

Science, Class, and Politics

Spring 1984
Number 29

Quarterly Journal
of the
Marxist-Leninist
League

On Stalin

Book Review

\$1.00

Contents

On Stalin.3

Book Review:

Robert Briffault's Europa
and Europa in Limbo.60

Science, Class, and Politics

A quarterly theoretical journal published by
Marxist-Leninist League

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yearly subscription rate	\$6.00
includes postage	
single issues	\$1.00
plus 50¢ postage	

make checks payable to Science, Class, & Politics

Send submissions and/or subscriptions to Science, Class, & Politics, P.O. Box 19074, Sacramento, Calif., 95819.

On Stalin

Bruce Franklin expresses as well as anyone the attitude to Stalin that most U.S. citizens have been taught to hold. However, Franklin is different than most people in that he knows a number of facts that directly conflict with this instilled opinion*. Here is what he had to say in 1972:

I used to think of Joseph Stalin as a tyrant and butcher who jailed and killed millions, betrayed the Russian revolution, sold out liberation struggles around the world, and ended up a solitary madman, hated and feared by the people of the Soviet Union and the world. Even today I have trouble saying the name "Stalin" without feeling a bit sinister.

But, to about a billion people today, Stalin is the opposite of what we in the capitalist world have been programmed to believe. The people of China, Vietnam, Korea, and Albania consider Stalin one of the great heroes of modern history, a man who personally helped win their liberation. This belief could be dismissed as the product of an equally effective brain-washing from the other side, except that the workers and peasants of the Soviet

*Of course, we do not agree with everything Bruce Franklin wrote in the introduction of this book.

Union, who knew Stalin best, share this view. For almost two decades the Soviet rulers have systematically attempted to make the Soviet people accept the capitalist world's view of Stalin, or at least to forget him. They expunged him from the history books, wiped out his memorials, and even removed his body from his tomb. Yet, according to all accounts, the great majority of the Soviet people still revere the memory of Stalin, and bit by bit they have forced concessions. First it was granted that Stalin had been a great military leader and the main anti-fascist strategist of World War II. Then it was conceded that he had made important contributions to the material progress of the Soviet people. Now a recent Soviet film shows Stalin, several years before his death, as a calm, rational, wise leader. (Franklin, ed., The Essential Stalin, p. 1.)

For a person raised and educated in the West (i.e., in capitalist countries and their neo-colonies), Franklin's perception of Stalin "as a tyrant and butcher" is pretty well unquestioned. But as indicated by Franklin there is plenty of evidence to disprove the correctness of this perception.

There are two major questions that must be faced in regard to Stalin: 1) Was he "a butcher and tyrant," or was he as "about a billions people" believe, one of the greatest humanitarians and democrats of the last few centuries. As we shall see the evidence supports the latter position; 2) If he was not a "tyrant and butcher" why did the ruling classes and governments of the West spend such efforts to convince their populations of this falsehood?

I

It may be more useful to start with the reasons for the slanders against Stalin. The basic reason is,

course, political. Socialism is a system where the wage and salary earners are the dominant class in society. This economic system is run for and by the wage and salary earners. It is the system that is in the interests of the majority of the population in all industrialized societies, not just in the Soviet Union. Capitalism is an economic system that is beneficial to and in the interests of the large business families. They represent a minute fraction of society. To the business community of any country, the coming of socialism would mean the end of the world. It not only means the end of their special privileges, but their reduction to the status of wage earners. As far as they are concerned, anything is preferable to this. Their willingness to flirt with nuclear war and nuclear extermination is an expression of this desperation, this horror.

So, right from the time of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 to the present, the ruling families of all the capitalist countries have had to fight a war on two fronts. First there was the war against socialist countries. This involved wars of intervention and attempted conquest whenever they were thought possible. It also involved aiding and developing internal opposition, subversion, etc. And, of course, it included unlimited amounts of anti-socialist falsehoods sent or beamed into socialist countries.

But the second front was even more important. This was the war against the majority of the people of their own countries. Since the great majority of the population of all industrialized countries are wage and salary earners, socialism (even an imperfect socialism) is far and away the most beneficial and efficient economic system. Capitalism is the most harmful and inefficient system for wage and salary earners. Consequently, the capitalists and their lackies must carry on an unrelenting propaganda war to convince workers that this is not the case. They must convince them that socialism is bad for them, and that capitalism is good. But since wage and salary earners have personal contact with capitalism, it is more difficult to pretty-up this system. Though, of course, they do their best.

Consequently, their main efforts go into slandering socialism. In effect, the capitalists say to the wage and salary earners, if you think capitalism is bad, you ought to see socialism. Thus from 1917 on, every conceivable crime, bestiality, or depravity that anyone could imagine (from the eating of children to mass murder) were attributed to the socialist countries, system, and leaders. Capitalist societies are elitist societies, and they subscribe to the great-man theory of historical development. Since under this theory individuals are of critical importance, the slander of socialism must involve the slander of socialism's leaders and theoreticians.

Consequently Karl Marx's theories were systematically falsified. The capitalist propagandists have even sunk to slandering his personal life, accusing him of being a womanizer, a homosexual, as well as murdering his children through neglect, etc. The slanders of Lenin in their number and viciousness defy description--the libraries are full of them. Once Stalin became the principal leader of the Soviet Union, he became the principal target of the capitalist countries' professional mudslingers.

It should be mentioned at this point that all capitalist countries have founded special institutions staffed by professional prevaricators for the manufacture of anti-socialist (anti-communist) propaganda. Stanford's Hoover Institute for War and Revolution is one such institute. It is the job of its "scholars" to fabricate anti-communist falsehoods with the appropriate academic trimmings. Of course, the press manufacturers many of its own falsehoods without the academic trimmings. These falsehoods take different forms: out-and-out falsehoods, half-truths, distortions-of-truth, and any combination of the preceding varieties.

Since Joseph Stalin was the principal leader of the U.S.S.R. and the Bolshevik wing of the C.P.S.U. for 29 years, he was the principal object of this professional mud-slinging. He is still the principal object of these falsehoods because he was the last

Bolshevik leader in the U.S.S.R. After his death in 1953, the Menshevik (petty-bourgeois) wing of the party gained the upper hand. To facilitate their swing to the right, which included increased privileges for the managerial and professional personnel, the Mensheviks gathered up all of the anti-Stalin and hence anti-Bolshevik slanders manufactured over three decades by the capitalist countries and flung them at the Soviet population. Consequently, Stalin has ended up getting it from two sides, i.e., inside and outside the Soviet Union. The role of the Mensheviks (revisionists) will be dealt with in a bit more detail later.

In reviewing a biography of Stalin by Isaac Deutcher, which is probably one of the most famous pieces of anti-socialist slander put out by the capitalist falsehood fabricators, Andrew Rothstein reminds his readers of this basic fact of current political and academic life:

For in all the "questions" and "answers" they [the intellectuals] were propounding with such learned gravity, and on which they were assembling "materials" with such concern for "impartiality" and "scholarship," there was one constant--they hated the Socialist revolution in Russia as the beginning of world revolution, they hated the Bolshevik Party which had brought it about, they hated the leaders who guided the Party and the revolution.

That still is the case: and those who take at their face value the outraged outbursts against Lysenko, in the name of "pure science," against the Soviet Communist Party's resolutions on art, literature and music, against alleged Soviet contempt for human rights, without seeing in all these manoeuvres the single deadly hatred of the first people in the world to overthrow capitalism, miss the key to the very question they are

studying. And that holds good for even the most learned and outwardly dispassionate works dealing with the U.S.S.R. or its leaders.

(Andrew Rothstein, "Stalin: A Novel Biography," pp. 99-100.)

In their slander of socialism and its leaders the professional fabricators allow themselves no limits. As was already pointed out, they go so far as to accuse Soviet citizens of the crime of eating children. This section can be closed on a semi-humorous note. Andrew Rothstein wrote an article refuting and exposing a series of blatant and clumsy lies told by Herbert Morrison, a Cabinet Minister in the Attlee Government of Great Britain. This example shows how these professional fabricators will even take things that are obviously favorable to the majority and turn it into something that appears to be unfavorable and sinister:

Mr. Morrison's last kick was one which recalled the early propaganda against the U.S.S.R., alleging that workmen were being cruelly forced to accept higher wages and shorter hours, and that the land was being forcibly divided among the peasants without allowing them to pay the landlords. He stated:

"One ingenious device which interested me in the Soviet university arrangements is that the student who has passed his final examination is summoned to a posting commission, which assigns him to his post in the Soviet economy, in any part of the country, regardless of his own taste or convenience."

By this ingenious device, indeed, Mr. Morrison sought to conceal from his audience, who, like all British students after their first year, were well aware of the problem of graduate unemployment, the plain and unmistakable fact--confirmed by the author-

ities or senior students in all three Soviet universities visited--that Soviet graduates find themselves with more offers of jobs than there are candidates, and are able to pick and choose at will.

