"STALIN'S PURGES" OF 1937–38:

What Really Happened?

Yuri Emelyanov

Publisher's Note

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Cover: Workers at the Dinamo factory in Moscow vote in favour of the execution of "Trotskyite spies," 1937.

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PART 1: THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Every year, before I start my lecture on the problems of modern Russia, I ask my students the same question, "What were the good points in Soviet life?" This year the first to respond was a tall and heavy boy. His loud answer may be translated into English as "A hell of a lot of good points!" Then more detailed answers followed from the audience: "People were socially equal," "Rents and transport were cheap," "Education and medicine were free," "We used to have great science," "People didn't worry about their future," "When in trouble you knew which authorities to address and you were sure that you would get help," "People were more honest, friendly and kind," etc.

Yet when I asked another traditional question, "What were the bad points of Soviet life?" the same boy shouted, "Stalin's purges!" The almost automatic reaction of the student was understandable. Just three days before the lecture one of the main Russian TV channels had shown a four-hour long film, *Comrade Stalin*. It depicts a crazy tyrant planning to destroy the world and boasting of how he had made everyone afraid of him. Almost every day you can watch TV talk-shows or films dealing with arrests or executions during the Stalin period. Already, while at school, my students had attended special lessons on "Stalin's purges."

Here is a list of questions taken from a Russian school manual: What is a totalitarian regime? Why did Stalin need a system of mass reprisals? What were the reasons for increasing mass purges in the 1930s? What

were the social and psychological consequences of the repressive system which existed in the country? etc. After many lessons schoolchildren develop automatic reactions when asked about Stalin and his time.

The purpose of these lessons and TV programmes is clear — that "Stalin's purges" should outweigh "social equality" and "social guarantees," "certainty about one's future," "successes of science and culture" and many other undeniable characteristics of socialism. At the end of the '80s and the beginning of the '90s, shocking people with stories about the reprisals of the 1930s helped greatly to discredit socialism in the USSR. Now, by repeating these stories, the Russian ruling class is trying to conceal the failures of capitalist restoration, including the degradation of the economy and social conditions, the corruption of the administration at all levels and the wide use of political pressure and fraud. Over the past 20 years Russian bourgeois propaganda and education have continued to exploit the topic of "Stalin's purges," making people believe that the present regime saved the nation from such horrors.

Yet it is clear that the events of 75 years ago remain a major blemish on the reputation of the Soviet Union. In 1937-38, altogether 1,372,392 people were arrested and 681,692 executed. This means that, during the course of just these two years, approximately one-third of all arrests and 85 per cent of all executions from 1921 to 1953 took place. Why did it happen?

Old and New Explanations of the Reprisals of 1937-38

In his report to the secret session of the 20th Congress of the CPSU, on February 25, 1956, General Secretary Khrushchev declared Stalin to be the main culprit of the tragedies of 1937-38 and explained them by the negative character of the Generalissimo. He said that Stalin

> "practised brutal violence, not only towards everything which opposed him, but also towards that which seemed, to his capricious and despotic character, contrary to his concepts. Stalin acted not through persuasion, explanation and patient cooperation with people, but by imposing his concepts and demanding absolute submission to his opinion. Whoever opposed this concept or tried to prove his own viewpoint, and the correctness of his own position, was doomed to removal from the leadership collective and to subsequent moral and physical annihilation."[1]

Khrushchev blamed Stalin personally for the reprisals, saying that

> "many abuses were made on Stalin's orders without reckoning with any norms of Party and Soviet legality. Stalin was a very distrustful man, sickly suspicious... Everywhere and in everything he saw 'enemies,' 'two-facers' and 'spies.' Possessing unlimited power, he indulged in great wilfulness and stifled people morally as well as physically. Stalin put the Party and the NKVD up to the use of mass terror when the exploiting classes had been liquidated in our country and when there were no

serious reasons for the use of extraordinary mass terror."[2]

Khrushchev claimed that the main victims of Stalin's tyrannical methods were the Party functionaries. He stated that, out of 139 members of the Central Committee of the Party, 98 were arrested and executed. Khrushchev specifically mentioned alternate members of the Politburo Postyshev, Eikhe and Rudzutak among those who were arrested and executed. The very fact that a person was a Central Committee or Politburo member served for Khrushchev as undeniable proof of their innocence.

* * *

Recent Russian Studies on the Stalin Period

Baibakov, Nikolai. *From Stalin to Yeltsin (Memoirs).* Moscow, 1998.

Balandin, Rudolf, and Sergei Mironov. *Conspiracies and the Fight for Power: From Lenin to Khrushchev.* Moscow, 2003.

Chuev, Felix. *140 Talks with Molotov.* Moscow, 1991.

Kapchenko, Nikolai. *A Political Biography of Stalin.* 3 vols. Tver, 2004–2009.

Kumanev, Georgi. *Close to Stalin: Candid Witnesses, Meetings, Conversations, Interviews and Documents.* Moscow: Bylina, 1999.

Lyskov, Dmitry. *Stalin's Repressions.* Moscow, 2009 (based on NKVD archives).

Malenkov, Andrei. *About My Father Georgi Malenkov.* Moscow, 1992.

Martirosyan, Arsen. *The Marshals' Conspiracy.* Moscow, 2003.

Minakov, Sergei. *Stalin and the Generals' Plot.* Moscow, 2005.

Naumov, Leonid. *Yezhov's Plot*. Moscow, 2009 (based on NKVD archives).
Ostrovsky, Alexandr. *Who Stood Behind Stalin?* Moscow: OLMA, 2004.
Pyatnitzky, Vladimir. *The Plot against Stalin*. Moscow, 1998.
Tumshis, Mikhail, and Alexander Papchinsky. *1937: The Great Purge*. Moscow, 2009 (based on NKVD archives).
Zhukov, Yuri. *A Different Stalin: The Political Reform in the USSR in 1933–37*. Moscow, 2003.
Zhukov, Yuri. *Stalin: The Mysteries of Power*. Moscow, 2005.

The author of the present article has also dealt with the same subject in a number of books, including: *Notes on Bukharin* (Moscow, 1989); *Stalin: The Road to Power* (Moscow, 2002); *Stalin: At the Top of Power* (Moscow, 2002); *Trotsky: Myth and Reality* (Moscow, 2003); *Khrushchev: From Shepherd to Central Committee Secretary* (Moscow, 2005); *Khrushchev: The Trouble-Maker in the Kremlin* (Moscow, 2005).

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According to Khrushchev's explanations, the Party and People's Commissariat for State Security (NKVD) were either blind tools in the hands of Stalin or helpless victims of his mania. This interpretation allowed Khrushchev to claim that essentially the Soviet system was good but it was corrupted by Stalin and his personality cult.

Despite capitalist restoration, the explanations of the purges of 1930s given in modern Russian school textbooks do not differ much from those given by Khrushchev. Thus one 11th grade general school book, *Russian History, 20th Century to the Start of the 21st*[3] explains the repressions of the '30s by Stalin's desire to

suppress opposition to his policies amongst communists. The book states that Stalin "launched reprisals upon the leading bodies of the Party, state, army, punitive administration and the Comintern." As the people who belonged to these institutions were Party members it means that the communists were the main victims of "Stalin's purges."

Another school textbook of the same title somewhat enlarges the scope of people who were arrested and executed. It states:

> "The main goal of the mass repressions of these years was to deal a blow not only at communists who refused to recognise that the Stalinist methods of building socialism were correct or just had doubts about them... The terror destroyed the best free-thinking part of the nation, which was able to think critically and by the very fact of its existence threatened the personal power of J.V. Stalin."[4]

Authors of all these versions had no doubt that all of those who were arrested and executed were innocent people, since practically all of them were rehabilitated either in the '50s or at the end of the '80s.

The constant attention to the topic of "Stalin's reprisals" has prompted many Russian researchers to study thoroughly Stalin's life and activity, his time and especially the events of 1937-38. The opening of some of the previously closed archives has provided access to documents which had never before been published. Written memories, long buried in family archives, were brought to light. Some of the witnesses of the historic events were still alive and their testimonies were regis-

tered and printed.

This research has resulted in many books, some of which are listed in the box on the preceding page. Their contents, as well as that of others and many articles published in Russia within the last two decades, have refuted the most widespread versions of the events of 1937-38 and demonstrate that the truth was by far more complex and contradictory.

Who Were Those Arrested and Executed During the Reprisals of 1937-38?

Careful study of new documents and other evidence on these events shows that the old versions ignore the most essential facts and figures of the reprisals.

First: Although the figures of those executed in the USSR from 1921 to 1953 were high enough, they were often exaggerated many times. Solzhenitsyn[5] and many other authors asserted that their number was close to 50-60 million, instead of the real figure of about 800,000. This distortion led to a gross exaggeration of the number arrested in 1937-38. According to Roy Medvedev[6] and others, 5-7 million people were arrested for political reasons at that time. The authors of one university textbook[7] state that, in 1937-38, "millions of people were subjected to repression... The general number of those executed was over 2 million."

