political assistant' was to be responsible for `all party-political work' and was to report to the commander on the political condition of the unit.

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Carr, op. cit. , p. 325.

The Tolmachev Military Political Academy in Leningrad and the commissars of the military district of Byelorussia protested against `the depreciation and diminution of the rфle of the party-political organs'.

.

Ibid. , p. 327.

Blomberg, a superior German officer, made a report after his visit to the USSR in 1928. He noted: `Purely military points of view step more and more into the foreground; everything else is subordinated to them'.

.

Ibid. , p. 320.

Since many soldiers came from the countryside, kulak influence was substantial. Unshlikht, a superior officer, claimed in 1928 and 1929 that the danger of Right deviation was greater in the Army than in the Party's civil organizations.

.

Ibid. , p. 331.

In 1930, ten per cent of the officer corps, i.e. 4500 military, were former Tsarist officers. During the purge of institutions in the fall of 1929, Unshlikht had not allowed a massive movement against the former Tsarist officers in the Army.

.

Ibid. , p. 317.

These factors all show that bourgeois influence was still strong during the twenties and the thirties in the army, making it one of the least reliable parts of the socialist system.

Plot?

V. Likhachev was an officer in the Red Army in the Soviet Far East in 1937--1938. His book, Dal'nevostochnyi zagovor (Far-Eastern conspiracy), showed that there did in fact exist a large conspiracy within the army.

.

Getty, op. cit. , p. 255, n. 84.

Journalist Alexander Werth wrote in his book Moscow 41 a chapter entitled, `Trial of Tukhachevsky'. He wrote:

`I am also pretty sure that the purge in the Red Army had a great deal to do with Stalin's belief in an imminent war with Germany. What did Tukhachevsky stand for? People of the French Deuxieme Bureau told me long ago that Tukhachevsky was pro-German. And the Czechs told me the extraordinary story of Tukhachevsky's visit to Prague, when towards the end of the banquet --- he had got rather drunk --- he blurted out that an agreement with Hitler was the only hope for both Czechoslovakia and Russia. And he then proceeded to abuse Stalin. The Czechs did not fail to report this to the Kremlin, and that was the end of Tukhachevsky --- and of so many of his followers.'

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Alexander Werth, quoted in Harpal Brar, Perestroika: The Complete Collapse of Revisionism (London: Harpal Brar, 1992), p. 161.

The U.S. Ambassador Moscow, Joseph Davies, wrote his impressions on on June 28 and July 4, 1937:

`(T)he best judgment seems to believe that in all probability there was a definite conspiracy in the making looking to a coup d'йtat by the

army --- not necessarily anti-Stalin, but antipolitical and antiparty, and that Stalin struck with characteristic speed, boldness and strength.'

.

Joseph Davies, op. cit. , p. 99.

`Had a fine talk with Litvinov. I told him quite frankly the reactions in U.S. and western Europe to the purges; and to the executions of the Red Army generals; that it definitely was bad ....

`Litvinov was very frank. He stated that they had to ``make sure'' through these purges that there was no treason left which could co-operate with Berlin or Tokyo; that someday the world would understand that what they had done was to protect the government from ``menacing treason.'' In fact, he said they were doing the whole world a service in protecting themselves against the menace of Hitler and Nazi world domination, and thereby preserving the Soviet Union strong as a bulwark against the Nazi threat. That the world would appreciate what a very great man Stalin was.'

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Ibid. , p. 103.

In 1937, Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov was working for the Central Commitee of the Bolshevik Party. A bourgeois nationalist, he had close ties to opposition leaders and with the Central Committee members from the Caucausus. In his book The Reign of Stalin, he regrets that Tukhachevsky did not seize power in 1937. He claims that early in 1937, after his trip to England, Tukhachevsky spoke to his superior officers as follows:

`The great thing about His Britannic Majesty's Army is that there could not be a Scotland Yard agent at its head (allusion to the rфle played by state security in the USSR). As for cobblers (allusion to Stalin's father),

they belong in the supply depots, and they don't need a Party card. The British don't talk readily about patriotism, because it seems to them natural to be simply British. There is no political ``line'' in Britain, right, left or centre; there is just British policy, which every peer and worker, every conservative and member of the Labour Party, every officer and soldier, is equally zealous in serving .... The British soldier is completely ignorant of Party history and production figures, but on the other hand he knows the geography of the world as well as he knows his own barracks .... The King is loaded with honours, but he has no personal power .... Two qualities are called for in an officer --- courage and professional competence.'

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Alexander Uralov (Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov), The Reign of Stalin (Westport, Conn.: Hyperion Press, p. 1975), p. 50.

Robert Coulondre was the French Ambassador to Moscow in 1936--1938. In his memoirs, he recalled the Terror of the French Revolution that crushed the aristocrats in 1792 and prepared the French people for war against the reactionary European states. At the time, the enemies of the French Revolution, particularly England and Russia, had interpreted the revolutionary terror as a precursor of the disintegration of the rйgime. In fact, the opposite was true. The same thing, Coulondre wrote, was taking place with the Soviet Revolution.

`Soon after Tukhachevsky's arrest, the minister of Lithuania, who knew a number of Bolshevik leaders, told me that the marshal, upset by the brakes imposed by the Communist Party on the development of Russian military power, in particular of a sound organization of the army, had in fact become the head of a movement that wanted to strangle the Party and institute a military dictatorship ....

`My correspondence can testify that I gave the ``Soviet terror'' its correct interpretation. It should not be concluded, I constantly wrote, that the rйgime is falling apart or that the Russian forces are tiring. It is in fact the opposite, the crisis of a country that is growing too quickly.'

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Robert Coulondre, De Staline a Hitler: Souvenirs de deux ambassades, 1936--1939 (Paris: Hachette, 1950), pp. 182--184.

Churchill wrote in his memoirs that Benes `had received an offer from Hitler to respect in all circumstances the integrity of Czechoslovakia in return for a guarantee that she would remain neutral in the event of a Franco-German war.'

`In the autumn of 1936, a message from a high military source in Germany was conveyed to President Benes to the effect that if he wanted to take advantage of the Fuehrer's offer, he had better be quick, because events would shortly take place in Russia rendering any help he could give to Germany insignificant.

`While Benes was pondering over this disturbing hint, he became aware that communications were passing through the Soviet Embassy in Prague between important personages in Russia and the German Government. This was a part of the so-called military and Old-Guard Communist conspiracy to overthrow Stalin and introduce a new rйgime based on a pro-German policy. President Benes lost no time in communicating all he could find out to Stalin. Thereafter there followed the merciless, but perhaps not needless, military and political purge in Soviet Russia ....

`The Russian Army was purged of its pro-German elements at a heavy cost to its military efficiency. The bias of the Soviet Government was turned in a marked manner against Germany .... The situation was, of course, thoroughly understood by Hitler; but I am not aware that the British and French Governments were equally enlightened. To Mr.\ Chamberlain and the British and French General Staffs the purge of 1937 presented itself mainly as a tearing to pieces internally of the Russian Army, and a picture of the Soviet Union as riven asunder by ferocious hatreds and vengeance.'

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Winston S. Churchill, The Second World War: The Gathering Storm (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1948), pp. 288--289.

The Trotskyist Deutscher rarely missed an opportunity to denigrate and slander Stalin. However, despite the fact that he claimed that there was only an `imaginary conspiracy' as basis for the Moscow trials, he did have this to say about Tukhachevsky's execution:

`(A)ll the non-Stalinist versions concur in the following: the generals did indeed plan a coup d'ĭtat .... The main part of the coup was to be a palace revolt in the Kremlin, culminating in the assassination of Stalin. A decisive military operation outside the Kremlin, an assault on the headquarters of the G.P.U., was also prepared. Tukhachevsky was the moving spirit of the conspiracy .... He was, indeed, the only man among all the military and civilian leaders of that time who showed in many respects a resemblance to the original Bonaparte and could have played the Russian First Consul. The chief political commissar of the army, Gamarnik, who later committed suicide, was initiated into the plot. General Yakir, the commander of Leningrad, was to secure the co-operation of his garrison. Generals Uberovich, commander of the western military district, Kork, commander of the Military Academy in Moscow, Primakow, Budienny's deputy in the command of the cavalry, and a few other generals were also in the plot.'

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I. Deutscher, Stalin: A Political Biography, second edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 379.

Deutscher, an important anti-Communist, even when he accepted the veracity of the Tukhachevsky plot, made sure that he underlined the `good intentions' of those who wanted `to save the army and the country

from the insane terror of the purges' and he assured his readers that Tukhachevsky was in no way acting `in Germany's interest'.

.

Ibid. , p. x, n. 1.

The Nazi Lйon Degrelle, in a 1977 book, referred to Tukhachevsky in the following terms:

`Who would have thought during the crimes of the Terror during the French Revolution that soon after a Bonaparte would come out and raise France up from the abyss with an iron fist? A few years later, and Bonaparte almost created the United Europe.

`A Russian Bonaparte could also rise up. The young Marshal Tukhachevsky executed by Stalin on Benes' advice, was of the right stature in 1937.'

.

Louise Narvaez, Degrelle m'a dit, Postface by Degrelle (Brussels: Йditions du Baucens, 1977), pp. 360--361.

On May 8, 1943, Gцbbels noted in his journal some comments made by Hitler. They show that the Nazis perfectly understood the importance of taking advantage of opposition and defeatist currents within the Red Army.

`The Fьhrer explained one more time the Tukhachevsky case and stated that we erred completely at the time when we thought that Stalin had ruined the Red Army. The opposite is true: Stalin got rid of all the opposition circles within the army and thereby succeeded in making sure that there would no longer be any defeatist currents within that army ....

`With respect to us, Stalin also has the advantage of not having any social opposition, since Bolshevism has eliminated it through the purges of the last twenty-five years .... Bolshevism has eliminated this danger in time and can henceforth focus all of its strength on its enemy.'

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J. Gцbbels, Tagebьcher aus den Jahren 1942--1943, (Zurich, 1948), p. 322. Quoted in Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, La seconde guerre mondiale: caractиres fondamentaux de la politique et de la stratйgie, vol. 1, pp. 213--214.

We also present Molotov's opinion. Apart from Kaganovich, Molotov was the only member of the Politburo in 1953 who never renounced his revolutionary past. During the 1980s, he recalled the situation in 1937, when the Purge started:

`An atmosphere of extreme tension reigned during this period; it was necessary to act without mercy. I think that it was justified. If Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Rykov and Zinoviev had started up their opposition in wartime, there would have been an extremely difficult struggle; the number of victims would have been colossal. Colossal. The two sides would have been condemned to disaster. They had links that went right up to Hitler. That far. Trotsky had similar links, without doubt. Hitler was an adventurist, as was Trotsky, they had traits in common. And the rightists, Bukharin and Rykov, had links with them. And, of course, many of the military leaders.'

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F. Chueva, Sto sorok besed s MOLOTOVYM (One hundred forty conversations with Molotov) (Moscow: Terra, 1991), p. 413.

The militarist and Bonapartist tendency

In a study financed by the U.S. army and conducted by the Rand Corporation, Roman Kolkowicz analyzed, from the reactionary point of view found in military security services, the relations between the Party and the Army in the Soviet Union. It is interesting to note how he supported all the tendencies towards professionalism, apolitism, militarism and privileges in the Red Army, right from the twenties. Of course, Kolkowicz attacked Stalin for having repressed the bourgeois and military tendencies.

After describing how Stalin defined the status of the army in the socialist society in the twenties, Kolkowicz wroted:

`The Red Army emerged from this process as an adjunct of the ruling Party elite; its officers were denied the full authority necessary to the practice of the military profession; they were kept in a perennial state of uncertainty about their careers; and the military community, which tends toward exclusiveness, was forcibly kept open through an elaborate system of control and indoctrination ....

`Stalin ... embarked on a massive program intended to provide the Soviet army with modern weapons, equipment, and logistics. But he remained wary of the military's tendency toward elitism and exclusiveness, a propensity that grew with its professional renascence. So overwhelming did his distrust become that, at a time of acute danger of war in Europe, Stalin struck at the military in the massive purges of 1937 ....

`Hemmed in on all sides by secret police, political organs, and Party and Komsomol organizations, the military's freedom of action was severely circumscribed.'

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Roman Kolkowicz, The Soviet Military and the Communist Party (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 343--344.

Note what the U.S. army most `hates' in the Red Army: political education (`endoctrination') and political control (by political organs, Party, Komsomol and security forces). On the other hand, the U.S. army views favorably the tendencies towards autonomy and privileges for superior officers (`elitism') and militarism (`exclusivity').

The purges are analyzed by Kolkowicz as a step in the Party struggle, directed by Stalin, against the `professionalists' and Bonapartists among the superior officers. These bourgeois currents were only able to impose themselves at Stalin's death.

`(W)ith Stalin's death and the division of the Party leadership that followed, the control mechanisms were weakened, and the military's own interests and values emerged into the open. In the person of Marshal Zhukov, broad sectors of the military had their spokesman. Zhukov was able to rid the establishment of the political organs' pervasive controls; he introduced strict discipline and the separation of ranks; he demanded the rehabilitation of purged military leaders and the punishment of their tormentors.'

.

Ibid. , p. 344.

Zhukov gave Khrushchev armed support in the two coups d'ĭtat of 1953 (the Beria affair) and 1957 (the Molotov--Malenkov--Kaganovich affair).

Vlasov

But how could generals of the Red Army have envisaged collaborating with Hitler? If they were not good Communists, surely these military men were at least nationalists?

This question will first be answered with another question. Why should this hypothesis be any different for the Soviet Union than France? Was not Marshal Pйtain, the Victor at Verdun, a symbol of French chauvinist patriotism? Were not General Weygand and Admiral Darlan strong defenders of French colonialism? Despite all this, these three became key players in the collaboration with the Nazis. Would not the overthrow of capitalism in the Soviet Union and the bitter class struggle against the bourgeoisie be, for all the forces nostalgic for free enterprise, be additional motives for collaborating with German `dynamic capitalism'?

And did not the World War itself show that the tendency represented by Pйtain in France also existed among certain Soviet officers?

General Vlasov played an important rфle during the defence of Moscow at the end of 1941. Arrested in 1942 by the Germans, he changed sides. But it was only on September 16, 1944, after an interview with Himmler, that he received the official authorization to create his own Russian Liberation Army, whose first division was created as early as 1943. Other imprisoned officers offered their services to the Nazis; a few names follow.

Major-General Trukhin, head of the operational section of the Baltic Region Chief of Staffs, professor at the General Chiefs of Staff Academy. Major-General Malyshkin, head of the Chiefs of Staff of the 19th Army. Major-General Zakutny, professor at the General Chiefs of Staff Academy. Major-Generals Blagoveshchensky, brigade commander; Shapovalov, artillery corps commander; and Meandrov. Brigade commander Zhilenkov, member of the Military Council of the 32nd Army. Colonels Maltsev, Zverev, Nerianin and Buniachenko, commander of the 389th Armed Division.

What was the political profile of these men? The former British secret service officer and historian Cookridge writes:

`Vlassov's entourage was a strange motley. The most intelligent of his officers was Colonel Mileti Zykov (a Jew). He had a been a supporter of the ``rightist deviationists'' of Bukharin and in 1936 had been banished by Stalin to Siberia, where he spent four years. Another survivor of Stalin's purges was General Vasili Feodorovich Malyshkin, former chief of staff of the Far East Army; he had been imprisoned during the Tukhachevsky affair. A third officer, Major-General Georgi Nicolaievich Zhilenkov, had been a political army commissar. They and many of the officers whom Gehlen recruited had been ``rehabilitated'' at the beginning of the war in 1941.'

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E. H. Cookridge, Gehlen: Spy of the Century (New York: Random House, 1972), pp. 57--58.

So here we learn that several superior officers, convicted and sent to Siberia in 1937, then rehabilitated during the war, joined Hitler's side! Clearly the measures taken during the Great Purge were perfectly justified.

To justify joining the Nazis, Vlasov wrote an open letter: `Why I embarked on the road of struggle against Bolshevism'.

What is inside that letter is very instructive.

First, his criticism of the Soviet rйgime is identical to the ones made by Trotsky and the Western right-wing.

`I have seen that the Russian worker has a hard life, that the peasant was driven by force into kolkhozes, that millions of Russian people disappeared after being arrested without inquest or trial .... The system of commissars eroded the Red Army. Irresponsibility, shadowing and spying made the commander a toy in the hands of Party functionaries in civil suits

or military uniforms ... Many thousands of the best commanders, including marshals, were arrested and shot or sent to labour camps, never to return.'

Note that Vlasov called for a professional army, with full military autonomy, without any Party control, just like the previously cited U.S. Army.

Then Vlasov explained how his defeatism encouraged him to join the Nazis. We will see in the next chapter that Trotsky and Trotskyists systematically used defeatist propaganda.

`I saw that the war was being lost for two reasons: the reluctance of the Russian people to defend Bolshevist government and the systems of violence it had created and irresponsible command of the army ....'

Finally, using Nazi `anti-capitalist' language, Vlasov explained that the New Russia had to integrate itself into the European capitalist and imperialist system.

`(We must) build a New Russia without Bolsheviks or capitalists ....

`The interests of the Russian people have always been similar to the interests of the German people and all other European nations .... Bolshevism has separated the Russian people from Europe by an impenetrable wall.'

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Vlasov and Vlasovites. New Times 44 (1990), pp. 36--40.

Solzhenitsyn

We would like to open a brief parenthesis for Solzhenitsyn. This man became the official voice for the fiver per cent of Tsarists, bourgeois, speculators, kulaks, pimps, maffiosi and Vlasovites, all justifiably repressed by the socialist state.

Solzhenitsyn the literary hack lived through a cruel dilemna during the Nazi occupation. Chauvinist, he hated the German invaders. But he hated socialism even more passionately. So he had a soft spot for General Vlasov, the most famous of the Nazi collaborators. Although Solzhenitsyn did not approve of Vlasov's flirt with Hitler, he was laudatory about his hatred of Bolshevism.

General Vlasov collaborated with the Nazis after having being captured? Solzhenitsyn found a way to explain and justify the treason. He wrote:

`Vlasov's Second Shock Army ... was 46 miles (70 kilometres) deep inside the German lines! And from then on, the reckless Stalinist Supreme Command could find neither men nor ammunition to reinforce even those troops .... The army was without food and, at the same time, Vlasov was refused permission to retreat ....

`Now this, of course, was treason to the Motherland! This, of course, was vicious, self-obsessed betrayal! But it was Stalin's .... It can include ignorance and carelessness in the preparations for war, confusion and cowardice at its very start, the meaningless sacrifice of armies and corps solely for the sake of saving one's own marshal's uniform. Indeed, what more bitter treason is there on the part of a Supreme Commander in Chief?'

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Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago, 1918--1956. An Experiment in Literary Investigation I--II (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 253, note.

So Solzhenitsyn defended the traitor Vlasov against Stalin. Let us look at what really happened in early 1942. Several armies had received the order to break the German blockade of Leningrad. But the offensive quickly got bogged down and the front commander, Khozin, received the order from Stalin's headquarters to withdraw Vlasov's army. Marshal Vasilevsky writes:

`Vlasov, who did not possess many gifts as a commander and, in fact, vacillating and cowardly by nature, was thoroughly inactive. The grave situation for the army demoralised him ever further and he made no attempt to withdraw his troops quickly and covertly ....

`I can with some authority confirm the extremely serious concern which Stalin displayed daily for the 2nd Shock Army and for rendering every possible assistance to them. This is evidenced by a whole series of GHQ directives that I personally wrote primarily to Stalin's dictation'.

Vlasov joined the enemy while a considerable part of his army succeeded in breaching through the German trap and in escaping.

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A. M. Vasilevsky, A Lifelong Cause (Moscow: Progress, 1973), pp. 139--141.

Russians were hired in the Nazi army to combat the Soviet people? But, exclaimed Solzhenitsyn, it was Stalin's criminal rйgime that pushed them to do it:

`(M)en could be induced to enter the Wehrmacht's Vlasov detachments only in the last extremity, only at the limit of desperation, only out of inexhaustible hatred of the Soviet regime.'

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Solzhenitsyn, op. cit. , p. 255.

Besides, said Solzhenitsyn, the Vlasovian collaborators were more anti-Communist than pro-Nazi:

`(O)nly in the fall of 1944 did they begin to form Vlasov divisions that were exclusively Russian .... their first and last independent action, dealt a blow --- to the Germans themselves .... Vlasov ordered his divisions to the aid of the Czech rebels.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 258--259.

This is the fable that has been repeated by Nazi and other fascist criminals of all countries: when the German fascists were on the verge of defeat, they all discovered their `national and independent' vocation and remembered their `opposition' to Germany, looking for protection under the wings of U.S. imperialism!

Solzhenitsyn did not object to the Germans being fascists, but to the fact that they were stupid and blind fascists. If they had been more intelligent, the German Nazis would have recognized the value of their Russian brothers-in-arms and they would have allowed them a certain level of autonomy:

`The Germans, in their shallow stupidity and self-importance, allowed them only to die for the German Reich, but denied them the right to plan an independent destiny for Russia.'

.

Ibid. , p. 261.

The war was still raging, Nazism was not clearly defeated, and Solzhenitsyn was already crying for the `inhuman' lot reserved for the arrested Vlasovian criminals! He described a scene after the cleaning-up of a Nazi pocket on Soviet territory:

`A prisoner on foot in German britches was crying out to me in pure Russian. He was naked from the waist up, and his face, chest, shoulders, and back were all bloody, while a sergeant osobist ... drove him forward with a whip .... I was afraid to defend the Vlasov man against the osobist .... This picture will remain etched in my mind forever. This, after all, is almost a symbol of the Archipelago. It ought to be on the jacket of this book.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 256--257.

We should thank Solzhenitsyn for his disconcerting candor: the man who best incarnated the `millions of victims of Stalinism' was a Nazi collaborator.

A clandestine anti-Communist organization in the Red Army

In general, the purges within the Red Army are presented as acts of foolish, arbitrary, blind repression; the accusations were all set-ups, diabolically prepared to ensure Stalin's personal dictatorship.

What is the truth?

A concrete and very interesting example can give us some essential aspects.

A colonel in the Soviet Army, G. A. Tokaev, defected to the British in 1948. He wrote a book called Comrade X, a real gold mine for those who want to try to understand the complexity of the struggle within the Bolshevik Party. Aeronautical engineer, Tokaev was from 1937 to 1948 the Political Secretary of the largest Party branch of the Zhukovsky Air Force Academy. He was therefore a leading cadre.

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Tokaev, op. cit. , pp. 83--84.

When he entered the Party in 1933 at the age of 22, Tokaev was already a member of a clandestine anti-Communist organization. At the head of his organization was a leading officer of the Red Army, an influential member of the Bolshevik Party Central Committee! Tokaev's group held secret conferences, adopted resolutions and sent emissaries around the country.

Throughout the book, published in 1956, he developed the political ideas of his clandestine group. Reading the main points adopted by this clandestine anti-Communist organization is very instructive.

Tokaev first presented himself as a `revolutionary democrat and liberal'.

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Ibid. , p. 1.

We were, he claimed, `the enemy of any man who thought to divide the world into `us' and `them', into communists and anti-communists'.

.

Ibid. , p. 5.

Tokaev's group `proclaimed the ideal of universal brotherhood' and `regarded Christianity as one of the great systems of universal human values'.

.

Ibid. , p. 220.

Tokaev's group was partisan to the bourgeois rйgime set up by the February Revolution. The `February Revolution represented at least a flicker of democracy ... (that) pointed to a latent belief in democracy among the common people'.

.

Ibid. , p. 75.

The exile Menshevik newspaper, Sozialistichesky Vestnik was circulated within Tokaev's group, as was the book The Dawn of the Red Terror by the Menshevik G. Aaronson .

.

Ibid. , p. 8.

Tokaev recognized the link between his anti-Communist organization and the social-democrat International. `The revolutionary democratic movement is close to the democratic socialists. I have worked in close co-operation with many convinced socialists, such as Kurt Schumacher .... Such names as Attlee, Bevin, Spaak and Blum mean something to humanity'.

.

Ibid. , p. 45.

Tokaev also fought for the `human rights' of all anti-Communists. `In our view ... there was no more urgent and important matter for the U.S.S.R. than the struggle for the human rights of the individual'.

.

Ibid. , p. 15.

Multi-partyism and the division of the U.S.S.R. into independent republics were two essential points of the conspirators' program.

Tokaev's group, the majority of whose members seem to have been nationalists from the Caucasus region, expressed his support for Yenukidze's plan, which aimed at destroying Stalinism `root and branch' and replacing Stalin's `reactionary U.S.S.R.' by a `free union of free peoples'. The country was to be divided into ten natural regions: The North Caucasian United States, The Ukraine Democratic Republic, The Moscow Democratic Republic, The Siberian Democratic Republic, etc.

.

Ibid. , p. 21.

While preparing in 1939 a plan to overthrow Stalin's government, Tokaev's group was ready to `seek outside support, particularly from the parties of the Second International .... a new Constituent Assembly would be elected and its first measure would be to terminate one Party rule'.

.

Ibid. , p. 160.

Tokaev's clandestine group was clearly engaged in a struggle to the end with the Party leadership. In the summer of 1935, `We of the opposition, whether army or civilian, fully realised that we had entered a life-or-death struggle'.

.

Ibid. , p. 17.

Finally, Tokaev considered `Britain the freest and most democratic country in the world'.

.

Ibid. , p. 189.

After World War II, `My friends and I had become great admirers of the United States'.

.

Ibid. , p. 274.

Astoundingly, this is, almost point by point, Gorbachev's program. Starting in 1985, the ideas that were being defended in 1931--1941 by clandestine anti-Communist organizations resurfaced at the head of the Party. Gorbachev denounced the division of the world between socialism and capitalism and converted himself to `universal values'. The rapprochement with social-democracy was initiated by Gorbachev in 1986. Multi-partyism became reality in the USSR in 1989. Yeltsin just reminded French Prime Minister Chirac that the February Revolution brought `democratic hope' to Russia. The transformation of the `reactionary U.S.S.R.' into a `Union of Free Republics' has been achieved.

But in 1935 when Tokaev was fighting for the program applied 50 years later by Gorbachev, he was fully conscious that he was engaged in a struggle to the end with the Bolshevik leadership.

`(I)n the summer of 1935 ... We of the opposition, whether army or civilian, fully realised that we had entered a life-or-death struggle.'

.

Ibid. , p. 17.

Who belonged to Tokaev's clandestine group?

They were mostly Red Army officers, often young officers coming out of military academies. His leader, Comrade X --- the real name is never given --- was a member of the Central Committee during the thirties and forties.

Riz, lieutenant-captain in the navy, was the head of the clandestine movement in the Black Sea flottila. Expelled from the Party four times, he

was reintegrated four times.

.

Ibid. , p. 6.

Generals Osepyan, Deputy Head of the Political Administration of the Armed Forces (!), and Alksnis were among the main leaders of the clandestine organization. They were all close to General Kashirin. All three were arrested and executed during the Tukhachevsky affair.

.

Ibid. , p. 118.

A few more names. Lieutenant-Colonel Gап, killed in 1936 in an armed confrontation with the police.

.

Ibid. , p. 22.

Colonel Kosmodemyansky, who `had made heroic but untimely attempts to shake off the Stalin oligarchy'.

.

Ibid. , p. 215.

Colonel-General Todorsky, Chief of the Zhukovsky Academy, and Smolensky, Divisional Commissar, Deputy Chief of the Academy, responsible for political affairs.

.

Ibid. , p. 28.

In Ukraine, the group supported Nikolai Generalov, whom Tokaev met in 1931 during a clandestine meeting in Moscow, and Lentzer. The two were arrested in Dniepropetrovsk in 1936.

.

Ibid. , pp. 9, 47.

Katya Okman, the daughter of an Old Bolshevik, entered into conflict with the Party at the beginning of the Revolution, and Klava Yeryomenko, Ukrainian widow of a naval aviation officer at Sebastopol, assured links throughout the country.

During the purge of the Bukharin group (`right deviationist') and that of Marshal Tukhachevsky, most of Tokaev's group was arrested and shot: `circles close to Comrade X had been almost completely wiped out. Most of them had been arrested in connection with the `Right-wing deviationists' '.

.

Ibid. , p. 84.

Our situation, wrote Tokaev, had become tragic. One of the cadres, Belinsky, remarked that we had made a mistake in believing that Stalin was an incapable who would never be able to achieve industrialization and cultural development. Riz replied that he was wrong, that it was a struggle between generations and that the after-Stalin had to be prepared.

.

Ibid. , pp. 74--75.

Despite having an anti-Communist platform, Tokaev's clandestine organization maintained close links with `reformist-communist' factions within the Party.

In June 1935, Tokaev was sent to the south. He made a few comments about Yenukidze and Sheboldayev, two `Stalinist' Bolsheviks, commonly considered as typical victims of Stalin's arbitrariness.

`One of my tasks was to try to ward off an attack against a number of Sea of Azov, Black Sea and North Caucasian opposition leaders, the chief of whom was B. P. Sheboldayev, First Secretary of the Regional Committee of the Party and a member of the Central Committee itself. Not that our movement was completely at one with the Sheboldayev--Yenukidze group, but we knew what they were doing and Comrade X considered it our revolutionary duty to help them at a critical moment .... We disagreed on details, but these were nevertheless brave and honorable men, who had many a time saved members of our group, and who had a considerable chance of success.'