(Andrew Rothstein, "Mr. Morrison and Soviet Students," p. 236.)

II

Let us first deal with the evidence concerning Stalin's activity. Almost all people who had much contact with Stalin are in agreement that he always functioned in a democratic way. This is not surprising since he came to political maturity in the most democratic organization of this century, the Bolshevik Party. Once he inherited the principal leadership position in that party, he carefully nurtured and continued this tradition.

Our first witness is Anna Louise Strong, a long-time resident (1921-1949) and a U.S. correspondent in the Soviet Union, and an acquaintance of Joseph Stalin. Though considered by many people to be a liberal, her reputation for honest reporting is well known. Further, she was accused of spying and expelled from the Soviet Union in 1949. So Strong cannot be suspected of having a bias in favor of Stalin. Nevertheless she confirms Stalin's reputation for democracy and responsible leadership.

His personal approach was modest, direct, simple; his analysis of problems was exceptionally clear. His technique for sizing up group opinion dates from his early days. "I recall him well," a veteran Bolshevik told me, "a quiet youth who sat at the edge of the committee, saying little and listening much. Towards the end, he would make a comment, perhaps only as a question. Gradually, we came to see that he summed up best our joint thinking." This description will be recognized by anyone who ever sat in a

discussion with Stalin. It explains how he kept his majority, for he sized up the majority before he laid down "the line." Thus, his mind was not that of the despot, who believes that orders can operate against the majority will. But neither was it that of the passive democrat, who awaits the vote and accepts it as final. Stalin knew that majority support is essential to sound political action; but he also knew how majorities are made. He first probed the thought of a group and then with his own words swung the decision as far as he could get the majority to go.

This same technique he used with the nation...When Emil Ludwig, and later Roy Howard, sought to learn how "the great man made decisions," Stalin impatiently replied: "With us, individuals cannot decide.... Experience has shown us that individual decisions, uncorrected by others, have a large percentage of error." He added that the success of the USSR came because the best brains in all arenas--science, industry, farming, world affairs--were combined in the Central Committee, through which decisions were made.

This standard he, more than anyone, instilled in the Soviet people. For he always acted "through channels" and after building majorities....

In all my years in the USSR, I never heard them speak of "Stalin's decision" or "Stalin's orders," but only of "government orders" or "the Party line," which are collectively made. When speaking of Stalin, they praised his "clearness," his "analysis." They said: "He does not think individually." By this, they meant that he thought not in isolation but in consultation with the brains

of the Academy of Science, the chiefs of industry and trade unions. Even towards the end, when men immoderately deified him, they hailed him not as "Great Ruler," but as "Great Teacher," the leader who analyzed the way.

(Anna Louise Strong, The Stalin Era, pp. 20, 22.)

Notice that Ms. Strong states that Stalin "always" acted democratically, and in line with the majority. He did not rely on his own opinion, but always went along with collectively reached decisions. Further, "this standard, he more than anyone, instilled in the Soviet people."

A second unimpeachable witness is Beatrice Webb. Beatrice Webb along with her husband, Sidney, cannot be accused of having a pro-Soviet or pro-Stalin bias. They were the theoretical leaders of the British Labour Party which has always been and still is militantly anti-Soviet. Nevertheless, the Webbs completed a monumental study of the Soviet Union in 1937, based on an enormous amount of research and several unsupervised trips to the Soviet Union. In an introduction (written in February 1942) to a book, she describes Stalin's role in the Soviet government:

To answer the first question--Is Stalin a dictator?... --Stalin is not a dictator. So far as Stalin is related to the constitution of the USSR, as amended in 1936, he is the duly elected representative of one of the Moscow constituencies to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. By this assembly he has been selected as one of the thirty members of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, accountable to the representative assembly for all its activities... The office by which Stalin earns his livelihood and owes his predominant influence is that of general secretary of the Communist Party, a unique organisation the characteristics of

which, whether good or evil, I shall describe later on in this volume. Here I will note that the Communist Party, unlike the Roman Catholic and Anglican Church, is not an oligarchy; it is democratic in its internal structure, having a representative congress electing a central committee which in its turn selects the Politbureau and other executive organs of the Communist Party. Nor has Stalin ever claimed the position of a dictator or fuehrer. Far otherwise; he has persistently asserted in his writings and speeches that as a member of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, he is merely a colleague of thirty other members, and that so far as the Communist Party is concerned he acts as general secretary under the orders of the executive. He has, in fact, frequently pointed out that he does no more than carry out the decisions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.... --Is the USSR a political democracy?--it is clear that, tested by the Constitution of the Soviet Union as revised and enacted in 1936, the USSR is the most inclusive and equalised democracy in the world...

At this point I reach the most distinctive and unique characteristic of Soviet Communism: the democratic control of land and capital.

(Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Soviet Communism: A New Civilization?, pp. XIX-XXI.)

Thus Beatrice Webb confirms that not only did Stalin function democratically, but that the Soviet Union was the world's most completely democratic country. She also points out that, unlike all other countries, the Soviet Union had economic and social, as well as political democracy. And as all social scientists are aware, one cannot have real political democracy without economic and social democracy.

Oligarchy in the economic sphere inevitably creates oligarchy in the political sphere, regardless of whether people have a vote or not. Of course, one cannot have a democratic country and still have a tyrant as the chief executive officer.

III

Besides circulating the falsehood that Stalin was a tyrant and a dictator, the capitalist press, academia, and governments have accused Stalin of various kinds and almost endless numbers of crimes. We will look at the validity of some of these charges. It goes without saying that these atrocity stories are without foundation. From the time of the Bolshevik revolution until the present, the capitalist communications media have been busy manufacturing these atrocities. Later, anti-communist foundations turn out academic "confirmations" of these stories.

For example, the American Enterprise Institute, using personnel from such places as Stanford's Hoover Institute, Harvard's Ukrainian Research Institute, and Georgetown's Center for Strategic and International Studies, has "proved", once again, that Stalin and the Soviet Union caused a "famine that killed more than 7 million peasants in the Ukraine in 1933-34." (American Enterprise Institute, Memorandum, Spring/Summer, 1984, No. 42, p. 12.)

This particular atrocity is usually "proved" every two years or so. Why does an atrocity need continually to be reproven? Evidently, because the previous "proofs" weren't very convincing. If a story of a man-made famine in one year collapses, then they come up with a famine in another year. But regardless of the year selected, the reports of large numbers of deaths from starvation invariably turn out to be the usual pre-meditated falsehoods.

The shortage of food (there was no famine) that occurred during the collectivization movement of 1930-34 was man-made, but it was not created by Stalin or the Soviet government. Instead it was created by the sabotage of the Kulaks (capitalist farmers) and

the agents of foreign capitalist powers.

Sidney and Beatrice Webb (the theoretical leaders of the British Labour Party) were in the Soviet Union several times between 1930 and 1936. They were given complete freedom to go anywhere and talk with anyone they wanted to. They were in an ideal position to check on most of the atrocity stories of the '20's and '30's. So they were able to evaluate the "Famine" fabrications:

...a retired high official of the Government of India, speaking Russian, and well acquainted with Tsarist Russia, who had himself administered famine districts in India, and who visited in 1932 some of the localities in the USSR in which conditions were reported to be among the worst, informed the present writers at the time that he had found no evidence of there being or having been anything like what Indian officials would describe as a famine.

Without expecting to convince the prejudiced, we give, for what it may be deemed worth, the conclusion to which our visits in 1932 and 1934, and subsequent examination of the available evidence, now lead us.... Soviet officials on the spot, in one district after another, informed the present writers that, whilst there was shortage and hunger, there was, at no time, a total lack of bread, though its quality was impaired by using other ingredients than wheaten flour; and that any increase in the death-rate, due to diseases accompanying defective nutrition, occurred only in a relatively small number of villages. What may carry more weight than this official testimony was that of various resident British and American journalists, who travelled during 1933 and 1934 through the districts reputed to have been the worst sufferers, and who declared to the present writers that they had found no

reason to suppose that the trouble had been more serious than was officially represented.

We note that Mr. W. H. Chamberlin, who has been transferred from Moscow to Tokyo, continues to assert (in various magazine articles in 1934-1935, and in his book Russia's Iron Age, 1935) that there was a terrible famine in 1932-33, "one of the greatest human catastrophes since the world-war," which caused, from disease and starvation, some four or five million deaths beyond normal mortality... We find, in the statements of Mr. Chamberlin and other believers in the famine, nothing that can be called statistical evidence of widespread abnormal mortality; though it may be inferred that hardships in particular villages must have led, here and there, to some rise in the local death-rate... (Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200, 217n-218n.)

Not only did the journalists of the U.S. and Britain who traveled through the affected area fail to confirm the stories, but the U.S. State Department and intelligence services failed to come up with any confirmation either. Anna Louise Strong documents this U.S. activity:

...when I went to Riga to renew my passport-- Washington had as yet no embassy in the USSR-- I found men in the American consulate giving full time to collecting data on Soviet collectivization from scores of local Soviet newspapers. They sent a thousand pages of reports to the U.S. State Department. Foreigners predicted the collapse of the USSR through famine. More than one border nation was reported to be getting its armies ready to march. (A.L. Strong, The Stalin Era, p. 39.)