Second: According to widespread versions, most of those arrested and executed were members of the Communist Party. Thus the school manual *Fundamental Course of Russian History*[8] claims that the number of communists arrested and executed in 1937-38 "exceed-

ed 1.3 million people." Repeating this figure, historian Vadim Kozhinov, in his book *The Truth of Stalin's Repressions*,[9] came to the conclusion that Party members constituted over 90 per cent of those subjected to repression in 1937-38. He claims that 43 per cent of Party members were arrested. The real figures, which are now at everyone's disposal, show that during these two years 116,885 Party members and candidate Party members were subjected to repression. They constituted 4.2 per cent of all communists and 8.5 per cent of those who were arrested in 1937-38.

In reality, about 49 per cent of those who were subjected to mass reprisals were former kulaks (rich peasants) who had lost their property during collectivisation in 1929-32. Most of them had been exiled but by 1935-36 they had returned to their native villages. About 26 per cent of those who were arrested in 1937-38 constituted penal criminals (thieves, robbers, murderers and others). About 25 per cent of the arrested belonged to a category called "active anti-Soviet elements." Apart from communists and non-Party people accused of treason and espionage, this category included members of parties banned during the Civil War, former White Guard officers and priests of different religions (the latter accounting for 3 per cent of all the arrests).

Yet former kulaks and penal criminals, who comprised 75 per cent of those arrested in 1937-38, are never mentioned by the school textbooks and TV programmes.

Third: There are strong doubts as to the absolute innocence of all those who were declared guilty in 1937-38. Commenting upon the fact that, at the end of

'80s, almost 100 per cent had been rehabilitated, historian Dmitry Lyskov wrote:

> "The speed of reassessment of sentences and rehabilitation was fantastic. Within 15 months the special committee had rehabilitated 1.5 million people. The committee studied 67,000 cases within a month, or 2,000 cases a day. The rate and scale of rehabilitation makes one doubt whether court sessions took place. And, if the cases were considered in large groups, it is dubious that any judicial and constitutional norms were observed."[10]

Yet the existing versions of the purges never mention how the reassessment of the verdicts of 1937-38 took place. It is obvious that ignoring the real facts and figures about the reprisals and rehabilitation has resulted in serious distortions of historical events. It is thus doubtful that the older, orthodox versions can offer reliable explanations of why the grim events of 1937-38 occurred.

What Factors Were Most Important for the Soviet Union in the 1930s?

In order to explain why the purges were launched in the middle of the '30s, the authors of the orthodox versions insist that at that time Stalin met with growing opposition among Communist Party members and "the best free-thinking part" of Soviet society. In order to prove that point, Roy Medvedev, in his book *On Stalin and Stalinism*,[11] stated that during the election of the Central Committee at the 17th Party Congress Sta-

lin received the least number of votes in favour. Medvedev wrote that "270 Congress delegates voted against Stalin," and that the least number of negative votes was received by Politburo member Sergei Kirov. Medvedev suggested that the results of the voting made Stalin prepare reprisals against the Congress delegates and start planning Kirov's murder.

But Medvedev's statement was proved false as a result of information published in the July 1989 issue of the magazine *News of the Central Committee of the CPSU*. Paradoxically, at the peak of the anti-Stalin campaign of the perestroika period, a protocol of the election committee of the 17th Congress was published, running contrary to the dominant mood. The protocol, signed by the chairman Y. Zatonsky, and other members of the committee, stated that J.V. Stalin received three votes against and S.M. Kirov, four votes against.

Contrary to the school textbook versions, there was by the middle of the '30s no significant opposition inside the Communist Party to the policies of the Central Committee and its Politburo led by Stalin. All opposition groups had been defeated in the open debates of the 1920s.

By 1934 the most important opposition figures who had previously been exiled had returned to Moscow; and those who had been expelled from the Party had regained their membership. All of them occupied good jobs. Grigory Zinoviev published his articles in the Party's major theoretical magazine, *The Communist*. Nikolai Bukharin was editor-in-chief of the *Izvestia* newspaper, which was second in importance to *Pravda*. Alexei Rykov was the People's Commissar for

Posts and Telegraphs. He and Bukharin were members of the Party Central Committee.

All former leaders of opposition groups (Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsky, Preobrazhensky, Radek and others) addressed the 17th Party Congress (January-February 1934) to announce that their struggle against the majority of the Central Committee objectively undermined the socialist state and served the cause of counter-revolution. All of them repented of their old deviations and hailed Stalin profusely.

Commenting upon these speeches, historian Isaac Deutscher, who was a devoted Trotskyite, wrote:

> "Their recantations were neither wholly sincere nor wholly insincere... Among them the 'fathers' of the opposition grumbled, sighed and talked their troubles off their chests. They continued to refer to Stalin as the Genghiz Khan of the Politburo, the Asiatic... The grumblings and epithets were immediately reported to Stalin, who had his ears everywhere. He knew the real feelings of his humiliated opponents and the value of their public eulogies. But he was also confident that they would not go beyond violent verbal expressions of their public impotence."[12]

Of all the former opposition leaders only Trotsky continued from abroad to call for active struggle against Stalin and his supporters. In October 1933, in his magazine *Bulletin of the Opposition*, Trotsky urged the organisation of a new underground Communist Party. At the same time, he announced that there were no constitutional ways to fight Stalin's government and

called for violent action. But Stalin did not consider the Trotskyites to be a strong force in the USSR. In March 1937, he recalled that, even ten years earlier, there had been no more than 12,000 Trotskyites. He added that since then "many of this number became disillusioned with Trotskyism and left it... you get a conception of the insignificance of the Trotskyite forces."[13]

The only small underground group, called the Union of Marxist-Leninists, was organised in 1932 by Martemyan Ryutin, who was a former Moscow Party secretary and supported Bukharin. But the members of the group were soon arrested.

Perhaps Trotsky understood that it was futile to organise a new mass Communist Party in the USSR. Therefore he appealed to those who so far actively supported Stalin. Though for years Trotsky proclaimed himself to be an ardent opponent of "the Stalinist bureaucracy," he suddenly addressed in his *Bulletin of the Opposition* those who worked in the Party apparatus. He wrote:

> "Stalin's strength has always lain in the machine, not in himself... Severed from the machine Stalin... represents nothing... It is a time to part with the Stalin myth... Stalin has brought you to an impasse... It is time to carry out at Lenin's final and insistent advice: 'Remove Stalin!'"[14]

This appeal meant that Trotsky had some information about the mood of some of the Party functionaries who, for a long time, had been loyal Stalinists. Faced with growing problems of fulfilling the first Five-Year Plan, especially in agricultural production, some high

Party and Soviet functionaries had misgivings about Stalin's policy. In 1932, a number of high officials were caught in clandestine activity directed at changing the Party and state leadership. Among them were Central Committee secretary A.P. Smirnov, USSR People's Commissar for Supplies N.B. Eismont, Russian Federation People's Commissar for Domestic Affairs V.N. Tolmachev, alternate member of the Politburo and chairman of the Councils of the People's Commissars of the Russian Federation S.I. Syrtzov, and first secretary of the Transcaucasian Regional Committee of the Party V.V. Lominadze.

By the beginning of 1934 all of these people had been dismissed from their posts. Eismont and Tolmachev were expelled from the Party. At the 17th Congress Lominadze made a speech of repentance.

Despite much attention to Ryutin, Syrtzov, Lominadze, Eismont and Tolmachev and others in the Party press, there was no serious threat to the Soviet Union from their clandestine activity, nor from the appeals of Trotsky or the grumblings of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Rykov and others. The greatest threat came from abroad. The war scare of 1927 showed that the USSR did not have adequate military strength with which to oppose an attack from the West. It turned out that the USSR had fewer tanks and planes even than Poland.

Rapid industrialisation was undertaken mostly for the purpose of building the adequate defence of the USSR. On February 4, 1931, Stalin announced: "We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Ei-

ther we do it, or they crush us."[15]

The possibility of war became more real after Hitler came to power in Germany on January 30, 1933. In December of that year, the Politburo voted for the USSR to join the League of Nations and approved other actions on the international arena in order to thwart nazi aggressive plans. The USSR was ready to form a united anti-fascist front together with some leading capitalist countries.

Apart from the nazi menace, there was the threat of aggression on the Far Eastern borders of the USSR from militarist Japan, after Manchuria was occupied in 1931. At the 17th Party Congress Bukharin spoke not only of his deviations but also, and at length, of the possibility of a joint German-Japanese intervention. In his report of the Congress, Stalin explained the necessity of creating a new agricultural base east of the Volga in terms of "the possibilities of complications in the sphere of international relations."[16] Thus Stalin hinted that the Soviet control over major agricultural bases in the Ukraine and Northern Caucasus might be lost during a forthcoming war. At the same Congress the Chief of the Red Army General Staff, Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky, warned that the Soviet defence industry lagged behind that of the Western countries as far as introduction of new technologies was concerned.