.

Ibid. , p. 6.

`(In 1935), my personal contacts made it possible for me to get at certain top-secret files belonging to the Party Central Office and relating to `Abu' Yenukidze and his group. The papers would help us to find out just how much the Stalinists knew about all those working against them ....

`(Yanukdize) was a committed communist of the right-wing ....

`The open conflict between Stalin and Yenukidze really dated from the law of December 1st, 1934, which followed immediately on the assassination of Kirov.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 17--18.

`Yenukidze (tolerated) under him a handful ... of men who were technically efficient and useful to the community but who were anti-communists.'

.

Ibid. , p. 20.

Yenukidze was placed under house arrest in mid-1935. Lieutenant-Colonel Gaп, a leader of Tokaev's organization, organized his escape. At Rostov-on-Don, they held a conference with Sheboldayev, First Secretary of the Regional Committee for Sea of Azon--Black Sea, with Pivovarov, the President of the Soviet of the Region and with Larin, the Prime Minister. Then Yenukidze and Gaп continued to the south, but they were ambushed by the NKVD near Baku. Gaп shot two men, but was himself killed.

.

Ibid. , p. 22.

Tokaev's opposition group also had links with Bukharin's group (see page).

Tokaev claimed that his group maintained close contact with another faction at the head of the Party, that of the Chief of Security, Yagoda. `(W)e knew the power of ... NKVD bosses Yagoda or Beria ... in their roles not of servants, but of enemies of the rйgime'.

.

Ibid. , p. 7.

Tokaev wrote that Yagoda protected many of their men who were in danger. When Yagoda was arrested, all the links that Tokaev's group had with the leadership of state security were broken. For their clandestine movement, this was a tremendous loss.

`The NKVD now headed by Yezhov, took another step forward. The Little Politbureau had penetrated the Yenukidze--Sheboldayev and the Yagoda--Zelinsky conspiracies, and broken through the opposition's links within the central institutions of the political police'. Yagoda `was removed from the NKVD, and we lost a strong link in our opposition intelligence service'.

.

Ibid. , p. 63.

What were the intentions, the projects and the activities of Tokaev's group?

Well before 1934, wrote Tokaev, `our group had planned to assassinate Kirov and Kalinin, the President of the Soviet Union. Finally, it was another group that assassinated Kirov, a group with which we were in contact.'

.

Ibid. , p. 2.

`In 1934 there was a plot to start a revolution by arresting the whole of the Stalinist-packed 17th Congress of the Party'.

.

Ibid. , p. 37.

A comrade from the group, Klava Yeryomenko, proposed in mid-1936 to kill Stalin. She knew officers of Stalin's bodyguard. Comrade X had refused, and `pointed out that there had already been no less than fifteen attempts to assassinate Stalin, none had got near to success, each had cost many brave lives'.

.

Ibid. , pp. 48--49.

`In August, 1936 ... My own conclusion was that the time for delay was past. We must make immediate preparations for an armed uprising. I was sure then, as I am today, that if Comrade X had chosen to send out a call to arms, he would have been joined at once by many of the big men of the U.S.S.R. In 1936, Alksnis , Yegorov, Osepyan and Kashirin would have joined him'.

.

Ibid. , p. 48.

Note that all these generals were executed after the Tukhachevsky conspiracy. Tokaev thought that they had in 1936 sufficiently many men in the army to succeed in a coup d'йtat, which, Bukharin still being alive, would have had support from the peasantry.

One of `our pilots', recalled Tokaev, submitted to Comrade X and to Alksnis and Osepyan his plan to bomb the Lenin Mausoleum and the Politburo.

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Ibid. , p. 34.

On November 20, 1936, in Moscow, Comrade X, during a clandestine meeting of five members, proposed to Demokratov to assassinate Yezhov during the Eighth Extraordinary Congress of the Soviets.

.

Ibid. , p. 64.

`In April (1939) we held a congress of underground oppositionist leaders to review the position at home and abroad. Apart from revolutionary democrats there were present two socialists and two Right-wing military oppositionists, one of whom called himself a popular democrat-decentralist. We passed a resolution for the first time defining Stalinism as counter-revolutionary fascism, a betrayal of the working class .... The resolution was immediately communicated to prominent personalities of both Party and Government and similar conferences were organised in other centres .... we went to assess the chances of an armed uprising against Stalin'.

.

Ibid. , p. 156.

Note that the theme `' was shared in the thirties by Soviet military conspirators, Trotskyists, social-democrats and the Western Catholic right-wing.

Soon after, Tokaev was discussing with Smolninsky, a clandestine name for a leading officer of the Leningrad district, the possibility of a attempt against Zhdanov.

.

Ibid. , pp. 156--157.

Still in 1939, on the eve of the war, there was another meeting, where the conspirators discussed the question of assassinating Stalin in the case of war. They decided it was inopportune because they no longer had enough men to run the country and because the masses would not have followed them.

.

Ibid. , p. 159--160.

When war broke out, the Party leadership proposed to Tokaev, who spoke German, to lead the partisan war behind the Nazi lines. The partisans, of course, were subject to terrible risks. At the time, Comrade X decided that Tokaev could not accept: `We were, as far as we could, to remain in the main centres, to be ready to take over power if the Stalin rйgime broke down'.

.

Ibid. , p. 183.

`Comrade X was convinced that it was touch and go for Stalin. The pity of it was that we could not see Hitler as the liberator. Therefore, said Comrade X, we must be prepared for Stalin's rйgime to collapse, but we should do nothing whatever to weaken it'. This point was discussed during a clandestine meeting on July 5, 1941.

.

Ibid. , p. 188.

After the war, in 1947, Tokaev was in charge of discussions with the German professor Tank, who specialized in aeronautics, in order to persuade him to come work in the Soviet Union. `Tank ... was indeed prepared to work on a jet fighter for the U.S.S.R.... I discussed the matter with a number of key men. We agreed that while it was wrong to assume that Soviet aircraft designers could not design a jet bomber, it was not in the interests of the country that they should .... The U.S.S.R. as we saw it was not really threatened by external enemies; therefore our own efforts must be directed towards weakening, not strengthening, the Soviet monopolistic imperialism in the hope of thus making a democratic revolution possible'.

.

Ibid. , p. 352.

Tokaev recognized here that economic sabotage was a political form of struggle for power.

These examples give an idea of the conspiratorial nature of a clandestine military group, hidden within the Bolshevik Party, whose survivors would see their `ideals' recognized with the arrival in power of Khrushchev, and implemented under Gorbachev.

The 1937--1938 Purge

The actual purge was decided upon after the revelation of the Tukhachevsky military conspiracy. The discovery of such a plot at the head of the Red Army, a plot that had links with opportunist factions within the Party, provoked a complete panic.

The Bolshevik Party's strategy assumed that war with fascism was inevitable. Given that some of the most important figures in the Red Army and some of the leading figures in the Party were secretly collaborating on plans for a coup d'ŭtat showed how important the interior danger and its links with the external menace were. Stalin was extremely lucid and perfectly conscious that the confrontation between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union would cost millions of Soviet lives. The decision to physically eliminate the Fifth Column was not the sign of a `dictator's paranoia', as Nazi propaganda claimed. Rather, it showed the determination of Stalin and the Bolshevik Party to confront fascism in a struggle to the end. By exterminating the Fifth Column, Stalin thought about saving several million Soviet lives, which would be the extra cost to pay should external aggression be able to profit from sabotage, provocation or internal treason.

In the previous chapter, we saw that the campaign waged against bureaucracy in the Party, especially at the intermediate levels, was amplified in 1937. During this campaign, Yaroslavsky harshly attacked the bureaucratic apparatus. He claimed that in Sverdlovsk, half of the members of the Presidiums of governmental institutions were co-opted. The Moscow Soviet only met once a year. Some leaders did not even know by sight their subordinates. Yaroslavsky stated:

`This party apparat, which should be helping the party, not infrequently puts itself between the party masses and the party leaders, and still further increases the alienation of the leaders from the masses.'

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Getty, op. cit. , p. 137.

Getty wrote:

`(T)he center was trying to unleash criticism of the middle-level apparat by the rank-and-file activists. Without official sanction and pressure from above, it would have been impossible for the rank and file, on their own, to organize and sustain such a movement against their immediate superiors.'

.

Ibid. , p. 155.

The bureaucratic and arbitrary attitude of the men in the provincial apparatuses was reinforced by the fact that the latter had a virtual monopoly on administrative experience. The Bolshevik leadership encouraged the base to struggle against these bureaucratic and bourgeois tendencies. Getty wrote:

`Populist control from below was not naive; rather, it was a vain but sincere attempt to use the rank and file to break open the closed regional machines.'

.

Ibid. , p. 162.

In the beginning of 1937, a satrap like Rumiantsev, who ran the Western Region, a territory as large as a Western European country, could not be dethroned by criticism from the base. He was expelled from above, for having been linked to a military plot, as a collaborator of Uborevich.

`The two radical currents of the 1930s had converged in July 1937, and the resulting turbulence destroyed the bureaucracy. Zhdanov's party-

revival campaign and Ezhov's hunt for enemies fused to create a chaotic ``populist terror'' that now swept the party ....

`Antibureaucratic populism and police terror destroyed the offices as well as the officeholders. Radicalism had turned the political machine inside out and destroyed the party bureaucracy.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 170--171.

The struggle against Nazi infiltration and against the military conspiracy therefore fused with the struggle against bureaucracy and feudal fiefs. There was a revolutionary purge from below and from above.

The purge started with a cadre decision, signed on July 2, 1937 by Stalin and Molotov.

Yezhov then signed the execution orders condemning to death 75,950 individuals whose irreconcilable hostility to the Soviet rйgime was known: common criminals, kulaks, counter-revolutionaries, spies and anti-Soviet elements. The cases had to be examined by a troika including the Party Secretary, the President of the local Soviet and the Chief of the NKVD. But starting in September 1937, the leaders of the purge at the regional level and the leadership's special envoys were already introducing demands to increase the quota of anti-Soviet elements to be executed.

The purge was often characterized by inefficiency and anarchy. On the verge of being arrested by the NKVD in Minsk, Colonel Kutsner took the train to Moscow, where he became Professor at the Frunze Academy! Getty cited testimony by Grigorenko and Ginzburg, two of Stalin's adversaries: `a person who felt that his arrest was imminent could go to another town and, as a rule, avoid being arrested'.

.

Ibid. , p. 178.

Regional Party Secretaries tried to show their vigilance by denouncing and expelling a large number of lower cadres and ordinary members.

.

Ibid.

Opponents hiding within the party led conspiracies to expell the greatest possible number of loyal Communist cadres. About this question, one opponent testified:

`We endeavored to expel as many people from the party as possible. We expelled people when there were no grounds for explusion (sic). We had one aim in view --- to increase the number of embittered people and thus increase the number of our allies.'

.

Ibid. , p. 177.

To lead a giant, complex country, still trying to catch up on its backwardness, was an extremely difficult task. In many strategic domains, Stalin concentrated on elaborating general guidelines. He then gave the task to be effected to one of his adjuncts. To put into application the guidelines on the purge, he replaced the liberal Yagoda, who had toyed with some of the opponents' plots, by Yezhov, an Old Bolshevik of worker origin.

But only three months after the beginning of the purge led by Yezhov, there were already signs that Stalin was not satisfied by the way the operation was being carried out. In October, Stalin intervened to affirm

that the economic leaders were trustworthy. In December 1937, the twentieth anniversary of the NKVD was celebrated. A cult of the NKVD, the `vanguard of party and revolution', had been developing for some time in the press. Stalin did not even wait for the next central meeting. At the end of December, three Deputy Commissars of the NKVD were fired.

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Ibid. , p. 185.

In January 1938, the Central Committee published a resolution on how the purge was taking place. It reaffirmed the necessity of vigilance and repression against enemies and spies. But it most criticized the `false vigilance' of some Party Secretaries who were attacking the base to protect their own position. It starts as follows:

`The VKP(b) Central Committee plenum considers it necessary to direct the attention of party organizations and their leaders to the fact that while carrying out their major effort to purge their ranks of trotskyite-rightist agents of fascism they are committing serious errors and perversions which interfere with the business of purging the party of double dealers, spies, and wreckers. Despite the frequent directives and warnings of the VKP(b) Central Committee, in many cases the party organizations adopt a completely incorrect approach and expel Communists from the party in a criminally frivolous way.'

.

On Errors of Party Organizations in Expelling Communists from the Party, on Formal Bureaucratic Attitudes toward the Appeals of Those Expelled from the VKP(b), and on Measures to Eliminate These Short-comings (18 January 1938). McNeal, op. cit. , p. 188.

The resolution shows two major organizational and political problems that made the purge deviate from its aims: the presence of

Communists who were only concerned about their careers, and the presence, among the cadres, of infiltrated enemies.

`(A)mong Communists there exist, still unrevealed and unmasked, certain careerist Communists who are striving to become prominent and to be promoted by recommending expulsions from the party, through the repression of party members, who are striving to insure themselves against possible charges of inadequate vigilance through the indiscriminate repression of party members ....

`This sort of careerist communist, anxious to curry favour, indiscriminately spreads panic about enemies of the people and at party meetings is always ready to raise a hue and cry about expelling members from the party on various formalistic grounds or entirely without such grounds ....

`Furthermore, numerous instances are known of disguised enemies of the people, wreckers and double dealers, organizing, for provocational ends, the submission of slanderous depositions against party members and, under the semblance of `heightening vigilance,' seeking to expel from the VKP(b) ranks honest and devoted Communists, in this way diverting the blow from themselves and retaining their own positions in the party's ranks ....

`(They) try through measures of repression to beat up our bolshevik cadres and to sow excess suspicion in our ranks.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 190--192.

We would like now to draw attention to Khrushchev's criminal swindle. In his Secret Report, he devoted an entire chapter in the denunciation of the `Great Purge'.

`Using Stalin's formulation, namely, that the closer we are to socialism the more enemies we will have ... the provocateurs who had infiltrated the state-security organs together with consciousless careerists began to protect with the party name the mass terror against ... cadres'.

.

Khrushchev, Secret Report, p. S26.

The reader will note that those are precisely the two kinds of hostile elements that Stalin warned against in January 1938! In fact, `Stalin's formulation' was invented by Khrushchev. Yes, some Communists were unjustly hit, and crimes were committed during the purge. But, with great foresight, Stalin had already denounced these problems when the operation had only been running for six months. Eighteen years later, Khrushchev would use as pretext the criminal activities of these provocateurs and careerists, denounced at the time by Stalin, to denigrate the purge itself and to insult Stalin!

We return to the January 1938 resolution. Here are some of its conclusions:

`It is time to understand that bolshevik vigilance consists essentially in the ability to unmask an enemy regarless of how clever and artful he may be, regardless of how he decks himself out, and not in discriminate or `on the off-chance' expulsions, by the tens and hundreds, of everyone who comes within reach.

`(Directions are) to end mass indiscriminate expulsions from the party and to institute a genuinely individualized and differentiated approach to questions of expulsion from the party or of restoring expelled persons to the rights of party membership ....

`(Directions are) to remove from their party posts and to hold accountable to the party those party leaders who do not carry out the directives of the VKP(b) Central Committee, who expel VKP(b) members

and candidate members from the party without carefully verifying all the materials, and who take an arbitrary attitude in their dealings with party members.'

.

Ibid. , p. 194.

Tokaev thought it probable that anti-Communist opponents had provoked excesses during the purge to discredit and weaken the Party. He wrote:

`The fear of being suspected of lack of vigilance drove local fanatics to denounce not only Bukharinists, but also Malenkovists, Yezhovists, even Stalinists. It is of course not impossible that they were also egged on to do so by concealed oppositionists ...! Beria ... at a closed joint session of the Central Committee and the Central Control Committee of the Party, held in the autumn of 1938 ... declared that if Yezhov were not a deliberate Nazi agent, he was certainly an involuntary one. He had turned the central offices of the NKVD into a breeding ground for fascist agents.'

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Tokaev, op. cit. , p. 119.

`Gardinashvili, one of my close contacts, (had a) conversation (with Beria) just before Beria was appointed Head of the police. Gardinashvili asked Beria if Stalin was blind to the dismay caused by so many executions --- was he unaware that the reign of terror had gone so far that it was defeating itself; men in high positions were wondering whether Nazi agents had not penetrated the NKVD, using their position to discredit our country.

`Beria's realistic reply was that Stalin was well aware of this but was faced with a technical difficulty: the speedy restoration of `normality'

in a centrally controlled State of the size of the U.S.S.R. was an immense task ....

`In addition, there was the real danger of war, and the Government therefore had to be very cautious about relaxations.'

.

Ibid. , p. 101.

The rectification

On November 11, 1938, Stalin and Molotov signed a clear decision, putting an end to the excesses that took place during the purges.

`The general operations --- to crush and destroy enemy elements --- conducted by the NKVD in 1937--1938, during which investigation and hearing procedures were simplified, showed numerous and grave defects in the work of the NKVD and prosecutor. Furthermore, enemies of the people and foreign secret service spies penetrated the NKVD, both at the local and central level. They tried by all means to disrupt investigations. Agents consciously deformed Soviet laws, conducted massive and unjustified arrests and, at the same time, protected their acolytes, particularly those who had infiltrated the NKVD.

`The completely unacceptable defects observed in the work of the NKVD and prosecutors were only possible because enemies of the people had infiltrated themselves in the NKVD and prosecutor offices, used every possible method to separate the work of the NKVD and prosecutors from the Party organs, to avoid Party control and leadership and to facilitate for themselves and for their acolytes the continuation of their anti-Soviet activities.

`The Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) resolves:

`1. To prohibit the NKVD and prosecutors from conducting any massive arrest or deportation operation ....

`The CPC and the CC of the CPSU(b) warn all NKVD and prosecutor office employees that the slightest deviation from Soviet laws and from Party and Government directives by any employee, whoever that person might be, will result in severe legal proceedings.

`V. Molotov, J. Stalin.'

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Nouvelles de Moscou 26 (30 June 1992), p. 15.

There is still much controversy about the number of people that were affected by the Great Purge. This subject has been a favorite topic for propaganda. According to Rittersporn, in 1937--1938, during the `Great Purge', there were 278,818 expulsions from the Party. This number was much smaller than during the preceding years. In 1933, there were 854,330 expulsions; in 1934, there were 342,294, and in 1935 the number was 281,872. In 1936, there were 95,145.

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Rittersporn, op. cit. , p. 12.

However, we should underscore that this purge was completely different from the previous periods. The `Great Purge' focused mainly on cadres. During the preceding years, elements that had nothing to do with Communism, common criminals, drunkards and undisciplined elements constituted the majority of the expelled.

According to Getty, from November 1936 to March 1939, there were fewer than 180,000 expulsions from the Party.

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Getty, op. cit. , p. 176.

This number takes into account reintegrated individuals.

Even before the 1938 Plenum, there were 53,700 appeals against expulsions. In August 1938, there were 101,233 appeals. At that time, out of a total of 154,933 appeals, the Party committees had already examined 85,273, of which 54 per cent were readmitted.

.

Ibid. , p. 190.

No other information could better give the lie to the statement that the purge was blind terror and without appeal, organized by an irrational dictator.

Conquest claims that there were 7 to 9 million arrests in 1937--1938. At that time, the number of industrial workers was less than 8 million. This number, Conquest `bases this on the memoirs of ex-prisoners who assert that between 4 and 5.5 per cent of the Soviet population were incarcerated or deported during those years'.

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Rittersporn, op. cit. , p. 12.

These figures are sheer fantasy, invented by enemies of socialism who were firmly committed to harming the rйgime by all means. Their `estimates' are based on no serious sources.

`Lacking evidence, all estimates are equally worthless, and it is hard to disagree with Brzezinski's observation that it is impossible to make any estimates without erring in the hundreds of thousands or even millions.'

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Getty, op. cit. , pp. 257--258, n. 16.

We would now like to address the Gulag and the more general problem of the number of imprisoned and dead in the corrective work camps, the word Gulag meaning Principal Administration of the camps.

Armed with the science of statistics and extrapolation, Robert Conquest makes brilliant calculations: 5 million interned in the Gulag at the beginning of 1934; more than 7 million arrested during the 1937--1938

purges, that makes 12 million; from this number one million executed and two million dead of different causes during those two years. That makes exactly 9 million politically detained in 1939 `not counting the common law'.

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Conquest's figures and those that refute his claims all come from Nicolas Werth, `Goulag: les vrais chiffres', op. cit. . See also Getty, Rittersporn and Zemskov, op. cit. .

Now, given the size of the repression, Conquest starts to count cadavers. Between 1939 and 1953, there was an average annual mortality `of around 10 per cent'. But, during all these years, the number of detained remained stable, around 8 million. That means that during those years, 12 million persons were assassinated in the Gulag by Stalinism.

The Medvedez brothers, those `Communists' of the Bukharin--Gorbachev school, essentially confirmed those revealing figures.

There were `12 to 13 million people thought to have been in concentration camps during Stalin's time'. Under Khrushchev, who reawoke hopes for `democratization', things went much better, of course: in the Gulag, there were only some 2 million common law criminals left.

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Roy A. Medvedev and Zhores A. Medvedev, Khrushchev: The Years in Power (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), p. 19.

Up to now, no problem. Everything was going just fine for our anti-Communists. Their word was taken for granted.

Then the USSR split up and Gorbachev's disciples were able to grab the Soviet archives. In 1990, the Soviet historians Zemskov and

Dugin published the unedited statistics for the Gulag. They contain the arrivals and departures, right down to the last person.

Unexpected consequence: These accounting books made it possible to remove Conquest's scientific mask.

In 1934, Conquest counted 5 million political detainees. In fact there were between 127,000 and 170,000. The exact number of all detained in the work camps, political and common law combined, was 510,307. The political prisoners formed only 25 to 35 per cent of the detainees. To the approximately 150,000 detainees, Conquest added 4,850,000. Small detail!

Annually, Conquest estimated an average of 8 million detainees in the camps. And Medvedev 12 to 13 million. In fact, the number of political detainees oscillated between a minimum of 127,000 in 1934 and a maximum of 500,000 during the two war years, 1941 and 1942. The real figures were therefore multiplied by a factor of between 16 and 26. When the average number of detainees was somewhere between 236,000 and 315,000 political detainees, Conquest `invented' 7,700,000 extra! Marginal statistical error, of course. Our school books, our newspapers, do not give the real figure of around 272,000, but the horror of 8,000,000!

Conquest, the fraud, claims that in 1937--1938, during the Great Purge, the camps swelled by 7 million `politicals' and there were in addition 1 million executions and 2 million other deaths. In fact, from 1936 to 1939, the number of detained in the camps increased by 477,789 persons (passing from 839,406 to 1,317,195). A falsification factor of 14. In two years, there were 115,922 deaths, not 2,000,000. For the 116,000 dead of various causes, Conquest adds 1,884,000 `victims of Stalinism'.

Gorbachev's ideologue, Medvedev, refers to 12 to 13 million in the camps; under the liberal Khrushchev, there remained 2 million, all common law. In fact, during Stalin's time, in 1951, the year of the greatest number of detained in the Gulag, there were 1,948,158 common law prisoners, as many as during Khrushchev's time. The real number of political prisoners was then 579,878. Most of these `politicals' had been Nazi collaborators: 334,538 had been convicted for treason.

According to Conquest, between 1939 and 1953, there was, in the work camps, a 10 per cent death rate per year, some 12 million `victims of Stalinism'. An average of 855,000 dead per year. In fact, the real figure in peace time was 49,000. Conquest invented a figure of 806,000 deaths per year. During the four years of the war, when Nazi barbarity was imposing unbearable conditions on all Soviets, the average number of deaths was 194,000. Hence, in four years, the Nazis caused an excess of 580,000 deaths, for which, of course, Stalin is responsible.

Werth, who denounces Conquest's falsifications, still does his best to maintain as much as possible the myth of Stalinist `crimes'.

`In fourteen years (1934--1947), 1 million deaths were registered in the work camps alone.' So Werth also blames socialism for the 580,000 extra deaths caused by the Nazis!

Let us return to the purge itself.

One of the best-known slanders claims that the purge was intended to eliminate the `Old Bolshevik Guard'. Even a vicious enemy of Bolshevism like Brzezinski can take up the same line.

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Zbigniew Brzezinski, The Grand Failure (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1989), p. 89.

In 1934, there were 182,600 `Old Bolsheviks' in the Party, i.e. members who joined in 1920 at the latest. In 1939, there were 125,000. The great majority, 69 per cent, were still in the Party. There was during those five years a drop of 57,000 individuals, i.e. 31 per cent. Some died of natural causes, others were expelled, others were executed. It is clear that if `Old Bolsheviks' fell during the Purge, it was not because they were `Old Bolsheviks', but because of their political behavior.

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Ibid. , p. 176.

We conclude with the words of Professor J. Arch Getty who, at the end of his remarkable book, Origins of the Great Purges, writes:

`The evidence suggests that the Ezhovshchina --- which is what most people really mean by the ``Great Purges'' --- should be redefined. It was not the result of a petrified bureaucracy's stamping out dissent and annihilating old radical revolutionaries. In fact, it may have been just the opposite. It is not inconsistent with the evidence to argue that the Ezhovshchina was rather a radical, even hysterical, reaction to bureaucracy. The entrenched officeholders were destroyed from above and below in a chaotic wave of voluntarism and revolutionary puritanism.'

.

Ibid. , p. 206.

The Western bourgeoisie and the Purge

By and large, the 1937--1938 purge succeeded in its purpose. There was also a lot of damage and many errors were committed, but these could probably not have been avoided, given the internal situation of the Party. Most of the men and women in the Nazi Fifth Column fell during the purge. And when the fascists attacked the USSR, there were few collaborators within the State and Party apparatus.

When we listen to Social Democrats, Christian Democrats, liberals and other bourgeois speaking of Stalin's `absurd terror', of the `bloody despot', we would like to ask them where they and people like them were in 1940, when the Nazis occupied France and Belgium. The great majority who, here at home, denounced Stalin's purge, actively or passively supported the Nazi rйgime as soon as it was set up. When the Nazis occupied Belgium, Hendrik de Man, the President of the Socialist Party, made an official declaration to praise Hitler and to announce that the arrival of the Hitlerite troops meant the `liberation of the working class'! In `The Manifesto to the Members of the POB (Belgian Workers' Party)', published in July 1940, de Man wrote:

`The war has led to the debacle of the parliamentary regime and of the capitalist plutocracy in the so-called democracies. For the working classes and for socialism, this collapse of a decrepit world, far from being a disaster, is a deliverance .... the way is open for the two causes which sum up the aspirations of the people: European peace and social justice.'

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Peter Dodge, Beyond Marxism: The Faith and Works of Hendrik de Man (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), pp. 196--197.

In history courses, they beat our eardrums with all the scandalous lies about Stalin, but they do not tell us that the President of the Belgian Socialist Party, great critic of the Stalin purge, hailed the Nazis in Brussels! It is a well established fact that not only Hendrik De Man, but also Achille

Van Acker, future Prime Minister of `democratic' Belgium, collaborated with the Nazis as soon as they arrived. When we hear these people say that the purge organized by Stalin was `criminal' and `absurd', we understand them. Those who were preparing to collaborate with the Nazis were of the same family as most of the `victims of the purge'. In France too, the vast majority of the parliamentary Socialists voted full powers to Pйtain and helped set up the collaborating Vichy rйgime.

Furthermore, when the Nazis occupied Belgium, resistance was almost non-existent. The first weeks and months, there was no significant resistance. The Belgian bourgeoisie, almost to a man, collaborated. And the masses were subject to and passively accepted the occupation. French author Henri Amouroux was able to write a book entitled Quarante millions de pйtainistes (Forty million Petainists).

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Henri Amouroux, Quarante millions de pйtainistes (Paris: Йditions Robert Laffont, 1977).

Let us make a comparison with the Soviet Union. As soon as the Nazis set foot on Soviet territory, they had to confront military and civilians prepared to fight to the death. The purge was accompanied by a constant campaign of political and ideological preparation of workers for the war of aggression. In his book about the Urals, U.S. engineer Scott described well how this political campaigning took place in the factories of Magnitogorsk. He described how the Party explained the world situation to the workers, in the newspapers, in seminars, using films and theatre. He talked about the profound effect this education had on the workers.

It is precisely because of the purge and the education campaign that accompanied it that the Soviet people found the strength to resist. If that steadfast will to oppose the Nazis by all means had not existed, it is obvious that the fascists would have taken Stalingrad, Leningrad and Moscow. If the Nazi Fifth Column had succeeded in maintaining itself, it would have found support among the defeatists and the capitulationists in

the Party. If the Stalin leadership had been overthrown, the Soviet Union would have capitulated, as did France. A victory of the Nazis in the Soviet Union would have immediately helped the pro-Nazi tendency in the British bourgeoisie, still powerful after Chamberlain's departure, take the upper hand from Churchill's group. The Nazis would probably have gone on to dominate the whole world.

Trotsky's rфle on the eve of the Second World War

During the thirties, Trotsky literally became the world's expert on anti-Communism. Even today, right-wing ideologues peruse Trotsky's works in search of weapons against the Soviet Union under Stalin.