And surely, if all those agents had developed the least shred of real evidence, one can be certain that this would have been fully documented.

As mentioned earlier, through the sabotage which the capitalist intelligence services aided and abetted, the capitalist countries hoped for a failure of the collectivization movement and the consequent alienation of the peasants. On this basis they were planning another mass invasion of the Soviet Union. As we know, their efforts failed. If there actually had been instances of high mortality they would have documented it to a fare-thee-well, probably invaded the Soviet Union in the bargain, and have had no reason to keep "proving", again and again, that there had been a deadly famine.

Strong also traveled extensively through the affected agricultural regions and found no evidence of starvation. She records details of the war waged by Kulaks (capitalist farmers) on the peasants which was primarily responsible for the food shortages in the next few years:

American commentators usually speak of collective farms as enforced by Stalin; they even assert that he deliberately starved millions of peasants to make them join collectives. This is untrue. I travelled the countryside those years and know what occurred. Stalin certainly promoted the change and guided it. But the drive for collectivization went so much faster than Stalin planned that there were not enough machines ready for the farms, nor enough bookkeepers and managers. Hopeful inefficiency combined with a panic slaying of livestock under kulak urging, and with two dry years, brought serious food shortage in 1932, two years after Stalin's alleged pressures. Moscow brought the country through by stern nationwide rationing.

I saw collectivization break like a storm on the Lower Volga in autumn of 1929. It was a revolution that made deeper changes

than did the revolution of 1917, of which it was the ripened fruit. Farmhands and poor peasants took the initiative, hoping to better themselves by government aid. Kulaks fought the movement bitterly by all means up to arson and murder. The middle peasantry, the real backbone of farming, had been split between hope of becoming kulaks and the wish for machinery from the state. But now that the Five-Year Plan promised tractors, this great mass of peasants began moving by villages, townships and counties, into the collective farms....

Kulaks and priests clouded the issue with rumors, playing on emotions of sex and fear. Everywhere, I heard of the "one great blanket" under which all men and women of the collective farm would sleep! Everywhere, rumor said the babies would be "socialized." In some places, kulaks joined collectives--to rule or ruin. Elsewhere, they were being expelled from collectives as undesirable. (A.L. Strong, The Stalin Era, pp. 35-37.)

It is quite clear that no such deadly famine occurred in the Ukraine during the early 1930's. Foreign correspondents, and foreign social scientists had the free-run of the affected area and found no sign of such mortality. The evidence for this conclusion is overwhelming. Of course, the professional atrocity fabricators of the big business-endorsed anti-communist institutes are very unhappy. Their fabrications are just ineffective in the face of this overwhelming evidence.

The American Enterprise-sponsored book contains this humorous (unintended) remark:

Dalrymple, a specialist in international agricultural research with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, looks at the coverup of the famine by the Soviet authorities.

"The famine was virtually unknown at the time despite the vast mortality and despite the fact that a number of accounts were published," he writes. "Curiously, general histories of the Soviet Union still make little mention of the famine. In retrospect, the famine certainly seems to represent one of the most successful news management stories in history. It seems incredible now that Stalin could have pulled off such a feat." (American Enterprise Institute, *Ibid.*, p. 12.)

The reason why this make-believe famine "was virtually unknown", even in professionally produced anti-communist books, and secures "little mention" is because it never happened. The so-called accounts of this famine Dalrymple refers to were undoubtedly the products of earlier professional fabricators.

IV

Another atrocity that Stalin is usually accused of was the framing and murder of a majority of the "old Bolsheviks" in the famous Treason Trials of 1936-38. There is no more to this atrocity story than there was to the one just discussed. These fabrications were originally made at the time of the trials and have been endlessly repeated by the capitalist press ever since.

Supposedly, since they all confessed their guilt, the defendants were drugged, bribed, or tortured into confessing. Again, almost all the people who attended the trial agree that the defendants were undoubtedly guilty and the evidence was more than sufficient to support the charges. Any unbiased person who bothers to read the verbatim transcripts of the trials will be convinced as well.

The first witness, who could only be accused of anti-Soviet and anti-Stalin bias, was the U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union for those years, Joseph E. Davies. First there is a letter (March 8, 1938) to a daughter that he wrote while the Bukharin trial was still going on:

For the last week, I have been attending daily sessions of the Bukharin treason trial. No doubt you have been following it in the press. It is terrific. I have found it of much intellectual interest, because it brings back into play all the old critical faculties involved in assessing the credibility of witnesses and sifting the wheat from the chaff--the truth from the false--which I was called upon to use for so many years in the trials of cases, myself.

All the fundamental weaknesses and vices of human nature--personal ambitions at their worst--are shown up in the proceedings. They disclose the outlines of a plot which came very near to being successful in bringing about the overthrow of this government....

The extraordinary testimony of Krestinsky, Bukharin, and the rest would appear to indicate that the Kremlin's fears were well justified. For it now seems that a plot existed in the beginning of November, 1936, to project a coup d'etat, with Tukhatchevsky at its head, for May of the following year. Apparently it was touch and go at that time whether it actually would be staged.

But the government acted with great vigor and speed. The Red Army generals were shot and the whole party organization was purged and thoroughly cleansed. Then it came out that quite a few of those at the top were seriously infected with the virus of the conspiracy to overthrow the government, and were actually working with the Secret Service organizations of Germany and Japan.

(Joseph E. Davies, Mission to Moscow, pp. 269-70.)

It is clear from the way he describes the events that Davies believes the charges made in the various trials to be true.

At the conclusion of this trial, Davies sent a confidential communication to the Secretary of State giving his opinion of this trial:

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 corroborations 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 of 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, which explained to the diplomats many of the hitherto unexplained developments of the last six months in the Soviet Union. The only difference of opinion that seemed to exist was the degree to which the plot had been implemented by different defendants and the degree to which the conspiracy had become centralized.

(Joseph E. Davies, *Ibid.*, pp. 271-2.)

Notice that not only is it Davies' opinion that the defendants were unquestionably guilty, but that it was also the opinion of all "those diplomats that attended the trial" on a regular basis, so they could hear all the evidence. Davies' opinion is especially significant, since he was a trained and experienced trial lawyer.

And Davies continued to hold this opinion of the trials of 1936-38 after he was no longer the ambassador to the Soviet Union:

Passing through Chicago, on my way home from the June commencement of my old University, I was asked to talk to the University Club and combined Wisconsin societies. It was just three days after Hitler had invaded Russia. Someone in the audience asked: "What about Fifth Columnists in Russia?" Off the anvil, I said: "There aren't any--they shot them."

On the train that day, that thought lingered in my mind. It was rather extraordinary, when one stopped to think of it, that in this last Nazi invasion, not a word had appeared of "inside work" back of the Russian lines. There was no so-called "internal aggression" in Russia co-operating with the German High Command. Hitler's march into Prague in 1939 was accompanied by the active military support of Henlein's organizations in Czechoslovakia. The same was true of his invasion of Norway. There were no Sudeten Henleins, no Slovakian Tisos, no Belgian De Grelles, no Norwegian Quislings in the Soviet picture....

The testimony in these cases involved and incriminated General Tukhatchevsky and many high leaders in the army and in the navy.... Voroshilov, Commander in Chief of the Red Army, said: "It is easier for a burglar to break into the house if he has an accomplice to let him in. We have taken care of the accomplices...." All of these trials, purges, and liquidations, which seemed so violent at the time and shocked the world, are now quite clearly a part of a vigorous and determined effort of the Stalin government to protect itself from not only revolution from within but from attack from without. They went to

work thoroughly to clean up and clean out all treasonable elements within the country. All doubts were resolved in favor of the government.

There were no Fifth Columnists in Russia in 1941--they had shot them. The purge had cleansed the country and rid it of treason. (Joseph E. Davies, *Ibid.*, pp. 272-73, 279-80.)

Ex-Ambassador Davies not only tells us that charges made in these trials were true, but he believes the drastic measures taken were justified as well.

The next witness is also a trained and experienced trial lawyer, D.N. Pritt. Pritt was a member of the Labour Party and a member of Parliament. Even though there really is no question of the guilt of the accused, there have been other questions raised by capitalist critics. D.N. Pritt who wrote about the Zinoviev Trial of 1936 dealt with these questions. Unfortunately his response requires relatively extensive quotations.

Probably the most general and important criticism that has been made is the simple one that it is incredible that men should confess openly and fully to crimes of the gravity of those in question here. Associated with this criticism there comes the suggestion that the confessions must have been extracted by "third degree" or other improper means....