The possibility of attack against the Soviet Union made the Soviet leadership place emphasis on patriotic propaganda. In August 1934, Stalin, Kirov and Zhdanov wrote relevant comments on school history books. Stalin even criticised an article written by Engels[17] which had been used by German social-democrats to

approve of the attack by Germany on Russia in 1914 and to explain their support for the Kaiser's government.

The war preparations and the needs of new industries and new industrial cities demanded rapid increase of agricultural production. The mechanisation and modernisation of agriculture was possible only on the basis of large rural enterprises. But extremely rapid organisation of collective farms followed by division of property of the kulaks caused new problems. The violent measures which accompanied collectivisation led to bitter conflicts. The kulaks were sometimes supported by poorer peasants, who constituted the majority of the Soviet population. In 1929-31 there were a number of peasants' uprisings which were suppressed by the armed forces.

Many Soviet people believed that, in case of war, former kulaks and those peasants who were sympathetic to them would rise against the Soviet regime and support the invading armies. A book about the construction of the White Sea-Baltic Canal,[18] presented to 17th Party Congress delegates, stated that many former kulaks had escaped from exile and were employed as construction workers in Moscow. These authors, including outstanding Soviet writers, claimed that the kulaks wrote threatening phrases, with swastikas as signatures, on the walls of Moscow houses promising execution of all communists. At the same time the book glorified the influential leader of OGPU (United State Political Administration — in fact, political police) Henrich Yagoda and his deputies for putting many kulaks under arrest and making them work on the con-

struction of the Canal and in other places under the GULAG (Chief Administration of Corrective Labor Camps and Colonies).

The economic, social, ideological and foreign political problems were by far more acute and pressing for Stalin and other Soviet leaders than relations with some communist oppositionists. These complicated problems demanded by far more profound and difficult decisions than efforts directed at coming to terms with or silencing small groups of malcontents as is asserted in the widely spread tales about "Stalin's purges." Besides, many oppositionists were aware of the gross problems facing the USSR. Explaining the behaviour of the former opposition leaders, Isaac Deutscher wrote:

> "They felt that they were all, Stalinists and anti-Stalinists, in the same boat... One of Trotsky's correspondents in Russia thus described the mood of these men in 1933: 'They all speak about their hatred for Stalin...' But they add, 'If it were not for him... everything would have fallen into pieces by now. It is he who keeps everything together.'"[19]

Contradictions Inside the Communist Party

It is obvious that the international and domestic challenges facing the USSR had to be answered by broad and rapid social and economic reconstruction of the country, and radical changes in foreign policy and ideological work, all performed under Stalin's leadership. These challenges demanded profound political reforms because the Soviet political organisation was practically the same as it had been in the first days of

the October Revolution and the Civil War.

The USSR Constitution, which had been unchanged since 1924, reflected the economic, social and political situation of the years immediately after the Civil War and the class struggle which had continued, sometimes in the form of armed conflicts, in the 1920s. According to this Constitution, election to the soviets was open and indirect. Delegates to local soviets were chosen by show of hands at open assemblies. Local soviets chose delegates to the provincial Soviets in the same manner. The latter chose the delegates to Republican Congresses of Soviets — who in turn chose the delegates to the USSR Supreme Soviet. Employers of hired labour (kulaks and owners of urban enterprises), priests of all religions, former land-owners of big estates, former policemen and members of the political parties banned during the Civil War were forbidden to take part in the elections.

Apart from this obviously undemocratic procedure, the rural and the urban populations were unequally represented in the Soviets. In the 1930s, the former constituted more than 70 per cent of the total, but they were represented in provincial soviets on the basis of one delegate for every 25,000 citizens, compared with one for every 5,000 in urban areas. As a result, the delegates from rural areas constituted a minority in all provincial soviets. Due to the multi-stage system of elections the rural population was even more strongly underrepresented in republican soviets and the USSR Supreme Soviet. It is obvious that the election system prevented not only the rural bourgeoisie (kulaks) but also their potential supporters from getting control of

the Soviets.

After 1933, almost all peasants became either members of collective farms (kolkhozes) or workers on state farms (sovhozes), and private capitalist firms in towns and cities were closed, so it was clear that the classes of rural and urban bourgeoisie had been done away with. There was no basis for continuing with the political discrimination of the peasantry. At the same time the threat of the coming war, and the need for political consolidation of the country, made a change in the election system especially urgent. Stalin and most other influential members of the Politburo (Molotov, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Kalinin, Kirov) came out for changing the election procedure and making elections general for all (liquidating all kinds of political and social discrimination), secret, direct and equal.

Later, Stalin and his supporters added that voters should have a choice between several candidates and that the old practice of voting for a single candidate should be abolished. On March 1, 1936, explaining the gist of the new election system to Roy Howard, President of Scripps-Howard Newspapers, Stalin said that he expected a very lively election campaign:

"There are not a few institutions in our country which work badly. Cases occur when this or that local government body fails to satisfy certain of the multifarious and growing requirements of the toilers of town and country. Have you built a good school or not? Have you improved housing conditions?

> "Are you a bureaucrat? Have you helped to make our labour more effective and our lives more

cultured?

"Such will be the criteria with which millions of electors will measure the fitness of candidates, reject the unsuitable, expunge their names from candidates' lists, and promote and nominate the best.

"...Our new electoral system will tighten up all institutions and organisations and compel them to improve their work. Universal, direct and secret suffrage in the USSR will be a whip in the hands of the population against the organs of government which work badly."[20]

Such elections had no precedent in Russian history. During the elections to the tsarist Duma there were property barriers, which meant that workers and poor peasants were heavily under-represented. Women and many national groups had no right to vote. Even during the secret, direct, equal elections to the Constituent Assembly in 1917 the voting did not embrace all the voters since it was conducted in less than half of all election districts of Russia.

But it was doubtful that all members of the Communist Party, especially its functionaries, were ready for a new system of elections. On the one hand, most of the Party functionaries supported Stalin's policies in the ideological battles of the 1920s. They constituted a consolidated body of professional leaders who were disciplined by the October Revolution and the Civil War. They demonstrated their abilities to perform difficult missions during the restoration of the Soviet economy after the Civil War and in the period of industrialisa-

tion and collectivisation.

They ardently supported Stalin. The tradition of praising Party leaders, starting from the first days of the October Revolution — when all the speeches ended with cheers to Lenin (and also to Trotsky, with less frequent cheers to Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin and Stalin), and when the assembly halls were decorated with portraits of Marx, Engels and Lenin (and also Trotsky) — changed from 1929 when cheering Stalin became standard, and portraits of Stalin and Lenin became principal decorations of Party meetings. The adoration of Stalin took the form of a veritable personality cult.

Yet, for most Party functionaries, it was not easy to perform the political reform designed by Stalin and his supporters. Their level of competence and education, their political experience and even understanding of Marxism were put to a difficult test.

The level of education of most of the Party functionaries was inadequate for a country which was in the process of 20th century modernisation. In his report to the 17th Party Congress, the Credentials Committee chairman Nikolai Yezhov announced with satisfaction that since the previous Congress in 1930 the proportion of delegates with a university education had risen from 4.1 per cent to 10 per cent, and the proportion of delegates with a secondary education had risen from 15.7 per cent to 31 per cent. Yet, despite the progress achieved, a majority — 59 per cent — of the Party elite represented at the 17th Congress still had only a primary education, which was absolutely inadequate for a country engaged in a life-and-death struggle with the most developed countries of the world.

At that time a veritable cultural revolution took place in the USSR. The illiteracy typical of the majority of pre-revolutionary Russia's population practically disappeared in the 1930s. Millions of people received secondary education. Tens of thousands of new specialists with university diplomas worked at newly-built plants and factories. Some of them were delegates to the 17th Congress. But the predominant majority of Party functionaries were veterans. In his report Yezhov stated that, while the number of those who had joined the Party before 1920 constituted only 10 per cent of Party members, they comprised 80 per cent of the Congress delegates. "Thus," said Yezhov, "this basic and well-tested layer of Party members who were schooled in the Civil War retain the leadership of the Party."

This "well-tested" layer was not homogeneous. Among these members were those who had joined before 1917. There were 24,000 Bolsheviks at the time of the February 1917 revolution. The vast majority of them had been arrested, imprisoned, exiled and/or condemned to penal servitude during tsarist times. Many of them emigrated abroad. The great majority of them were unable to get a formal higher education. Even such figures as Trotsky and Bukharin, who were considered to be "intellectuals" of the Party, had but one year of university attendance. They compensated for their lack of formal education by self-teaching, often in prison and exile. Almost everyone, including workers with primary education, diligently studied the works of Marx, Engels and their followers.