In 1982, when Reagan was again preaching the anti-Communist crusade, Henri Bernard, Professor Emeritus at the Royal Military School of Belgium, published a book to spread the following urgent message:

`The Communists of 1982 are the Nazis of 1939. We are weaker in front of Moscow than we were in August 1939 in front of Hitler.'

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Bernard, op. cit. , p. 9.

All of the standard clichйs of Le Pen , the fascist French Front National leader, are there:

`Terrorism is not the act of a few crazies. The basis of everything is the Soviet Union and the clandestine network of international terrorism.'

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Ibid. , p. 121.

`Christian leftism is a Western wound.

`The synchronicity of `pacifist' demonstrations shows how they were inspired by Moscow.'

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Ibid. , p. 123.

`The British commandos who went to die in the Falklands showed that there still exist moral values in the West.'

.

Ibid. , p. 11.

But the tactics used by such an avowed anti-Communist as Bernard are very interesting. Here is how a man who, despite despising a `leftist Christian', will ally himself with Trotsky.

`The private Lenin was, like Trotsky, a human being .... His personal life was full of nuance ....

`Trotsky should normally have succeeded Lenin ... he was the main architect of the October Revolution, the victor of the Civil War, the creator of the Red Army ....

`Lenin had much respect for Trotsky. He thought of him as successor. He thought Stalin was too brutal ....

`Within the Soviet Union, Trotsky rose up against the imposing bureaucracy that was paralysing the Communist machine ....

`Artist, educated, non-conformist and often prophet, he could not get along with the main dogmatists in the Party ....

`Stalin was nationalist, a sentiment that did not exist either in Lenin or Trotsky .... With Trotsky, the foreign Communist Parties could consider themselves as a force whose sole purpose was to impose a social order. With Stalin, they worked for the Kremlin and to further its imperialist politics.'

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Ibid. , pp. 48--50.

We present here a few of the main theses that Trotsky put forward during the years 1937--1940, and that illustrate the nature of his absolute anti-Communist struggle. They allow one to understand why people in the Western security services, such as Henri Bernard, use Trotsky to fight Communists. They also shed some light on the class struggle between Bolsheviks and opportunists and on some aspects of the Purge of 1937--1938.

The enemy is the new aristocracy, the new Bolshevik bourgeoisie

For Trotsky, the main enemy was at the head of the Soviet State: it was the `new Bolshevik aristocracy', the most anti-Socialist and anti-democratic layer of the society, a social layer that lived like `the well-to-do bourgeois of the United States'! Here is how he phrased it.

`The privileged bureaucracy ... now represents the most antisocialist and the most antidemocratic sector of Soviet society.'

.

Trotsky, Thermidor et l'antisйmitisme (22 February 1937). La lutte, pp. 143--144.

`We accuse the ruling clique of having transformed itself into a new aristocracy, oppressing and robbing the masses .... The higher layer of the bureaucracy lives approximately the same kind of life as the well-to-do bourgeois of the United States and other capitalist countries.'

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Trotsky, The World Situation and Perspectives (14 February 1940). Writings, vol. 12, pp. 148--149.

This language makes Trotsky indistinguishable from the Menshevik leaders when they were leading the counter-revolutionary armed struggle, alongside the White and interventionist armies. Also indistinguishable from the language of the classical Right of the imperialist countries.

Compare Trotsky with the main anti-Communist ideologue in the International Confederation of Christian Unions (CISC), P. J. S. Serrarens, writing in 1948:

`There are thanks to Stalin, once again `classes' and rich people .... Just like in a capitalist society, the йlite is rewarded with money and power. There is what `Force Ouvriиre' (France) calls a `Soviet aristocracy'. This weekly compares it to the aristocracy created by Napoleon.'

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P. J. S. Serrarens, La Russie et l'Occident (Utrecht: Confйdйration Internationale des Syndicats Chrйtiens, n.d.), pp. 33, 37.

After World War II, the French union Force Ouvriиre to which Serrarens was referring was directly created and financed by the CIA. The `Lambertist' Trotskyist group worked, and still works, inside it. At that time, the CISC, be it in Italy or Belgium, worked directly for the CIA for the defence of the capitalist system in Europe. To mobilize the workers against Communism, it used a revolting `anti-capitalist' demagoguery that it borrowed from the social-democrats and the Trotskyists: in the Soviet Union, there was a `new class of rich people', a `Soviet aristocracy'.

Confronting this `new aristocracy, oppressing and robbing the masses',

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Trotsky, The World Situation, p. 148.

there were, in Trotsky's eyes, `one hundred and sixty millions who are profoundly discontented'.

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Ibid. , p. 149.

These `people' were protecting the collectivization of the means of production and the planned economy against the `ignorant and despotic

Stalinist thieves'. In other words, apart from the `Stalinists', the rest of the society was clean and led just struggles! Listen to Trotsky:

`Twelve to fifteen millions of the privileged --- there are the ``people'' who organize the parades, demonstrations, and ovations .... But apart from this ``pays lйgal'' as was once said in France, there exist one hundred and sixty millions who are profoundly discontented ....

`Antagonism between the bureaucracy and the people is measured by the increasing severity of the totalitarian rule ....

`The bureaucracy can be crushed only by a new political revolution.'

.

Ibid. , p. 149.

`(T)he economy is planned on the basis of nationalization and collectivization of the means of production. This state economy has its own laws that are less and less tolerant of the despotism, ignorance and banditry of the Stalinist bureaucracy.'

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Trotsky, La capitulation de Staline (11 March 1939). La lutte, p. 216.

Since the re-establishment of capitalism was impossible in Trotsky's eyes, any opposition, be it social-democratic, revisionist, bourgeois or counter-revolutionary, became legitimate. It was the voice of `one hundred and sixty millions who were profoundly discontented' and aimed to `protect' the collectivization of the means of production against the `new aristocracy'. Trotsky became the spokesperson for all the retrograde forces, anti-socialist and fascist.

Bolshevism and fascism

Trotsky was one of the first to put forward the line that Bolshevism and fascism were twins. This thesis was quite popular, during the thirties, in the reactionary Catholic parties. The Communist Party was their sworn enemy, the fascist party their most important bourgeois opponent. Once again, here is Trotsky:

`Fascism is winning victory after victory and its best ally, the one that is clearing its path throughout the world, is Stalinism.'

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Trotsky, Сапп Dugachvili va jusqu'au bout (April 1938). L'appareil, p. 238.

`In fact, nothing distinguishes Stalin's political methods from Hitler's. But the difference in results on the international scale is remarkable.'

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Trotsky, La capitulation de Staline, p. 216.

`An important part, which becomes more and more important, of the Soviet apparatus is formed of fascists who have yet to recognize themselves as such. To equate the Soviet rйgime with fascism is a gross historic error .... But the symmetry of the political superstructures and the similarity of totalitarian methods and of psychological profiles are striking ....

`(T)he agony of Stalinism is the most horrible and most odious spectacle on Earth.'

.

Trotsky, Nouvelles dйfections (17 March 1938). La lutte, pp. 161--162.

Trotsky here presented one of the first versions of the essential theme of CIA and fascist propaganda during the fifties, that of `red fascism'. By using the word `fascism', Trotsky tried to redirect the hatred that the masses felt towards the terrorist dictatorship of big capital, against socialism. After 1944--1945, all the German, Hungarian, Croatian and Ukrainian fascist leaders that fled to the West put on their `democratic' mask; they praised U.S. `democracy', the new hegemonic force and the main source of support for retrograde and fascist forces in the world. These `old' fascists, faithful to their criminal past, all developed the same theme: `Bolshevism is fascism, but even worse'.

Note further that at the time that European fascism had already started its war (wars in Ethiopia and Spain, annexation of Austria and Czechoslovakia), Trotsky was affirming that the `most horrible and most odious spectable' on Earth was the `agony of socialism'!

Defeatism and capitulation in front of Nazi Germany

Trotsky became the main propagandist for defeatism and capitulationism in the Soviet Union. His demagogic `world revolution' served to better stifle the Soviet revolution. Trotsky spread the idea that in case of fascist aggression against the Soviet Union, Stalin and the Bolsheviks would `betray' and that under their leadership, the defeat of the Soviet Union was inevitable. Here are his ideas on this subject:

`The military ... status of Soviet Russia, is contradictory. On one side we have a population of 170,000,000 awakened by the greatest revolution in history ... with a more or less developed war industry. On the other side we have a political regime paralyzing all of the forces of the new society .... One thing I am sure: the political regime will not survive the war. The social regime, which is the nationalized property of production, is incomparably more powerful than the political regime, which has a despotic character .... The representatives of the political regime, or the bureaucracy, are afraid of the prospect of a war, because they know better than we that they will not survive the war as a regime.'

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Trotsky, On the Eve of World War II (23 July 1939). Writings, vol. 12, p. 18.

Once again, there were, on one side, `the 170 million', the `good' citizens who were awoken by the Revolution. One might wonder by whom, if it was not by the Bolshevik Party and Stalin: the great peasant masses were certainly not `awoken' during the years 1921--1928. These `170 million' had a `developed war industry'. As if it was not Stalin's collectivization and industrialization policies, implemented thanks to his strong will, that allowed the creation of an arms industry in record time! Thanks to his correct line, to his will, to his capacity to organize, the Bolshevik rйgime awoke the popular forces that had been kept in ignorance, superstition and primitive individual work. According to the provocateur

Trotsky's rantings, the Bolshevik rйgime paralyzed that society's forces! And Trotsky made all sorts of absurd predictions: it was certain that the Bolshevik rйgime would not survive the war! Hence, two propaganda themes dear to the Nazis can be found in Trotsky's writings: anti-Bolshevism and defeatism.

`Berlin knows to what extent the Kremlin clique has demoralized the country's army and population through its struggle for self-preservation ....

`Stalin continues to sap the moral force and the general level of resistance of the country. Careerists with no honor, nor conscience, upon whom Stalin is forced to rely, will betray the country in difficult times.'

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Trotsky, Staline et Hitler (12 March 1938). L'appareil, p. 234.

In his hatred of Communism, Trotsky incited the Nazis to wage war against the Soviet Union. He, the `eminent expert' on the affairs of the Soviet Union, told the Nazis that they had every chance of winning the war against Stalin: the army and the population were demoralized (false!), Stalin was destroying the resistance (false!) and the Stalinists would capitulate at the beginning of the war (false!).

In the Soviet Union, this Trotskyist propaganda had two effects. It encouraged defeatism and capitulationism, through the idea that fascism was assured victory given that the USSR had such a rotten and incompetent leadership. It also encouraged `insurrections' and assassination attempts to eliminate Bolshevik leaders `who would betray in difficult times'. A leadership that was categorically destined to fall during the war might well fall at the beginning of the war. Anti-Soviet and opportunistic groups could therefore make their attempts.

In both cases, Trotsky's provocations directly helped the Nazis.

Trotsky and the Tukhachevsky plot

In the chapter dedicated to the Tukhachevsky military plot, we showed that a large anti-Communist opposition truly did exist among the cadres of the Red Army. Trotsky's attitude towards this reality is enlightening.

Here are Trotsky's written positions about the Tukhachevsky affair:

`I must here state what were my relations with Tukhachevsky .... I never considered the Communist convictions of this officer of the Old Guard to be serious ....

`The generals struggled to defend the security of the Soviet Union against the interests of Stalin's personal security.'

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Trotsky, L'armйe contre Staline (6 March 1938). L'appareil, pp. 197, 201.

`The army needs capable, honest men, just as the economists and scientists, independent men with open minds. Every man and woman with an independent mind comes into conflict with the bureaucracy, and the bureaucracy must decapitate the one section at the expense of the other in order to preserve themselves .... A man who is a good general, like Tukhachevsky, needs independent aides, other generals around him, and he appreciates every man according to his intrinsic value. The bureaucracy needs docile people, byzantine people, slaves, and these two types come into conflict in every state.'

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Trotsky, On the Eve of World War II, p. 19.

`Tukhachevsky, and along with him the cream of the military cadres, perished in the struggle against the police dictatorship hovering over Red Army officers. In its social characteristics, the military bureaucracy is naturally no better than the civil bureaucracy .... When the bureaucracy is viewed as a whole, it retains two functions: power and administration. These two functions have now reached an acute contradiction. To ensure good administration, the totalitarian power must be eliminated ....

`What does the new duality of power mean: the first step in the decomposition of the Red Army and the beginning of a new civil war in the country?

`The current generation of commissars means the control of the Bonapartist clique over the military and civilian administration and, through it, over the people ....

`The actual commanders grew up in the Red Army, can not be dissociated from it and have an unquestioned authority acquired over many years. On the other hand, the commissars were recruited among the sons of bureaucrats, who have no revolutionary experience, no military knowledge and no ideological capital. This is the archetype of the new school careerists. They are only called upon to command because they are `vigilant', i.e. they are the army's police. The commanders show them the hatred that they deserve. The rйgime of dual command is transforming itself into a struggle between the political police and the army, where the central power sides with the police ....

`The development of the country, and in particular the growth of its new needs, is incompatible with the totalitarian scum; this is why we see tendencies to resist the bureaucracy in all walks of life .... In the areas of technology, economics, education, culture, defence, people with experience, with a knowledge of science and with authority automatically reject the agents of Stalinist dictatorship, who are for the most part uncultivated and cynical uncouth like Mekhlis and Yezhov.'

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Trotsky, Les dйfaitistes totalitaires (3 July 1939). La lutte, pp. 166--169.

First of all, Trotsky had to recognize that Tukhachevsky and those like him were never Communists: previously, Trotsky himself had designated Tukhachevsky as candidate for a Napoleon-like military coup d'йtat. Furthermore, for the needs of his unrelenting struggle against Stalin, Trotsky denied the existence of a bourgeois counter-revolutionary opposition at the head of the army. In fact, he supported any opposition against Stalin and the Bolshevik Party, including Tukhachevsky, Alksnis , etc. Trotsky led a united front policy with all the anti-Communists in the army. This clearly shows that Trotsky could only come to power in alliance with the counter-revolutionary forces. Trotsky claimed that those who were fighting Stalin and the leadership of the Party within the army were actually struggling for the security of the country, while the officers who were loyal to the Party were defending Stalin's dictatorship and his personal interests.

It is remarkable that Trotsky's analysis about the struggle within the Red Army is identical to that made by Roman Kolkowicz in his study for the U.S. Army (see page). First, Trotsky opposed the Party measures to assert political control over the Red Army. In particular, Trotsky attacked the reintroduction of political commissars, who would play an essential political rфle in the war of anti-fascist resistance and would help young soldiers maintain a clear political line despite the incredible complexity of problems created by the war. Trotsky encouraged the elitist and exclusivist sentiments within the military against the Party, with the explicit aim of splitting the Red Army and provoking civil war. Next, Trotsky declared himself in favor of the independence, hence the `professionalism', of officers, saying that they were capable, honest and with an open mind, to the extent that they opposed the Party! Similarly, it is clear that anti-Communist elements like Tokaev defended their dissident bourgeois ideas in the name of independence and of an open mind!

Trotsky claimed that there was a conflict between the `Stalinist' power and the State administration, and that he supported the latter. In fact,

the opposition that he described was the opposition between the Bolshevik Party and the State bureaucracy. Like all anti-Communists throughout the world, Trotsky slandered the Communist Party by calling it `bureaucratic'. In fact, the real danger of bureaucratization of the rйgime came from the parts of the administration that were in no sense Communist, that sought to get rid of the `stifling' political and ideological control of the Party, to impose themselves on the rest of society and to acquire privileges and benefits of all kinds. The political control of the Party over the military and civil administration was especially aimed at fighting these tendencies towards bureaucratic disintegration. When Trotsky wrote that to ensure a good administration of the country, the Party had to be eliminated, he was the spokesperson for the most bureaucratic tendencies of the state apparatus.

More generally, Trotsky defended the `professionalism' of the military, technical, scientific and cultural cadres, i.e. of all the technocrats who tried to rid themselves of Party control, who wanted to `eliminate the Party from all aspects of life', according to Trotsky's precepts.

In the class struggle that took place within the State and Party in the thirties and forties, the front line was between the forces that defended Stalin's Leninist line and those who encouraged technocratism, bureaucracy and militarism. It was the latter forces that would gain hegemony over the Party leadership during Khrushchev's coup d'йtat.

Provocations in the service of the Nazis

To prepare for the Nazi war of aggression, Stalin and the Bolsheviks had to be overthrown. By defending this thesis, Trotsky became an instrument in the hands of the Hitlerites. Recently, during a meeting at the Free University of Brussels (ULB), a ranting Trotskyist yelled: `Those are lies! Trotsky always stated that he unconditionally defended the Soviet Union against imperialism.'

Yes, Trotsky always defended the Soviet Union, assuming that destroying the Bolshevik Party was the best preparation for defence! The essential point is that Trotsky was calling for an anti-Bolshevik insurrection, from which the Nazis, and not the handful of Trotskyists, would profit. Trotsky could well preach insurrection in the name of a `better defence' of the Soviet Union, but he clearly held an anti-Communist line and mobilized all the anti-socialist forces. There is no doubt that the Nazis were the first to appreciate this `better defence of the Soviet Union'.

Here are Trotsky's exact words about `a better defence of the Soviet Union'.

`I cannot be ``for the USSR'' in general. I am for the working masses who created the USSR and against the bureaucracy which has usurped the gains of the revolution .... It remains the duty of a serious revolutionary to state quite frankly and openly: Stalin is preparing the defeat of the USSR.'

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Trotsky, A Political Dialogue, pp. 156, 158.

`I consider the main source of danger to the USSR in the present international situation to be Stalin and the oligarchy headed by him. An open struggle against them ... is inseparably connected for me with the defense of the USSR.'

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Trotsky, Stalin After the Finnish Experience (13 March 1940). Writings, vol. 12, p. 160.

`The old Bolshevik Party was transformed into a caste apparatus ....

`Against the imperialist enemy, we will defend the USSR with all our might. However, the gains of the October Revolution will serve the people only if it shows itself capable of acting against the Stalinist bureaucracy as it did previously against the Tsarist bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie.'

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Trotsky, Lettres aux travailleurs d'URSS (May 1940). La lutte, pp. 301--302.

`Only an uprising of the Soviet proletariat against the base tyranny of the new parasites can save what is still left over in the foundations of the society from the conquests of October .... In this sense and in this sense only, we defend the October Revolution from imperialism, fascist and democratic, from the Stalin bureaucracy, and from its ``hired friends".'

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Trotsky, The Twenty-First Anniversary (14 November 1938). Writings, vol. 11, p. 111.

From these citations, it is clear that the words `we support the USSR against imperialism' were pronounced by an anti-Communist who had to say them if he wanted to have the slightest chance of being listened to by the masses who were ready to defend the socialist rйgime to the bitter

end. But only politically blind people could be confused by the meaning of this `defence'. In fact, this is how traitors and enemies prepare defence: `Stalin will betray, he is preparing defeat; so Stalin and the Bolshevik leadership have to be eliminated to defend the USSR.' Such propaganda perfectly suited the Nazis.

Trotsky `defended' the Soviet Union, but not the Soviet Union of Stalin and the Bolshevik Party. He pretended to defend the Soviet Union `with all our might', i.e. with his few thousand followers in the USSR! Meanwhile, these few thousand marginals should have prepared an insurrection against Stalin and the Bolshevik Party! Good defence, to be sure.

Even a hardened anti-Communist such as Tokaev thought that Trotsky's writings played into the hands of the German aggressors. Tokaev was anti-Communist, but a partisan of British imperialism. At the beginning of the war, he made the following reflexions:

`The peoples of the U.S.S.R., guided by their elemental feelings in the face of mortal danger, had made themselves one with the Stalin rйgime .... The opposed forces had joined hands; and this was a spontaneous act: the average Soviet outlook was: `Side even with the Devil, to defeat Hitler.' ... opposition to Stalin was not only harmful to the international anti-Axis front but was also equivalent to antagonism to the Peoples of the U.S.S.R.'

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Tokaev, op. cit. , p. 188.

With the approach of World War II, Trotsky's main obsession, if not the only one, became the overthrow of the Bolshevik Party in the Soviet Union. His thesis was that of the world far-right: `whoever defends, directly or indirectly, Stalin and the Bolshevik Party, is the worst enemy of socialism'. Here are Trotsky's declarations:

`The reactionary bureaucracy must be and will be overthrown. The political revolution in the USSR is inevitable.'

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Trotsky, Le gouvernement soviйtique applique-t-il toujours les principes dйfinis il y a vingt ans? (13 January 1938). La lutte, pp. 159--160.

`Only the overthrow of the Bonapartist Kremlin clique can make possible the regeneration of the military strength of the USSR .... The struggle against war, imperialism, and fascism demands a ruthless struggle against Stalinism, splotched with crimes. Whoever defends Stalinism directly or indirectly, whoever keeps silent about its betrayals or exaggerates its military strength is the worst enemy of the revolution, or socialism, of the oppressed peoples.'

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Trotsky, A Fresh Lesson: After the ``Imperialist Peace'' at Munich (10 October 1938). Writings, vol. 11, p. 68.

When these lines were being written in 1938, a fierce class struggle was developing on the world scene, between fascism and Bolshevism. Only the most right-wing ideologues of French, British or U.S. imperialism or of fascism could defend Trotsky's thesis:

`Whoever defends Stalinism directly or indirectly ... is the worst enemy'.

Trotsky encouraged terrorism and armed insurrection

From 1934 on, Trotsky called over and over for the overthrow of the Bolsheviks, through terrorism and armed insurrection.

In April 1938, Trotsky claimed that it was inevitable that there would be, in the USSR, attempts against Stalin and the other Bolshevik leaders. Of course, he continued to claim that individual terror was not a correct Leninist tactic. But, you see, `the laws of history tell us that assassinations attempts and acts of terror against gangsters such as Stalin are inevitable'. Here is how Trotsky put forward in 1938 the program of individual terror.

`Stalin is destroying the army and is crushing the country .... Inplacable hatred is accumulating around him, and a terrible vengeance hangs over his head.

`An assassination attempt? It is possible that this rйgime, which has, under the pretext of fighting terrorism, destroyed the best brains in the country, will ultimately suffer individual terror. One can add that it would be contrary to the laws of history that the gangsters in power not be suject to acts of vengeance by desperate terrorists. But the Fourth International ... has nothing to do with despair and individual vengeance is too limited for us .... In as much as Stalin's personal future concerns us, we can only hope that his personal lot is to live long enough to see his system collapse. He will not have to wait long.'

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Trotsky, Cапn Dougachvili va jusqu'au bout, p. 238.

Hence, for Trotskyists, it would be `against the laws of history' that one would not attempt to kill Stalin, Molotov, Zhdanov, Kaganovich, etc. It was an `intelligent' and `clever' way for the clandestine Trotskyist organization to put forward its terrorist message. It did not say `organize

assassination attempts'; it said: `the terrorist vengeance against Stalin is part of the laws of history'. Recall that in the anti-Communist circles that Tokaev and Alexander Zinoviev frequented, there was much talk of preparation for assassination attempts against the Bolshevik leaders. One can easily see what forces were being `inspired' by Trotsky's writings.

Trotsky alternated his calls for individual terrorism with propaganda for armed insurrections against the Bolshevik leadership. In general, he used the veiled and hypocritical formula of `political revolution'. During a debate with the Trotskyist Mandel, in 1989, we said that Trotsky called for armed struggle against the Soviet rйgime. Mandel got angry and cried out that this was a `Stalinist lie', since `political revolution' meant popular revolution, but pacific. This anecdote is an example of the duplicity systematically taken by professional anti-Communists, whose primary task is to infiltrate leftist circles. Here, Mandel wanted to reach out to the environmentalist audience. Here is the program of anti-Bolshevik armed struggle, put forward by Trotsky:

`(T)he people ... have lived through three revolutions against the Tsarist monarchy, the nobility and the bourgeoisie. In a certain sense, the Soviet bureaucracy now incarnates the traits of all the overthrown classes, but without their social roots nor their traditions. It can only defend its monstrous privileges through organized terror ....

`The defence of the country can only be organized by destroying the autocratic clique of saboteurs and defeatists.'

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Trotsky, Les dйfaitistes totalitaires, pp. 165, 169.

As a true counter-revolutionary, Trotsky claimed that socialism united the oppressive traits of Tsarism, the nobility and the bourgeoisie. But, he said, socialism did not have as large a social basis as those other exploiting rйgimes! The anti-socialist masses could therefore overthrow it more easily. Once again, here was a call for all the reactionary forces to

attack the abhorent, toppling rйgime and to undertake the `Fourth Revolution'.

In September 1938, Austria had already been annexed. This was the month of Munich, where French and British imperialism gave the green light to Hitler to occupy Czechoslovakia. In his new Transitional Program, Trotsky set out the tasks of his organization in the Soviet Union, despite the fact that he himself admitted `as an organization ...\ unquestionably ``Trotskyism'' is extremely weak in the USSR.'

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Leon Trotsky, The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International. The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1974), p. 103.

He continued:

`(T)he Thermidorian oligarchy ... hangs on by terroristic methods .... the chief political task in the USSR still remains the overthrow of this same Thermidorian bureaucracy .... Only the victorious revolutionary uprising of the oppressed masses can revive the Soviet regime and guarantee its further development toward socialism. There is but one party capable of leading the Soviet masses to insurrection --- the party of the Fourth International.'

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Ibid. , pp. 103--106.

This document, which all Trotskyist sects consider to be their basic program, contains an extraordinary sentence. When would this `insurrection' and `uprising' have taken place? Trotsky's answer is stunning in its honesty: Trotsky planned his `insurrection' for when the Hitlerites attacked the Soviet Union:

`(T)he impetus to the Soviet workers' revolutionary upsurge will probably be given by events outside the country.'

.

Ibid. , p. 105.

The next citation is a good example of duplicity. In 1933, Trotsky claimed that one of the `principal crimes' of the German Stalinists was to have refused the united front with social democracy against fascism. But, until Hitler took power in 1933, social democracy did its utmost to defend the capitalist rйgime and repeatedly refused unity proposals made by the German Communist Party. In May 1940, eight months after the European part of World War II had started, the great specialist of the `united front', Trotsky, proposed that the Red Army start an insurrection against the Bolshevik rйgime! He wrote in his Open Letter to the Soviet Workers:

`The purpose of the Fourth International ... is to regenerate the USSR by purging it of its parasitic bureaucracy. This can be only be done in one manner: by the workers, the peasants, the soldiers of the Red Army and the sailors of the Red Fleet who will rise up against the new caste of oppressors and parasites. To prepare this uprising of the masses, a new party is needed .... the Fourth International.'

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Trotsky, Lettres aux travailleurs d'URSS, p. 303.

At the time that Hitler was preparing war against the Soviet Union, the provocateur Trotsky was calling on the Red Army to effect a coup d'йtat. Such an event would have been a monstrous disaster, opening up the entire country to the fascist tanks!

Stalin and the anti-fascist war

With the 1929 economic collapse, the world capitalist system was in shambles. The time was ripe for another world war. It would soon break out. But where? And to what extent? Who would fight whom? These questions stood without answers for some time. Even after the `official' beginning, in 1940, the answers to these questions were still not clear.

These unanswered questions allow one to better understand Stalin's foreign policy during the thirties.

The Germano-Soviet Pact

Hitler came to power on January 30, 1933. Only the Soviet Union understood the dangers to world peace. In January 1934, Stalin told the Party Congress that `the ``new'' (German) policy ... recalls the policy of the former German Kaiser, who at one time occupied the Ukraine and marched against Leningrad, after converting the Baltic countries into a place d'armes for this march'. He also stated:

`(I)f the interests of the U.S.S.R. demand rapprochement with one country or another which is not interested in disturbing peace, we adopt this course without hesitation.'

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Stalin, Works, vol. 13, p. 309.

Until Hitler's coming to power, Great Britain had led the crusade against the Soviet Union. In 1918, Churchill was the main instigator of the military invervention that mobilized fourteen countries. In 1927, Great Britain broke diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and imposed an embargo on its exports.

In 1931, Japan invaded Northern China and its troops reached the Soviet border in Siberia. The Soviet Union thought at the time that war with Japan was imminent.

In 1935, fascist Italy occupied Ethiopia. To oppose the danger of fascist expansion, the Soviet Union proposed, as early as 1935, a collective system of security for Europe. Given this perspective, it signed mutual assistance treaties with France and Czechoslovakia. Trotsky made vicious attacks against Stalin who had, with these treaties, `betrayed' the French proletariat and the world revolution. At the same time, official voices of the French bourgeoisie were declaring that their country was not obliged to come to the aid of the Soviet Union, should it be attacked.

In 1936, Italy and Germany sent their ĭlite troops to Spain to fight the legal republican government. France and Great Britain adopted a `non-intervention' policy, leaving free reign to the fascists. They were trying to placate Hitler and to push him East.

In November of the same year, Germany and Japan signed the Anti-Cominterm Pact, which Italy joined soon after. The Soviet Union was encircled.

On March 11, 1938, Radio Berlin announced a `Communist uprising in Austria' and the Wehrmacht (German army) pounced on that country, annexing it in two days. The Soviet Union took up Austria's defence and called on Great Britain and France to prepare collective defence. `Tomorrow will perhaps be too late', underscored the Soviet leadership.