Now, it will surely be conceded that in all countries, even in those most fully supplied with able and ingenious defence lawyers, prisoners do sometimes plead guilty to charges, even to serious charges, when they see that the evidence against them is overwhelming. My friends in U.S.S.R. tell me that this is more common in their country than in some others, and they speak with not too tolerant contempt of systems under

which accused persons who are obviously guilty will consume precious time and energy in wriggling and putting up technical defences;...

It is of crucial importance, when attempting to criticise or to appraise this case in general or the actual strength of the prosecution's evidence in particular, to bear in mind that, as all the accused pleaded guilty to the whole charge (with definite but minor reservations on the part of two of them, Smirnoff and Holzman), there was no necessity either for the prosecution to adduce in open court all the available evidence going to establish the whole case, or for the court to consider and weigh the evidence against the other fourteen of the accused for the purpose of deciding their guilt. All that was done, and all that was attempted, was to develop the facts and evidence before the court merely to the extent necessary to enable the judges to decide the exact degree of legal guilt of the two men in question and to form a view of the moral guilt of all the sixteen accused, in order to decide properly on the penalty.... It is sufficient, I think, in this instance to confine oneself to considering the circumstances of the present case. It seems plain to me, on a number of different grounds that anything in the nature of forced confessions is intrinsically impossible. In respect of most of the accused, it must be remembered that we are considering the case of stubborn and infinitely experienced revolutionaries, men who knew from the best of all sources, that of personal contact, most kinds of prisons and most kinds of investigations, and who were also fully acquainted above all with the mentality and outlook of the authorities who were dealing with this

case. If it were the practice of the People's Commissariat for Home Affairs, which has taken over the staff and the functions of the G.P.U., to extract confessions by false promises of lenient treatment (which I do not know and do not believe, but which others who equally do not know are at liberty to believe), surely no one would be better able to estimate the complete worthlessness of such a promise under the circumstances of this case than the experienced revolutionaries whom I saw in the dock. If again, it were the practice of this department to attempt to extract confessions by violence (which I do not think any competent observer believes) no one would be better able than these men to support the violence and subsequently to expose it before the world in the sure hope of discrediting their enemies and gaining sympathy for themselves. If any trickery or deceit, simple or complicated, were employed in an effort to trap any of these men into confession, surely they would be better fitted than anyone else on earth to detect and circumvent the plot.

It was, moreover, obvious to anyone who watched the proceedings in court that the confessions as made orally in court could not possibly have been concocted or rehearsed. Such a farce would doubtless not be beyond the mental powers of normal men to stage in the case of a small set of well-defined facts, which could be memorised by one or two people and parroted without any basis of truth. But in the present case sixteen men were involved, and dozens of conversations and incidents spread over years and over thousands of miles, now one, now another, or two or three or more of the accused being involved. I doubt whether, even if they had to deal with the relatively slow tempo of an English

trial, more than one or two of the accused could successfully master their role in such a farce without betraying the whole thing; certainly sixteen could not hope to do so. But, in fact, the proceedings before a Soviet court move with great rapidity, due partly to the lack of formality, partly to the judges not having to take long notes, and partly to the absence of a jury; and the proceedings in this case were no exception to the rule. And in the middle of the examination of one of the accused, when he said something that implicated another or denied something to which another had previously testified, that other would come to his feet spontaneously or would be called upon by the prosecutor, and then and there the point would be fought out with a quick cross-fire of question and answer, assertion and counter-assertion. Months of rehearsal by the most competent actors could not have enabled false participants in such a contest to last ten minutes without disclosing the falsity; nor indeed would any stage manager risk of breakdown by allowing the farce to play so quickly. The employment of this procedure (normal, of course, in the Soviet Union), without the keenest critic finding a false note, is a most convincing demonstration of the genuineness of the case.... I am more impressed by the Moscow correspondent of a Conservative Sunday paper, who reported: "It is futile to think the trial was staged and the charges trumped up. The Government's case against the defendants is genuine.")

Another point of some substance in favour of the genuineness of the confessions is the complete absence of that very usual feature of proceedings in most countries (including England) in which it is common to allege

that confessions have been improperly obtained: to wit, the attempt by the accused at some stage of the trial to withdraw all or part of his confession. One may repeat that if either intelligence or courage were needed for such withdrawal, the accused in this case possessed both. If experience or common sense were needed to make clear to the accused that, so long as their confessions stood unwithdrawn and unchallenged, the chances of, at any rate, most of them escaping the death penalty were infinitesimal, they, above all, possessed it. And it is worth while realising the number of opportunities they had to make such a withdrawal....

At the hearing I studied over long periods the demeanour of the defendents....

But all of them, at every stage, save two, of the five long days of the hearing showed a complete absence of fear, or embarrassment. The haggard face, the twitching hand, the dazed expression, the bandaged head, normal ornaments of the prisoners' dock in too many modern jurisdictions, were all alike absent. As soon as one entered the court, one was struck by their apparent ease. Treated with courtesy and patience equally by the court, the prosecutor, the guards, (even strolling out of court for a few moments when they wished), they spoke up freely when they wanted to, disputed minor and major points of difference with one another with vigour if not violence of speech, and displayed no signs of pressure or repression....

The next criticism that should be dealt with can be answered more shortly. It takes the form, briefly, that the whole story is simply incredible, and that nobody, least of all old revolutionaries, could possibly have behaved as these men are said to have

behaved....

The odd thing, moreover, about this criticism is that it comes mainly from people who for years have been saying that both the Government of Soviet Russia and its economic conditions are so bad, and its people in such a state of seething revolt, that only the most ruthless employment of force prevents a revolutionary outbreak at any moment. Such critics should surely receive news of plots to murder the heads of such a Government as the most natural and inevitable thing in the world, instead of offering a blank incredulity which at once insults the Soviet judicial authorities and evidences the critics' real belief in the stability of the Soviet Government. (D.N. Pritt, The Zinoviev Trial, pp. 5, 6, 8, 9, 12-14, 20-21, 23-24.)

This sudden sympathy of professional pro-capitalist, anti-communist critics for "old Bolsheviks" and their "rigged trial theory" was not likely to fool politically knowledgeable people like Pritt:

Of course, the less scrupulous critics will be delighted to support that theory; they would always prefer to blacken the rulers of a Socialist country rather than people who confess to having sought to assassinate those rulers; but some of us with memories will find their sudden affection and admiration for Zinoviev and all the "Old Guard" a little comic. (Ibid., p. 4.)

And as for why "old revolutionaries" would plot to overthrow the revolutionary government, the answer is well known to most students of history. During a revolutionary war, people of many different persuasions get together on the basis of what they have in common, i.e., the overthrow of the old government which they

view as the ultimate evil. Once that has been successfully terminated, then what type of government and what type of policy to be pursued by the new government comes on the agenda. Then the political differences between the various groups of revolutionaries come out. For example, there were the "revolutionaries" who fled Cuba claiming that Fidel Castro had betrayed the revolution. The same sort of thing happened in the Soviet Union.

Some of the revolutionaries whose politics and policies were rejected by the democratic process turned to other means. And some of these became more and more desperate and more and more unprincipled. As D.N. Pritt put it:

and one does not need to be a student of psychology to realise how far, over long periods, a frustrated longing for power, or a sense of injustice or defeat, will ultimately demoralise ambitious men. (Ibid., p. 24.)

And that was all there was to it.

And another and similar example is the case of the old Cuban "revolutionary" Huber Matos who is organizing a Cuban detachment to fight for the right-wing rebel forces in Nicaragua. (Larry Rohter, New York Times, 12/17/84.)

This is not to say that no injustices were committed during those times (1936-38). Certainly, all those prominent leaders who were brought to public trial were guilty as charged. But a number of innocent people were convicted in other trials. In a report delivered to the Eighteenth Congress of the Party in 1939, Stalin said, "It cannot be said that the purge was not accomplished by grave mistakes. There were more, unfortunately more, mistakes than might have been expected." As Ambassador Davies stated in an earlier quote, "all doubts were resolved in favor of the government." And as Davies also said, there were no fifth columnists, no traitors in positions of authority in the U.S.S.R. when the Germans attacked.

V

The professional anti-communists in the certified institutes have come forward with similar atrocity tales about the World War II and the post-war period. Supposedly, just about everyone arrested, imprisoned, or shot during those periods was innocent and was unjustly accused. There is about as much substance to these accusations as there was to those about the treason trials of 1936-38.

One example can be taken from this to illustrate this point--the case of Alexander Solzhenitsyn. He has become the case par excellence of the person arbitrarily and unjustly treated by Stalin and the Soviet government. Just how much substance is there to the charge that Solzhenitsyn was unjustly arrested and imprisoned?

The charge against Solzhenitsyn was that, as an officer, he was circulating demoralizing, defeatist sentiments among Soviet military personnel during the course of the war against the Nazis. Those opinions were not only defeatist, they were anti-Soviet. Given the circumstances that the troops among whom he spread these sentiments were fighting the Nazis, anti-Soviet propaganda amounted to pro-Nazi propaganda.