They were engaged in propaganda work directed at improving the economic conditions of the workers,

and for liberties and democratic rights. Before February 1917, the Bolsheviks fought to overthrow the tsarist regime and for democratic revolution. Although they had sharp debates with members of the Menshevik faction of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP), Socialist-Revolutionary Party members and anarchists, they often cooperated with their ideological opponents in their struggle against the monarchy. The final goal of the Bolsheviks was a socialist revolution but they had no clear idea of when it would come in Russia. Stalin, as well as all other Politburo members in 1934 (Molotov, Voroshilov, Kalinin, Kaganovich, Kirov, Kuibishev, Ordzhonikidze, Andreev, Kosior), belonged to that oldest ("Leninist") generation of the Party.

Another and more numerous group constituted those members who, like Yezhov, joined the Party between February and October of 1917. At that time the Party grew from 24,000 to 350,000 members. Most of the newcomers lacked any previous experience of political struggle and any theoretical knowledge of Marxism, but they were carried into the Party by Bolshevik speeches at the never-ending public meetings of 1917. These people joined the Party when Lenin announced the socialist revolution to be the primary goal of the Bolsheviks and they were now in conflict with almost all other socialists of Russia.

From October 1917 to the end of the Civil War, the Party increased its membership to 700,000. Khrushchev, Beria, Malenkov and many other Soviet leaders belonged to this generation of members. Together with older Party members they performed bravely in the

throes of the Civil War. Yet, unlike those who were Bolsheviks before 1917, they were aware that they had joined the ruling Party. Soon after the break-up of the alliance with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, and with almost all members of all other parties joining the White Guards during the Civil War, the Bolshevik (or Communist) Party became the only ruling party in Soviet Russia. The new communists were not accustomed to debates with people of other political views and they treated them as mortal enemies of the Soviet republic.

Many of this new generation came to occupy jobs in the Party, the soviets and other offices. In 1920, while 52 per cent of Party members were industrial workers by background, only 11 per cent of them continued to work in plants and factories. Over 80 per cent of Party members worked in the new soviet, Party or army offices or in other office establishments. For some people, becoming a communist meant first of all getting a good job. That is why Lenin time and again after October 1917 warned about opportunists and careerists who became Party members.

After joining the Party, most of these new members did not bother to study Marxism or develop their general education. At the 17th Congress Stalin spoke about "the not very high theoretical level of the majority of our Party members, the inadequate ideological work of the Party bodies, and the fact that our Party functionaries are overburdened with purely practical work."[21] In 1937 he stated, "I do not know how many members of the Central Committee learned Marxism."[22]

From 1917 to 1920 the vast majority of Party veterans grew accustomed to their ruling positions which

also meant certain material and social benefits to them and the members of their families. The fact that the position of the Party was uncontested led them to believe that they were destined to remain in ruling positions for an indefinite period. At the 17th Congress Stalin compared those Party functionaries with "aristocrats, who consider that Party decisions and the laws issued by the Soviet government are not written for them, but for fools."[23]

The disregard of laws by Party big bosses became chronic. The deputy chairman of the Party's Central Control Commission N.G. Shkuratov complained to the delegates at the 12th Congress in 1923 that it was practically impossible to start legal proceedings against a Party member as the legal bodies would be subjected to political pressure.

The position of those Party functionaries who joined Stalin's side in the ideological and political conflicts of the 1920s was pretty strong. Stalin and other Politburo members relied upon their support and in turn did not interfere actively in the affairs of the provinces and republics. The cult of Stalin (as well as smaller cults of Molotov, Voroshilov, Kalinin, Kaganovich and other Politburo members), which was fostered by provincial and republican leaders, allowed them to establish their own forms of adulation. In provinces and republics portraits of local Party leaders were used for decorating official buildings. Local poets composed poems and songs in their honour. Official speeches ended up with cheers for the local leaders.

In this artificial atmosphere of adulation it was easy for local Party leaders to surround themselves with

groups of sycophants. In order to safeguard their positions many local Party leaders relied upon the support of cliques and groups of communists devoted to them personally. On March 5, 1937, Stalin exposed this practice and spoke about Party functionaries who took with them dozens of their supporters whenever they were appointed to new posts.[24]

At the same time these cliques and groups were engaged in mutual rivalries. In his report to the 12th Party Congress Stalin had named dozens of provinces where Party organisations were turned into veritable battlefields of different cliques.[25]

Since most of these people began their careers as politicians and statesmen during the Civil War they grew accustomed to tackling extraordinary situations. At the same time simplistic thinking in dichotomist terms was habitual for them. They hardly resorted to profound and dialectical analysis. They used commands rather than persuasion. Their faults became evident during the collectivisation, which they turned into a competition of trying to make their republic or province fully collectivised before others. Many Party secretaries (E. Bauman in Moscow province, I. Vareikis in the Central Black Soils province, S. Kosior in the Ukraine, M. Khataevich in the Middle Volga province, Sheboladev in the Lower Volga province, R. Eikhe in the Western Siberian province) tried to complete collectivisation in their provinces as quickly as possible, disregarding the attitude of the peasants. As a result they resorted to military coercion.

Many a time Stalin and other Politburo members intervened in order to stop the brutal methods of re-

gional secretaries. Thus on January 31, 1930, Stalin, Molotov and Kaganovich sent a cable to Khataevich: "Your haste regarding kulaks has nothing to do with the Party policy." On March 2, 1930, in an article *Giddy with Success*, Stalin attacked the methods which regional and local Party leaders used in order to make peasants join collective farms.[26] After this article was published many peasants left collective farms, which they had been made to join by threats of brutal force.

These negative features of many Party functionaries, and the contradictions inside the Party, were totally ignored by Khrushchev for a simple reason: he was a typical representative of those Party functionaries who did not want the changes urged by Stalin and his supporters in the Politburo. Mentioning contradictions between Stalin and some Party leaders, modern textbooks and propaganda distort their respective positions. Without bringing a single fact they assert that the resistance of some communists to Stalin's policy inside the Party was motivated by their desire to strengthen democratic principles.

PART 2: REAL AND FALSE ENEMIES

Plots Against Stalin's Political Reforms

Not only Khrushchev, but also many other Party functionaries, did not want any changes which might jeopardise their position. Stalin encountered quiet but effective sabotage from the moment that he sent his constitutional reform proposals to Avel Yenukidze, secretary of the Presidium of the Soviet Central Executive Committee (*i.e.* the head of the civil service) so that he and his staff would transform them into a legal document. For months Yenukidze and his staff refused to work on Stalin's proposals.[27]

At that time Yenukidze, as well as many other Party functionaries, considered that all the innovations of Stalin and his supporters were tantamount to high treason of revolutionary principles. In private conversations they blamed Stalin for building an alliance with former Entente nations and class enemies inside the USSR.[28] Yenukidze and his group of supporters wanted to prevent work on the Constitution before such a project became public. In order to do so they were planning to arrest Stalin and his closest supporters.[29]

The sentiments of Yenukidze and others were also shared by Henrich Yagoda who in the middle of 1934 was appointed head of the USSR People's Commissariat for Domestic Affairs (the NKVD). Yagoda, who had become a figure of great importance due to his performance in organising mass arrests of kulaks and other "counter-revolutionaries," and sending them to GULAG camps, was most likely aware that discarding the

policy of repression would limit his activities simply to catching thieves and other penal criminals.

At the 1938 trial of the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" Yagoda admitted to being one of the leaders of the "bloc," to pursuing the aim of overthrowing the Soviet government by a 'palace coup' and to being complicit, through "grave violation of duty," in the assassination of Sergei Kirov in Leningrad on December 1, 1934.[30]

This author considers it possible that Yagoda wanted to construct a situation similar to the "Red Terror" declared after the attempt on Lenin's life by Socialist Revolutionary Party member Fanny Kaplan on August 30, 1918. From that time the importance of the political police — at first the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission (VChK or Cheka) headed by Felix Dzerzhinsky, later the NKVD — had grown tremendously.

The investigation of the circumstances surrounding Kirov's assassination revealed that Leningrad NKVD employees displayed at least a lack of professional zeal in guarding Kirov's safety. The earlier detention and release of Kirov's murderer Nikolaev on October 15, the traffic accident on December 4 which resulted in the death of Kirov's bodyguard Borisov, who was being transported under arrest to the place where he was to be interrogated, and the disappearance of witnesses to Kirov's murder, make one think that the later accusations that Leningrad NKVD employees were accomplices in the crime were not completely groundless.