In mid-May, Hitler concentrated his troops on the border with Czechoslovakia. The Soviet Union, with treaty obligations towards the threatened country, placed 40 divisions on its Western border and called up 330,000 reservists. But in September, Great Britain and France met in Munich with the fascist powers, Germany and Italy. Neither Czechoslovakia nor the Soviet Union were invited. The great `democracies' decided to offer Hitler the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia. Along with this treacherous act, Great Britain signed on September 30 a declaration with Germany in which the two powers stated that they regarded the agreement `as symbolic of the desire of our peoples never to go to war with one another again.'

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R., Documents and Materials Relating to the Eve of the Second World War (New York: International Publishers, 1948). vol. 1, p. 271.

France did the same in December. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union offered its aid to Czechoslovakia in case of German aggression, but this

offer was declined. On March 15, 1939, the Wehrmacht seized Prague. By cutting up Czechoslovakia, Hitler offered a piece of the cake to the reactionary Polish government, which greedily gobbled up the bait.

A week later, the German army occupied the Lithuanian territory of Klaipeda, an important Baltic port. Stalin could see that the monster was advancing East and that Poland would be the next victim.

In May 1939, the Japanese army attacked Mongolia, which also had a military assistance treaty with the Soviet Union. The following month, Soviet troops, led by an unknown officer, Zhukov, took up battle with the Japanese army. It was a sizeable military confrontation: Japan lost more that 200 planes and more than 50,000 of its soldiers were killed or wounded. On August 30, 1939, the last Japanese troops left Mongolia.

The next day, another Soviet border was set aflame: Germany invaded Poland.

Everyone knew that this aggression would take place: to ensure an optimal position and begin his war either against Great Britain and France or against the Soviet Union, Hitler had to `resolve Poland's fate'. Let us look at the events of the previous months.

In March 1939, the Soviet Union began negociations to form an anti-fascist alliance. Great Britain and France allowed time to pass, maneuvered. By this attitude, the two great `democracies' made Hitler understand that he could march against Stalin without being worried about the West. From June to August 1939, secret British-German talks took place: in exchange for guaranteeing the integrity of the British Empire, the British would allow Hitler to act freely in the East. On July 29, Charles Roden Buxton of the Labour Party fulfilled a secret mission for Prime Minister Chamberlain to the German Embassy. The following plan was elaborated:

`Great Britain would express her willingness to conclude an agreement with Germany for a delimitation of spheres of interest ....

`1) Germany promises not to interfere in British Empire affairs.

`2) Great Britain promises fully to respect the German spheres of interest in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. A consequence of this would be that Great Britain would renounce the guarantees she gave to certain States in the German sphere of interest. Great Britain further promises to influence France to break up her alliance with the Soviet union and to give up her ties in Southeastern Europe.

`3) Great Britain promises to give up the present negotiations for a pact with the Soviet Union.'

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Ibid. , vol. 2, pp. 110--111.

The Soviet intelligence services ensured that Stalin was aware of these maneuvers.

In August 1939, negociations between Britain, France and the Soviet Union entered their final phase. But the two Western powers sent second rank delegations to Moscow, with no mandate to finalize an accord. Voroshilov insisted on binding, precise engagements so that should there be renewed German aggression, the allies would go to war together. He wanted to know how many British and French divisions would oppose Hitler should Germany invade the Soviet Union.

He received no response. He also wanted to draw up an accord with Poland so that the Soviet troops could engage the Nazis on Polish soil in case of German aggression. Poland refused, thereby making any possible accord effective. Stalin understood perfectly that France and Britain were preparing a new Munich, that they were ready to sacrifice Poland, encouraging Hitler to march on the Soviet Union. Harold Ickes, U.S. Secretary of the Interior, wrote at the time in his journal:

`(England) kept hoping against hope that she could embroil Russia and Germany with each other and thus escape scot-free herself.'

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Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), p. 705.

`France would also have to renounce to Central and Eastern Europe in favor of Germany in the hope of seeing her wage war against the Soviet Union. Hence France could stay in security behind the Maginot Line.'

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Sipols and Kharmalov, A la veille de la Seconde Guerre mondiale (Moscow: Йditions Novosti, 1973), p. 262.

The Soviet Union was facing the mortal danger of a single anti-Soviet front consisting of all the imperialist powers. With the tacit support of Britain and France, Germany could, after having occupied Poland, continue on its way and begin its blitzkrieg against the USSR, while Japan would attack Siberia.

At the time, Hitler had already reached the conclusion that France and Britain had neither the capacity nor the will to resist. He decided to grab Western Europe before attacking the USSR.

On August 20, Hitler proposed a non-aggression pact to the Soviet Union. Stalin reacted promptly, and the pact was signed on August 23.

On September 1, Hitler attacked Poland. Britain and France were caught in their own trap. These two countries assisted in all of Hitler's adventures, hoping to use him against the Soviet Union. Right from 1933, they never stopped speaking in praise of Hitler's battle against

Communism. Now they were forced to declare war against Germany, although they had no intention of doing so in an effective manner. Their rage exploded in a virulent anti-Communist campaign: `Bolshevism is fascism's natural ally'. Half a century later, this stupid propaganda is still be found in school books as an unquestioned truth. However, history has shown that the Germano-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact was a key for victory in the anti-fascist war. This may seem paradoxical, but the pact was a turning point that allowed the preparation of the necessary conditions for the German defeat.

In fact, the Soviet Union concluded this pact with the clear understanding that sooner or later war with Nazi Germany was inevitable. Once Germany had decided to sign an accord with the USSR, Stalin forced out of Hitler a maximum of concessions, ensuring the best possible conditions for the war to come. The September 23, 1939 issue of Pravda wrote:

`The only thing that was possible was to preserve from German invasion Western Ukraine, Western Byelorussia (two provinces seized from the Soviet Union in 1920) and the Baltic countries. The Soviet government forced Germany to make the engagement to not cross the line formed by the Thasse, Narew, Bug and Vistula rivers.'

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Grigori Dйborine, Les secrets de la Seconde Guerre mondiale (Moscow: Йditions du Progrиs, 1972), p. 35.

In the West, those who sympathized with Hitler's anti-Communist politics immediately cried out: `The two totalitarianisms, Fascism and Bolshevism, shared up Poland.' But the advance of the Soviet troops corresponded to the interests of the masses in these territories, since they could get rid of the fascists, the landed gentry and the capitalists. This advance also helped the entire world anti-Hitler movement. The most realistic bourgeois saw clearly that by advancing its troops, the Soviet

Union gave itself a better starting position for the coming war. For example, Churchill declared on October 1, 1939:

`(T)hat the Russian armies should stand on this line was clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace. At any rate, the line is there, and an Eastern Front has been created which Nazi Germany does not dare assail.'

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Winston S. Churchill, op. cit. , p. 449.

Unable to see through their dream of seeing the Nazi army charge through Poland to attack the Soviet Union, France and Britain were forced to declare war on Germany. But on the Western Front, not a single bomb would bother Nazi tranquility. However, a real internal political war was launched against the French Communists: On September 26, the French Communist Party was banned and thousands of its members were thrown into prison. Henri de Kerillis wrote:

`An incredible tempest swept through bourgeois minds. The crusade storm raged. Only one cry could be heard: War on Russia. It was at this moment that the anti-Communist delirium reached its apogee.'

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Cited in La grande guerre nationale de l'Union soviйtique (Moscow: Йditions du Progrиs, 1974), p. 20.

At the same time, Stalin spoke with great insight to Zhukov:

`The French Government headed by Daladier and the Chamberlain Government in Britain have no intention of getting seriously involved in the war with Hitler. They still hope to incite Hitler to a war against the Soviet Union. By refusing in 1939 to form with us an anti-

Hitler bloc, they did not want to hamper Hitler in his aggression against the Soviet Union. Nothing will come of it. They will have to pay through the nose for their short-sighted policy.'

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G. Zhukov, The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov (London: Jonathan Cape, 1971), p. 171.

Knowing that war with Germany was inevitable, the Soviet government was extremely worried about Leningrad's security, as it was only 32 kilometres from the Finnish border. On October 14, 1939, Stalin and Molotov sent a memorandum to the Finnish government about the problem of the defence of Leningrad. The Soviet Union wished to be able to `block the access to the Gulf of Finland'. It asked of Finland that it be ceded by lease the Port of Hanko and four islands. To ensure the defence of Finland, it asked for part of the ithmus of Karelia belonging to Finland. In exchange, the Soviet Union would offer to Finland part of Soviet Karelia, twice the size.

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Ministиre des Affaires Йtrangиres de Finlande, Documents sur les relations finno-soviйtiques (Paris: Йditions Flammarion, 1940), pp. 93--95, 109.

Encouraged by Germany, Finland refused. On November 30, 1939, the the Soviet Union declared war on Finland. A few days later, Hitler gave instructions for the coming war with the Soviet Union. Here is one passage:

`On the flanks of our operation we can count on active intervention from Romania and Finland in the war against the Soviet Union.'

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Jacobsen, op. cit. , vol. 1, p. 118.

Britain and France, worried about not getting caught up in this `strange war', charged headlong into a real war against the Bolshevik menace! In three months, Britain, France, the U.S. and fascist Italy sent 700 planes, 1,500 canons and 6,000 machine guns to Finland, `victim of aggression'.

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Pavel Zhiline, Ambitions et mйprises du Troisiиme Reich, (Moscow: Йditions du Progrиs, 1972), p. 74.

The French General Weygand went to Syria and Turkey to prepare an attack against the Soviet Union from the South. The French Chief of Staffs prepared to bomb the Baku oilfields. At the same time, General Serrigny cried out:

`In fact, Baku, with its annual oil production of 23 million tons, dominates the situation. If we succeed in conquering the Caucasus, or if these refineries were simply set alight by our air force, the monster would collapse exhausted.'

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Bernard Serrigny, L'Allemagne face a la guerre totale (Paris: Йditions Grasset, 1940), p. 228.

Even though no shot had been fired against the Hitlerites, despite the fact that they were in a state of war, the French government regrouped an expeditionary force of 50,000 men to fight the Reds! Chamberlain declared that Britain would send 100,000 soldiers.

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Falsificateurs de l'Histoire (Brussels: Йditions ABS, 1948), p. 118.

But these troops were unable to reach Finland before the Red Army defeated the Finnish army: a peace accord was signed on March 14, 1939. Later on, during the war, a Gaullist publication appearing in Rio de Janeiro claimed:

`At the end of the 1939--1940 winter, Chamberlain's and Daladier's political and military plot failed. Its purpose was to provoke a backlash against the Soviet Union and to end the conflict between the Anglo-French alliance and Germany through a compromise and an anti-Comminterm alliance. This plot consisted in sending an Anglo-French expedition to help the Finns, the intervention thereby provoking a state of war with the Soviet Union.'

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Petite encyclopйdie politique du monde (Rio de Janeiro: Йditions Chanteclair, 1943), p. 136.

The Germano-Soviet Pact and the defeat of Finland prepared the conditions for the Red Army's victory over the Nazis.

These two events had four important implications.

They prevented the formation of a united front of the imperialist powers against the socialist Soviet Union. A German attack in 1939 would certainly have provoked a Japanese intervention in Siberia. What in fact happened was that the Soviet Union succeeded in signing with Japan a Non-Aggression Pact that held until the defeat of fascism.

France and Britain, which had both refused throughout the thirties a collective security system, were forced into an effective military alliance with the Soviet Union once Germany broke the Germano-Soviet Pact.

The Soviet Union was able to advance its defences by 150 to 300 kilometres. This factor had great influence on the defence of Leningrad and Moscow at the end of 1941.

The Soviet Union won 21 months of peace, allowing it to decisively reinforce its defence industry and its armed forces.

Did Stalin poorly prepare the anti-fascist war?

When Khrushchev seized power, he completely inverted the Party's line. To do this, he denigrated Stalin and his Marxist-Leninist politics. In a series of incredible slanders, he even denied Stalin's lead in preparing for and undertaking the anti-fascist war.

So Khrushchev claimed that in the years 1936--1941, Stalin poorly prepared the country for war. Here are his statements.

`Stalin put forward the thesis that the tragedy ... was the result of the result of the ``unexpected'' attack of the Germans against the Soviet Union. But, comrades, this is completely untrue. As soon as Hitler came to power in Germany he assigned to himself the task of liquidating Communism ....

`Many facts from the prewar period clearly showed that Hitler was going all out to begin a war against the Soviet state ....

`Had our industry been mobilized properly and in time to supply the Army with the necessary matйriel, our wartime losses would have been decidedly smaller ....

`(O)ur Army was badly armed ....

`Soviet science and technology produced excellent models of tanks and artillery peoces before the war. But mass production of all this was not organized'.

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Khrushchev, Secret Report, pp. S36, S38.

That the participants in the Twentieth Congress could listen to these slanders without indignant protests coming from every part says a lot about the political degeneration that had already taken place. In the room,

there were dozens of marshals and generals who knew to what extent those statements were ridiculous. At the time, they did not say anything. Their narrow professionalism, their exclusive militarism, their refusal of political struggle within the Army, their refusal of the ideological and political leadership of the Party over the Army: these factors all brought them closer to Khrushchev's revisionism. Zhukov, Vasilevsky, Rokossovsky, all great military leaders, never accepted the necessity of the Army Purge in 1937--1938. Nor did they understand the political implications of Bukharin's trial. Hence they supported Khrushchev when he replaced Marxism-Leninism with theses taken from the Mensheviks, the Trotskyists and the Bukharinists. There is the explanation for the marshals' silence over Khrushchev's lies about the Second World War. They refuted these lies later on in their memoirs, when there were no longer any political implications and when these questions had only become academic.

In his 1970 Memoirs, Zhukov correctly underscored, against Khrushchev's allegations, that the real defence policy began with Stalin's decision to industrialize in 1928.

`We could have put off a steep rise in the heavy industry for some five or seven years and given the people more consumer goods, and sooner. Our people had earned this right a thousand times. This path to development was highly attractive.'

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Zhukov, op. cit. , p. 107.

Stalin prepared the defence of the Soviet Union by having more than 9,000 factories built between 1928 and 1941 and by making the strategic decision to set up to the East a powerful industrial base.

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Ibid. , p. 137.

With respect to the industrialization policy, Zhukov gave tribute to the `wisdom and acumen of the Party line, finally indicated by history'.

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Ibid. , pp. 107.

In 1921, in almost all areas of military production, they had to start from nothing. During the years of the First and Second Five Year Plans, the Party had planned that the war industries would grow faster than other branches of industry.

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Ibid. , p. 138.

Here are the significant numbers for the first two plans.

The annual production of tanks for 1930 was 740 units. It rose to 2,271 units in 1938.

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Ibid. , p. 139.

For the same period, annual plane construction rose from 860 to 5,500 units.

.

Ibid. , p. 140.

During the Third Five-Year Plan, between 1938 and 1940, industrial production increased 13 per cent annually, but defence industry production rose by 39 per cent.

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La grande guerre nationale, op. cit. , p. 33.

The breathing space offered by the Germano-Soviet Pact was used by Stalin to push military production to the hilt. Zhukov testified:

`Experienced Party workers and prominent experts were assigned to large defence enterprises as CC Party organizers, to help the plants have everything needed and ensure attainment of targets. I must say that Stalin himself worked much with defence enterprises --- he was personally acquainted with dozens of directors, Party leaders, and chief engineers; he often met with them, demanding fulfilment of plans with a persistence typical of him.'

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Zhukov, op. cit. , p. 191.

The military deliveries that took place between January 1, 1939 and June 22, 1941 are impressive.

Artillery received 92,578 units, including 29,637 canons and 52,407 mortars. New mortars, 82mm and 120mm, were introduced just before the war.

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Zhukov, op. cit. , pp. 198--199. La grande guerre nationale, op. cit. , p. 33.

The Air Force received 17,745 fighter aircraft, including 3,719 new models. In the area of aviation:

`The measures taken between 1939 and 1941 created the conditions necessary to quickly obtain during the war quantitative and qualitative superiority'.

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Zhukov, op. cit. , p. 201. La grande guerre nationale, op. cit. , p. 33.

The Red Army received more that 7,000 tanks. In 1940, production of the medium-size T-34 tank and heavy KV tank, superior to the German tanks, began. There were already 1,851 produced when war broke out.

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Zhukov, op. cit. , pp. 197. La grande guerre nationale, op. cit. , p. 33.

Referring to these achievements, as if to express his disdain for Khrushchev's accusations, Zhukov made a telling self-criticism:

`Recalling what we military leaders demanded of industry in the very last months of peace, I can see that we did not always take full stock of the country's real economic possibilities.'

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Zhukov, op. cit. , p. 192.

The actual military preparation was also pushed to the hilt by Stalin. The military confrontations in May--August 1939 with Japan and in December 1939--March 1940 with Finland were directly linked with the anti-fascist resistance. These combat experiences were carefully analyzed to strengthen the Red Army's weaknesses.

In March 1940, a Central Committee meeting examined the operations against Finland. Zhukov related:

`Discussions were sharp. The system of combat training and educating troops was strongly criticized.'

.

Ibid. , p. 180.

In May, Zhukov paid a visit to Stalin:

` ``Now that you have this combat experience," Stalin said, ``take upon yourself the command of the Kiev Military District and use this experience for training the troops." '

.

Ibid. , p. 170.

For Stalin, Kiev was of significant military importance. He expected that the main attack in the German attack would focus on Kiev.

`Stalin was convinced that in the war against the Soviet Union the Nazis would first try to seize the Ukraine and the Donets Coal Basin in order to deprive the country of its most important economic regions and lay hands on the Ukrainian grain, Donets coal and, later, Caucasian oil. During the discussion of the operational plan in the spring of 1941, Stalin said: ``Nazi Germany will not be able to wage a major lengthy war without those vital resources." '

.

Ibid. , p. 211.

In summer and fall 1940, Zhukov made his troops undergo intense combat preparation. He noted that he had with him capable young officers and generals. He made them learn the lessons resulting from German operations against France.

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Ibid. , p. 173.

From December 23, 1940 to January 13, 1941, all leading officers were brought together for a large conference. At the center of debates: the future war with Germany. The experience that the fascists had accumulated with large tank corps was carefully examined. The day after the conference, a great operational and strategic exercise took place on a map. Stalin attended. Zhukov wrote:

`The strategic situation was based on probable developments in the western frontier zone in the event of a German attack on the Soviet Union.'

.

Ibid. , p. 184.

Zhukov led the German aggression, Pavlov the Soviet resistance. Zhukov noted:

`The game abounded in dramatic situations for the eastern side. They proved to be in many ways similar to what really happened after June

22, 1941, when fascist Germany attacked the Soviet Union'. Pavlov had lost the war against the Nazis. Stalin rebuked him in no uncertain terms:

`The officer commanding a district must be an expert in the art of war and he must be able to find correct solutions in any conditions, which is what you failed to do in this game.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 185--186.

Building of fortified sectors along the new Western border began in 1940. By the beginning of the war, 2,500 cement installations had been built. There were 140,000 men working on them every day.

`Stalin was also pushing us with that work', wrote Zhukov.

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Ibid. , p. 213.

The Eighteenth Congress of the Party, February 15--20, 1941, dealt entirely with preparing industry and transportion for the war. Delegates coming from all over the Soviet Union elected a number of extra military members to the Central Committee.

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Zhiline, op. cit. , p. 212. Zhukov, op. cit. , p. 209.

Early in March 1941, Timoshenko and Zhukov asked Stalin to call up the infantry reservists. Stalin refused, not wanting to give the Germans a pretext for provoking war. Finally, late in March, he accepted to call up 800,000 reservists, who were sent to the borders.

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Zhukov, op. cit. , p. 196.

In April, the Chiefs of Staff informed Stalin that the troops from the Baltic, Byelorussia, Kiev and Odessa Military Regions would not be sufficient to push back the attack. Stalin decided to advance 28 border divisions, grouped into four armies, and insisted on the importance of not provoking the Nazis.

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Ibid. , 217--218.

On May 5, 1941, in the Kremlin Great Palace, Stalin spoke to officers coming out of the military academies. His main theme: `the Germans are wrong in thinking that it's an ideal, invincible army.'

.

Ibid. , p. 225.

All these facts allow one to refute the standard slanders against Stalin:

`He prepared the army for the offensive, but not for the defensive'; `He believed in the Germano-Soviet Pact and in Hitler, his accomplice'; `He did not believe that there would be a war with the Nazis'. The purpose of these slanders is to denigrate the historic achievements of the Communists and, consequently, to increase the prestige of their opponents, the Nazis.

Zhukov, who played a crucial rфle in Khrushchev's seizure of power between 1953 and 1957, still insisted, in his Memoirs, on giving the

lie to Khrushchev's Secret Report. He concluded as follows about the country's preparation for war:

`It seems to me that the country's defence was managed correctly in its basic and principal features and orientations. For many years everything possible or almost everything was done in the economic and social aspects. As to the period between 1939 and the middle of 1941, the people and Party exerted particular effort to strengthen defence.

`Our highly developed industry, the kolkhoz system, universal literacy, the unity of nations, the strength of the socialist state, the people's great patriotism, the Party leadership which was ready to unite the front and rear in one whole --- this was the splendid foundation of our immense country's defensive capacity, the underlying cause of the great victory we won in the fight against fascism. The fact that in spite of enormous difficulties and losses during the four years of the war, Soviet industry turned out a collosal amount of armaments --- almost 490 thousand guns and mortars, over 102 thousand tanks and self-propelled guns, over 137 thousand military aircraft --- shows that the foundations of the economy from the military, the defence standpoint, were laid correctly and firmly.'

.

Ibid. , p. 226.

`In basic matters --- matters which in the end decide a country's fate in war and determine whether it is to be victory or defeat --- the Party and the people prepared their Motherland for defence.'

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Ibid. , p. 227.

The day of the German attack

To attack the tremendous prestige of Stalin, undoubtedly the greatest military leader of the anti-fascist war, his enemies like to refer to the `incredible mistake' that he made by not predicting the exact date of the aggression.

Khrushchev, in his Secret Report, stated:

`Documents ... show that by April 3, 1941 Churchill ...\ personally warned Stalin that the Germans had begun regrouping their armed units with the intent of attacking the Soviet Union ....

`However, Stalin took no heed of these warnings.'

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Khrushchev, Secret Report, op. cit. , pp. S36--S37.

Khrushchev continued by stating that Soviet military attachйs in Berlin had reported rumors according to which the attack against the Soviet Union would take place on May 14 or June 15.

`Despite these particularly grave warnings, the necessary steps were not taken to prepare the country properly for defense ....

`When the fascist armies had actually invaded Soviet territory and military operations began, Moscow issued the order that the German fire was not to be returned ....

`(A) certain German citizen crossed our border and stated that the German armies had received orders to start the offensive against the Soviet Union on the night of June 22 at 3 o'clock. Stalin was informed about this immediately, but even this warning was ignored.'

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Ibid. , pp. 37--39.

This version is found throughout bourgeois and revisionist litterature. Elleinstein, for example, wrote that under `the dictatorial and personal system that Stalin had set up ... no-one dared to say that he had erred.'

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Jean Elleinstein, Staline (Paris: Fayard, 1984), p. 262.

What can be said about the first day of the war?

Stalin knew perfectly well that the war would be of extreme cruelty, that the fascists would exterminate without mercy the Soviet Communists, and would, using unprecedented terror, reduce the Soviet peoples to slavery.

Hitlerian Germany was reinforced by Europe's economic potential. Each month, each week of peace meant a significant reinforcement of the Soviet Union's defence. Marshal Vasilevsky wrote:

`The political and state leaders in the country saw war coming and exerted maximum efforts to delay the Soviet Union's entry into it. This was a sensible and realistic policy. Its implementation required above all a skillful conduct of diplomatic relations with the capitalist countries, especially with the aggressors.' The army had received strict orders to avoid `any action that the Nazi leaders could use to exarcerbate the situation or to make a military provocation.'

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Vasilevsky, op. cit. , p. 84.

The situation on the borders had been very tense since May 1941. It was important to keep one's cool and to not get entangled in German provocations. Vasilevsky wrote about this subject:

`The state of alert in a border area is in itself an extreme development ....

`(T)he premature alert of the troops may be just as dangerous as the delay in giving it. Quite often there is still a long distance from hostile policies of a neighbour-country to a real war.'

.

Ibid. , p. 83.

Hitler had not succeeded in invading Britain, not in shaking it. But the British Empire was still the world's leading power. Stalin knew that Hitler would do anything to avoid a war on two fronts. There were good reasons to believe that Hitler would do everything it could to beat Britain before engaging the Soviet Union.

For several months, Stalin had been receiving information from Soviet intelligence services announcing that the German aggression would begin in one or two weeks. Much of this information was rumor spread by Britain or the U.S., who wanted to turn the fascist wolves against the socialist country. Each defence measure of the Soviet borders was manipulated by the Right in the U.S. to announce an imminent attack by the Soviet Union against Germany.

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Dйborine, op. cit. , pp. 73--74.

Zhukov wrote:

`The spring of 1941 was marked by a new wave of false rumours in the Western countries about large-scale Soviet war preparations against Germany.

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Zhukov, op. cit. , p. 224.

The Anglo-American Right was pushing the fascists to fight the Soviet Union.

Furthermore, Stalin had no guarantees as to the British or U.S. reaction to a Nazi aggression against the Soviet Union. In May 1941, Rudolf Hess, number two in the Nazi Party, had landed in Scotland. Sefton Demler, who ran a British radio station specialized in propaganda broadcasts destined for Germany, noted in his book:

`Hess ... stated that the object of his flight to Scotland had been to make peace with Britain ``on any terms'', providing that Britain would then join Germany in attacking Russia.

` ``A victory for England as the ally of the Russians,'' said Hess, ``will be a victory for the Bolsheviks. And a Bolshevik victory will sooner or later mean Russian occupation of Germany and the rest of Europe.'' '

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Sefton Demler, Black Boomerang (London: Secker & Warburg, 1962), pp. 59--60.

In Britain, the current to make a deal with the USSR had deep roots. A recent event shows this once again. In early 1993, a controversy took place in Britain with John Charmley's bibliography of Churchill, The

End of Glory. Alan Clarc, former Minister of Defense under Thatcher, intervened to state that it would have been better if Churchill had made peace with Germany in Spring 1941. Nazi Germany and Bolshevik Russia would have mutually destroyed each other and Britain would have maintained its Empire!

.

De Morgen, 23 January 1993, p. 21.

Let us return to early 1941. Stalin was receiving at the time varied information, from all over the world, announcing an imminent German attack against Britain. When Stalin saw simultaneous reports coming from Britain, announcing an imminent Nazi attack against the Soviet Union, he had to ask himself: to what extent are these British lies, whose aim is to prevent a Hitlerian attack against Britain?

After the war, it was learned that German Marshall Keitel, applying instructions from Hitler given on February 3, 1941, had followed a `Directive for Misinforming the Enemy'. Zhukov wrote:

`Maps of England were printed in vast quantities, English interpreters were attached to units, preparations were made for ``sealing off'' some areas along the coast of the English Channel, the Strait of Dover and Norway. Information was spread about an imaginary ``airborne corps'', make-believe ``rocket batteries'' were installed along the shore ... the flood of propaganda was turned against England and the usual diatribes against the Soviet union stopped'.

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Zhukov, op. cit. , p. 223.

All this explains Stalin's extreme caution. He was hardly the blind dictator that Elleinstein depicts, but well a very lucid Communist leader

who weighed all possibilities. Zhukov testified:

`(Stalin) did say to me one day:

` ``A man is sending me very important information about the intentions of the Hitler Government but we have some doubts."

`Perhaps he was speaking of Richard Sorge (famous Soviet spy)'.

.

Ibid. , p. 228.

According to Zhukov, the Soviet intelligence services bear their responsability in the erroneous prediction of the attack date. On March 20, 1941, their leader, General Golikov, submitted to Stalin a report containing information of vital importance: the attack would take place between May 15 and June 15. But in his conclusions, Golikov noted that this was probably `misinformation coming from the English or perhaps even the German intelligence service.' Golikov estimated that the attack would probably take place `after (German) victory over England'.

.

Ibid. , pp. 228--229.

On June 13, Marshal Timoshenko phoned Stalin to place the troops on alert. `We will think it over,' Stalin replied. The next day, Timoshenko and Zhukov came back. Stalin told them.

`You propose carrying out mobilization, alerting the troops and moving them to the Western borders? That means war! Do you two understand that or not?!'

Zhukov replied that, according to their intelligence services, the mobilization of the German divisions was complete. Stalin replied:

`You can't believe everything in intelligence reports.'

At that very moment, Stalin received a phone call from Khrushchev. Zhukov relates:

`From his replies we gathered that they talked about agriculture.

` ``That's good," Stalin said after listening for a while.

`N. S. Khrushchev must have painted the prospects for a good harvest in rosy colours.'

.

Ibid. , p. 230.

From Zhukov, this remark is incredible! We know that Khrushchev attacked Stalin's `lack of vigilance' and `irresponsibility'. But at the time that Zhukov, Timoshenko and Stalin were evaluating the chances of an imminent aggression, the vigilant Khrushchev was discussing grain and vegetables.

The evening of June 21, a German deserter reported that the attack would take place the next night. Timoshenko, Zhukov and Vatutin were called to Stalin's place:

`But perhaps the German generals sent this deserter to provoke a conflict?', Stalin asked.