When he was released from prison he was rehabilitated. Even though the great majority were justly imprisoned, most of these were freed and were declared to be rehabilitated, i.e., to have been unjustly accused, convicted, and imprisoned. This rehabilitation was false as far as Solzhenitsyn was concerned, just as it was for the majority of those who were freed at the same time. A review of the evidence on Solzhenitsyn will demonstrate this. And most of this evidence is provided by Solzhenitsyn himself.

Corroboration of Solzhenitsyn's desire for a fascist victory is provided in his recent writings. This whole business was reviewed in an article in a recent issue of Science, Class, and Politics (No. 17, Spring, 1982, pp. 56-60).

"If only the invaders had not been so hopelessly crude and arrogant we would not have been forced to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of Russian communism." (The Gulag Archipelago, Vol. 3, pp. 26-7) In another place, Solzhenitsyn praises a real hero, a Rumanian saboteur who claimed to have destroyed a whole Soviet air-borne division by slashing their parachute straps so they would break when opened. (The Gulag Archipelago, Vol. 1, p. 608-610)

Later, he villifies the United States and England for their failure to attack and conquer the Soviet Union at various times and their failure to ally with the Nazis against the Soviet Union. He even bewails their failure to use nuclear weapons against the Soviet population.

"The failure to support the Czar, the recognition of the USSR in 1933, the collaboration with the Soviet Union during the war... were immoral compromises..."

(Speech at Washington's Hilton Hotel, June 30, 1975, quoted in N. Yakovlev, Living in Lie, p. 85.)

Just as the generation of Romain Rolland in their youth were depressed by the anticipation of war, our labor-camp generation [i.e., the pro-Nazi elements--M-LL] were depressed by the absence of it..." We "were most excited, of course, by the news from Korea... Those soldiers of the U.N. particularly stirred us..."* "Just wait, scoundrels! Truman will get you! They will drop an atomic bomb on your heads."

(The Gulag Archipelago, Vol. 3, p. 50-1, quoted in Living in Lie, p. 94.)

*The systematic use of war crimes by the U.S. in Korea was well publicized in the USSR at the time. See Science, Class, and Politics, No. 15 for details on these war crimes.

Another more noteworthy hero of Solzhenitsyn's is the quisling Vlasov, a Soviet general who turned traitor and fought for the Nazis. Calling him "an outstanding personality", Solzhenitsyn claims that Vlasov committed his treasonous activities because of disagreements he had with Stalin's policy. Apparently he had no such differences with Hitler and his thugs. Vlasov, therefore, had no qualms about shooting his fellow Soviet citizens and aiding the Nazis with their other atrocities.

In an offensive on Lyuban, Vlasov and his men became encircled by the Nazi forces. Although ordered by the Soviet command to withdraw before the encirclement was complete, Vlasov failed to do so. Soviet headquarters sent in additional help that with artillery and tanks was able to save a large part of the 2nd Strike Army. Vlasov, however, was not among those saved. The Soviets then instituted an unsuccessful search for him using guerillas and paratroopers. Although Solzhenitsyn wants his readers to believe Vlasov went over to the enemy because he was abandoned by Soviet headquarters, this was obviously not the case.

Captured German documents show that Vlasov gave himself up to the Nazis and offered to fight against the Soviets. "He swore allegiance to Hitler: 'We regard it as our duty to the Fuehrer...', 'I told them about my intentions to start fighting against the Bolsheviks...' '...Later in Gatchina, speaking at a banquet before Hitlerite officers, he assured them that he hoped soon 'to host the German officers in besieged Leningrad.'" (P. Zhilin, The Last Circle, pp. 107-8.)

It is not difficult to see who Solzhenitsyn found Vlasov such a hero. Vlasov was actually much like Solzhenitsyn. Both men were confirmed haters of socialism and

democracy. They both found the Nazi murderers admirable and sought to aid them by attacking and undermining the efforts of the Soviet army. By trying to make a hero out of Vlasov, Solzhenitsyn is trying to justify his own treachery.

Not only does Solzhenitsyn admire the Nazis and their loyal flunkies, but he tries to excuse the barbarous crimes they committed against the Soviet people. Using the familiar blame-the-victim fraud, Solzhenitsyn maintains that the atrocities inflicted on Soviet prisoners of war were the fault of the Soviet government. He puts forward the ridiculous argument that since the USSR did not support the 1907 Hague Convention or the 1929 Geneva Convention, the Nazis cannot be criticized for their treatment of Soviet prisoners of war. He claims that the Soviet Union did not care what happened to its soldiers in captivity.

What was this treatment that our humanitarian is trying to excuse?

"In special so-called gulags and stalags, the Soviet war prisoners were starved, exhausted by heavy physical work, burnt in crematoriums, used for making medical experiments unprecedented for their inhuman nature, subjected to refined humiliation in order to suppress their moral spirit, mercilessly beaten and shot dead.

"The sentence of the Nuremberg trial of the chief German war criminals said: 'The treatment of Soviet prisoners of war was characterized by especial inhumanity. The death of many of them was...a result of the systematic plan of killings.'"

(Skvortsov, The Last Circle, pp. 99-100.)

How absurd to argue that unless a signature is on paper somewhere, crimes against humanity are no longer that. But even aside from this

ludicrous premise, there is another falsehood in Solzhenitsyn's argument. "Solzhenitsyn could not but know that the Soviet Union recognized the Hague Convention and repeatedly stated its recognition." (Boris Skvortsov, The Last Circle, p. 96.) The USSR did not sign the Geneva Convention agreement because it contained racist provisions that it could not endorse. However, legal authorities, including German experts, recognized that the Soviet Union was covered under the Geneva Convention's standards for the treatment of war criminals. (See, Skvortsov, The Last Circle, p. 98.)

Interestingly, Solzhenitsyn's blame-the-victim excuse for Nazi barbarism was not original. Hitler made the same argument shortly before Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Was Solzhenitsyn deliberately parroting Hitler's views or was this simply a case of both sharing a common outlook and common aims?

It should be remembered that the German government's plans for the Soviet population were fairly well known in the Soviet Union by the time of Solzhenitsyn's defeatist activities in 1944. What were these plans? Its short-run plans included the wiping off the map of Leningrad and Moscow; the extermination of all party members; the extermination of all intellectuals and well-educated persons; and the extermination of the great majority of the population of the European part of the Soviet Union.

So in conclusion to this section, it is clear that Solzhenitsyn's conviction for spreading pro-Nazi and anti-Soviet sentiments (i.e., an advocacy of defeatism and collaboration with the Nazis) in the army was more than justified. It is also clear that his opinions had always been thus. He had always

been an elitist. Solzhenitsyn's affection for the Nazis was not some sudden and strange aberration, but one example and expression of his love for oligarchy in general.

There is still a myth in circulation that Solzhenitsyn was unjustly imprisoned. This is obviously not so. Because some innocent persons were imprisoned, an incorrect assumption has developed that all persons convicted of political crimes during the Stalin era were innocent. This is not true either. The great majority of the convictions were probably fully justified. From 1935 to 1950, under the threats of imminent invasion, invasion, post-war encirclement by U.S. bases, and U.S. atomic blackmail, the Soviet authorities overreacted from time to time to protect the country. But in the case of Solzhenitsyn, it is obvious that the Soviet authorities underreacted.

VI

The number of slanders directed at Stalin and the Bolsheviks are great in any period; so were they in this period (1941-53). So only one more example, that of Greece, will be considered in a short article like this. To even begin to deal with most of the major slanders, would take a multi-volume work.

According to this slander, Stalin and Churchill sat down and shared out sphere-of-influence in South-eastern Europe. This, of course, runs counter to everything Marxists believe in. Since Marxists believe in national independence, they believe that each nation decides its own fate. Spheres of influence are what capitalist nations believe in. Valentin Berezhkov, a Soviet diplomat and a translator, was present at the meeting between Churchill and Stalin when (according to Churchill) this agreement was reached.

Since this was a relatively sophisticated slander it will take a rather extended quote from Mr. Berezhkov to illustrate the point:

Then Churchill took up the question that interested him most of all.

"Let us settle about our affairs in the Balkans," he said. "Your armies are in Rumania and Bulgaria. We have interests, missions, and agents there. Don't let us get at cross-purposes in small ways. So far as Britain and Russia are concerned, how would it do for you to have ninety per cent predominance in Rumania, for us to have ninety per cent of say in Greece, and go fifty-fifty about Yugoslavia?"

While this was being translated into Russian, Churchill jotted down the percentages on a sheet of paper and held it out to Stalin over the table. Stalin glanced at the page and gave it back to Churchill. There was a pause. The sheet of paper lay on the table. Churchill did not touch it. Then he said:

"Might it not be thought rather cynical if it seemed we had disposed of these issues, so fateful to millions of people, in such an offhand manner? Let us burn the paper."

"No, you keep it," Stalin answered.

Churchill folded the paper in half and tucked it into his pocket.