Apart from Yenukidze, Yagoda and some of Yagoda's subordinates in the NKVD, a number of other important people took part in the plot for a "palace coup," including Kremlin commandant Rudolf Peter-

son and Moscow military district commander August Kork. With the help of soldiers who were stationed in the Kremlin and Moscow, they were preparing to arrest Stalin and other Politburo members. In his book *A Different Stalin: the Political Reform in the USSR in 1933-37*, Yuri Zhukov cites Yenukidze's evidence, given in Kiev on February 1,, 1937, after his arrest, and Peterson's evidence, given in Kharkov 16 days later. Pointing out coincidences, Zhukov writes:

> "It is difficult to imagine that both of them fabricated this evidence in advance, as they were aware that the result of such evidence would be a death sentence. It is even more difficult to imagine that the prosecution in Kiev and in Kharkhov received instructions to make Yenukidze and Peterson repeat the same fabricated evidence.
>
> "...the four versions of the coup d'état, about which Yenukidze and Peterson spoke, dealt with the greatest secrets about the Kremlin, its buildings, passages inside them and the organisation of the Kremlin which are kept secret even today. Such secrets would not be passed on to any old investigators in Kiev and Kharkhov."[31]

The secrets were in fact revealed by Yenukidze and Peterson in the process of the investigation.

At that time yet another plot was brewing. It was being organised by a number of Red Army commanders led by Marshal Tukhachevsky. Even before publication of the Russian books mentioned in Part 1, a number of authors in the West had presented evidence which proved beyond doubt that the Tukhachevsky conspira-

cy was not a result of Stalin's suspiciousness. The appropriate facts were narrated in the memoirs of German former intelligence chief Walter Schellenberg,[32] and in *The Conspirators* by American historian Geoffrey Bailey.[33] A brief account of how the Tukhachevsky plot was formed and developed was given in the book *Hitler Moves East, 1941-1943* by Hitler's former personal interpreter Paul Schmidt (literary name Paul Carell).[34] The famous American historian William Shirer noted that the latter "seems to have managed to be present whenever and wherever the drama of the Third Reich reached a climax..."[35]

We need to take into account the fact that Trotsky, as chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Soviet Republic and as People's Commissar for Military Affairs from 1918, had appointed many of the leading figures in the Red Army during the Civil War. Sharing the political views of their chief, these officers tended to overrate military methods of administration and the role of the Red Army in the world revolutionary process. Many of them continued to occupy commanding posts in the Red Army after Trotsky was ousted in 1925.

Besides this, Marshal Tukhachevsky and other military figures joined the plot mostly because of their opposition to Stalin's attempts to build cooperation with France and Britain against nazi Germany. From the beginning of the secret cooperation between Germany and the USSR in the early 1920s, which allowed Germany to bypass Versailles treaty bans, Tukhachevsky and some other Soviet military leaders established good working relations with many influential German gen-

erals.

Hitler's coming to power, and the ending of Soviet-German military cooperation, did not break personal relations between some of the Soviet and German military figures. At that time German generals approved wholeheartedly of Hitler's armament programme. At the same time they were afraid that Hitler might plunge Germany into another war on two fronts, and they relied on their good relations with the Soviet military to prevent attack by the Red Army from the East. Their fear of war on two fronts was so great that they even prepared a coup d'état in 1938, when the threat of such a war emerged during the political crisis over the Sudetenland. Only the surrender of France and Britain at the Munich conference prevented the realisation of this plot.[36]

In turn Tukhachevsky and his supporters in the Red Army hoped that their cooperation with the German military would prevent the Soviet Union having to fight a war on two fronts, against Germany and Japan. At the same time Tukhachevsky's rivalry with Marshal Vorishilov, USSR People's Commissar for Defence and the third most influential person in the Politburo, made the former start planning his own coup d'état in order to establish military rule in the Soviet Union.

The murder of Kirov created a situation which favoured the resumption of the "Red Terror" of 1918. The leadership thought that the assassination meant the beginning of a coup d'état. Just as Stalin was about to go to the railway station in Moscow, in order to travel to Leningrad after he had learned about Kirov's murder, he got a phone call from Yenukidze. The conversation

between Stalin and Yenukidze resulted in a decree submitted to the USSR Central Executive Committee which changed legal procedures in all cases connected with terrorist acts. According to the "Law of December 1," such cases were to be considered within ten days. The defendants were forbidden to appeal to higher judicial authorities and were to be executed immediately after the sentence was passed. This draconian measure was the result of the sense of mortal danger for the Soviet government and was used for several trials involving dozens of people which took place at the beginning of 1935. Only gradually was this practice stopped.

Yagoda and other NKVD officers tried to prove that Nikolaev was connected with former White Guards. At the same time it was announced that Nikolaev had acted on the orders of an underground organization of Zinoviev supporters. Zinoviev and his longtime collaborator Kamenev were arrested.

Already in 1927 Zinoviev and Kamenev had been expelled from the Party, then repented. In 1932 they were caught in another case of breaking Party discipline and were expelled again. They repented a second time and were readmitted to the Party. By that time they were totally discredited and nobody believed them. In the atmosphere charged with hatred towards the murderers of Kirov the fact that some of Nikolaev's friends were former supporters of Zinoviev and Kamenev seemed sufficient proof of their involvement in the plot. Both of them were put on trial and received prison sentences.

The murder of Kirov and the loud demands for increasing vigilance and exposing the clandestine ac-

tivities of class enemies promoted arbitrary accusations and expulsions from the Party. In 1935 a Soviet film, *The Party Card*, showed a former kulak who became a worker and then a Party member but in fact served a foreign intelligence service. Thousands of communists were expelled from the Party for concealing their true class origin or for "losing vigilance." In the Smolensk province alone 23 per cent of communists were expelled from the Party.

It is clear that Stalin and other Politburo members condoned this campaign. Yet at the same time Stalin and Molotov became more active in promoting the new Constitution. Yenukidze tried to limit the changes: although he agreed to establishing direct elections instead of the existing multi-stage procedure, and to discarding the inequality in representation of rural and urban dwellers, he resolutely opposed voting by secret ballot.[37] As the contradictions between him and Stalin developed, Yenukidze was relieved of his duties as the Secretary of the USSR Central Executive Committee. Approximately at the same time Peterson was relieved from his post as the Kremlin commandant. The NKVD arrested a number of minor employees of Yenukidze's staff in the Kremlin, and in June 1935 he was accused of "losing political vigilance." At the same time Stalin's growing suspicions about Yagoda and the NKVD made him charge Yezhov, chairman of the Party Control Commission, with keeping the NKVD under strict control. The plans for a coup d'état were thwarted but Yenukidze, Peterson and others remained free. Meanwhile Tukhachevsky and others continued their separate preparations for a coup d'état, involving

not only new military but also political figures.

Struggle Over the New Constitution

All through 1935 and the beginning of 1936 the work on the new USSR Constitution continued. Former opposition leaders Bukharin and Radek participated in this work. Stalin himself wrote and rewrote many articles of the Constitution. In the middle of 1936 the draft was published, and public discussion then took place at some 500,000 meetings. Over 2 million amendments to the draft were proposed during the course of the discussion.

Yet, as Yuri Zhukov points out, many important Party leaders avoided the central topic of general interest. At the peak of public discussion about the future Constitution, Moscow Party First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev published articles devoted to the development of playgrounds for children; and, while Lavrentii Beria, First Secretary of the Transcaucasian Central Committee of the Party, mentioned the draft in an article of his, he warned that class enemies would try to use the new system of elections to get into the Soviets.

Answering this open or muted opposition to the new Constitution, Stalin resolutely rejected attempts to restore a clause which forbade the participation in elections of "non-working and exploiting elements." On November 25, 1936, in his report to the Extraordinary 8th Congress of Soviets of the USSR, he said:

> "It is said that this is dangerous, as elements hostile to the Soviet government, some of the former White Guards, kulaks, priests, etc., may worm

their way into the supreme governing bodies of the country. But what is there to be afraid of? If you are afraid of wolves, keep out of the woods.

"In the first place, not all the former kulaks, White Guards and priests are hostile to the Soviet government.

"Secondly, if the people in some place or other do elect hostile persons, that will show that our propaganda work was very badly organised, and we shall fully deserve such a disgrace; if, however, our propaganda work is conducted in a Bolshevik way, the people will not let hostile persons slip into the supreme governing bodies. This means that we must work and not whine, we must work and not wait to have everything put before us ready-made by official order."[38]

Were Party functionaries so afraid of some former White Guards, kulaks or priests becoming Supreme Soviet deputies? It is difficult to believe it. Yet, under the pretext of preserving the purity of class consciousness, it was easier for them to defend the old practice which allowed themselves to be elected to the Soviets and thus demonstrate popular support. They had read Stalin's interview with Roy Howard, quoted in Part 1 of this article, and were not happy with it. They were not eager to let voters discuss their doings. They were accustomed to loud applause at the end of their bombastic speeches which they had learned from the time of the Civil War, and they were not ready for open and honest debates before an audience. They hated to think that the new election procedures might put an end to their ruling

positions and all the good aspects of life to which they had become accustomed.

As Yuri Zhukov again points out, many peasants (and not only kulaks) remembered the excesses of collectivisation in 1929-30 and could vote against those who tried to overfulfil the plans at all costs. If such Party secretaries failed to get elected to the Soviets, their positions as Party leaders might be questioned as well.