Timoshenko: `We think the deserter is telling the truth'.

Stalin: `What are we to do?'

Timoshenko: `A directive must immediately be given to alert all the troops of border Districts'.

After a brief discussion, the military men drew up a text, which was slightly modified by Stalin. Here is the essence:

`I order:

`a) During the night of 21.6.41 the firing posts in the fortified areas on the state border are to be secretly occupied;

`b) Before dawn on 22.6.41 all aircraft including army aviation are to be dispersed among the field aerodromes, and carefully camouflaged;

`c) All units are to be alerted. Forces are to be kept dispersed and camouflaged;'

.

Ibid. , pp. 232--233.

Signed Timoshenko and Zhukov. The transmission to the various regions was finished soon after midnight. It was already June 22, 1941.

Khrushchev wrote about the first months of the war:

`(A)fter the first severe disaster and defeat at the front, Stalin thought that this was the end ....

`Stalin for a long time actually did not direct the military operations and ceased to do anything whatever. He returned to active leadership only when some members of the Political Bureau visited him'.

.

Khrushchev, Secret Report, op. cit. , p. S40.

`(T)here was an attempt to call a Central Committee plenum in October 1941, when Central Committee members from the whole country were called to Moscow .... Stalin did not even want to meet and talk to the Central Committee members. This fact shows how demoralized Stalin was in the first months of the war'.

.

Ibid. , pp. S19--S20.

Elleinstein adds to this:

`Drinking strong vodka, he remained drunk for almost eleven days.'

.

Elleinstein, op. cit. , p. 269.

Let us return to Stalin, dead drunk for the last eleven days and demoralized for another four months.

When Zhukov announced to Stalin on June 22, 1941, at 3:40 in the morning, that German planes had bombed border cities, Stalin told him to convoke the Politburo. Its members met at 4:30. Vatutin told them that the German land forces had begun their offensive. Soon after came the German declaration of war.

.

Zhukov, op. cit. , pp 235--236.

Stalin understood better than anyone the savagery that the country would have to endure. He kept a long silence. Zhukov recalled this dramatic moment.

`Stalin himself was strong-willed and no coward. It was only once I saw him somewhat depressed. That was at the dawn of June 22, 1941, when his belief that the war could be avoided, was shattered.'

.

Ibid. , p. 268.

Zhukov proposed that the enemy units should be attacked immediately. Stalin told him to write up the directive, which was sent at 7:15. But `considering the balance of forces and the situation obtaining it proved plainly unrealistic --- and was therefore never carried out.'

.

Ibid. , p. 236.

Khrushchev's affirmation that Stalin had `issued the order that the German fire was not to be returned' is clearly false.

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Khrushchev, Secret Report, op. cit. , p. S39.

If Stalin was affected when he heard that the war broke out, `After June 22, 1941, and throughout the war Stalin firmly governed the country,

led the armed struggle and international affairs together with the Central Committee and the Soviet Government.'

.

Ibid. , p. 268.

Already, on June 22, Stalin took decisions of vital importance. Zhukov testified that at 13:00 on that day, Stalin telephoned him to say:

`Our front commanders lack combat experience and they have evidently become somewhat confused. The Politbureau has decided to send you to the South-Western Front as representative of the General Headquarters of the High Command. We are also sending Marshal Shaposhnikov and Marshal Kulik to the Western Front.'

.

Ibid. , p. 238.

The High Command was the college of military and political leaders around the supreme leader, Stalin.

At the end of the day, Zhukov was already in Kiev. He learned upon arrival that Stalin had given a directive to begin counter-offensive operations. Zhukov thought the directive premature, given that the Chiefs of Staff did not have sufficient information about what was happening on the front. Nevertheless, on June 24, Zhukov sent the 8th and 15th mechanized corps on the offensive. They `successfully dealt one of their first counterblows at the enemy.'

.

Ibid. , p. 242.

With good reason, Zhukov draws attention to the `grandiose border battle of the initial period in the war', which is little studied in his opinion. And with good reason. To further his political intrigues, Khrushchev painted this period as a series of criminal errors by Stalin, who completely disorganized the defence. But, facing the Nazi blitzkrieg, disorganization, defeats and important losses were to a great extent inevitable. The important fact is that, placed in very difficult circumstances, the army and its leading cadres undertook phenomenal, determined resistance. Their heroic fighting began to create, right from the very first days, the conditions for the defeat of blitzkrieg warfare. All this was possible, to a great extent, because of Stalin's energetic resistance.

Right from June 26, Stalin took the strategic decision to build a reserve front, some 300 kilometres behind the front, to stop the enemy should it succeed in breaking through the defences.

That very day, the Western Front was broken and the Nazis charged toward Minsk, the capital of Byelorussia. That evening, Stalin convoked Timoshenko, Zhukov and Vatutin and told them:

`Think together and decide what can be done about the current situation'. Zhukov reported:

`All these proposals were approved by Stalin ....

`(B)uilding up a defence in depth on the approaches to Moscow, continuously harrying the enemy and checking his advance on one of the lines of defence, then organizing a counter-offensive, by bringing up for this purpose troops from the Far East together with new formations.'

.

Ibid. , p. 256.

On June 29, a series of measures were taken. Stalin would announce them to the people in his famous radio speech of July 3, 1941. Its content reached the Soviets by its simplicity and by its tenacious will to win. Stalin said:

`The enemy is cruel and implacable. He is out to seize our lands, watered with our sweat, to seize our grain and oil secured by our labor. He is out to restore the rule of landlords, to restore tsarism, to destroy national culture and the national state existence of the Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Lithuanians, Letts, Estonians, Uzbeks, Tatars, moldavians, Georgians, Armenians, Azerbaidjanians, and the other free peoples of the Soviet Union, to Germanize them, to convert them into the slaves of German princes and barons.

`Thus the issue is one of life or death for the Soviet State, for the peoples of the U.S.S.R.; the issue is whether the peoples of the Soviet Union shall remain free or fall into slavery ....

`Our people must know no fear in fight and must selflessly join our patriotic war of liberation, our war against the fascist enslavers.

`Lenin, the great founder of our state, used to say that the chief virtue of the Bolshevik must be courage, valor, fearlessness in struggle, readiness to fight, together with the people, against the enemies of the country ....

`The Red Army, Red Navy, and all citizens of the Soviet Union must defend every inch of Soviet soil, must fight to the last drop of blood for our towns and villages ....

`We must strengthen the Red Army's rear, subordinating all our work to this cause. All our industries must be got to work with greater intensity to produce more rifles, machine-guns, artillery, bullets, shells, airplanes ....

`We must wage a ruthless fight against all disorganizers of the rear, deserters, panic-mongers, rumor-mongers, we must exterminate spies,

diversionists, and enemy parachutists ....

`In case of forced retreat of Red Army units, all rolling stock must be evacuated, the enemy must not be left a single engine, a single railway car, not a single pound of grain, or a gallon of fuel ....

`In areas occupied by the enemy, guerilla units, mounted and on foot, must be formed, diversionist groups must be organized to combat the enemy troops, to foment guerilla warfare everywhere ....

`Forward, to our victory!'

.

Stalin, The German invasion of the Soviet Union. The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union (New York: International Publishers, 1945), pp. 13--17.

On July 10 began the Battle of Smolensk. After the seizure of that city, the Hitlerites thought that they could charge towards Moscow, 300 kilometres further on. The Battle of Smolensk raged for two months.

`The battle of Smolensk played a crucial role in the initial period of the Great Patriotic War .... According to German generals their forces lost 250,000 officers and men ....

`As a result we gained time and were able to raise strategic reserves and carry out defensive measures at the Moscow sector.'

.

Ibid. , p. 275.

Vasilevsky made the following remark:

`The Smolensk battle ... laid the basis for disrupting the blitzkrieg ....

`(It was) a most valuable school for testing the fighting efficiency of Soviet soldiers and commanders, including top commanders and the Supreme Command'.

.

A. M. Vasilevsky, A Lifelong Cause (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), p. 96.

On September 30, the Nazis began their final offensive to take Moscow.

Some 450,000 inhabitants of the city, 75 per cent women, were mobilized to build fortifications and anti-tank defences. General Panfilov's troops led memorable battles in defence of the Volokolamsk Road, immortalized in a novel of the same name by Alexander Beck .

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Alexandre Beck, La chaussйe de Volokolamsk (Paris: Йditions Bordas, 1946).

Moscow was bombed by German aviation. Panic began to seize the city's population. The Nazis were only 80 kilometres away. Part of the administration was evacuated. But Stalin decided to remain in Moscow. The battles became more and more fierce and, in early November, the Nazi offensive was stopped. After consulting with Zhukov, Stalin took the decision to organize the traditional November 7 military parade on Red Square. It was a formidable challenge to the Nazi troops camped at the gates of Moscow. Stalin made a speech, which was broadcast to the entire country.

`(T)he enemy is before the gates of Leningrad and Moscow.

`The enemy calculated that our army would be dispersed at the very first blow and our country forced to its knees. But the enemy wholly miscalculated .... our country --- our whole country --- has organized itself into a single fighting camp in order, jointly with our army and navy, to rout the German invaders ....

`Is it possible, then, to doubt that we can and must gain victory over the German invaders? The enemy is not as strong as some terror-stricken would-be intellectuals picture him. The devil is not as terrible as he is painted ....

`Comrades, Red Army and Red Navy men, commanders and political instructors, men and women guerillas:

`The whole world is looking to you as a force capable of destroying the brigand hordes of German invaders. The enslaved peoples of Europe under the yoke of the German invaders are looking to you as their liberators. A great mission of liberation has fallen to your lot.

`Be worthy of this mission! ....

`Under the banner of Lenin --- onward to victory!'

.

Stalin, The twenty-fourth anniversary of the October Revolution, The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Revolution, pp. 35--38.

On November 15, the Nazis began their second offensive against Moscow. On November 25, some units advanced into the southern suburbs of Moscow. But on December 5, the attack was contained. Throughout this period, new troops coming from all over the country were able to reach Moscow. Even at the most dramatic moments, Stalin kept his strategic forces in reserve. Rokossovsky wrote:

`The Army's defences were spread so thin that they threatened to burst. It took feats of troop juggling to prevent this from happening.'

.

K. K. Rokossovsky, A Soldier's Duty (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1985), p. 87.

After having consulted all of his commanders, Stalin decided on a large counter-attack, which began on December 5. Some 720,000 Red soldiers pushed back 800,000 Hitlerites 100 to 300 kilometres.

For the first time, the `invincible' German troops were defeated, and well. In front of Moscow, the fascists lost more than 500,000 men, 1,300 tanks, 2,500 canons, more than 15,000 motorized vehicles and much more matйriel. Hitler's army had not yet suffered such losses.

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Vasilevsky, op. cit. , p. 128.

Many consider the Battle of Moscow to be the real turning point of the anti-fascist war. It took place less than six months after the beginning of the lightning war. The unflinching will, the immense organizational capacities and the mastery of large strategic problems by Stalin contributed significantly.

Stalin and the Nazi war of annihilation

When referring to the Second World War, it is important to remember that there were several wars, not one. The war led by the Anglo-American and French imperialists against their German counterpart had little in common with the national anti-fascist war led by the Soviet Union. During its struggle against the Hitlerian invasion, the French ruling class did not and could not mobilize and arm the working masses in a fight to the death against Nazism. After the defeat of his troops, Pйtain, French World War I hero, signed the act of capitulation and became a major collaborator. Almost en masse, the French big bourgeoisie followed Hitler, trying to make the most of the German New Order. The war in the West was more or less a `civilized' war between `civilized' bourgeois.

Nothing of the kind took place in the Soviet Union. The Soviet people faced a completely different war; one of Stalin's merits is to have understood this in time and to have prepared appropriately.

Before Operation Barbarossa began, Hitler had already announced what was to occur. In his Journal, General Halder took notes of a speech given by Hitler to his generals on March 30, 1941. The fьhrer spoke of the upcoming war with the Soviet Union:

`Battle between two ideologies. Damning judgment of Bolshevism: it is an asocial crime. Communism is a frightening danger for the future .... It is a battle of annihilation. If we do not see things in this manner, we will still beat the enemy, but in thirty years, the Communist enemy will oppose us once more. We are not waging war to maintain our enemy ....

`Battle against Russia: destruction of Bolshevik commissars and of the Communist intelligentsia.'

.

Jacobsen, op. cit. , pp. 119--120.

Note that discussion refers to a `final solution', but not against the Jews. The first promises of a `war of annihilation' and of `physical destruction' were addressed to the Communists. And, sure enough, the Bolsheviks, the Soviets, were the first victims of mass extermination.

General Nagel wrote in September 1941:

`Unlike the diet for other prisoners (i.e. British and U.S.) we are under no obligation to feed the Bolshevik prisoners'.

.

Alan Clark, La Guerre a l'Est (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1966), p. 250.

In the Auschwitz and Chemno extermination camps, `Soviet prisoners of war were the first, or among the first, to be deliberately killed by lethal injections and gassing.'

.

Arno Mayer, Why Did the Heavens Not Darken? The ``Final Solution'' in History (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), p. 349.

There were 3,289,000 Soviet prisoners of war, dead in the concentration camps, `while travelling' or under `various circumstances' ! When epidemics took place in the barracks of Soviet prisoners, Nazi guards only entered `with flame-throwing teams when, ``for hygiene reasons'', the dying and dead were burned along with their lice-ridden beds'. There can easily have been 5,000,000 assassinated prisoners, if we take into account the Soviet soldiers who were `simply killed on the spot' when they surrendered.

.

Clark, op. cit. , p. 251.

Therefore the first extermination campaigns, in fact the biggest, were against the Soviet peoples, including Soviet Jews. The peoples of the USSR suffered the most and endured the greatest number of dead (23 million), but they also showed utter determination and amazing heroism.

Until the invasion of the Soviet Union, there were no large massacres of Jewish populations. At the time, the Nazis had not encountered any serious resistance. But with their very first steps on Soviet soil, these noble Germans had to face adversaries who were fighting to the last man. Right in the first weeks, the Germans suffered important losses, against an inferior race, the Slavs, worse even, against Bolsheviks! The exterminating rage of the Nazis was born in their first massive losses. When the fascist beast started to bleed under the Red Army's blows, it dreamed up the `final solution' for the Soviet people.

On November 26, 1941, the German 30th Army Corps, occupying a large Soviet territory, ordered that be taken as hostages ` ``all individuals related to partisans''; ``all individuals suspected of being in contact with partisans''; ``all members of the party and the Komsomol, as well as party caretakers''; ``all former party members''; and ``all individuals who ocupied official positions before the arrival of German and Rumanian troops.'' These hostages were to be held ``in concentration camps.'' For every German or Rumanian soldier killed by a partisan, ten of these hostages were to be executed'.

.

Mayer, op. cit. , p. 251.

For each German soldier killed, the Nazis decided to execute at least ten hostages.

On December 1, 1942, during a discussion with Hitler on the war against the Soviet partisans, General Jodl summed up the German position as follows:

`In battle, our troops can do as they please: hang partisans, even hang them head down or quarter them.'

.

Hitler parle a ses gйnйraux (Paris: Albin Michel, 1964), pp. 39--40.

The bestiality with which the Hitlerian troops tracked down and liquidated all the Party members, all the partisans, all the Soviet State leaders, along with their families, allows us to better understand the importance of the Great Purge of 1937--1938. In the occupied territories, unreconcilable counter-revolutionaries who had not been liquidated in 1937--1938 went to work for the Hitlerites, informing on all the Bolsheviks, their families and their friends in struggle.

As the war in the East became fiercer and fiercer, the Nazis' murderous folly against an entire people intensified. Himmler, talking to SS leaders, spoke in June 1942:

`In what was a ``war of annihilation [Vernichtungskampf]," two ``races and peoples" were locked in ``unconditional" combat; on the one side ``this brute matter, this mass, these primeval men, or better these subhumans [Untermenschen], led by commissars"; on the other, ``we Germans".'

.

Mayer, op. cit. , p. 281.

An unprecedented, sanguinary terror: that was the weapon that the Nazis tried to use to force the Soviets into moral and political submission. Himmler said:

`During the battles to seize Kharkov, our reputation of striking fear and sowing terror preceded us. It is an extraordinary weapon that should always be reinforced.'

.

Heinrich Himmler, Discours secrets (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), p. 191.

And the Nazis intensified that terror.

On August 23, 1942, precisely at 18:00, one thousand airplanes began to drop incendiary bombs on Stalingrad. In that city of 600,000 people, there were many wooden buildings, gas tanks and fuel tanks for industries. Yeryomenko, who commanded the Stalingrad front, wrote:

`Stalingrad was drowned by the misty flames, surrounded by smoke and soot. The entire city was burning. Huge clouds of smoke and fire rose up above the factories. The oil reservoirs appeared to be volcanoes throwing up their lava. Hundreds of thousands of peacable inhabitants perished. One's heart got caught in one's throat in compassion for the innocent victims of the fascist victim.'

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Eremenko, pp. 153--154.

One must have a clear view of these unbearable truths to understand certain aspects of what the bourgeoisie calls `Stalinism'. During the purge, unrepentant bureaucrats, defeatists and capitulationists were affected; many were sent to Siberia. A defeatist or capitulationist Party

could never have mobilized and disciplined the population to face the Nazi terror. And the Soviet people did face it in the besieged cities, in Leningrad and Moscow. And even in the Stalingrad inferno, men and women survived, never surrendered and, finally, participated in the counter-offensive!

During the German aggression, in June 1941, General Pavlov, commander of the Western Front, displayed grave incompetence and negligence. The result was the loss of Minsk, the Byelorussian capital, on June 28. Stalin recalled Pavlov and his staff to Moscow. Zhukov noted that `on a proposal of the Military Council of the Western Front', they were tried and shot.

.

Zhukov, op. cit. , p. 260.

Elleinstein of course writes that `Stalin continued to terrorize his subordinates'.

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Elleinstein, op. cit. , p. 283.

But, faced with Nazi barbarism, the Soviet leadership had to show an unflinching attitude and phenomenal endurance; any irresponsible act had to be punished with the utmost severity.

Once the fascist beast began to receive mortal wounds, it tried to take up courage by bathing in blood, by practicing genocide against the Soviet people who were under its talons.

Himmler declared on December 16, 1943, in Weimar:

`When I was forced to give in a village the order to march against the Jewish partisans and commissars, I systematically gave the order to also kill the women and children of these partisans and these commissars. I

would be a coward and a criminal with respect to our descendants if I allowed these hate-filled children of subhumans in the battle between human and subhuman. We always keep in mind that we are engaged in a primitive, natural and original racial battle.'

.

Himmler, op. cit. , p. 205.

In another speech on April 24, 1943, in Kharkov, the head of the SS said:

`By what means will we succeed in removing from Russia the greatest number of men, dead or alive? We will succeed by killing them, by making them prisoner, by making them really work and by giving back (certain territories) to the enemy only after having completely emptied them of inhabitants. Giving men back to Russia would be a great error.'

.

Ibid. , p. 187.

This reality, of the unbelievable terror that the Nazis practiced in the Soviet Union, against the first socialist country, against the Communists, is almost systematically covered up or minimized in bourgeois litterature. This silence has a clear goal. Those who do not know of the monstrous crimes committed against the Soviets are more likely to believe that Stalin was a `dictator' comparable to Hitler. The bourgeoisie covers up the real anti-Communist genocide to better publicize what it has in common with Nazism: the irrational hatred of Communism, the class hatred of socialism. And to better cover up the great genocide of the war, the bourgeoisie shines the light on another genocide, that of the Jews.

In a remarkable book, Arno J. Mayer, whose father was left-Zionist, shows that the extermination of the Jews only began once the Nazis had, for the first time, suffered heavy losses. It was in June--July 1941, against the Red Army. The bestiality against the Communists, followed by the unexpected defeats that demolished the sentiment of invincibility of the Ubermenschen (Supermen), created the atmosphere that led to the Holocaust.

`The Judeocide was forged in the fires of a stupendous war to conquer unlimited Lebensraum from Russia, to crush the Soviet regime, and to liquidate international bolshevism .... Without Operation Barbarossa there would and could have been no Jewish catastrophe, no ``Final Solution".'

.

Mayer, op. cit. , p. 234.

Once the Nazis had to face the defeats on the Russian front, they decided on a `global and final solution' of the `Jewish problem' during the Wannsee conference of January 20, 1942.

For years, the Nazis had put forward their hatred of `Judeo-Bolshevism', Bolshevism having been the worst invention of the Jews. The determined resistance of the Bolsheviks prevented the Hitlerians from finishing off their principal enemy. So the latter turned their frustations on the Jews, whom they exterminated with blind fury.

Since the Jewish big bourgeoisie had been conciliatory to the Hitlerian state, sometimes even collaborationist, most Jews handed themselves over to their executors. But the Communist Jews, who acted in an internationalist spirit, fought the Nazis and led some of the Jewish Left into resistance. The great majority of the poor Jews were gassed. But many rich Jews succeeded in escaping to the United States. After the war, they went to work for U.S. imperialism and its Middle East beachhead, Israel. They speak at length about the Jewish Holocaust, but in a pro-Israel light; at

the same time, they freely voice their anti-Communism, thereby insulting the memory of those Communist Jews who really did fight the Nazis.

We conclude with a word on how Hitler prepared the Nazis to indifferently massacre 23 million Soviet citizens. To transform his men into killing machines, he had to make them believe that a Bolshevik was subhuman, an animal.

`Hitler warned his troops that the enemy forces were ``largely composed of beasts, not soldiers," conditioned to fight with animal-like ferocity.'

.

Ibid. , p. 244.

In order to push the German troops to exterminate Communists, Hitler told them that Stalin and the other Soviet leaders were `bloodstained criminals ... [who had] killed and rooted out millions of [Russia's] leading intelligentsia in a wild thirst for blood ... [and] exercised the most cruel tyranny of all times.'

.

Ibid. , p. 106.

`(T)he bloody Jew and tyrant over the people ... killed (sometimes with inhuman tortures) or starved to death with truly fanatical savagery close to thirty million people.'

.

Ibid. , p. 101.

So, for Hitler, the lie of `thirty million victims of Stalinism' served to psychologically prepare for Nazi barbarism and the genocide of Soviet Communists and partisans.

Note that Hitler first blamed Lenin for `thirty million victims'. This disgusting lie already appeared in 1926 in Mein Kampf, long before the collectivization and purge! Attacking Judeo-Bolshevism, Hitler wrote:

`(The Jew) killed or starved about thirty million people with a truly diabolic ferocity, under inhuman tortures'.

.

Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1941), pp. 450--451.

Half a century later, Brzezinski, U.S. imperialism's official ideologue, took up these Nazi lies, word for word:

`(I)t is absolutely safe to estimate the number (of Stalin's victims) at no less than twenty million and perhaps as high as forty million'.

.

Brzezinski, op. cit. , p. 27.

Stalin, his personality and his military capacities

The Hitlerian aggression drenched the Soviet Union in a bath of blood and steel that surpassed all the horrors that the world had ever previously seen. Never in humanity's history has such a terrifying test, of such unfeeling violence, been imposed on a people, its cadres and its leadership. Under such conditions, it was impossible to pretend, to rationalize or to try to save oneself with empty words and acts.

The moment of truth had come for Stalin, the supreme leader of the Party and the country. The war was to measure his moral and political strength, his will and endurance and his intellectual and organizational capacities.

At the same time, all the `truths' about Stalin, revealed in a self-interested manner, by the Hitlerians and by the more `respectable' Right, were to be tested: the war would show up without doubt Stalin the `dictator', whose `personal power' was not affected by the `slightest contradiction', the `despot' who did not listen to reason, the man of `mediocre intelligence', etc.

Half a century after the war, these slanders, put forward at the time by socialism's worst enemies, have become primary `truths' once again. With time, the international bourgeoisie succeeded in imposing on intellectual circles the monopoly of its class `truth'.

Yet the Second World War itself provided ample material to denounce this lie, which is so important to save capitalism, the system of exploitation and pillage.

Stalin, the `dictator'

We begin with the first `uncontestable truth': Stalin, alone, the dictator, imposing his personal will, requiring total submission to himself. Here is Khrushchev:

`The power accumulated in the hands of one person, Stalin, led to serious consequences during the Great Patriotic War.'

.

Khrushchev, Secret Report, op. cit. , p. S36.

`Stalin acts for everybody; he does not reckon with anyone; he asks no one for advice.'

.

Ibid. , p. S43.

`Stalin acted not through persuasion, explanation and patient cooperation with people, but by imposing his concepts and demanding absolute submission to his opinion. Whoever opposed this concept or tried to prove his viewpoint and the correctness of his position was doomed to removal from the leading collective and to subsequent moral and physical annihilation.'

.

Ibid. , p. S13.

`The sickly suspicion created in him a general distrust .... A situation was created where one could not express one's own will.'

.

Ibid. , p. S34.

Elleinstein followed in Khrushchev's footsteps. He is quite happy to denounce the `Soviet dictatorship', in which Stalin `was suspicious of all his subordinates'. `The errors of Stalin's leadership had tragic consequences in the first months of the war, but these took place primarily as a result of the Soviet dictatorship.'

.

Elleinstein, op. cit. , pp. 284, 282.

Vasilevsky was originally assistant to Zhukov, the Chief of Staff. In May 1942, he became Chief of Staff. He worked at Stalin's side throughout the war.

`In elaborating a particular operational-strategic decision or in examining other important issues affecting the conduct of the war, the Commander-in-Chief called in responsible people directly in charge of the problem under review .... periodically he would summon certain members of front military councils so as to work out, review or confirm a particular decision concerning control of battle operations ....

`(T)he preliminary draft of a strategic decision of plan for its implementation was drawn up by the Commander-in-Chief in a narrow circle of people. These were usually a few members of the Politburo and the State Defence Committee .... This work would often take several days. In the course of it the Commander-in-Chief would normally confer with commanders and members of military councils of the respective fronts'.

Note that the State Committee for Defence, headed by Stalin, was responsible for the leadership of the country and all authority was

concentrated in its hands. Vasilevsky continued:

`(T)he Central Committee Politburo and army leadership always relied on collective decision-making. That is why the strategic decisions taken collectively and drawn up by the Supreme Command as a rule corresponded to the situation at the fronts, while the requirements made upon people were realistic'.

.

Vasilevsky, op. cit. , pp. 91--93.

Vasilevsky also thought that Stalin's style of work improved during the battle of Stalingrad, then during the great offensives against the Hitlerians.

`The big turning point for Stalin as Supreme High Commander came in September 1942 when the situation became very grave and there was a special need for flexible and skilled leadership in regard to military operations. (He was) ... obliged constantly to rely on the collective experience of his generals. Thenceforth one would often hear him say: ``Why the devil didn't you say so!"

`From then on, before he took a decision on any important war issue, Stalin would take advice and discuss it together with his deputy, the top General Staff personnel, heads of chief departments of the People's Defence Commissariat and front commanders, as well as people's commissars in charge of the defence industry.'

.

Ibid. , p. 449.

During the entire war, General Shtemenko worked for the Chief of Staff, first as Chief of Operations, then as under-Chief of Staff.

`I must say that Stalin did not decide and did not like to decide for himself important questions about the war. He understood perfectly well the necessity of collective work in this complex area, he recognized those who were experts on such and such a military problem, took into account their opinion and gave each their due.'

.

Chtйmenko, L'Йtat-Major gйnйral soviйtique en guerre (Moscow: Йditions du Progrиs, 1976), vol. 2, p. 319.

Zhukov described many vivid conversations and underscored the manner in which they were resolved:

`Often sharp arguments arose at the Committee sittings. Views were expressed in definite and sharp terms ....

`If no agreement was reached at the sitting, a commission would be immediately formed of representatives of the two extreme sides which had to reach an agreement and report on the proposals it would work out ....

`In all, the State Committee for Defence adopted some ten thousand resolutions on military and economic matters during the war.'

.

Zhukov, op. cit. , pp. 267--268.

Khrushchev's image of Stalin, the `lone man who leans on no-one', is falsified by an event during the war, in the beginning of August 1941, which implicated Khrushchev himself and Commander Kirponos. Vasilevsky recalled the anecdote, probably thinking of the passage in

Khrushchev's Secret Report that reads `At the beginning of the war we did not even have sufficient numbers of rifles'.

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Khrushchev, Secret Report, op. cit. , p. S38.

Stalin had given his approval to Khrushchev for an offensive that would start August 5, 1941. But at the same time, Stalin told him to prepare the defence line that he (Stalin) had proposed. Stalin explained that in warfare, `you have to prepare for the bad and even the very bad as well as the good. That is the only way of avoiding blunders'.

But Khrushchev made all sorts of unreasonable demands that the headquarters could not meet. Stalin said:

` ``It would be silly to think ... that you are going to get everything ready-made from somewhere else. Learn to supply and reinforce yourself. Set up reserve units attached to the armies, turn some factories over to making rifles, machine-guns, get cracking .... Leningrad has been able to start manufacturing Katiusha rockets ...."

` ``Comrade Stalin, all your instructions will be put into effect. Unfortunately, we are unfamiliar with the Katiusha rocket ...."

` ``Your people have the blueprints, and they've had the models for ages. It's your own fault for being so ignorant of this crucial weapon." '

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Vasilevsky, op. cit. , p. 99.