This incident was reflected in the message Churchill sent from Moscow to President Roosevelt two days later (October 11) only by the following remark: "It is absolutely necessary we should try to get a common mind about the Balkans, so that we may prevent civil war breaking out in several countries when, probably you and I would be in sympathy with one side and U.J. with the other. I shall keep you informed of all this, and nothing will be settled, except preliminary agreements between Britain and Russia, subject to further discussion and melting down with you. On this basis I am sure you will not mind our trying to have a full meeting of minds with the Russians."

On October 12, Harriman called on Churchill in his Moscow residence. It was late in the morning but the Prime Minister, as was his habit, was still in bed, dictating a letter. Harriman recalls: "He read me a letter he drafted for Stalin, giving his interpretation of the percentages." Harriman said that Roosevelt and Hull would react negatively to such a letter if it was sent. At that moment Eden came into the bedroom, and Churchill, turning to him, said: "Anthony, Averell doesn't think that we should send this letter to Stalin." And thus the latter was never sent.

Afterwards there was a great deal of speculation, taking every possible form, with regard to the notorious sheet of paper Churchill had jotted on during the meeting in the Kremlin on October 9. It was claimed that London and Moscow had come to an understanding on the division of spheres of influence in the Balkans, and that this governed the conduct of the parties to the understanding in the course of later events. There are even some who conclude that if it were not for this understanding Southeastern Europe as a whole would have looked completely different after the war. In reality, there is no basis for giving such an interpretation to the incident. Even Churchill's description of what happened makes it clear that there was no hint of an understanding, let alone a formal agreement.

What actually occurred? Churchill wrote his percentages on a sheet of paper. Stalin glanced at them, and gave the sheet back to the Prime Minister without saying a word. Churchill suggested burning the paper, apparently thinking that if Stalin agreed this would make them accomplices in destroying a compromising document. Stalin, however, gave

the British leader no grounds for this. He answered casually that Churchill might keep the paper, thus showing that he attached no particular importance to it. And that was the whole of it!

What conclusions can be drawn? Undoubtedly, Churchill wanted to create the impression that some sort of understanding had been reached with the Soviet Union in order to justify the British government's attempts to establish its own influence in several regions of Europe. The long years of war and the horrors of fascist occupation had brought about an unprecedented upsurge in the liberation movement. Communists headed resistance forces everywhere and showed themselves to be the most stalwart foes of Nazi tyranny, thus winning the sympathy of the broad masses of the people. All this made it possible that after the occupying armies were driven out, the power in a number of countries might go to Communist parties that had the confidence of the popular masses. This frightened Churchill. His correspondence from this period with Eden and other members of the British cabinet contains not a few references to the possibility that Italy, France, Greece, and other countries might be "communised". He urged that action be taken to prevent this. It may well be that Churchill's motive in making his disreputable suggestion was to have a formal pretext for future meddling in the internal affairs of some countries and stamping out progressive movements. This is what actually happened in Greece, for example.

The Soviet Union, however, could never have been party to any such questionable "understanding". This would have been contrary to the fundamental principles of the Soviet Union's Leninist foreign policy, and

first of all to the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations and of respect for their sovereign rights. It was, of course, impossible for the Soviet Union to accept the Prime Minister's suggestion, and thus to sanction the British imperialists' attempts to dictate their own will to liberated peoples.

It is also indicative that in the telegram Stalin and Churchill sent to Roosevelt on October 10 (the only joint message the two leaders sent to Washington during their talks in Moscow), they said only: "We have to consider the best way of reaching an agreed policy about the Balkan countries including Hungary and Turkey."

Harriman remarks in his memoirs that in the first draft of the joint message to Roosevelt the words, "having regard to our varying duties toward them", suggested by Churchill, concluded the sentence just cited. On Stalin's insistence, they were dropped from the final version. Harriman writes that he told Stalin, during an official luncheon, that he knew about the first draft of the message and that Roosevelt would certainly be pleased that Stalin had suggested these words be deleted, since the President regarded it as highly important that all major questions be decided together by the Big Three. Harriman writes: "Stalin said he was glad to hear this and, reaching behind the Prime Minister's back, shook my hand."

The letter Stalin sent to Roosevelt on October 19, the day of Churchill's departure from Moscow, spoke only of an exchange of views. The letter said in part: "Ambassador Harriman will assuredly have informed you of all the important talks. I also know

that the Prime Minister intended sending you his appraisal of the talks. For my part I can say that they were very useful in acquainting us with each other's views on such matters as the future of Germany, the Polish question, policy on the Balkans and major problems of future military policies. The talks made it plain that we can without undue difficulty coordinate our policies on all important issues and that even if we cannot ensure immediate solution of this or that problem, such as the Polish question, we have, nevertheless, more favourable prospects in this respect as well. A hope that the Moscow talks will be useful also in other respects, that when we three meet we shall be able to take specific decisions on all the pressing matters of common interest to us." Neither at the Big Three Conference in Yalta nor in subsequent correspondence among the leaders, however, was the question of "percentages" touched upon.

All of this shows that the Soviet side had no intention of making a deal with London on dividing spheres of influence. Harriman writes of this episode: "I don't understand now, and I do not believe I understood at the time, just what Churchill thought he was accomplishing by these percentages. I know that he wanted a free hand in Greece, with the support of the United States, and that he wanted to have a hand in the development of the new Yugoslav Government, combining the government-in-exile in England with Tito and his group. Churchill certainly knew that President Roosevelt insisted on keeping a free hand and wanted any decision deferred until the three could meet together. The interesting thing is that when they did meet, at Yalta, the question of percentages was never again raised."

(Valentin Berezhkov, History in the Making, (1983) pp. 370-74.)

The fact that Stalin and the Soviet government made no such agreement to share spheres-of-influence is quite clear. Even U.S. Diplomat Harriman, a hard-liner, agrees that there was no such understanding. But the slander is useful, and continues to flourish in academic works, the news media, and in many "left" publications.

A further slander, based on the one above, states that Stalin and the Soviet Union cut off all aid to the Greek patriots. Actually, it was the capitalist powers with their ally, Tito's Yugoslavia, that accomplished this. Bruce Franklin summarizes the sequence of events:

Here we meet another "left" criticism of Stalin, similar to that made about his role in Spain but even further removed from the facts of the matter. As in the rest of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, the Communists had led and armed the heroic Greek underground and partisan fighters. In 1944 the British sent an expeditionary force commanded by General Scobie to land in Greece, ostensibly to aid in the disarming of the defeated Nazi and Italian troops. As unsuspecting as their comrades in Vietnam and Korea, who were to be likewise "assisted," the Greek partisans were slaughtered by their British "allies," who used tanks and planes in an all-out offensive, which ended in February 1945 with the establishment of a right-wing dictatorship under a restored monarchy. The British even rearmed and used the defeated Nazi "Security Battalions." After partially recovering from this treachery, the partisan forces rebuilt their guerrilla apparatus and prepared to resist the combined forces of Greek fascism and Anglo-American imperialism. By late 1948 full-scale civil war raged, with the right-wing forces backed up by the intervention

of U.S. planes, artillery, and troops. The Greek resistance had its back broken by another betrayal, not at all by Stalin, but by Tito, who closed the Yugoslav borders to the Soviet military supplies that were already hard put to reach the land-locked popular forces. This was one of the two main reasons why Stalin...led the successful fight to have the Yugoslav "Communist" Party officially thrown out of the international Communist movement. (Bruce Franklin, ed., The Essential Stalin, p. 34.)

This slander, like the former one, continues to live too. And it is equally devoid of substance.

VII

"The proof of the pudding is in the eating", is an old saying. It is appropriate here. Therefore it is necessary to turn from emphasizing what Stalin didn't do to considering what he did do that was of value and significance. Again, turning to Anna Louise Strong:

I think that, looking back, men will call it "the Stalin Era." Tens of millions of people built the world's first socialist state, but he was the engineer. He first gave thought that the peasant of Russia could do it. From that time on, his mark was on all of it...

To my friends of the West, I would say: This was one of history's great dynamic eras, perhaps its greatest. It changed not only the life of Russia but of the world. (A.L. Strong, The Stalin Era, p. 9.)

Even orthodox, pro-capitalist newsman Howard K. Smith made a similar observation at the time of Stalin's death in early 1953:

Howard K. Smith said from Europe: "Stalin did more to change the world in the first half of this century than any other man who lived in it." Let that stand as his worldwide epitaph.

He built up Russia to a great power, to the world's first socialist state. Thus, he also speeded and helped give form to the rising nationalist movements in Asia, especially in China, and to the movements for a "welfare state" in the West. "He altered the West's whole attitude to the workingman," H.K. Smith noted. For all ideas of government planning, of "New Deal" in the USA and "welfare state" in Britain, arose in competition with Russia's Five-Year Planning, to keep the 1929 world economic crisis from producing revolution.

Thus, in all lands, whether for him or against him, Stalin created history. (A.L. Strong, *Ibid.*, p. 117.)