The new Constitution, also known as the "Stalin" Constitution, was adopted on December 5, 1936. Several months before this it had been announced that the practice of Party purges would be stopped. The country started preparations for the elections to the USSR Supreme Soviet.

The First Moscow "Show Trials"

Yet there were other events which seemingly contradicted the tendency towards more political freedom and democracy. In August 1936, a new trial against Kamenev, Zinoviev and others took place. All of them were accused of being members of a secret "Trotskyite-Zinovievite centre" which had planned murders of Politburo members and a coup d'état.

Though some of the accusations were plausible most of them now appear farfetched. Yet it must be taken into consideration that Stalin, as well as many Soviet people, had long before this point ceased to trust Zinoviev and Kamenev and therefore could believe the prosecution's version of events. For a year and a half practically no-one in the Soviet Union had doubted the *indirect* responsibility of the two opposition leaders for

Kirov's murder; so it was easy to believe that both of them, as well as their supporters, were *directly* involved in organising the murder not only of Kirov but of other Soviet leaders as well.

All of the defendants were sentenced to death. During the trial some other former opposition leaders were implicated and some of them were arrested. In September 1936, Yagoda was relieved of his post as head of the NKVD, and his replacement Yezhov prepared new trials.

The next Moscow "show trial" took place in January 1937. This time Pytakov, Radek, Sokolnikov and other oppositionists were in the dock. They were accused of being members of a "parallel Trotskyite centre" and of organising terrorist activities, including transport wreckages, murders and other acts of sabotage. The noted German writer Lion Feuchtwanger, who was present at all the sessions of the trial, found the arguments of the prosecution and the self-accusations of the defendants convincing.[39] Judging from the looks of the defendants, Feuchtwanger emphatically denied that they were subjected to any form of physical pressure. In his book Feuchtwanger also described a conversation with Stalin, showing vividly that Stalin believed the accusation and expressed his sincere indignation at Radek's hypocrisy.[40]

Yet it was clear that at least some of the evidence presented was open to question. For example, while Pyatakov stated that he went from Berlin to Oslo by air in order to meet Trotsky, the Norwegian authorities declared that no foreign plane landed in Oslo for weeks before or after the date that Pyatakov alleged.

This time not all of the defendants were sentenced to death: Radek, Sokolnikov and some others received imprisonment terms.

Stalin's Programme of Re-education of All Party Functionaries

In February/March 1937, soon after the trial of Pyatakov and the others, a plenary Central Committee meeting was convened. At the 20th Congress Khrushchev asserted that at this meeting Stalin attempted to build a "theoretical justification for the mass terror policy."[41] Nothing was further from the truth. Although the meeting most likely started with Yezhov's report on charges against Bukharin and Rykov, the main discussion (probably quite heated) seems to have been around Party democracy, introduced in the speech by Andrei Zhdanov.[42]

At the meeting many of the participants (Kosior, Eikhe. Postyshev, Sheboldaev, Vareikis, Gamarnik, Kaminsky, Lubchenko, Rudzutak, Khataevich, Yakir and others) demanded urgent measures in order to expose clandestine enemies and to punish them without mercy. At the same time they demanded that Bukharin and Rykov be expelled from the Central Committee, arrested and shot.

While supporting the general appeal of the speakers to increase vigilance, Stalin, in his two speeches at the plenary meeting, drew quite different conclusions. Stating that supporters of Trotsky had turned into "a gang without principle and without ideas, of wreckers, diversionists, intelligence service agents, murderers,"[43]

Stalin nonetheless added that there was no need to exaggerate the strength and influence of the oppositionists. Besides, he pointed out, many of the former Trotskyites had discarded their views long before. Stalin also stressed that one should not punish "all those who at one time went along the same street with some Trotskyite or dined in a public dining-hall close to a Trotskyite."[44] Yet, he said, many honest and good communists were expelled from the Party for their connections with Trotskyism. He spoke of a plant in Kolomna where there were 1,400 communists at the time and 2,000 former communists who had been expelled from the Party. He said that "the ruthless inhuman policy regarding common members of the Party, the indifference of many of our leaders to the destinies of separate Party members, their readiness to push out of the Party wonderful people who turned out to be excellent workers... create the situation which allows the Rightists, Trotskyites, Zinovievites and all others to enlarge their alien reserves."[45]

Stalin cited other examples of the disregard by Party functionaries of common people. He reminded the plenum of the brutal measures which had been used in order to make peasants join collective farms. At the same time he spoke about those Party leaders who appointed their personal friends and relatives to important administrative posts. Such leaders, said Stalin, "wanted to create conditions which would give them a certain independence, both of the local people and of the Central Committee of the Party."[46]

Stalin said that many Party functionaries had forgotten Lenin's principle of not only teaching the mass-

es but also learning from them. Citing the example of the Kiev Party organisation's disregard of complaints by rank-and-file member Nikolaenko, he warned that the Party might perish if it did not keep close contact with the working class. He reminded the plenum of the Greek myth about Antaeus, who lost his battle with Hercules as soon as he lost contact with the Earth, his mother.

In order to remedy this state of affairs Stalin presented a plan for the re-education of all Party functionaries. He proposed that the 100,000-150,000 Party cell secretaries should attend four-month "Party courses," to be established in regional centres; the 30,000-40,000 district secretaries should attend eight-month "Lenin courses" in ten of the most important centres; the city committee secretaries should be sent on six-month "courses for the study of history and the Party's policy"; and the first secretaries of the divisional and provincial organisations and republican central committees should attend a six-month "conference on questions of internal and international policy."

Stalin suggested that each Party functionary should present several candidates so that one of them would be chosen to perform his/her duties during the studies. Later these deputies should also be sent on the appropriate courses. Thus Stalin made it clear that all party functionaries were in need of education in order to improve their level of professional performance.

He considered that the participants in the six-month "conference" might in the future become the leading figures of the Party. He said:

> "These comrades should provide not one but several relays, capable of replacing the leaders of the Central Committee of our Party.[47] ...We, members of the Politburo, are old people. Soon we shall go down. This is a law of nature. And we want to have several teams which will be able to replace us."[48]

At the same time Stalin made it clear that many Party functionaries of that time might part with their jobs and be replaced by other people. He said:

> "We have tens of thousands of capable and talented people. It is only necessary to know them and to promote them in time so that they should not remain in their old places too long and begin to rot."[49]

Supporting Zhdanov's proposals, Stalin also demanded

> "restoration of democratic centralism in our inner-party life. This is a form of control. The restoration on the basis of the Party charter which demands election of party bodies. Secret elections, the right to demand the ousting of all candidates without exceptions and the right to criticise candidates."[50]

The programme of re-education, the restoration of democratic centralism in the Party and the approaching election, during which many of the Central Committee members might not be elected to the USSR Supreme Soviet, made Khrushchev and many other Party functionaries equate Stalin's plans with a programme

of "mass terror." Many of them wanted to thwart the plans.[51]

Tukhachevsky's Plot and Its Debacle

In February 1937, Yenukidze, Peterson and several NKVD officers who served under Yagoda had been arrested. Yagoda himself was arrested on March 29. Some military officers who were involved in Tukhachevsky's plot were also taken into custody. All this made Tukhachevsky and others hurry on with their plot.

In the previous year Tukhachevsky had conferred with his German colleagues. Paul Carell wrote:

> "In the spring of 1936, Tukhachevsky went to London as the leader of the Soviet delegation attending the funeral of the King George V. Both his outward and homeward journeys led him through Berlin. He used the opportunity for talks with leading German generals. He wanted to make sure that Germany would not use any possible revolutionary unrest in the Soviet Union as a pretext for marching against the East. What mattered to him most was his idea of a German-Russian alliance after the overthrow of Stalin... Tukhachevsky became increasingly convinced that the alliance between Germany and the Soviet Union was an inescapable commandment of history."[52]

In his book *The Conspirators*, Geoffrey Bailey quoted an attested remark by Tukhachevsky made at that time to the Romanian Foreign Minister Titulescu. He said:

> "You are wrong to tie the fate of your country to countries which are old and finished, such as France and Britain. We ought to turn towards new Germany. For some time at least Germany will assume the leading position on the continent of Europe."[53]

Meanwhile the pro-German statements made by Tukhachevsky in Western European countries during his trip to Britain became known in France and Czechoslovakia. The mutual assistance treaties of both countries with the USSR, concluded in 1935, united them in a joint anti-nazi coalition. The information that such an important figure as Tukhachevsky took a pro-German stand caused grave concern in Paris and Prague. The two governments notified the Soviet government about Tukhachevsky's statements.