That was how Stalin taught his subordinates, here Khrushchev, to show initiative, creativity and a sense of responsibility.

In July 1942, Rokossovsky, who had led with much success an army up to then, was named commander of the Briansk Front by Stalin. He was unsure of whether he was competent. He was warmly received by Stalin, who explained the position. Rokossovsky described the end of the interview.

`When I had finished and was about to leave, Stalin said, ``Don't go yet."

`He phoned Poskryobyshev and asked him to call in a general just removed from the command at the Front. The following dialogue took place:

` ``You say that we have punished you wrongly?"

` ``Yes, because the GHQ representative kept getting in my way."

` ``How?"

` ``He interfered with my orders, held conferences when it was necessary to act, gave contradictory instructions... In general he tried to override the commander."

` ``So he got in your way. But you were in command of the Front?"

` ``Yes."

` ``The Party and the Government entrusted the Front to you... Did you have a telephone?"

` ``Yes."

` ``Then why didn't you report that he was getting in your way?"

` ``I didn't dare complain about your representative."

` ``Well, that is what we have punished you for: not daring to pick up the receiver and phone up, as a result of which you failed to carry out the operation."

`I walked out of the Supreme Commander's office with the thought that, as a new-fledged Front Commander, I had just been taught an object lesson. Believe me, I made the most of it.'

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Rokossovsky, op. cit. , pp. 118--119.

That was how Stalin sanctioned those generals who did not dare defend their opinion by addressing him directly.

Stalin, the `hysteric'

Let us consider another `uncontestable truth': Stalin ran a personal dictatorship, often behaved hysterically, was a charlatan and led the war irresponsibly without knowing the real situation on the ground.

Once again, the man who wanted to `return to the Great Lenin', Khrushchev, had something to offer on the subject:

`Even after the war began, the nervousness and hysteria which Stalin demonstrated ... caused our Army serious damage.'

.

Khrushchev, Secret Report, op. cit. , p. S40.

`Stalin began to tell all kinds of nonsense about Zhukov, among others the following, ``... It is said that before each operation at the front Zhukov used to behave as follows: He used to take a handful of earth, smell it and say, `We can begin the attack' or the opposite, `The planned operation cannot be carried out.' " '

.

Ibid. , p. S42.

`Stalin planned operations on a globe. (Animation in the hall.) Yes, comrades, he used to take the globe and trace the front line on it.'

.

Ibid. , p. S41.

`Stalin was very far from an understanding of the real situation which was developing at the front. This was natural because, during the whole Patriotic War, he never visited any section of the front'.

.

Ibid. , p. S40.

Elleinstein, who avoids making a fool of himself with Khrushchev's stupid remarks about a globe, still attacks Stalin's detestable `leadership methods':

`An important fact must be pointed out about Stalin's actions during the war: it is his almost total absence, for the combatants and for the civilian population. He never went to the front.'

.

Elleinstein, op. cit. , p. 285.

Here is how Zhukov presented Stalin, the `nervous hysteric' who could not stand for the slightest contradiction.

`As a rule, the General Headquarters worked in an orderly, business-like manner. Everyone had a chance to state his opinion.

`Stalin was equally stern to everybody and rather formal. He listened attentively to anybody speaking to the point.

`Incidentally, I know from my war experience that one could safely bring up matters unlikely to please Stalin, argue them out and firmly carry the point. Those who assert it was not so are wrong.'

.

Zhukov, op. cit. , p. 281.

Now let us examine the unforgettable scene where Zhukov went to visit the dictator, globe in hand, to approximately (of course) indicate the front line. Upon returning, Zhukov wrote:

`It was impossible to go to Stalin without being perfectly familiar with the situation plotted on the map and to report tentative or (which was worse) exaggerated information. Stalin would not tolerate hit-or-miss answers, he demanded utmost accuracy and clarity.

`Stalin seemed to have a knack of detecting weak spots in reports and documents. He immediately laid them open and severely reprimanded those responsible for inaccuracies. He had a tenacious memory, perfectly remembered whatever was said and would not miss a chance to give a severe dressing-down. That is why we drafted staff documents as best we possibly could under the circumstances.'

.

Ibid. , p. 282.

As for General Shtemenko, he directly addressed Khrushchev's accusation that Stalin, not visiting the front, could not know the realities of war.

`The Supreme Commander could not, in our opinion, visit the fronts more frequently. It would have been an unforgivably lightheaded act to abandon, even for a short period, the General Headquarters, to decide a partial question on a single front.'

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Chtйmenko, op. cit. , p. 354.

Such travel was useless, claimed Vasilevsky. Stalin received at Headquarters very detailed and very complete information, so `he could, while in Moscow, take decisions properly and with despatch'.

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Vasilevsky, op. cit. , p. 451.

Stalin made his decisions `not only from data known provided by Headquarters, but also taking into account particularities of the given situation'

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Vasilevsky, op. cit. , p. 375.

How did he do so? Stalin received all the important information that came from the offices of the Chief of Staff, the Minister of Defence and the Political Leadership of the Red Army. His knowledge of the particular situation on the different fronts came from two sources. First, the front commanders regularly sent him reports. Then, according to Zhukov:

`Stalin based his judgments of crucial issues on the reports furnished by General Headquarters representatives, whom he would send to the Fronts for on-the-spot assessment of the situation and consultations with respective commanders, on conclusions made at the General Headquarters and suggestions by Front commanders and on special reports.'

.

Zhukov, pp. 282--283.

The General Headquarters representatives were to send a report to Stalin every day. On August 16, 1943, the first day of an important operation near Kharkov, Vasilevsky did not send his report. Stalin immediately sent him the message:

`I warn you for the last time that if you ever fail to do your duty to the GHQ again you will be removed from your post as Chief of General Staff and recalled from the front ....'

.

Vasilevsky, p. 285.

Vasilevsky was thunderstruck, but was not offended by this `brutality'. On the contrary, he wrote:

`Stalin was just as categorical with other people. He required similar discipline from every representative of the GHQ .... My feeling is that the lack of any indulgence to an GHQ representative was justified in the interests of efficient control of hostilities. Stalin very attentively followed the course of events at the front, quickly reacted to all changes in them and firmly held troop control in his own hands.'

.

Ibid. .

As opposed to Khrushchev, who claimed to have seen an irresponsible and charlatanesque Stalin, Vasilevsky, who worked for thirty-four months at Stalin's side, analyzed the latter's style of work as follows:

`Stalin paid a great deal of attention to creating an efficient style of work in the GHQ. If we look at the style from autumn 1942, we see it as distinguished by reliance on collective experience in drawing up operational and strategic plans, a high degree of exactingness, resourcefulness, constant

contact with the troops and a precise knowledge of the situation at the Fronts.

`Stalin as Supreme High Commander was extremely exacting to all and sundry; a quality that was justified, especially in wartime. He never forgave carelessness in work or failure to finish a job properly'.

.

Ibid. , p. 450.

A detailed example convincingly shows how Stalin's `irresponsible leadership methods' really worked. In April 1942, a Red Army offensive to liberate the Crimea failed. The High Command was given orders to stop it and to organize a staggered defence. Twenty-one Soviet divisions faced ten Nazi divisions. But on May 8, the Nazis attacked and broke through the Soviet defence. The High Command representative, Mekhlis, a close companion of Stalin, sent his report, to which the Supreme Commander responded:

`You are taking a strange position as an outside observer who has no responsibility for the Crimean Front affairs. This position may be convenient but it is utterly disgraceful. You are not some outside observer at the Crimean Front, but the responsible representative of the GHQ, responsible for all the Front's successes and failures and obliged to correct the command's mistakes on the spot. You together with the command are responsible for the Front's left flank being utterly weak. If ``the entire situation showed that the enemy was going to attack that morning'' and you did not take all measures to repel the enemy, just confining yourself to passive criticism, the worse for you.'

.

Ibid. , p. 159.

Stalin fully criticized bureaucratic and formalist leadership methods.

`Comrades Kozlov and Mekhlis believed that their main job was to issue orders and that issuing orders was all they had to do in controlling the troops. They did not appreciate that the issuing of an order is only the start of work and that the command's chief job is to ensure that an order is implemented, to convey the order to the troops, and to arrange assistance for the troops in carrying out the command's order. As an analysis of the course of operations has shown, the Front command issued their orders without account for the situation at the front, unaware of the real position of the troops. The Front command did not even ensure the delivery of their orders to the armies .... During the critical days of the operation, the Crimean Front command and Comrade Mekhlis spent their time on longwinded fruitless meetings of the military council instead of personal contact with the Army commanders and personal involvement in the course of operations.

`The task is that our commanders should put an end once and for all to harmful methods of bureaucratic leadership and troop control; they must not confine themselves to issuing orders, but visit the troops, the armies and divisions more often and help their subordinates to carry out the orders. The task is that our commanding staff, commissars and political officers should thoroughly root out elements of indiscipline among commanders of all ranks.'

.

Ibid. , p. 161.

During the entire war, Stalin firmly fought against any irresponsible or bureaucratic attitude. He insisted on real presence on the ground.

Stalin, of `mediocre intelligence'

We finish with the third `truth' about Stalin's personality: the brutal and cold man, of mediocre intelligence, with no consideration for his fellow humans and who had nothing but contempt for his aids.

In fact, the men who had to `endure' this monster day after day for those four terrible war years offer a radically different picture of Stalin.

Here is how Zhukov described his `master':

`Though slight in stature and undistinguished in outward appearance, Stalin was nevertheless an imposing figure. Free of affectation and mannerisms, he won the heart of everyone he spoke to. His visitors were invariable struck by his candour and his uninhibited manner of speaking, and impressed by his ability to express his thoughts clearly, his inborn analytical turn of mind, his erudition and retentive memory, all of which made even old hands and big shots brace themselves and be ``on the alert." '

.

Zhukov, op. cit. , p. 283.

`Stalin possessed not only an immense natural intelligence, but also amazingly wide knowledge. I was able to observe his ability to think analytically during sessions of the Party Politburo, the State Defence Committee and during my permanent work in the GHQ. He would attentively listen to speakers, ... sometimes asking questions and making comments. And when the discussion was over he would formulate his conclusions precisely and sum things up.'

.

Vasilevsky, op. cit. , p. 448.

`His tremendous capacity for work, his ability quickly to grasp the meaning of a book, his tenacious memory --- all these enabled him to master, during one day, a tremendous amount of factual data, which could be coped with only by a very gifted man.'

.

Zhukov, op. cit. , p. 283.

Vasilevsky added to this portrait with a few comments about how Stalin related to other men:

`Stalin ... had a great capacity for organization. He worked very hard himself, but he also could make others work to the full extent of their ability, squeezing from them all that they could offer.'

.

Vasilevsky, op. cit. , p. 452.

`Stalin had an amazingly good memory .... Stalin knew not only all the commanders of the fronts and armies, and there were over a hundred of them, but also several commanders of corps and divisions, as well as the top officials of the People's Defence Commissariat, not to speak of the top personnel of the central and regional Party and state apparatus.'

.

Ibid. , p. 451.

In addition, Stalin knew personally a number of builders of aircraft, artillery and tanks; he often convened them and asked of them detailed questions.

.

Zhukov, op. cit. , p. 284.

Stalin's military merits

How should one evaluate the military merits of the man who led the army and the peoples of the Soviet Union during the greatest and most terrible war that history has ever seen?

Here is Khrushchev's summary:

`Stalin very energetically popularized himself as a great leader .... let us take, for instance, our historical and military films ...; they make us feel sick. Their true objective is the propagation of the theme of praising Stalin as a military genius ....

`Not Stalin, but the party as a whole, the Soviet Government, our heroic Army, its talented leaders and brave soldiers, the whole Soviet nation --- these are the ones who assured the victory in the Great Patriotic War. (Tempestuous and prolonged applause.)

.

Khrushchev, Secret Report, pp. S42--S43.

It was not Stalin! Not Stalin, but the entire Party. And the entire Party probably took orders and instructions from the Holy Spirit.

Khrushchev pretended to glorify the Party, that collective entity of struggle, to diminish the rфle played by Stalin. Organizing the cult of the personality, Stalin usurped the victory that was won by the `entire' Party. As if Stalin was not the most important leader of the Party, the one who, throughout the war, displayed great working capacity, great stamina and foresightedness. As if the strategic decisions had not been confirmed by Stalin, but, in opposition, by his subordinates.

If Stalin was not a military genius, one can only conclude that the greatest war in history, the war that humanity led against fascism, was won with no military geniuses. Because in this terrifying war, no one played a

comparable rфle to Stalin. Even Averell Harriman, U.S. imperialism's representative, after repeating the necessary clichйs about `the tyrant in Stalin', clearly stated `his high intelligence, that fantastic grasp of detail, his shrewdness and the surprising human sensitivity that he was capable of showing, at least in the war years. I found him better informed than Roosevelt, more realistic than Churchill, in some ways the most effective of the war leaders.'

.

W. Averell Harriman and Elie Abel, Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin: 1941--1946 (New York: Random House, 1975), p. 536.

`When Stalin was present, there was no room for anyone else. Where were our military chiefs?', cried out Khrushchev the demagogue. He flattered the marshals: wasn't it you who were the real military geniuses of the Second World War? Finally, Zhukov and Vasilevsky, the two most important military leaders, gave their opinion fifteen and twenty years, respectively, after Khrushchev's infamous report. We present Vasilevsky's opinion first.

`The process of Stalin's growth as a general came to maturity .... After the Stalingrad and especially the Kursk battles he rose to the heights of strategic leadership. From then on Stalin would think in terms of modern warfare, had a good grasp of all questions relating to the preparation for and execution of operations. He would now demand that military action be carried out in a creative way, with full account of military science, so that all actions were decisive and flexible, designed to split up and encircle the enemy. In his military thinking he markedly displayed a tendency to concentrate men and materiel, to diversified employment of all possible ways of commencing operations and their conduct. Stalin began to show an excellent grasp of military strategy, which came fairly easily to him since he was a past master at the art of political strategy, and of operational art as well.'

.

Vasilevsky, op. cit. , pp. 449--450.

`Joseph Stalin has certainly gone down in military history. His undoubted service is that it was under his direct guidance as Supreme High Commander that the Soviet Armed Forces withstood the defensive campaigns and carried out all the offensive operations so splendidly. Yet he, to the best of my judgment, never spoke of his own contribution. The title of Hero of the Soviet Union and rank of Generalissimus were awarded to him by written representation to the Party Central Committee Politburo from front commanders .... He told people plainly and honestly about the miscalculations made during the war.'

.

Ibid. , p. 452.

`It is my profound conviction that Stalin, especially in the latter part of the war, was the strongest and most remarkable figure of the strategic command. He successfully supervised the fronts and all the war efforts of the country on the basis of the Party line .... He has remained in my memory as a stern and resolute war leader, but not without a certain personal charm.'

.

Ibid. , p. 447--448.

Zhukov begins by giving us a perfect example of leadership methods, as presented by Mao Zedong: concentrate the correct ideas of the masses and transform them into directives for the masses.

`To Stalin is usually ascribed a number of fundamental innovations such as elaborating the methods of artillery offensive action, the winning of

air supremacy, methods of encircling the enemy, the splitting of surrounded groups and their demolition by parts, etc.

`All these paramount problems of the art of war are the fruits of battles with the enemy, the fruits of profound thinking, the fruits of the experience of a big team of leading military leaders and the troops themselves.

`Here Stalin's merit lies in the fact that he correctly appraised the advice offered by the military experts and then in summarized form --- in instructions, directives and regulations --- immediately circulated them among the troops for practical guidance.'

.

Zhukov, op. cit. , p. 285.

`Before and especially after the war an outstanding role was attributed to Stalin in creating the Armed Forces, elaborating the fundamentals of Soviet military science and major doctrines of strategy, and even operational art ....

`Stalin mastered the technique of the organization of front operations and operations by groups of fronts and guided them with skill, thoroughly understanding complicated strategic questions. He displayed his ability as Commander-in-Chief beginning with Stalingrad.

`In guiding the armed struggle as a whole, Stalin was assisted by his natural intelligence and profound intuition. He had a knack of grasping the main link in the strategic situation so as to organize opposition to the enemy and conduct a major offensive operation. He was certainly a worthy Supreme Commander.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 284--285.

From Stalin to Khrushchev

On February 9, 1946, Stalin presented to his electors a summary of the anti-fascist war:

`The war was a great school in which all of the people's forces were successfully put to the test.'

Stalin indirectly attacked the militarist conceptions that pretended that the Red Army was the main factor in the victory. The idea that the Army was above the Party, popular during Tukhachevsky's time, had resurfaced in Zhukov's circle at the end of the war. Stalin, of course, recognized the enormous achievements of the Army but, `above all, it was our Soviet social system that triumphed .... The war showed that our Soviet social system is a truly popular system.' Second, victory is due to `our Soviet political system .... Our multinational state resisted all the war's tests and proved its vitality.'

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Staline, Discours 9 fйvrier 1946, uvres (Йditions NBE, 1975), vol. XIV, pp. 189--191.

It would be a mistake, Stalin continued, to think `that we owe our triumph uniquely to the courage of our troops'. The army's heroism would have been in vain without the huge numbers of tanks, canons and munitions that the people made for the soldiers. And this incredible production could not have taken place without industrialization, `accomplished in the excessively short period of thirteen years', and without collectivization, which ended, `in a short period, the permanent state of backwardness of our agriculture'. Stalin also recalled the struggle led by the Trotskyists and the Bukharinists against industrialization and collectivization:

`Many important members of our Party systematically pulled the Party backwards and tried in every way to push it on to the ``ordinary'' road of capitalist development.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 193--196.

Stalin therefore focused, correctly, on the key rϕle played by the Party and by the working masses in the preparation for defence and for war.

In February 1946, the new Five Year Plan was approved.

During its retreat, the German Army had deliberately destroyed and burned anything that could be of use to the Soviets: 2,000 cities, 70,000 villages and factories employing four million workers were totally or partially destroyed.

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Maurice Dobb, Soviet Economic Development (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966. 6th edition, p. 301.

In the invaded regions, the destruction incurred meant 40 to 60 per cent of the potential coal, electricity, steel, metals and machinery production. Some estimated that the Soviet Union would need several decades before it could recover from the wounds the Nazis had inflicted on its industrial apparatus. Yet, after three incredible years, the 1948 industrial production surpassed that of 1940.

.

Ibid. , p. 313.

With respect to the base year 1940, coal production reached an index of 123, electricity 130, laminates 102, cars and trucks 161, machine tools 154 and cement 114.

.

Bettelheim, op. cit. , pp. 148, 151.

In 1950, at the end of the Fourth Five-Year Plan, industrial production was 73 per cent above that of 1940. Capital goods production had doubled, while consumer goods production had increased by 23 per cent.

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Dobb, op. cit. , p. 316.

The Fifth Plan, for the period 1951--1955, sought yearly industrial growth of 12 per cent. A new twist was that consumer goods production was to see a remarkable increase, of 65 per cent; capital goods were to increase by 80 per cent in five years.

.

Ibid.

This change in economic policy had already been announced in Stalin's 1946 summary speech:

`We will pay particular attention to increasing production of consumer goods, to raising the standard of living of workers, by progressively reducing the cost of goods and by creating all sorts of scientific research institutes.'

.

Staline, op. cit. , p. 198.

The U.S. takes up where Nazi Germany left off

Even before the anti-fascist war was finished, a number of U.S. generals dreamed of a shift in alliances so that they could attack the Soviet Union. For this adventure, they intended to use the Nazi army, purged of Hitler and his close entourage. The former secret servant Cookridge recalled some of the discussions in the summer of 1945:

`General Patton was dreaming of rearming a couple of Waffen SS divisions to incorporate them into his US Third Army ``and lead them against the Reds".

`Patton had put this plan quite seriously to General Joseph T. McNarney, deputy US military governor in Germany .... ``What do you care what those goddam bolshies think?" said Patton. ``We're going to have to fight them sooner or later. Why not now while our army is intact and we can kick the Red Army back into Russia? We can do it with my Germans ... they hate those red bastards."

` ``He inquired ...", Murphy later wrote, ``whether there was any chance of going on to Moscow, which he said he could reach in thirty days, instead of waiting for the Russians to attack the United States." '

.

E. H. Cookridge, op. cit. , pp. 127--128.

Gehlen, the Nazi, and the CIA

General Gehlen had been the Nazi head of intelligence in the Soviet Union. In May 1945, he surrendered, along with his archives, to the U.S. He was presented to Major-General Luther Sibert, head of intelligence for General Bradley's armies. At Sibert's request, Gehlen the Nazi wrote a 129-page report. Thereafter, Gehlen `developed his great scheme of a secret organisation engaged on intelligence work against the Soviet Union under American aegis.'

Ibid. , p. 122.

Gehlen was introduced to the highest U.S. military authorities and, when Soviet representatives asked about the whereabouts of Gehlen and Schellenberg, two war criminals who should have been returned to them, the U.S. replied that they had no news of them. On August 22, 1945, they clandestinely brought Gehlen to the U.S.

Ibid. , p. 125.

Gehlen the Nazi `negotiated' with the leaders of U.S. intelligence, including Allen Dulles, and they came up with an `agreeement': Gehlen's spy organization would continue to serve in the Soviet Union, autonomously, and `Liaison with American Intelligence would be maintained by US officers'. Furthermore, the `Gehlen Organisation would be used solely to procure intelligence on the Soviet Union and satellite countries of the communist bloc.'

.

Ibid. , p. 135.

On July 9, 1946, Gehlen was back in Germany to reactivate his Nazi spy service, under U.S. leadership. He hired dozens of upper Gestapo and SS officers, to whom he furnished false identities.

.

Ibid. , pp. 144--145.

John Loftus, former U.S. intelligence officer responsible for the tracking down of former Nazis at the end of the war, noted that thousands of Ukrainian, Croatian and Hungarian fascists were snuck into the U.S. by a `rival' intelligence service. Loftus writes:

`According to one estimate, some 10,000 Nazi war criminals entered the United States after World War II.'

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Mark Aarons and John Loftus, Ratlines: How the Vatican's Nazi networks betrayed Western intelligence to the Soviets (London: Heinemann, 1991), pp. 269--270.

Right from 1947, when the U.S. started up the Cold War, these `former' Nazis played an important rфle in the anti-Communist propaganda. So we can correctly claim that U.S. imperialism was the direct continuation of Nazi expansionism.

The nuclear bomb against the Soviet Union

On July 21, 1945, during the Potsdam conference, Truman received a report on the first U.S. nuclear test.

Margaret Truman wrote:

`This freed my father to negotiate (with Stalin) with far more boldness and bluntness.'

Margaret Truman, Harry S. Truman (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1973), p. 273.

She continued:

`(M)y father now tackled the sticky question of how and what to tell Stalin about the atomic bomb .... Dad strolled over to the Russian leader and told him that the United States had created a new weapon ``of unusual destructive force." Prime Minister Churchill and Secretary of State Byrnes stood only a few yards away, studying Stalin's reaction. He was remarkably cool.'

Ibid. , pp. 275--276.

Zhukov recalled the conversation held between Stalin and Molotov upon their return to their residence:

`Molotov reacted immediately. ``They are trying to bid up."

`Stalin laughed:

` ``Let them. I'll have to talk it over with Kurchatov today and get him to speed things up."

`I understood they were talking about the development of the atomic bomb.'

G. Zhukov, Reminiscences and Reflections (Moscow: Progress, 1985), vol. 2, p. 449.

Stalin was a determined and cool man who never allowed himself to be intimidated, not even by nuclear blackmail.

Truman, right from the production of the first atomic weapon, perceived it as a weapon of mass terror that would ensure U.S. world hegemony. He wrote in his memoirs:

`I regarded the bomb as a military weapon and never had any doubt that it should be used .... when I talked to Churchill he unhesitatingly told me he favored the use of the atomic bomb.'

Harry S. Truman, Memoirs (New York: Signet Book, 1965), vol. 1, p. 462.

In the end of July, the Soviet Union decided to attack Japan, which was headed for inevitable military defeat. However, without the slightest military necessity, the U.S. decided to `experiment' their nuclear weapons on human beings. They wanted to terrorize their adversaries to an extent that even the Nazis had not done. The main purpose of imperialism, when it massively killed Japanese, was to create terror among the Soviets: the main message was for Stalin. As soon as Churchill learned of the atomic bomb's existence, he wanted to use it against the Soviet Union! Professor Gabriel Kolko writes:

`Field Marshal Alan Brooke thought the Prime Minister's infantile enthusiasm bordered on the dangerous: ``He was already seeing himself capable of eliminating all the Russian centres of industry".'

Gabriel Kolko, The Politics of War: The World and United States Foreign Policy 1943--1945 (New York: Pantheon, 1990), p. 559.

At Potsdam, Churchill `urged that they consider it as a diplomatic lever on the Russians'.

Ibid. , p. 560.

On August 6, 1945, having learned that Hiroshima was destroyed by the bomb, Truman declared to the people around him that it was the `greatest achievement of organized science in history'. Truman dared to write that in his memoirs! The decision of U.S. imperialism to indiscrimately exterminate hundreds of millions of Japanese civilians shows its inhuman and barbaric nature; it had taken up the torch from the fascist powers. In his official declaration, the same day, Truman said:

`If they do not now accept our terms, they may expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth.'

Truman, Ibid. , p. 466.

On August 9, a second city, Nagasaki, was destroyed by Truman's promised atomic rain. In Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 443,000 civilians were massacred.

Dйborine, op. cit. , p. 265.

The only potential world hegemonic power, the U.S. virulently opposed any anti-imperialist movement, fighting for independence, popular democracy or socialism. This is the meaning of the `Truman Doctrine', a doctrine of unlimited interventionism with the slogan of defending `freedom' (of the market, of exploitation) from `Communist tyranny'. Here is how Truman phrased it on March 12, 1947: `it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.'

Truman, op. cit. , vol. 2, p. 128--129.

This policy of interventionism was principally `justified' by the `threat of Russian totalitarianism'. Truman declared that `the new menace facing us seemed every bit as grave as Nazy Germany.'

Ibid. , p. 124.

Having eliminated Hitler, his rival for world hegemony, Truman took up all the Nazi anti-Communist slanders. Here is how Truman spoke of the Soviet Union:

`(A) group of cruel but skillful fanatics who set up a dictatorship with all the trappings of a state religion .... The individual became the subject of the state in perpetual enslavement'.

Ibid. , p. 314.

So, as soon as the Nazis had been defeated, Truman took up their main direction, anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism. In fact, it was Hitler himself who proposed this opening to the U.S. on August 31, 1944.

`A victory of our adversaries will inevitably Bolshevize Europe.' `The coalition of our adversaries is composed of heterogeneous elements ...: ultra-capitalist states on one side, ultra-communist states on the other'. `One day the coalition will fall apart.' `The important thing is to wait for the moment, no matter how grave the situation.'

Adolph Hitler, Hitler parle a ses gйnйraux (Paris: Йditions Albin Michel, 1964), pp. 279, 264, 283.

To save themselves from their inevitable defeat, the Nazis accentuated, towards the end of the War, their disgusting anti-Communist slanders. Truman took them up, eighteen months later.

Anti-imperialist struggle and the struggle for peace

Given this background, one can better understand the international policy that Stalin followed from 1945 to 1953. Stalin was firm in his opposition to U.S. imperialism and to its war plans. To the extent that it was possible, he helped the revolutionary movements of different peoples, while remaining cautious.

Stalin led a four-front struggle against the world capitalist system: he reinforced the defence of the Soviet Union, the basis for the international Communist movement; he helped peoples who were on the road to popular democracy and socialism; he supported the colonized peoples who sought independence; and he encouraged the vast international movement for peace, against the new military adventures of imperialism.

Stalin fully understood that the purpose of Anglo-American imperialism was to `save' the reactionary classes of countries neighboring the Soviet Union, the same ones that had collaborated with the Nazis, in order to integrate them into their world hegemony strategy. This direction was already clear during the war itself.

On August 1, 1944, the Polish government in London set off an insurrection in Warsaw. These reactionaries began their criminal adventure solely to prevent the Red Army from liberating the Polish capital. The Red Army, which had just advanced 600 kilometres, had lost many men and much matйriel. It was impossible for it to go forward to Warsaw and help the insurrection. In fact, the Polish reactionaries had deliberately hidden from the Soviets their intention to start the insurrection. But the Nazis, having concentrated several divisions in Warsaw, massacred the population and destroyed the capital.

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K. K. Rokossovsky, op. cit. , pp. 254--263.

Stalin saw this as a war within a war. He wrote to Churchill and Roosevelt:

`Sooner or later, the truth will be known about the handful of criminals who, in order to seize power, set off the Warsaw adventure.'

.

Staline, op. cit. , p. 376.

On August 23, 1944, the Red army liberated the first Hungarian village. Two days later, Horthy's fascist government, in power since 1919, addressed the new situation. In the records, we find `The Anglo-Saxons would like the Hungarians to contain the Russians until they themselves occupy Hungary'.

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L'armйe soviйtique libйratrice dans la Seconde Guerre mondiale (Moscow: Йditions du Progrиs, 1977). p.309.