And, as the principal leader of the first socialist and hence first truly democratic state, he had a significant effect on science, art, and literature. For an estimate of Stalin's role in the field of science, we can do no better than to turn to J.D. Bernal, who even in capitalist academia (e.g., C.P. Snow) is considered the greatest historian of science as well as one of the greatest physicists of this century.

In thinking of Stalin as the greatest figure of contemporary history we should not overlook the fact that he was at the same time a great scientist, not only in his direct contribution to social science, but, even more, in the impetus and the opportunity he gave to every branch of science and technique and in the creation of the new, expanding and popular science of the Soviet Union.

Stalin's contribution to the development

of science cannot be separated from his great work as the builder and preserver of socialism. He combined, as no man had before his time, a deep theoretical understanding with unfailing mastery of practice. And this was no accident. The success of Stalin both in his creative role and in his many battles against apparently overwhelming forces, was due precisely to his grasp of the science of Marxism as a living force. In learning from Marxism and in using Marxism he developed it still further. He will stand now and for all time beside Marx, Engels and Lenin, as one of the great formulators of the transforming of thought and society in the most critical stage of human evolution. In their different ways they each had crucial tasks to fulfil. Marx and Engels had to achieve the first knowledge of the nature of capitalist exploitation and of scientific socialism, at a time when the domination of capitalism seemed assured beyond any question, and had to create the methods of dialectical materialism completely foreign to the official thought of the time. They had to bring to the newly emerging industrial working class the first consciousness of their strength and destiny. Lenin was the first to make the decisive break and, through the creation of a communist party of a new kind, succeeded by revolution in forming the first socialist state. But he lived only to see it triumphant against the first onslaught of its enemies. The task of turning a backward and half-ruined country into a great and prosperous industrial and military power, the task of showing that socialism would work, was, throughout all the crises of internal difficulties and external attack, the responsibility of Stalin and history records his success.

But though his was the guiding hand and

his also the undaunted strength of purpose that all could rely on, this achievement was the achievement of hundreds of millions of men and women infused with the same determination and inspired by the same ideas. The true greatness of Stalin as a leader was his wonderful combination of a deeply scientific approach to all problems with his capacity for feeling and expressing himself in simple and direct human terms. His grasp of theory never left him without clear direction. His humanity always prevented him from becoming doctrinaire. (J.D. Bernal, "Stalin as Scientist", Modern Quarterly, pp. 133-134.)

Stalin used his influence to see that an immense (by capitalist standards) proportion of available resources were made available for the development and spread of science, art, and literature. He was aware of the fact these were a critical part of the basis of real democracy, and did his best to develop science and to spread scientific knowledge to as great a proportion of the population as possible:

The most striking example of this was his immediate seizing of the achievement of Stakhanov and his understanding that here was not merely someone who worked harder and more enthusiastically, but someone from the ranks of the workers who had mastered modern scientific technique and was able to combine it with his practical experience. Stalin saw at once that this opened the way to using the hitherto untapped reserves of intelligence of the people which capitalism could never touch, and that it broke at once the barriers of accepted standards of production. Here, for the first time in history, the workers were entering science in a positive way and science must make way for them:

"People talk about science. They say that the data of science, the data contained in technical handbooks and instructions, contradict the demands of the Stakhanovites for new and higher technical standards. But what kind of science are they talking about? The data of science have always been tested by practice, by experience. Science which has severed contact with practice, with experience--what sort of science is that? If science were the thing it is represented to be by certain of our conservative comrades, it would have perished for humanity long ago. Science is called science just because it does not recognize fetishes, just because it does not fear to raise its hand against the obsolete and antiquated, and because it lends an attentive ear to the voice of experience, of practice."

This was his appreciation of the revolutionary effect of a whole working population contributing to the making of knowledge and not merely to the using of it. Stalin drew the moral in his toast to science at a gathering of workers in higher education in May, 1936:

"To the flourishing of science! Of such science as does not segregate itself from the people, does not keep aloof from the people but which is ready to serve the people, to place all its achievements at the disposal of the people; of the science which serves the people, not under constraint, but voluntarily, willingly..."

"To the flourishing of science! Of such science whose devotees, while realising the force and significance of the traditions established in science and making skilful use of them in the interests of science, yet refuse to be slave to these traditions; of

science which has the daring and determination to shatter old traditions, standards, and methods when they become obsolete, when they turn into a brake on progress, and which is able to establish new traditions, new standards, new methods.

"In the course of its development science has known quite a number of courageous people who have been able to shatter the old and establish the new regardless of, and in the teeth of all obstacles. Such men of science as Galileo, Darwin, and many others are widely known. I should like to dwell on one such Corythaeus of science who is at the same time the greatest man of modern science, I have in mind Lenin, our teacher, our mentor...

"It also happens that new trails in science and technique are sometimes blazed, not by widely known scientists, but by people who are absolutely unknown in the scientific world, by ordinary people, men engaged in practical work, innovators. Here at the table with us all sit comrades Stakhanov and Papanin, men unknown in the scientific world, without academic degrees, practical workers in their fields of activity. But who does not know that Stakhanov and the Stakhanovites in their practical work in the field of industry scrapped as obsolete the existing standards established by well-known men of science and technique and introduced new standards, corresponding to the demands of real science and technique? Who does not know that Papanin and the Papaninites in their practical work on the drifting ice-flow, incidentally without any special effort, scrapped as obsolete the old conception of the Arctic and established a new one corresponding to the demands of real science? Who can deny that Stakhanov and Papanin are innovators in science, men of our advanced science?"

The development took shape even more clearly after the second World War with the recognition of the two complementary groups of worker-scientists, the rationalisers who continually improved production in detail and the innovators who provoke radical alterations in the mode of production. (Ibid., pp. 138-139.)

Stalin used his influence in a similar way in the fields of art and literature. Above average proportions of economic resources were put into developing and spreading literature, music, dance, sculpture, etc. In particular, workers and peasants were encouraged to try their hands in these fields. Special journals were set up for them to publish their plays, poems, novels, and short stories. Those who became good enough in any of these fields were encouraged to become professionals. The same type of procedure applied to art. This was the process by which working class art and literature were developed.

Stalin, like all real communists, had a high regard for all that was fine in art and literature. They want the entire population to have the benefit of it. But in the early days after the revolution most of the artists and writers did not come from the peasant or working classes. According to the propaganda put out in the capitalist press since 1917, Stalin and the Bolsheviks did not allow any but Marxist writers or scientists to publish. The most extreme form of censorship was used. Of course this was not the case. Stalin and the government felt that it was much better to have non-Marxist and hence non-socialist literature, than no new literature at all. The Bolsheviks believed that in a democracy, all citizens must be cultured. Therefore, the cultural level of the population must be raised. The great effort to achieve 100% literacy of the population when economic resources and literate people were so scarce reflects this same attitude.

All writers were allowed to publish as long as their work was of high quality and the content was not

overtly counter-revolutionary:

For almost fifteen years all these anti-Marxist and non-Marxist schools and trends dominated Soviet literature both in quality and quantity of output. The pervading tone of this literature was awe before the grandeur of the social cataclysm, grief over its fratricidal excesses, cold fascination with the iron discipline Bolshevism infused into the chaos unleashed by the Revolution, nostalgia for the lyricism of peaceful old Russia, ironic recognition of the dramatic changes in the peasant village, ill-concealed gloating over Bolshevik failures and embarrassments, and, above all, obsessive concern over the tragedy of the good, noble, sensitive, humane, but weak and vacillating, intellectual in the midst of mass heedlessness and cocksureness. All in all, it was a literature written by the intelligentsia, of the intelligentsia, and for the intelligentsia.

Some hotheads actually attempted to install proletarian literature by administrative means, that is, to impose a rigid literary dictatorship on all authors. But the Soviet Government squelched these attempts, realizing that for the time being, at least, literary skill and output were the virtual monopoly of the old "unreconstructed" intelligentsia, and that arbitrary interference, except in cases of obvious counterrevolution, might choke off literary creation....

The Marxist writers were advised to be patient, to discuss, to argue, to criticize, to give positive guidance, to try to win over the vacillators, to set an example by the superiority of their creative work, but to avoid high-handed repression....

Beginning with the thirties, the changed conditions caused a rapid shrinkage of the

market for anti-Marxist or non-Marxist literary wares, and a corresponding rise in Marxism's stock. This trend was enhanced by the very considerable creative triumphs a number of Marxist writers had scored in the meantime. The Marxists pointed with pride to Serafimovich's Iron Flood, Furmanov's Chapayev and Revolt, Fadeyev's The Nineteen and The Last of the Udeges, Gladkov's Cement, and Energy, Sholokhov's The Silent Don and Seeds of Tomorrow, Panferov's Bruski, Ostrovsky's How the Steel was Tempered (American title--Making of a Hero), and many other works of fiction, poetry, and drama. They argued, not without justice, that these works, all written by Communists, by Marxists, presented, on the whole, a fairer, more perceptive, and more rounded depiction of the totality of Soviet life than anything produced by the most gifted non-Marxists.