As Tukhachevsky with other conspirators, using unrest among the Party functionaries, accelerated preparations for a coup d'état, he intended to ask the USSR People's Commissar for Defence K.E. Voroshilov to convene a conference on military problems in the Kremlin. Tukhachevsky planned to come to the conference with his supporters and to surround the Kremlin with troops loyal to him. Stalin and some of his Politburo colleagues were to be arrested and shot immediately.[54]

Carell wrote:

> "In March 1937, the race between Stalin and Tukhachevsky was becoming increasingly dramatic... Why did the Marshal not act then? Why was he still hesitating? The answer is simple enough.

> The moves of General Staff officers and Army commanders, whose headquarters were often thousands of miles apart, were difficult to coordinate, especially as their strict surveillance by the secret police forced them to act with the utmost caution. The coup against Stalin was fixed for May 1, 1937, mainly because the May Day Parades would make it possible to move substantial troop contingents to Moscow without arousing suspicion."[55]

On April 9, 1937, the chief of the Red Army Intelligence Board, Semyon Uritsky, informed Stalin and Voroshilov that in Berlin there were rumours about opposition in the Soviet military to the Soviet leadership.[56]

By that time the Gestapo had got wind of Tukhachevsky's negotiations with the German military leaders. In order to get fuller information about relations between the military leaders of the two countries, Gestapo agents penetrated the Wehrmacht archives and stole some documents pertaining to Soviet-German military contacts. The agents tried to conceal the theft by setting fire to the archives. After the stolen documents were analysed, the Gestapo deputy chief Heydrich came to the conclusion that there was ample evidence of secret cooperation between the leaders of the Wehrmacht and the Red Army. The Gestapo informed Hitler.

Despite Tukhachevsky's pro-German statements, Hitler and others in the nazi leadership were not happy about clandestine contacts between the military leaders of Germany and the USSR. The nazi leaders considered

that the establishment of a military dictatorship in Russia might stimulate similar developments in Germany. As military dictator of Russia, Tukhachevsky might help his German colleagues during a future coup. Hitler decided to thwart the joint conspiracy. He ordered the stolen documents to be sent to Moscow, but with added fabrications to make the materials even more shocking. German intelligence chief Walter Schellenberg later wrote that the false additions constituted but a minor part of the whole collection, which was secretly sold to the Soviet Union.[57] (Later, in 1971, former premier Vyacheslav Molotov claimed that he, Stalin and other Politburo members knew about the Tukhachevsky conspiracy before they got the German documents.[58])

There are different versions about the subsequent events. On the one hand there is substantial evidence that the military coup scheduled for May 1 was frustrated at the last minute. Some people present in Red Square at the time remembered that immediately after the beginning of the parade, rumours spread about an imminent terrorist act against Stalin and other Politburo members, who at that time occupied the tribune on the Lenin Mausoleum.[59] Many years later, former NKVD officer Pavel Meshik claimed that he personally arrested a terrorist on the upper floor of a building adjacent to Red Square just when he was getting ready to shoot. Meshik said that he was awarded the Order of Lenin for this arrest.[60]

On the other hand there is evidence that the coup was postponed. Just before May 1, it was announced in London that the coronation of George VI, who had become King after the abdication of Edward VIII, would

take place on May 12. The Soviet Union was invited to send a delegation to the ceremony, and the government decided that Tukhachevsky would head it. According to Carell, Tukhachevsky "postponed the coup by three weeks. That was his fatal mistake."[61]

On May 3, Tukhachevsky's documents were sent to the British Embassy in connection with his visit to London. But the next day the papers were recalled and it was announced that Admiral Vladimir Orlov, naval commander-in-chief, would head of the delegation.

On May 10, it was announced that Tukhachevsky had been relieved of his duties as Deputy People's Commissar for Defence and made commander of the Volga military district. On May 24, Stalin sent a circular letter to all the members and alternate members of the Party Central Committee, informing them about the conspiratorial activities of Tukhachevsky and others. Since Tukhachevsky was an alternate member of the Central Committee, other members and alternate members of this highest body of the Party were asked to vote for or against his expulsion from the Party and the transfer of his case to the NKVD. All supported the suggested measures.

On May 27, the leader of the conspiracy was arrested. Between May 19 and 31, his major collaborators were also arrested. But one of them, Deputy People's Commissar for Defence Y.B. Gamarnik, committed suicide just before his arrest.

On June 2, a session of the Military Council of the People's Commissariat for Defence was convened. Although the investigation was not yet over, and it was probable that some of the participants in the plot were

present, Stalin attended the session and addressed it.

He began his speech by saying, "Comrades, I think that now nobody has doubts about the existence of a military-political conspiracy against Soviet power." He added that "the core of the military-political conspiracy" consisted of 13 people: Trotsky, Rykov, Bukharin, Rudzutak, Karakhan, Yenukidze, Yagoda, Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Uborevich, Kork, Eideman and Gamarnik. At the same time he mentioned that some 300-400 people had been arrested. Explaining that the conspiracy had not been exposed earlier, due to euphoria in the Party and among the Soviet people, Stalin said:

> "The general situation, the growth of our ranks, the achievements of the army and the country as a whole decreased our political vigilance, diminished the sharpness of our sight."[62]

Stalin spoke about the dependence of Tukhachevsky and the other arrested commanders on the German military, and suggested that the conspirators did not have any profound ideological platform:

> "What was their weakness? They lacked contact with the people... They relied on the German forces... They were afraid of the people."[63]

Stalin suggested that some of the military officers got involved in the conspiracy out of sheer opportunism. At the same time, he spoke about some of the plotters being intimidated by Tukhachevsky and the others into joining them. He proposed that such people should be forgiven if they came forward and honestly

spoke about their participation in the plot.

Refuting concern expressed by some of the speakers at the session that the arrests among the military might weaken the Red Army, Stalin said:

> "We have in our army unlimited reserves of talents... One should not be afraid to move people upwards."[64]

On June 11, Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Uborevich, Kork, Eideman, Feldman, Putna and Primakov were brought before a court martial and after a brief trial were sentenced to death.

Stalin Versus Most of the Central Committee

On June 23, 1937, less than two weeks after Tukhachevsky's execution, a plenary meeting of the Central Committee was convened. The first to speak was Nikolai Yezhov. He demanded emergency powers in order to continue exposing anti-Soviet conspiracies. At the same time, he asked the Central Committee for permission to arrest Sheboldayev, Balitzky and nine other members and 14 alternate members of the Central Committee, suspected of participation in the anti-Soviet conspiracy.

In his book *The Plot against Stalin*, Vladimir Pyatnitsky[65] describes this plenary meeting in detail. Though he attacks Stalin, he notes that a number of speeches were made, by Kaminsky, Khataevich, Lubchenko and others, against prolonging the extraordinary powers of Yezhov and the NKVD. An especially vehement protest was made by I.A. (Osip) Pyatnitsky

(the author's father), chief of the political-administrative department of the Central Committee (with responsibility for the NKVD) and formerly a member of the political secretariat of the Comintern.

Stalin tried to come to terms with Pyatnitsky during the meeting. In the interval after the latter's speech, Molotov, Voroshilov and Kaganovich talked to Pyatnitsky and said that Stalin believed in his personal honesty and values, his talent as a good organiser and administrator. They asked him to retract his statement, but Pyatnitsky was adamant.

Around the same time, Moscow mayor Filatov, also a Central Committee member, reported to Stalin that the opposition of Pyatnitsky and others to the NKVD was a result of a decision reached at a secret meeting at Pyatnitsky's apartment. Filatov was the only participant of this meeting who informed Stalin about it. Just a month earlier, Stalin had learned of the Tukhachevsky plot revealed by the NKVD; and now he heard of a secret meeting attended by dozens of Central Committee members who were trying to stop further NKVD investigations. He suspected that Kaminsky, Khataevich, Lubchenko, Pyatnitsky and other speakers as well as other participants of the secret meeting (who had so far abstained from speaking) were connected with the Tukhachevsky plot.

At the plenary meeting, most of the speakers (Eikhe, Postyshev, Khrushchev, Vareikis, Bagirov, Gikalo and others) energetically attacked Kaminsky, Khataevich, Lubchenko, Pyatnitsky and others, and the majority voted for conferring emergency powers on Yezhov.

One may suppose that at that time Yezhov was not quite sure of his position. He knew that Stalin trusted Pyatnitsky, and that the latter would be able to remove him as head of the NKVD if he (Pyatnitsky) and his supporters prevailed. Therefore Yezhov joined with Pyatnitsky's opponents. Yuri Zhukov is quite right in supposing that "Yezhov easily came to terms with Eikhe and many first secretaries, and agreed with the necessity as soon as possible of doing away with the those who were certain to vote against them."[66]

The plenary meeting was not yet over when Robert Eikhe visited Stalin with a proposal which ran counter to the one supported by Pyatnitsky and Kaminsky. Eikhe stated that former kulaks and members of forbidden anti-Soviet parties were planning to use the election campaign in Western Siberia to get as many seats as possible in the USSR Supreme Soviet. Eikhe submitted a written proposal to permit the Western Siberian authorities to organise an emergency committee (a "troika"), composed of the NKVD chief of Western Siberia, the attorney of Western Siberia and himself, Eikhe. The "troika" was to have emergency powers to make arrests and pass sentences, including death sentences, on members of underground anti-Soviet groups.