Horthy and his gang began the struggle against `Red imperialism' just as 35 fascist divisions prepared to `defend' Budapest againt the Soviet army. From that day, Hungarian reaction hoped to be saved by the U.S., which would guarantee `Hungarian independence' from `Soviet expansionism'. In all the Central and Eastern European countries, `national independence' was the rallying cry of the reactionary classes in order to fight not only socialism, but also basic national interests, in order to better integrate into the U.S. strategy of world domination.

In Greece, the national resistance, led by the Communist Party, had inflicted major losses on the Nazis. When the Germans evacuated Athens on October 12, 1944, the 70,000 armed resistants controlled almost the entire territory. The British Army intervened to prevent the Greek people

from forming a revolutionary government. On December 5, Churchill wrote to General Scobie:

`Do not however hesitate to act as if you were in a conquered city where a local rebellion is in progress.'

.

Kolko, op. cit. , p. 188.

And so began the long Anglo-American war against the Greek anti-fascists.

By crushing the fascist armed forces in the Central and Eastern European countries, the Red Army created optimal conditions for the development of the struggles of the workers, peasant and anti-fascists.

Thanks to this aid, the masses, led by the Communist Parties, succeeded in installing socialist rйgimes, thereby creating a real national independence. They successfully outplayed the intrigues of fascist and bourgeois forces that tried to maintain power by tranforming those countries into U.S. neo-colonies.

The theory of `Red imperialism', which the Nazis invented at the beginning of the war in 1941 to justify their agression, was taken up by the U.S. in 1946. The Anglo-American interpretation of `independence' was well illustrated in Greece, where they massacred the forces that had led the anti-Hitlerian battles.

Stalin's analysis of the international situation after the defeat of the fascist powers was presented by one of his close collaborators, Zhdanov, political leader in Leningrad during the 900-day fascist blockade.

Here is the text that Zhdanov presented to the information conference of nine Communist Parties in September 1947 in Poland. These positions are important, not only because they were relevant, but because

they were, one by one, rejected nine years later after Khrushchev's coup d'ĭtat.

`The aim of the expansionist course of the United States is simply the establishment of world domination. This new course aims to consolidate the United States monopoly situation, which was established with the disappearance of their two most important competitors --- Germany and Japan --- and by the weakening of its capitalist partners, Britain and France. This new course depends on a large military, economic and political program, whose application would establish in every targeted country the political and economic domination of the United States, thereby reducing those countries to satellite countries, and would establish internal regimes that would eliminate any obstacles to exploitation of these countries by U.S. capital.'

`The most enraged and unsteady imperialist politicians have, following Churchill, begun preparing plans for launching, as quickly as possible, a preventive war against the Soviet Union, openly calling for the use against the Soviet peoples of the temporary U.S. monopoly of atomic weapons.'

`The U.S. military strategic plan calls for the creation, in peace time, of numerous military bases and stockpiles, far removed from the American continent and designed to be used aggressively against the Soviet Union and the New Democratic countries.'

`The U.S. monopolies place all their hopes in the restoration of a capitalist Germany, considering that it would constitute the most important guarantee for success in the struggles against democratic forces in Europe.'

`But on the road to their world domination ambitions, the U.S. must face the USSR with its rising international influence, as the bastion of anti-imperialist and anti-fascist politics, the New Democratic countries, which succeeded in escaping Anglo-American control, and the workers of all countries.'

`Concessions to this new direction of the United States and of the imperialist camp would allow its creators to become more rude and aggressive. This is why the Communist Parties must lead the resistance, in all areas, to imperialist plans of expansion and aggression.'

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Andrй Jdanov, Rapport d'Andrй Jdanov sur la situation internationale (Paris: Imprimerie Marйchal, 1947), pp. 5-7, 14, 21, 7, 26.

Stalin always had confidence in the strength of the Soviet people and in the revolutionary and anti-capitalist forces throughout the world. This attitude was clearly expressed in an official declaration by Molotov in 1950.

`Let no one believe that the piles of arms of the warmongers scares us. It is not for us, but for the imperialists and the aggressors to be scared .... Can there be any doubt that if the imperialists trigger a third world war, that this war will not mean the demise of isolated capitalist states but, rather, of the entire world capitalist system?'

.

Malenkov, Le XXXII anniversaire de la grande rйvolution socialiste d'Octobre (Moscow: Йditions en langues йtrangиres, 1950), p. 23.

In 1947, the Soviet Union built its own nuclear weapons. Stalin had succeeded in breaking U.S. nuclear nightmare diplomacy. At the same time, the Soviet Union and the Communist Parties of the entire world began a major international campaign to counter U.S. war plans and to ban nuclear weapons. The World Peace Council began, against imperialist aggression, the largest peace movement ever. Its Manifesto, published at the end of the Second World Congress, reads:

`More and more, the peoples of the world are placing their hopes in themselves, in their firmness and in their will. The struggle for peace is your struggle. Know that hundreds of millions of Peace Partisans are uniting and holding out their hands to you. One does not wait for peace, it is won. With the 500 million conscious souls who signed the Stockholm Appeal, we insist upon the banning of atomic weapons, general disarmament and control of these measures.'

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`Manifeste aux peuples', Revue mondiale de la Paix (Paris), Nov. 1950, 21:121--122.

Tito's revisionism and the United States

The Central and Eastern European countries, which led bitter struggles during the years 1945--1948 to build socialism, had much less experience than did the Soviet Party. Ideologically, they were not solid: the fact that hundreds of thousands of new members joined, often coming from social-democratic circles, made them easily subject to opportunism and bourgeois nationalism.

As early as 1948, the anti-Soviet social-democratic model was adopted by the leadership of the Yugoslav Communist Party.

By provoking the struggle against Tito's revisionism in 1948, Stalin showed himself to be clear-sighted and firm in his principles. Forty-five years later, history has completely confirmed his predictions.

At the time of the German invasion in 1941, the clandestine Yugoslav Party had 12,000 members; 8,000 of these were killed during the war. But it gained 140,000 members during the resistance and 360,000 more before mid-1948. Tens of thousands of kulaks, bourgeois and petit-bourgeois had joined the Party.

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James Klugmann, From Trotsky to Tito (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1951), p. 13.

Tito relied more and more on these elements in his struggle against real Communists. The Party had no normal internal life, there was no political discussion, so no Marxist-Leninist criticism and self-criticism; the leaders were not elected but chosen.

.

Ibid. , p. 22.

In June 1948, the Information Bureau of the Communist Parties, including eight parties, published a resolution criticizing the Yugoslav Party. It underscored that Tito payed no attention to the increase in class differences in the countryside nor to the rise of capitalist elements in the country.

.

Ibid. , p. 9.

The resolution affirmed that, starting from a bourgeois nationalist position, the Yugoslav Party had broken the socialist united front against imperialism. It concluded:

`(S)uch a nationalist line can only lead to Yugoslavia's degeneration into an ordinary bourgeois republic'.

.

Ibid. , p. 11.

Once this criticism was published, Tito set off a massive purge. All the Marxist-Leninist elements of the Party were wiped out. Two members of the Central Committee, Zhujovic and Hebrang, had already been arrested in April 1948. General Arso Jovanovic, Chief of Staff of the Partisan Army, was arrested and assassinated, as was General Slavko Rodic.

.

Ibid. , p. 43.

The London newspaper, The Times, referred to numerous arrests of Communists upholding the Kominterm resolution; it estimated the number of imprisoned persons at between 100,000 and 200,000.

.

Ibid. , p. 143.

In his report to the Party's Eighth Congress, held in 1948, Karelj quoted Stalin on numerous occasions to insist that Yugoslavia was `pushing back kulak elements' and would never take `anti-Soviet positions'.

.

Rapport: Le PCY dans la lutte pour la Yougoslavie nouvelle (Belgrade, 1948), pp. 94, 25.

But, a few months later, the Titoists publicly took up the old social-democratic theory of passing from capitalism to socialism without class struggle! Bebler, Vice-Minister of External Affairs, declared in May 1949:

`We have no kulaks such as there were in the U.S.S.R. Our rich peasants took part en masse in the people's liberation war .... Would it be a mistake if we succeeded in getting the kulaks to pass over to socialism without class struggle?'

.

Klugmann, op. cit. , p. 129.

In 1951, Tito's team declared that the Soviet `kolkhozy reflected state capitalism which, mixed together with feudal remnants, forms the social basis of the USSR'. Developing Bukharin's ideas, the Titoists replaced planning by the free market:

`No one outside the co-operative sets production goals or categories'. The Titoists organized `the passage to a system with more

freedom for objective economic laws to come into play. The socialist sector of our economy will triumph over capitalist tendencies through purely economic means.'

.

`Directives du CC', in Questions actuelles du socialisme (Paris: Agence Yougoslave d'Information, Jan.-Feb. 1952), 10:160, 161, 145.

In 1953, Tito reintroduced the freedom to buy and sell land and to hire agricultural workers.

In 1951, Tito compared the Yugoslav Communists who remained loyal Marxist-Leninists to the Hitlerian Fifth Column, thereby justifying the arrest of more than 200,000 Communists, according to Colonel Vladimir Dapcevic's testimony. Tito wrote:

`The attacks of the fascist aggressors have proved that much importance can be attributed to a new element: the Fifth Column. It is a political and military element that gets into gear in preparation for aggression. Today, something similar is being attempted in our country, under different forms, particularly by the Cominterm countries.'

.

Ibid. , p. 85.

In the beginning of the 1950s, Yugoslavia was still essentially a feudal country. But the Titoists attacked the principle according to which a Socialist State must maintain the dictatorship of the proletariat. In 1950, the Yugoslav revisionists began a forum on `the problem of the withering away of the State, in particular of the rфle of the State in the economy'. To justify the return to a bourgeois state, Djilas called the Soviet state a `monstrous edifice of state capitalism' that `oppressed and exploited the proletariat'. Still according to Djilas, Stalin fought `to increase his state capitalist

empire and, internally, to reinforce the bureaucracy'. `The Iron Curtain, hegemony over the countries of Eastern Europe and an aggressive political line have become indispensable to him.' Djilas spoke of `the misery of the working class that works for the ``superior'' imperialist interests and the bureaucracy's privileges.' `Today, the USSR is objectively the most reactionary power.' Stalin `practices state capitalism and is the head and spiritual and political leader of the bureaucratic dictatorship.' Acting as agent for U.S. imperialism, Djilas continued:

`Some of the Hitlerian theories are identical to Stalin's theories, both from the standpoint of their contents and of the resulting social practice.'

.

Ibid. , Oct.-Nov. 1952, 14:2, 5, 18, 35--36, 30, 37, 44, 47.

Let us add that Djilas, who later moved to the U.S., referred in this text to Trotsky's `critique of the Stalinist system'!

.

Ibid. , p. 44.

In 1948, Kardelj was still claiming to be faithful to the anti-imperialist struggle. Two years later, Yugoslavia upheld the U.S. war against Korea! The London Times reported:

`Mr. Dedijer sees events in Korea as a manifestation of the Soviet will to dominate the world ... if this is to be resisted successfully ... the workers of the world must `realise that yet another pretender to world domination has appeared, and get rid of illusions about the Soviet Union representing some alleged force of democracy and peace'.'

.

The Times, 27 December 1950. In Klugmann, op. cit. , p. 111.

So Tito had become a simple pawn in U.S. anti-Communist strategy. Tito declared to the New York Herald Tribune that `in the event of a Soviet attack anywhere in Europe, even if the thrust should be miles away from Yugoslavia's own borders', he would `instantly do battle on the side of the West ... Yugoslavia considers itself part of the collective security wall being built against Soviet imperialism.'

.

New York Herald Tribune, 26 June 1951. In Klugmann, op. cit. , p. 98.

In the economic field, the socialist measures that Yugoslavia had taken before 1948 were liquidated. Alexander Clifford, the Daily Mail correspondent, wrote about the economic reforms adopted in 1951:

`If it comes off, Yugoslavia looks like ending up a good deal less socialised than Britain': `price of goods ... determined by the market --- that is, by supply and demand'; `wages and salaries ...\ fixed on the basis of the income or profits of the enterprise'; economic enterprises that `decide independently what to produce and in what quantities'; `there isn't much classical Marxism in all of that'.

.

Daily Mail, 31 August 1951. In Klugmann, op. cit. , p. 150.

The Anglo-American bourgeoisie soon recognized that Tito was to be a very effective weapon in its anti-Communist struggles. The April 12, 1950 issue of Business Week reads:

`For the United States in particular and the West in general this encouragement of Tito has proved to be one of the cheapest ways yet of containing Russian Communism.

`To date the West's aid to Tito has come to $51.7 million. This is far less than the billion dollars or so that the United States has spent in Greece for the same purpose.'

.

Business Week, 12 April 1950. In Klugmann, op. cit. , p. 175.

This bourgeoisie intended to use Tito to encourage revisionism and to organize subversion in the socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. On December 12, 1949, Eden spoke to the Daily Telegraph:

`Tito's example and influence can decisively change the course of events in Central and Eastern Europe.'

.

Daily Telegraph, 12 December 1949. In Klugmann, op. cit. , p. 191.

Understanding the Communist demagogy of Tito for what it really was, the London Times wrote:

`Titoism remains a force, however, only so long as Marshal Tito can claim to be a Communist.'

.

The Times, 13 September 1949. In Klugmann, op. cit. , p. 194.

Titoism took power in 1948 as a bourgeois nationalist current. It is with nationalism that Yugoslavia abandoned all principles of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Nationalism was the soil in which Trotskyist and Bukharinist theories flourished.

After the Second World War, this nationalist orientation had great influence in other Communist Parties in Central and Eastern Europe.

After Stalin's death, Great-Russian nationalism developed in Moscow and, in backlash, nationalist chauvinism spread throughout Central and Eastern Europe.

Let us examine the principles that are at the heart of this controversy. In 1923, Stalin had already formulated an essential aspect of proletarian internationalism in these terms:

`It should be borne in mind that besides the right of nations to self-determination there is also the right of the working class to consolidate its power .... There are occasions when the right of self-determination conflicts with the other, the higher right --- the right of a working class that has assumed power to consolidate its power. In such cases --- this must be said bluntly --- the right to self-determination cannot and must not serve as an obstacle to the exercise by the working class of its right to dictatorship. The former must give way to the former.'

.

Stalin, Marxism and the National and Colonial Question (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1936), p. 168.

Starting from the principle of proletarian internationalism, Stalin was a resolute adversary of all nationalism, starting with Great-Russian nationalism. Still in 1923, he declared:

`The principal force hindering the amalgamation of the republics into a single union is ... Great-Russian chauvinism. It is not fortuitous, comrades, that the Smenovekhists have recruited a large number of supporters from among the Soviet officials.'

.

Ibid. , p. 153.

`Smenovekhism is the ideology of the new bourgeoisie, which is steadily growing and gradually joining forces with the kulaks and the bureaucratic intellectuals. The new bourgeoisie has created its own ideology ... which declares that the Communist Party is bound to degenerate and the new bourgeoisie to consolidate itself. We Bolsheviks, it appears, will imperceptibly to ourselves move towards this threshold of a democratic republic and cross this threshold, and then, with the help of a Caesar, who is to rise either from the military or from the civil ranks, we are to find ourselves in the position of an ordinary bourgeois republic.'

.

Ibid. , p. 300, n. 43.

But in the world struggle between socialism and imperialism, Stalin also understood that bourgeois nationalism could be used as a powerful anti-socialist weapon:

`When a life-and-death struggle is being waged, and is spreading, between proletarian Russia and the imperialist Entente, only two alternatives confront the border regions:

`Either they join forces with Russia, and then the toiling masses of the border regions will be emancipated from imperialist oppression;

`Or they join forces with the Entente, and then the yoke of imperialism is inevitable.

`There is no third solution. So-called independence of a so-called independent Georgia, Armenia, Poland, Finland, etc., is only an illusion, and conceals the utter dependence of these apologies for states on one group of imperialists or another ....

`And the interests of the masses of the people render the demand for the secession of the border regions at the present stage of the revolution a profoundly counter-revolutionary one.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 79--80.

In the semi-feudal republics of the Soviet periphery, bourgeois nationalism constituted the main form of bourgeois ideology rotting inside the Bolshevik Party:

`It should be borne in mind that our Communist organisations in the border districts, in the republics and regions, can develop and firmly establish themselves, can become genuine internationalist, Marxist cadres, only if they get rid of their nationalism. Nationalism is the chief ideological obstacle to the training of Marxist cadres, of a Marxist vanguard in the border regions and republics .... In relation to these organisations nationalism is playing the same part as Menshevism played in the past in relation to the Party of the Bolsheviks. Only under cover of nationalism can various kinds of bourgeois, including Menshevik, influences penetrate into our organisations in the border regions. Our organisations in the republics can become Marxist cadres only if they are able to withstand the nationalist ideas which are pushing their way into our Party in the border regions ... because the bourgeoisie is reviving, the New Economic Policy is spreading, nationalism is growing; because there are still survivals of Great-Russian chauvinism, which also tend to develop local nationalism, and because there

is the influence of foreign states, which are fostering nationalism in every way.'

.

Ibid. , p. 178.

`The essence of the deviation towards local nationalism consists in the attempt to isolate oneself and shut onself up within one's own national shell, in the attempt to hush up class differences within one's own nation, in the attempt to resist Great-Russian chauvinism by turning aside from the general current of socialist cosntruction, in the attempt to shut one's eyes to that which brings together and unites the toiling masses of the nationalities of the U.S.S.R. and to see only that which tends to estrange them.

`The deviation towards local nationalism reflects the dissatisfaction of the moribund classes of the formerly oppressed nations with the regime of the proletarian dictatorship, their endeavour to separate themselves off into their national state and there to establish their own class supremacy.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 262--263.

Stalin came back to the question of internationalism in 1930. He formulated a principle that became crystal clear during the Brezhnev era:

`What does a deviation towards nationalism mean --- irrespective of whether it is a deviation towards Great-Russian nationalism or towards local nationalism? The deviation towards nationalism is the adaptation of the internationalist policy of the working class to the nationalist policy of the bourgeoisie. The deviation towards nationalism reflects the attempts of ``one's own'' ``national'' bourgeoisie to undermine the Soviet system and to

restore capitalism. The source of these deviations ... is a common one. It is a departure from Leninist internationalism ....

`The major danger is the deviation against which one has ceased to fight and has thus enabled to grow into a danger to the state.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 267--268.

Stalin against opportunism

We can now address the question: how was the revisionist Khrushchev able to immediately seize power after Stalin's death?

Several aspects show that as early as 1951, Stalin was seriously worried about the Party's state. Before then, from 1945 to 1950, he was forced to concentrate on reconstruction and on international problems.

Bourgeois tendencies in the thirties

The most important bourgeois tendencies that Stalin had to fight during the twenties and thirties were Trotskyism (Menshevism covered up in ultra-leftist rhetoric), Bukharinism (social-democratic deviations), Bonapartism (militarist tendencies within the army) and bourgeois nationalism. These four tendencies all continued to have influence in the years 1945--1953.

Let us give two revealing examples.

After the war, Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, a young civil servant of Chechen origin working in the propaganda department of the Central Committee, fled the Soviet Union for the U.S. His ideological past shows the links between the various opportunistic tendencies of the thirties and those that surfaced after 1945: `politically I was a follower of Bukharin'

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Alexander Uralov (Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov), op. cit. , p. 8.

However, his book The Reign of Stalin is full of praise for Trotsky, `the lion of the October Revolution', who should have, according to Lenin's `Political Testament', run the Party with Bukharin's help.

.

Ibid. , pp. 38, 41.

`Trotsky (was) the friend of the Georgian `nationalists' '.

.

Ibid. , p. 79.

Avtorkhanov continued by implying that Trotsky considered that an attempt `in imposing proletarian `socialism' on the most backward agricultural country in Europe' `would likely degenerate into a despotic dictatorship by a handful of anarchic socialists.'

.

Ibid. , p. 169.

Avtorkhanov was mostly a partisan of social-democratic ideas. For him, `the Bukharin school' defended free competition between the socialist and capitalist sectors: `socialised heavy industry (would) gradually eliminate the capitalist section ... through the free play of competition.' `One should be able to say to the co-operative peasants, `Enrich yourselves!' .... The rural petite bourgeoisie (the kulaks), being unable to withstand the competition of the co-operatives, would gradually disappear'.

.

Ibid. , p. 123.

Finally, Avtorkhanov also defended bourgeois nationalist positions:

`Of all the federated republics, those of the Caucasus had always shown the greatest tendency towards separatism ....

`When in 1921 the Soviet occupied these countries by force, the democrats and the partisans of independence went underground .... There were repeated nationalist revolts in the Caucasus'.

.

Ibid. , pp. 144--145.

So we see Avtorkhanov expressing sympathy for the four main opportunist tendencies that menaced socialism during the twenties and thirties: Trotskyism, Bukharinism, bourgeois nationalism and militarism. His positions in favor of this last tendency were presented in chapter 7 (page).

Avtorkhanov's positions during the war and during the period 1945--1950 are significant. Referring to the Nazi aggression, he wrote that what `90 per cent of the population secretly thought and desired ... (was) the end of Stalin, even at the price of Hitler's victory .... The war against the U.S.S.R., which the German soldiers had won in 1941, was lost for them by the S.S.'

.

Ibid. , p. 158.

`Hitler, the tyrant, was nothing but the shadow of Stalin'.

.

Ibid. , p. 237.

After having flirted for some time with Hitler, Avtorkhanov, resolute anti-Communist, finally fell into the hands of the Anglo-American imperialists.

`(D)uring the first two years of the war the peoples of the U.S.S.R. went so far as to prefer Hitler to Stalin ....

`They had a unique chance, rarely encountered in history, of playing the two opponents, German and Russian, against one another, and of winning the war without intervening with their own forces .... The thing became possible on the day when Hitler turned his armies against the East ....

`(W)hen Hitler and Stalin were at grips it would have been possible for the Allies ... to contrive matters that when the crowd got back from burying Hitler they would have to follow Stalin's funeral procession.'

.

Ibid. , p. 240.

Well received in the U.S., Avtorkhanov became an ardent partisan of U.S. hegemony, which he encouraged to fight against `Communist expansion':

`Faithful to Lenin's teaching, Stalin ... (has) staked everything on world revolution .... The purpose of Stalinism is ... to set up a terrorist world-dictatorship by a single party.'

.

Ibid. , p. 242.

`Everyone must today realise that the world is faced by a single alternative --- Stalinism or democracy. In order to settle the question during his lifetime, Stalin has mobilised his fifth columns throughout the world.'

However, for Avtorkhanov, U.S. countermeasures would render these plans obsolete.

`In the end there can be only one solution of the problem for Stalinism --- war.'

.

Ibid. , p. 245.

Our second example concerns Tokaev's clandestine organization, linked during the thirties to the Bonapartists, the Bukharinists and the bourgeois nationalists. It continued its activity after the war.

In 1947, Tokaev was in Germany, at Karlshorst. A `comrade standing very high' brought along microfilms with the last pieces of Tokaev's personal dossier:

`Far too much was known .... The hunt was uncomfortably close. And when the indictment was ready, there would figure in it deeds of as long ago as 1934'.

.

Tokaev, op. cit. , pp. 354--355.

`(A)t the end of 1947 the revolutionary democrats of the U.S.S.R. came to the conclusion that they must act: better to die honourably than to drag on as slaves .... we liked to think that parties of a Liberal complexion and those belonging to the Second International abroad would try to help us .... We knew that there were national communists not only in Yugoslavia, but also in Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary and the Baltic States, and we believed that they too would support us where they could though we were not communists at all ....

`But the MVD (state security) won in the race. We were too slow to mobilise. Once again we suffered a catastrophe .... Arrests had begun, and the charges ran all the way back to the assassination of Kirov in 1934 .... Others were charged with Buonapartist (sic) conspiracies in 1937 and 1940, with bourgeois nationalism, with the proposed attempt to overthrow the rйgime in 1941. As the net closed in round us all, I was given the task ... of saving at least a part of our records.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 358-359.

After his flight to England, Tokaev published a series of articles in the Western press. He admitted having sabotaged the development of Soviet aviation, and explained it as follows:

`To not try to refrain my compatriots in their insatiable ambition to dominate the world would mean to push them to the fate that Hitler reserved for the Germans.' `It is crucial for the West to understand that Stalin has only one goal: world domination by any means.'

.

La Libre Belgique, 4 March 1949, p. 1; 6 March 1949, p. 1.

It is important to remember that after their flight to the West, Avtorkhanov and Tokaev, two representatives of bourgeois tendencies in the Soviet Union, supported the most extreme positions of the Anglo-American bourgeoisie during the Cold War.

Weaknesses in the struggle against opportunism

There is no no doubt that Stalin continued, during the latter years of his life, to struggle against social-democratic and bourgeois nationalist tendencies and against Anglo-American subversion.

Nevertheless, it is clear that this struggle was not done to the extent that was necessary to redress and reinvigorate the Party ideologically and politically.

After the war, which had required extraordinary professional effort on the part of military, technical and scientific cadres, the old tendencies of military professionalism and technocratism were substantially reinforced. Bureaucratization and the search for privileges and the easy life were also reinforced. This negative development was encouraged with the `dizziness of success': the tremendous pride that the cadres had developed from the anti-fascist victory often became presumptuousness and arrogance. All these phenomena undermined the ideological and political vigilance that was necessary to fight the opportunist tendencies.

Stalin struggled against particular forms of opportunism and revisionism. He thought that the class struggle in the ideological sphere would continue for a long time. But he was not capable of formulating a comprehensive theory of its basis and its social base. In other words, he was not able to formulate a consistent theory explaining how classes and the class struggle persist in a socialist society.

Stalin had not completely understood that after the disappearance of the economic basis of capitalist and feudal exploitation, that there would still exist in the Soviet Union fertile ground for bourgeois currents. Bureaucracy, technocratism, social inequalities and privileges allowed the development within certain sectors of Soviet society a bourgeois lifestyle and aspirations for the reintroduction of certain aspects of capitalism. The persistence of bourgeois ideology among both the masses and the cadres was an additional factor that encouraged entire sectors to veer towards anti-socialist positions. The adversaries of socialism always had important resources and ideological and material resources from imperialism, which

never stopped infiltrating its spies and buying off renegades; the latter never stopped in their efforts to exploit and amplify all forms of opportunism within the Soviet Union. Stalin's thesis, according to which `There is no class basis, there can be no class basis, for the domination of the bourgeois ideology in our Soviet society', was one-sided and undialectic. It introduced weaknesses and errors in the political line.

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G. Malenkov, Report to the Nineteenth Party Congress on the Work of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B.) (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1952), p. 126.

Stalin was not able to define the adequate forms of mass mobilization of workers and kolkhozians to combat the dangers of restauration. Popular democracy should have been developed, with the deliberate intention to eliminate bureaucracy, technocratism, ambitiousness, and privileges. But the popular participation in such a defence of the dictatorship of the proletariat was not ensured as it should have been done. Stalin always underscored that the influence of the bourgeoisie and of imperialism was reflected in the Party through opportunist tendencies. But he was not able to formulate a theory about the struggle between the two lines in the Party. In 1939, summarizing the Great Purge, Stalin focused exclusively on `the espionage and conspiratorial activities of the Trotskyite and Bukharinite leaders' and on the manner in which `the bourgeois states ... take advantage of people's weaknesses, their vanity, their slackness of will'.

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Stalin, Leninism: Selected Writings (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975), pp. 468--469.

Stalin clearly underestimated the internal causes that gave birth to opportunist tendencies, which, once infiltrated by secret services, became

linked one way or the other to imperialism. Consequently, Stalin did not think that it was necessary to mobilize all of the Party members to combat opportunistic lines and to eliminate unhealthy tendencies. During the ideological and political struggles, all the cadres and members shoud have educated and transformed themselves. After 1945, the struggle against opportunism was restricted to the highest circles of the Party and did not assist in the revolutionary transformation of the entire Party.

It was by analyzing these weaknesses that Mao Zedong formulated his theory about continuing the revolution:

`Socialist society covers a fairly long historical period. In the historical period of socialism, there are still classes, class contradictions and class struggle, there is the struggle between the socialist road and the capitalist road, and there is the danger of capitalist restoration. We must recognize the protracted and complex nature of this struggle. We must heighten our vigilance. We must conduct socialist education .... Otherwise a socialist country like ours will turn into its opposite and degenerate, and a capitalist restoration will take place.'

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Mao Tse-tung and Lin Pao, Post-Revolutionary Writings (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1972), p. 429.

Beria's and Khrushchev's revisionist groups

This political weakness was further aggravated by revisionist tendencies within the leadership of the Party that emerged at the end of the forties.

To direct the different sectors of the Party and the State, Stalin had always relied on his closest collaborators. Since 1935, Zhdanov had played an essential rфle in the Party consolidation work. His death in 1948 left a vacuum. In the beginning of the fifties, Stalin's health took a dramatic turn for the worse after the overwork incurred during the war. The problem of Stalin's succession posed itself for the near future.

It was around this time that two groups of revisionists within the leadership became visible and started to plot their intrigues, while preaching fidelity to Stalin. Beria's group and Khrushchev's contituted two rival revisionist factions that, while secretly undermining Stalin's work, were waging war with each other.

Since Beria was shot by Khrushchev in 1953, soon after Stalin's death, it might be supposed that he was an adversary of Khrushchevian revisionism. This is the position that Bill Bland took in a well documented study of Stalin's death.