Wittingly or unwittingly, many of the non-Marxist writers, including some of those on the right, men like Ilya Ehrenburg, Leonid Leonov, and Alexey Tolstoy, became gradually imbued with Marxist ideas and attitudes. Their writing underwent a steady change, becoming increasingly less skeptical, less ironical, more positive....

(Joshua Kunitz, ed., Russian Literature Since the Revolution, pp. 5-9.)

Some, like Alexei Tolstoy, absorbed more of these Marxist (democratic) ideas. Others, like Ilya Ehrenburg, absorbed less of Marxist ideas, and consequently retained more of their petty bourgeois prejudices.

As in science, the Soviet writers approach to creativity is intensely democratic. This approach is entirely alien and incomprehensible to intellectuals raised in capitalist (elitist) societies.

The better to perform his task the Soviet writer was urged always to master the facts,

to spend time in factories, collective farms, and labor communes. He was enlisted in literary brigades to visit and mingle with various peoples in the vast land, and he was counseled to study Marxism, so that he might be able to fit his factual knowledge into the "scientific pattern and creative method of materialist dialectics."

The point most vigorously stressed was that no writer, however keen his perceptions and broad his knowledge, could hope to master the complex and rapidly changing Soviet reality by himself, without the active and constant cooperation of his readers and fellow-writers. Accordingly, the practice universally adopted was for writers to appear before workers, peasants, students, soldiers, children to read their works and then to have these works discussed and criticized by the audience with utmost candor; even more important from the creative point of view, to read their works, prior to publication, to open gatherings of their fellow-craftmen.

(Ibid., pp. 7-8.)

In music, the situation was the same. The government, including Stalin, wanted to raise the population's tastes and understanding of music up to and past the level of the old upper classes. That meant that the population had to learn to understand the best in music, and that meant classical music. The government was very generous in its support of composers, but these composers had to be socially responsible. That is, they had to write music that would contribute toward accomplishing the above-mentioned task: They had to write music that the man-in-the-street could enjoy. That meant melodic, easy-to-follow music, not music full of technical tricks that only an elite could follow and appreciate. Later, after the population's musical education had reached the level of

the old upper class, then the sophisticated musical techniques could be used.

Many of the old Russian composers emigrated and never came back. Stravinsky and Rachmaninoff are examples of these. Prokofiev also had emigrated, but when he realized the democratic implications of what the Soviet government was trying to do, he became intrigued. So he came back and immediately set to work.

Since he was trying to educate the whole population to an understanding, appreciation, and love of classical music, he started with the children. The Soviet Government in line with its democratic aspirations, had founded and lavishly financed children's theatres, children's operas, etc. One of the most famous of Prokofiev's compositions for the children's musical institutes was "Peter and the Wolf". He also composed "Cinderella" and "The Ugly Duckling" among others. Prokofiev went on from success in the children's music area to success in all areas of classical music. In the process of giving reality to his democratic project, he gradually became politically a Bolshevik as well.

Music critics, musicians, and the professional anti-communists in the capitalist countries have portrayed criticism of the works of famous Soviet composers (including Prokofiev) by government officials, musicians' institutions, and various members of the public, as intolerable restrictions on the rights of composers and of freedom of artistic expression. But in a socialist (democratic) society this has never been the view. It is taken for granted that composers should create and produce in a democratic fashion like any other responsible producer and citizen. Remember Joshua Kunitz's description (quoted a few pages earlier) of writers producing their own work. They submit it for criticism to the people they write about, to their readers, and to their fellow writers and their writers' organizations. This is mostly before publication. But this criticism continues after publication. The same procedure applies to music.

To summarize this section. Stalin was intimately involved in the democratization of all areas of culture. As the principal leader of the Bolsheviks for 30 years he could hardly have acted otherwise. If he (along with the Soviet Government) allowed the scientists, literary writers, musicians, and other artists the freedom to do what they wanted, he would have betrayed the democratic basis of socialism. All of these fields have developed their traditions and orientation in elitist societies (feudal, capitalist). Most of their practitioners come from upper-class families. Left to themselves, the majority of them could only have continued to express an elitist and anti-democratic point of view. The arts and the sciences had to be reconstituted on a democratic basis. Otherwise a democratic society would not have been possible.

Literature and art constitute one of the most important areas in determining a person's perception of the world and, enhance, his/her political orientation. Contrary to what the intellectuals in capitalist countries say, art, literature, and science are not above and independent of politics. Literature, in particular, is very political. This, on reflection, is obvious.

Conclusion

Stalin was one of the greatest revolutionary leaders in history. He was specifically a socialist revolutionary. Consequently, to genuine socialists he is a hero and a great leader. To defenders of capitalism, whether of the overt variety or the hidden Menshevik variety, he is one of the greatest villains. From the class point of view, both estimates are correct. But this is only the beginning. What is correct here led to certain unpalatable consequences. Since he fought for the interests of the great majority, those who viewed him as a great revolutionary leader did not have to lie about him. While those who had to defend an elitist society and fight against Bolshevik society were forced to lie and slander both

the Bolsheviks and Stalin. They had to lie since they were trying to convince the majority of the population of the world that Bolshevism (i.e., real socialism) was not in their interests.

In his last years, Stalin was aware of the rise of Menshevism, or revisionism, (i.e., the petty bourgeois outlook) in the party. He, therefore, was in the process of organizing a reversal of this trend at the time of his death:

In 1950, the miraculous postwar reconstruction was virtually complete, and the victorious Chinese revolution had decisively broken through the global anti-Communist encirclement and suppression campaign. At this point Stalin began to turn his attention to the most serious threat to the world revolution, the bureaucratic-technocratic class that had not only emerged inside the Soviet Union but had begun to pose a serious challenge to the leadership of the working class. In the last few years of his life, Joseph Stalin, whom the present rulers of the U.S.S.R. would like to paint as a mad recluse, began to open up a vigorous cultural offensive against the power of this new elite. "Marxism and Linguistics" and "Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R." are milestones in this offensive, major theoretical works aimed at the new bourgeois authorities beginning to dominate various areas of Soviet thought.

In "Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.," published a few months before his death and intended to serve as a basis for discussion in the Nineteenth Party Congress of 1952, Stalin seeks to measure scientifically how far the Soviet Union had come in the development of socialism and how far it had to go to achieve communism. He criticizes two extreme tendencies in

Soviet political economy: mechanical determinism and voluntarism. He sets this criticism within an international context where, he explains, the sharpening of contradictions among the capitalist nations is inevitable.

Stalin points out that those who think that objective laws, whether of socialist or capitalist political economy, can be abolished by will are dreamers. But he reserves his real scorn for those who make the opposite error, the technocrats who assert that socialism is merely a mechanical achievement of a certain level of technology and productivity, forgetting both the needs and the power of the people. He shows that when these technocrats cause "the disappearance of man as the aim of socialist production," they arrive at the triumph of bourgeois ideology. These proved to be prophetic words.

(Bruce Franklin, ed., The Essential Stalin, p. 35.)

Stalin's last political communication was a speech he gave to the Nineteenth Party Congress in late 1952. In this speech he once again reaffirmed his dedication to democracy. In a sense it was his last will and testament; he asked that all the decent people of the world carry on their fight for democracy and a decent world. This speech has been kept away from the population of the world, but Bruce Franklin was able to sneak into the Hoover Institute at Stanford and see it. In the following quote he summarizes part of its contents:

In his final public speech, made to that Nineteenth Party Congress in 1952, Stalin explains a correct revolutionary line for the parties that have not yet led their revolutions. The victories of the world revolution

have constricted the capitalist world, causing the decay of the imperialist powers. Therefore the bourgeoisie of the Western democracies inherit the banners of the defeated fascist powers, with whom they establish a world-wide alliance while turning to fascism at home, and the would-be bourgeoisie of the neocolonial nations become merely their puppets. Communists then become the main defenders of the freedoms and progressive principles established by the bourgeoisie when they were a revolutionary class and defended by them until the era of their decay. Communists will lead the majority of people in their respective nations only when they raise and defend the very banners thrown overboard by the bourgeoisie--national independence and democratic freedoms.

(Franklin, *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.)

So Stalin worked and fought his entire life for democracy and the freedom of the majority of people the world over. This is the very reason why he is slandered by those who consciously or unconsciously stand for an elitist society. To paraphrase a famous saying of Stalin "Slanderers come and go, but the achievements of the Bolsheviks and Stalin remain, only things done for the people are immortal".*

What the Bolsheviks, Lenin, and Stalin accomplished between 1917 and 1953 is one of the greatest achievements, if not the greatest achievement, in the history of the world. The achievement wasn't so much that of material advance but of cultural advance, the advance in human freedom and true knowledge for the mass of the population. This cultural advance is without parallel in human history, and Stalin's name will always be associated with it.

*"Leaders come and go, but the people remain. Only the people are immortal." (It is important to remember that Marxists, and hence the Bolsheviks and Stalin, do not subscribe to the 'great man' theory.)

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