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Bill Bland, `The ``Doctors' case'' and the death of Stalin' (London: The Stalin Society, October 1991), Report.

However, testimony from diametrically opposite sources concur in their affirmation that Beria held rightist positions.

For example, the Zionist author Thaddeus Wittlin published a biography of Beria in the nauseating style of McCarthyism. Here is an example: `the Dictator of Soviet Russia looked down at his peoples as if he were the merciless new god of millions of his people'.

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Thaddeus Wittlin, Commissar: The Life and Death of Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria (New York: Macmillan, 1972), p. 354.

Literally. But, presenting the ideas developed by Beria towards 1951, Wittlin claimed that he wanted to authorize private enterprise in light industry and `to moderate the collective farm system', as well as `by returning to the approach of the pre-Stalin era, the NEP'. `Beria ... was against the Stalin policy of Russification of non-Russian nations and republics'. Beria wanted `Better international relations with the West' and `also intended to restore relations with Tito'.

.

Ibid. , pp. 363--365.

This homage to Beria's `reasonable politics' stands out, coming from such a sickening anti-Communist pen.

Tokaev, clandestine opponent, claimed that he knew Beria and others in the thirties, `not of servants, but of enemies of the rйgime'.

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Tokaev, op. cit. , p. 7.

Gardinashvili, one of Beria's close collaborators, had close relations with Tokaev.

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Ibid. , p. 101.

Khrushchev, for whom it would be in his interest to depict Beria as being close to Stalin, wrote:

`In the last years of Stalin's life Beria used to express his disrespect for Stalin more and more baldly.'

.

Nikita Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers (London: Andrй Deutsch, 1971), p. 313.

`Stalin feared that he would be the first person Beria might choose'.

.

Ibid. , p. 311.

`It seemed sometimes that Stalin was afraid of Beria and would have been glad to get rid of him but didn't know how to do it.'

.

Ibid. , p. 250.

We should not forget Molotov's opinion. He and Kaganovich were the only leaders to remain faithful to their revolutionary past.

`I cannot exclude the possibility that Beria provoked Stalin's death. I felt it through what he was saying. May Day 1953, on the Tribune of the Mausoleum, he made such allusions. He was looking for complicity. He said, ``I made him disappear''. He tried to implicate me. ``I saved you all''.'

.

Chueva, op. cit. , p. 327.

`I consider Khrushchev as rightwing, but Beria was even more rightwing. Both were rightwing. And Mikoyan too. But they had different personalities. Khrushchev was to the right and completely rotten, but Beria was even more to the right and even more rotten.'

.

Ibid. , p. 335.

`Without question, Khrushchev was reactionary and succeeded in infiltrating into the Party. Of course, he believed in no form of communism. I consider Beria as an enemy. He infiltrated himself into the Party with destructive goals. Beria was a man without principles.'

.

Ibid. , p. 323.

During Stalin's last years, Khrushchev and Mikoyan clearly hid their political ideas to better place themselves after the succession.

Khrushchev's disdain for Stalin shows up clearly in his memoirs:

`In my opinion it was during the war that Stalin started to be quite right in the head.'

.

Ibid. , p. 311.

At `the end of 1949', a `sickness ... began to envelop Stalin's mind'.

.

Ibid. , p. 246.

Enver Hoxha noted Khrushchev's impatience for Stalin to die. In his memoirs, he noted a discussion that he had had in 1956 with Mikoyan:

`Mikoyan himself told me ... that they, together with Khrushchev and their associates, had decided to carry out a ``pokushenie'', i.e., to make an attempt on Stalin's life, but later, as Mikoyan told us, they gave up this plan.'

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Enver Hoxha, With Stalin: Memoirs (Toronto: Norman Bethune Institute, 1980), p. 31.

Stalin against the future Khrushchevism

Did Stalin know of the intrigues that the revisionists around him were preparing?

The main report presented by Malenkov to the Nineteenth Congress in October 1952, along with Stalin's book Economic Problems of Socialism, published on the same occasion, showed that Stalin was convinced that a new struggle against opportunism and a new purge of the Party had become necessary.

Malenkov's report had Stalin's brand. It defended the revolutionary ideas that would be dismantled four years later by Khrushchev and Mikoyan. It virulently criticized a number of negative tendencies in the economy and in the life of the Party, tendencies that would be imposed in 1956 by Khrushchevian revisionism.

First, recalling the 1937--1938 Purge, Malenkov noted:

`In the light of the war and its results, we perceive in all its magnitude the importance of that implacable struggle which over a period of many years our Party waged against every brand of enemy of Marxism-Leninism --- the Trotskyite and Bukharinite degenerates, the capitulators and traitors who tried to deflect the Party from the right path and to split its ranks .... By demolishing the Trotskyite and Bukharinite underground ..., the Party in good time destroyed all possibility of the appearance of a ``fifth column'' in the U.S.S.R., and prepared the country politically for active defence. It will be easily understood that if this had not been done in time, we should, during the war, have found ourselves under fire from the front and the rear, and might have lost the war.'

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Malenkov, op. cit. , pp. 108--109.

Four years later, Khrushchev would deny that the Trotskyists and the Bukharinists had degenerated to the point of defending a social-democratic and bourgeois platform, as he would deny that some among them had made contacts with hostile foreign forces. Khrushchev then invented the theory according to which socialism had definitely triumphed in 1936 and there was no longer a social basis for treason, nor for capitalist restoration! Here are the main declarations:

`(T)he Soviet state was strengthened, ... the exploiting classes were already liquidated and socialist relations were rooted solidly in all phases of national economy'.

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Khrushchev, Special Report, op. cit. , p. S17.

`(S)ocialism in our country was fundamentally constructed, ... the exploiting classes were generally liquidated, ... the Soviet social structure had radically changed, ... the social basis for political movements and groups hostile to the party had violently contracted'.

.

Ibid. , p. S15.

Khrushchev concluded that the Purge was an arbitrary act that was in no way justified, thereby rehabilitating the political positions of the opportunists and the enemies of socialism.

In his Report to the XIXth Congress, Malenkov underscored four major weaknesses of the Party. It was precisely those weaknesses that Khrushchev would use four years later to achieve his revisionist coup.

Malenkov underscored that many bureaucratized cadres refused criticism and control from their base, and were formalist and uncaring:

`Not in all Party organizations, and nowhere by any means in full measure, have self-criticism, and especially criticism from below become the principal method of disclosing and overcoming our errors and shortcomings, our weaknesses and maladies ....

`There are cases when people are persecuted and victimized for criticism. We still meet with responsible workers who never tire of professing their fidelity to the Party, but who actually cannot tolerate criticism from below, stifle it, and revenge themselves on those who criticize them. We know of plenty of cases where a bureaucratic attitude towards criticism and self-criticism has ... killed ... initiative ... and infected some of the organizations with the anti-Party habits of bureaucrats, sworn enemies of the Party.

`(W)herever ... control by the masses over the activities of organizations and institutions is weakened, there ... bureaucracy and degeneration, and even the corruption of individual sections of the Party apparatus, invariably appear ....

`(A)chievement has bred in the ranks of the Party a tendency to self-satisfaction, to make a pretence of all being well, a spirit of smug complacency, a desire on the part of people to rest on their laurels and to live on the capital of their past services .... Leaders ... not infrequently turn meetings, gatherings of active members, plenary meetings and conferences into vainglorious displays, into occasions of self-laudation, with the result that errors and shortcomings in work, maladies and weaknesses are not brought to light and subjected to criticism .... A spirit of negligenge has penetrated our Party organizations.'

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Malenkov, op. cit. , pp. 113--116.

This was a recurrent theme in Stalin's work of the thirties: appeals to the base so that it criticizes and controls the bureaucrats who are looking for the quiet life, who repress the active members, are uncaring and behave as enemies of Communism. This text leaves one to wonder about the torrent of criticisms that Stalin wanted once again to raise against the revisionists.

Four years later, when Khrushchev denounced the `insecurity, fear and despair' that supposedly reigned under Stalin, he promised to the bureaucratic and opportunistic elements that he could now doze in tranquility. They would no longer be `persecuted' by the `leftist' criticisms from the base. Self-satisfaction and the tranquil life would be the principal characteristics of the revisionist bureaucracy that definitely took power under Khrushchev.

Second, Malenkov, denounced the Communists who ignored Party discipline and behaved as owners:

`A formal attitude to decisions of Party and government, and passivity in carrying them out, is a vice that must be eradicated with the utmost ruthlessness. The Party does not need inert and indifferent executives who prize their own comfort higher than the interests of the work; it needs men who will fight indefatigably and devotedly ....

`There are quite a number of executives who forget that the enterprises to their charge are state enterprises, and try to turn them into their own private domain, where ... they ... can do anything they fancy .... there are quite a number of executives who believe that Party decisions and Soviet laws are not written for them ....

`Anyone who attempts to conceal the truth from the Party and to deceive the Party cannot be allowed to remain in its ranks.'

.

Ibid. , pp. 119--121.

Those that Malenkov denounced in this passage would soon find Khrushchev to be their representative. Khrushchev became the spokesperson for the bureaucrats when he criticized the `excessive replacement of cadres'.

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Khrushchev, `Central Committee Report', The Documentary Record of the 20th Communist Party Congress and its Aftermath (New York: Frederick A. Praeger), p. 58.

Malenkov's text allows us to better understand what was really going on in Khrushchev's diatribes against Stalin. Stalin had, he said, `abandoned the method of ideological struggle'; using the expression `enemy of the people', Stalin systematically had recourse to `mass repressions and terror'.

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Khrushchev, `Secret Report', op. cit. , pp. S14--S15.

These phrases were designed to ensure the position of those who had been attacked in Malenkov's text, those who made State enterprises into their own personal fiefdoms, those who hid the truth from the Party so that they could steal and redirect without punishment, those who blathered on with `Marxist-Leninist' phrases without the slightest intention of adhering to them. With Khrushchev, all those who aspired to become real bourgeois no longer had to fear the `mass repressions and terror' of the socialist power.

Third, Malenkov attacked those cadres who formed clans not subject to any control and that enriched themselves illegally:

`(S)ome officials themselves engage in filching collective-farm property .... these men convert to their own use common land, compel

collective-farm boards and chairmen to supply them with grain, meat, milk and other produce at low prices, and even gratis'.

.

Malenkov, op. cit. , p. 76.

`(S)ome of our executives do not base their selection of personnel on political and business qualifications, but on considerations of kinship, friendship and hometown ties .... Owing to such distortions of the Party line in the matter of selection and promotion of personnel, we get in some organizations close coteries who constitute themselves into a mutual insurance society and set their group interests higher than the interests of Party and state. It is not surprising that such a state of affairs usually results in degeneration and corruption.'

.

Ibid. , p. 124.

`An unscrupulous and irresponsible attitude towards the carrying out of the directives of leading bodies is the most dangerous and vicious manifestation of bureaucracy.'

.

Ibid. , p. 122.

`(T)he primary purpose of verification of fulfilment is to disclose shortcomings, to expose infringement of law, to help honest executives with advice, to punish the incorrigible'.

.

Ibid. , pp. 125--126.

Under Khrushchev, cadres would no longer be chosen for having the best political qualities. On the contrary, those would be `purged' for being `Stalinist'. Bourgeois circles would form around Beria, Khrushchev, Mikoyan and Brezhnev, circles completely estranged from revolutionary, popular action, exactly as Malenkov described. Stalin would no longer be there to `punish the unrepentant', but the unrepentant would now punish the real Communists.

Finally, Malenkov criticized the cadres that neglected their ideological work, allowing bourgeois tendencies to emerge once again and become the dominant ideologies:

`Many Party organizations underrate the importance of ideological work, with the result that it falls short of the Party's requirements, and in many organizations is in a state of neglect ....

`(I)f the influence of socialist ideology is weakened the effect is to strengthen the influence of the bourgeois ideology ....

`(W)e still have vestiges of the bourgeois ideology, relics of the private-property mentality and morality. These relics ... are very tenacious and may strengthen their hold, and a determined struggle must be waged against them. Nor are we guaranteed against the infiltration of alien views, ideas and sentiments from outside, from the capitalist countries, or from inside, from the relics of groups hostile to the Soviet state ....'

.

Ibid. , pp. 126--127.

`Whoever ... relies upon formulas learned by rote, and has no feeling for the new, is incapable of understanding home and foreign affairs'.

.

Ibid. , p. 128.

`Some of our Party organizations tend to devote all their attention to economic affairs and to forget ideological matters .... Whenever attention to ideological questions is relaxed, a favourable soil is created for the revival of views and ideas hostile to us. If there are sectors of ideological work which for any reason fall out of the purview of Party organizations, if there are sectors in which Party leadership and influence have slackened, alien elements, the remnants of anti-Leninist groups smashed by the Party, will try to get hold of these sectors'.

.

Ibid. , p. 127.

Khrushchev would empty Leninism of its content, transforming it into a series of slogans with no revolutionary spirit. The resulting vacuum drew in all the old social-democratic and bourgeois ideologies, that would be taken up by the youth. Furthermore, Khrushchev would falsify or simply eliminate the essential notions of Marxism-Leninism: anti-imperialist struggle, socialist revolution, dictatorship of the proletariat, continuing the class struggle, basic concepts of a Leninist Party, etc. When he spoke of `Marxist education', he proposed the opposite to Malenkov:

`It must be admitted that for many years our Party cadres were insufficiently indoctrinated in the ... practical problems of economic construction.'

.

Khrushchev, `Central Committee Report', op. cit. , p. 57.

By rehabilitating opportunists and enemies who had been purged, Khrushchev allowed the resurrection of social-democratic, bourgeois and Tsarist ideological currents.

During the plenum that followed the Nineteenth Congress, Stalin was even harsher in his criticisms of Mikoyan, Molotov and Voroshilov; he almost openly clashed with Beria. All the leaders understood perfectly well that Stalin insisted upon a radical change of course. Khrushchev clearly understood the message and, like the others, made himself very scarce:

`Stalin evidently had plans to finish off the old members of the Political Bureau. He often stated that the Political Bureau members should be replaced by new ones.

`His proposal, after the 19th Congress, concerning the election of 25 persons to the Central Committee Presidium, was aimed at the removal of the old Political Bureau members and the bringing in of less experienced persons ....

`We can assume that this was also a design for the future annihilation of the old Political Bureau members and, in this way, a cover for all shameful acts of Stalin.'

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Khrushchev, `Secret Report', op. cit. , p. S63.

At the time, Stalin was a old man, tired and sick. He acted with caution. Having made the conclusion that the members of the Politburo were no longer trustworthy, he introduced more revolutionary minded youth to the presidium, in order to temper and test them. The revisionists and plotters like Khrushchev, Beria and Mikoyan knew that they would soon lose their positions.

Still according to Khrushchev, Stalin is to have said to the members of the Politburo, after the Doctor's Plot in the end of 1952:

`You are blind like young kittens; what will happen without me? The country will perish because you do not know how to recognize enemies.'

.

Ibid. , p. S49.

Khrushchev put forward that statement as proof of Stalin's folly and paranoia. But history has shown that the comment was correct.

Khrushchev's coup d'ŭtat

Beria's intrigues

Zhdanov, Stalin's probable successor, died in August 1948. Even before his death, a woman doctor, Lydia Timashuk, accused Stalin's doctors of having applied an inappropriate treatment to accelerate his death. She would repeat these accusations later on.

During the year 1949, almost all of Zhdanov's entourage was arrested and executed. Kuznetsov, Secretary of the Central Committee and Zhdanov's right hand man; Rodionov, Prime Minister of the Russian Republic; and Voznesensky, President of the Plan, were the main victims. They were among the most influential new cadres. Khrushchev claims that their elimination was due to Beria's intrigues.

Stalin had criticized some of Voznesensky's theories, according to which the law of value should be used to determine the distribution of capital and labor among the different sectors. In that case, replied Stalin, capital and labor forces would migrate to light industry, which is more profitable, and hinder heavy industry:

`(T)he sphere of operation of the law of value is severely restricted and strictly delimited in our economic system (by) ... the law of planned (balanced) development of the national economy'.

.

Stalin, `Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.', The Documentary Record of the 19th Communist Party Congress and the Reorganization After Stalin's Death (New York: Frederick A. Praeger), p. 5.

However, in his text, Stalin refuted these opportunist points of view without treating their authors as traitors. According to Khrushchev, Stalin intervened several times for Voznesensky's liberation and appointment as head of the State Bank.

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Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, op. cit. , p.`251.

As for Timashuk's accusations against Zhdanov's doctors, Stalin's daughter, Svetlana, recalled that her father, at first, `did not believe the doctors were `dishonest' '.

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S. Alliluyeva, p. 215; cited in Bland, op. cit. , p. 4.

Abakumov, Minister of State Security, close to Beria, was then leading the inquiry. But in the end of 1951, Ignatiev, a Party man with no experience in security, replaced Abakumov, who was arrested for lack of vigilance. Had Abakumov protected his boss, Beria?

The inquiry was then led by Ryumin, the man formerly responsible for Security in Stalin's personal secretariat. Nine doctors were arrested, accused of being `connected with the international Jewish bourgeois nationalist organisation `JOINT' (American-Jewish Joint Distribution Committee), established by American intelligence'.

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Pravda, 13 January 1953, p. 4; cited in Bland, op. cit. , p. 18.

This affair was understood as Stalin's first attack against Beria. The second attack took place simultaneously. In November 1951, leaders of the Communist Party of Georgia were arrested for redirecting public funds and for theft of State property and were accused of being bourgeois nationalist forces with links to Anglo-American imperialism. In the ensuing

purge, more than half of the Central Committee members, known as Beria's men, lost their position.

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J. Ducoli, `The Georgian Purges (1951--1953)', Caucasian Review, vol. 6, pp. 55, 1958; cited in Bland, op. cit. , p. 11--13.

The new First Secretary stated in his report that the purge was undertaken `upon Comrade Stalin's personal instructions'.

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A. Mgdelaze, Report to Congress of Georgian Communist Party, Sept. 1952; cited in Bland, op. cit. , p. 24.

Stalin's death

A few months before Stalin's death, the entire security system that protected him was dismantled. Alexandr Proskrebychev, his personal secretary, who had assisted him since 1928 with remarkable efficiency, was fired and placed under house arrest. He had allegedly redirected secret documents. Lieutenant-Colonel Nikolay Vlasik, Chief of Stalin's personal security for the previous 25 years, was arrested on December 16, 1952 and died several weeks later in prison.

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P. Deriabin, Watchdogs of Terror: Russian Bodyguards from the Tsars to the Commissars (1984), p. 321; cited in Bland, op. cit. , p. 24.

Major-General Petr Kosynkin, Vice-Commander of the Kremlin Guard, responsible for Stalin's security, died of a `heart attack' on February 17, 1953. Deriabin wrote:

`(This) process of stripping Stalin of all his personal security (was) a studied and very ably handled business'.

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Deriabin, op. cit. , p. 209; cited in Bland, op. cit. , p. 27.

Only Beria was capable of preparing such a plot.

On March 1, at 23:00, Stalin's guards found him on the floor in his room, unconscious. They reached the members of the Politburo by telephone. Khrushchev claimed that he also arrived, and that each went back home.

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Deriabin, op. cit. , p. 300.

No-one called a doctor. Twelve hours after his attack, Stalin received first aid. He died on March 5. Lewis and Whitehead write:

`Some historians see evidence of premeditated murder. Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov sees the cause in Stalin's visible preparation of a purge to rival those of the thirties'.

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J. Lewis and P. Whitehead, Stalin: A Time for Judgment (London, 1990), p. 279; cited in Bland, op. cit. , p. 34.

Immediately after Stalin's death, a meeting of the presidium was convened. Beria proposed that Malenkov be President of the Council of Ministers and Malenkov proposed that Beria be named Vice-President and Minister of Internal Affairs and State Security.

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Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, op. cit. , p. 324.

During the following months, Beria dominated the political scene. `We were going through a very dangerous period', wrote Khrushchev.

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Ibid. , p. 331.

Once installed as head of Security, Beria had Proskrebychev, Stalin's secretary, arrested; then Ryumin, who had led the inquiry into Zhdanov's suspicious death. Ignatiev, Ryumin's boss, was denounced for his rфle in the same affair. On April 3, the doctors accused of having killed Zhdanov were liberated. The Zionist author Wittlin claimed that by

rehabilitating the Jewish doctors, Beria wanted to `denigrate ... Stalin's aggressive foreign policy against the West, the United States and Great Britain primarily'.

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Wittlin, op. cit. , p. 388.

Still in April, Beria organized a counter-coup in his native region, Georgia. Once again he placed his men at the top of the Party and the State. Dekanozov, later shot along with Beria, became Minister of State Security, replacing Rukhadze, arrested as `enemy of the people'.

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Bland, op. cit. , p. 46.

Khrushchev's intrigues against Beria

Meanwhile, Khrushchev was plotting against Beria. He first acquired the support from Beria's `protйgй, Malenkov, then talked with the others, individually. The last to be contacted was Mikoyan, Beria's best friend. On June 24, the presidium was convened so that Beria could be arrested. Mikoyan stated that Beria `would take our criticisms to heart and reform himself'.

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Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, op. cit. , p. 337.

On a prearranged signal, eleven marshals and generals, led by Zhukov, entered the room and arrested Beria, who would be shot along with his collaborators on December 23, 1953.

On July 14, 1953, General Alexei Antonov and Major-General Efimov organized a `coup d'йtat' in the Georgian Communist Party and pushed out Beria's men. Mzhavanadze, former Lieutenant-General, became the Party's Prime Minister.

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Bland, op. cit. , pp. 55--57.

Ryumin was arrested by Beria on April 5, 1953. Fifteen months later, the Khrushchevites would condemn him for his rфle in the `Doctors' Plot'. On July 23, he was shot. But his boss Ignatiev, protected by Khrushchev, was named First Secretary of the Bashkir Republik.

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Ibid. , pp. 67--70.

At the end of December 1954, Abakumov , former Minister of State Security, and his associates, were condemned to death for having fabricated, on Beria's orders, the `Leningrad Affair' against Voznesensky and his friends.

In September 1955, Nikolay Rukhadze, responsible for Security in Georgia, who had led the purge of Beria's men in 1951, was condemned and shot as `Beria's accomplice'.

.

Ibid. , p. 73.

So, from 1950 to 1955, different revisionist groups lashed out with at each other with their fangs, taking advantage of the situation to eliminate Stalin's supporters.

The `rehabilitated' enemies

After Stalin's death, under Khrushchev, opportunists and enemies of Leninism, sent, justifiably, to Siberia under Stalin, were rehabilitated and placed in key positions. Khrushchev's son, Sergei, gives an example. During the thirties, Khrushchev and Mikoyan had been close to a man named Snegov, condemned in 1938, as an enemy of the people, to twenty-five years of prison. In 1956, Khrushchev brought him out of prison so that he could testify against the `Stalinist crimes'. But, Snegov `proved' to Khrushchev's son that `the issue was not Stalin's mistakes or delusions, but that everything was the fruit of his criminal policy. The monstrous results had not appeared all of a sudden in the thirties. Their roots, Snegov said, went back to the October Revolution and the Civil War.'

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Sergei Khrushchev, Khrushchev on Khrushchev: An Inside Account of the Man and His Era (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), p. 8.

This individual, an open opponent of the October Revolution, was chosen by Khrushchev as Commissar of the Ministry of the Interior, where he was responsible for the rehabilitation of the `victims of Stalinism'!

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Ibid. , p. 13.

Khrushchev also fished Solzhenitsyn out from a work camp. So, the revisionist leader who wanted to `return to Leninism' made an alliance with a Tsarist reactionary to combat `Stalinism'. The two scum got along perfectly. In a burst of warmth for his `Marxist' partner, Solzhenitsyn would later write:

`It was impossible to foresee the sudden, thundering and furious attack that Khrushchev had reserved for Stalin during the Twenty-Second

Congress! I cannot remember in a long time having read something so interesting.'

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Solzhenitsyn, Le chкne et le veau; cited in Branko Lazitch, Le rapport Khrouchtchev et son histoire (Paris: Йditions du Seuil, 1976), p. 77.

Khrushchev and the pacific counter-revolution

After Beria's execution, Khrushchev became the most important figure in the Presidium. At the Twentieth Congress, in February 1956, he completely reversed the ideological and political line of the Party. He noisily announced that `Leninist democracy' and `collective leadership' were re-restablished, but he more or less imposed his Secret Report about Stalin on the other members of the Presidium. According to Molotov:

`When Khrushchev read his report to the Twentieth Congress, I had already been maneuvered into a dead-end. I have often been asked, why, during the Twentieth Congress, did you not speak out against Khrushchev? The Party was not ready for that. By staying in the Party, I hoped that we could partially redress the situation'.

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Chueva, op. cit. , p. 350.

The struggle between the two lines, between Marxism-Leninism and bourgeois tendencies, never ceased, right from October 25, 1917. With Khrushchev, the power relationship was reversed and opportunism, fought and repressed up to then, took over the leadership of the Party. Revisionism took advantage of this position to liquidate, bit by bit, the Marxist-Leninist forces. Upon Stalin's death, there were ten in the Presidium: Malenkov, Beria, Khrushchev, Mikoyan, Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov, Bulganin, Saburov and Pervukhin.

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R. A. Medvedev and Zh. .A. Medvedev, op. cit. , p. 4.

After Beria's elimination, Mikoyan stated in 1956 that in `the Central Committee and its Presidium in the last three years ... after a long interval collective leadership has been established'.

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A. I. Mikoyan, Discussion of Khrushchev--Moskatov Reports, 20th Communist Party Congress, op. cit. , p. 80.

But the following year, Khrushchev and Mikoyan fired the rest, using the argument that `the anti-Party factionalist group' `wanted a return to the days, so painful fo our party and country, when the reprehensible methods and actions spawned by the cult of the individual held sway'.

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Kozlov, `Report on the Party Statutes', The Documentary Record of the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), p. 206.

Eliminating the Marxist-Leninist majority in the Presidium was possible thanks to the army, particularly Zhukov, and regional secretaries who came to support Khrushchev when he was in the minority. Molotov's, Malenkov's and Kaganovich's hesitations, lack of political acumen and conciliatory attitude caused their defeat.

In international politics, Stalin's line from 1945 to 1953 was completely dismantled. Khrushchev capitulated to the world bourgeoisie. He addressed the Party at the Twentieth Congress: `(T)he Party ... smashed obsolete ideas'. `We want to be friends with the United States'. `There are also substantial achievements in the building of socialism in Yugoslavia.' `(T)he working class ... has an opportunity to ... win a firm majority in parliament and to turn the parliament from an agency of bourgeois democracy into an instrument of genuinely popular will'.

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Khrushchev, `Central Committee Report', op. cit. , pp. 29, 35, 30, 38.

Khrushchev began the dismantling of Stalin's work with all sorts of wonderful promises. Hearing them today, we can see that Khrushchev was simply a clown.

According to Khrushchev, `In the conditions of the cult of the individual .... People who usurp power ... escape from under (the Party's) control'.

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Khrushchev, `Concluding Remarks' 22nd Congress, op. cit. , p. 198.

These sycophants and magicians obviously disappeared along with Stalin. And Khrushchev continued:

`In the current decade (1961--1970) the Soviet Union, creating the material and technical base of communism, will surpass the strongest and richest capitalist country, the U.S.A.'

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Khrushchev, `The Party Program', 22nd Congress, op. cit. , p. 15.

Twenty years after the `beginning of Communism' promised by Khrushchev for 1970, the Soviet Union exploded under the blows of U.S. imperialism; its republics are now controlled by maffiosi and rapacious capitalists; the people live in profound misery, unemployed; crime reigns supreme; nationalism and fascism have provoked horrible civil wars; there are tens of thousands dead and millions of refugees.

As for Stalin, he also looked at the uncertain future. The conclusions of the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): Short Course, whose writing he supervised in 1938, are worth re-examining, given recent events. They contain six fundamental lessons, drawn from the Bolshevik Party's experience. The fourth reads:

`Sceptics, opportunists, capitulators and traitors cannot be tolerated on the directing staff of the working class.

`It cannot be regarded as an accident that the Trotskyites, Bukharinites and nationalist deviators ... ended ... by becoming agents of fascist espionage services.

`The easiest way to capture a fortress is from within.'

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Commission of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. (B.), editor. History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): Short Course (Toronto: Francis White Publishers, 1939), p. 360.

Stalin predicted correctly what would happen in the Soviet Union if a Gorbachev or a Yeltsin ever entered the Politburo.

At the end of the twentieth century, humanity has sort of returned to the start state, to the years 1900--1914, where the imperialist powers thought that they could run the world among themselves. In the years to come, as the criminal, barbaric and inhuman character of imperialism shows itself more and more clearly, new generations who never knew Stalin will pay homage to him. They will follow the words of Mao Zedong who, on December 21, 1939, in the distant caves of that huge China, toasted Stalin's sixtieth birthday:

`Congratulating Stalin means supporting him and his cause, supporting the victory of socialism, and the way forward for mankind which he points out, it means supporting a dear friend. For the great majority of mankind today are suffering, and mankind can free itself from suffering only by the road pointed out by Stalin and with his help.'

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Mao Tse-Tung, `Stalin, Friend of the Chinese People', Works, vol. 2, p. 335.

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