Within three to four days similar proposals were submitted to Stalin personally by the first secretaries of several provincial committees of the Party: Far Eastern province — I. Vareikis; Saratov province — A. Krinitzky; Azerbaijan republic — M. Bagirov; Sverdlovsk province — A. Stolar; Stalingrad province — B. Semenov; Omsk province — D. Bulatov, Northern province — D. Kontorin; Kharkhov province — N. Gikalo;

Kirgiz republic — M. Amosov.

Soon they were joined by other Party secretaries. Yuri Zhukov established that by July 11, 43 out of the 71 first secretaries of the provinces and republics of the USSR had submitted proposals on the organisation of "troikas." At the same time the proposals included the numbers of people to be exiled and to be executed.

Zhukov named those who demanded especially big "quotas" for repression:

> "It turned out that there were seven secretaries who set the number of their victims over 5,000: A. Ikramov (Uzbek republic) — 5,441; K. Sergeev (Stavropol province) — 6,133; P. Postyshev (Kuibishev province) — 6,140; Y. Kaganovich (Gorky province) — 6,580; I. Vareikis (Far Eastern province) — 6,698; L. Mirzoyan (Kazakh republic) — 6,749; and K. Ryndin (Chelyabinsk province) — 7,953. There were three secretaries who considered that the number of victims of 'troikas' should exceed 10,000: A. Stolar (Sverdlovsk province) — 12,000; V. Sharangovich (Byelorussian republic) — 12,800; and E. Yevdokimov (Azov and Black Sea province) — 13,606. The most bloodthirsty turned to be R. Eikhe, who expressed his wish to shoot 10,800 inhabitants of the West Siberian province (he had not yet determined a figure of those whom he wanted to exile); and N.S. Khrushchev, who suspiciously quickly managed to find and count in Moscow province 41,305 'former kulaks' and 'penal criminals,' and then insisted on their expulsion and execution... The fact that the

number of nameless victims reached a QUARTER OF A MILLION PEOPLE meant that the proposed action would result in unprecedented mass reprisals."[67]

It is noteworthy that, in his "secret speech" to the 20th Party Congress, Khrushchev said not a word about the Eikhe memorandum, nor about the requests for exiling and executions filed by Eikhe and himself. Instead, Khrushchev praised Eikhe and depicted him as an innocent victim of Stalin's terror.

Though at that time there were those in the USSR who wanted to overthrow Soviet power, and who in the impending war would constitute a danger to the country, there were no legal grounds to set quotas for arrest and execution of people who were not found guilty of treason or sabotage. The reason was different: the leaders of the provinces and republics were afraid that they would lose the first general, direct, equal and secret elections with alternative candidates. By resorting to reprisals they wanted to create an atmosphere of Red Terror characteristic of the situation in Russia during the Civil War. In such an atmosphere it would be impossible to conduct political debates between different candidates, but it would be easy to make loud speeches against class enemies.

The provincial and republican secretaries had another and deeper motive for their plan. Constant feuds between different cliques inside regional committees in their struggle for power could now be ended, not in resignations and dismissals as before, but in imprisonments and executions. The ruling secretaries especially wanted

to get rid of those who, after the February-March 1937 plenum, were designated to take their jobs during the re-education programme and then possibly forever. Unwittingly, the Party secretaries were ready to resort to the principle of Father Brown, who said:

> "Where does a wise man hide a leaf? In the forest. But what does he do if there is no forest?... He grows a forest to hide it in... And if a man had to hide a dead body, he would make a field of dead bodies to hide it in."[68]

The Party secretaries were planning to make vast fields of dead bodies in order to hide in them the bodies of their political opponents, accusing them of being "enemies of people," together with those for whose executions they demanded special quotas.

Stalin was caught between two fires in the Central Committee. On the one hand there were those who were against the NKVD, as Yezhov was launching a campaign to uproot real or imagined supporters of conspirators. On the other hand the great majority of the Central Committee wanted the NKVD to take more resolute measures to fight clandestine enemies. In fact, both groups acted against Stalin's policy: he could defend measures against undiscovered participants of Yenukidze's plot, but it was next to impossible for him to defend former kulaks, members of forbidden anti-Soviet parties and penal criminals. In this situation Stalin and his staunch supporters in the Politburo decided to join the majority.

Yet Stalin and the rest of Politburo tried to lower the numbers of victims of the reprisals. Historian Leo-

nid Naumov states that the quotas demanded by some secretaries were lowered by a factor of 7. The quotas of reprisals were lowered for Moscow province, the Byelorussian republic, Uzbekistan, the Far Eastern province, the Western Siberian province, Stavropol province, Gorky province, Kuibishev province, Sverdlovsk province, Chelyabinsk province, the Mordovian republic, the republic of Mari-El and the Chechen-Ingush republic.[69]

At the same time Stalin tried to accelerate preparation for the elections which might bring a political end to many of the provincial and republican bosses. But the provincial secretaries said that it was impossible to organise elections before the beginning of December.

Since permission for the start of repressions had been given, it was impossible to stop them.

PART 3: THE MASS PURGES AND THEIR AFTERMATH

Yezhovshina Begins

Nikolai Yezhov, head of the NKVD from January 1937 onwards, had supported Stalin in his opposition to mass reprisals at the February-March 1937 meeting of the Central Committee.[70] But, on the basis of a Politburo decision taken in early July 1937, he signed a secret decree, stating that "The organs of state security are faced with the task — in the most merciless fashion — of destroying this band of anti-Soviet elements... once and for all, to put an end to their foul subversive work against the foundations of the Soviet state."[71] Explaining Yezhov's swift evolution, Yuri Zhukov wrote that mass reprisals became

> "beneficial to the NKVD since it was a punitive organisation by origin. After the 'exposure' and arrest of real or alleged supporters of Trotsky, Zinoviev and Bukharin had been completed, the very existence of the NKVD became useless. Therefore, it is quite possible that Yezhov, a Party functionary by origin, who had been secretary of the Mari-El republican committee and of the Semipalatinsk province of Kazakhstan, did not lose his feeling of solidarity with other Party secretaries."[72]

This helped Yezhov to reach an understanding with Eikhe and other first secretaries, and he was ready to help them to get rid of those who would vote against them and for alternative deputies in the forthcoming

elections.

Mass reprisals were also beneficial for Yezhov for the same reason as for Yagoda. Yezhov did away with those NKVD employees who opposed arbitrary accusations and wholesale reprisals. When, at an NKVD conference in July 1937, Edouard Salyn, NKVD chief for Omsk province, stated "there was no such number of enemies" as followed from the quota requested by the provincial secretary, Yezhov announced that Salyn was an enemy himself and that he should be arrested. Salyn was indeed immediately arrested and later shot. No participant at the conference protested against the arrest.[73]

Under the pretext of exposing agents of Yagoda, Yezhov dismissed many veterans of the service and replaced them with people of his own choice.[74] With all their drawbacks, many of the veterans had acquired some professional experience over a 20-year period.

Yezhov's people, who were taken from the ranks of young communists or Komsomol members, knew next to nothing about legal procedures and lacked an elementary understanding of police work. Yezhov led them to believe that the USSR was filled with foreign spies and that their noble mission was to expose them and to bring them to severe punishment. He not only repressed those who resisted his policies; he also generously rewarded those who managed to "uncover" more enemies.

Yezhov's signed decree instructed NKVD organs "to begin in all republics, regions and provinces for the repression of former kulaks, active anti-Soviet elements and criminals on August 5, 1937."[75] This campaign, lat-

er unofficially called "Yezhovshina," had started.

"Exposing" kulaks and penal criminals was not very difficult. Internal passports, and the registration of all people by their residence in local militia stations, allowed the NKVD to find out the whereabouts of practically all former kulaks and penal criminals. Hence about 75 per cent of those who were subjected to reprisals were easily caught.

The category of "active anti-Soviet elements" was much looser by far. Apart from well-known former members of anti-Soviet parties, White Guards and priests, people who were labelled "active anti-Soviet elements" belonged to different social groups. But in tracking down these "elements" the NKVD relied on the help of many voluntary assistants, with the country caught up with a real epidemic of witch-hunting.[76]

As has happened many times in world history, a nation faced with real danger tends to exaggerate the scale of treason and espionage. This happened in France during the religious wars of the 16th century and during the revolution of 1789-94. The same things happened in the USA during the Civil War of 1861-65.

Mass paranoiac scare about hidden spies spread in the countries of Western Europe after the start of German offensive on May 10, 1940. Frightened people in the Netherlands, Belgium and France "exposed" "secret Gestapo agents." Thousands of innocent people were caught by angry mobs who claimed that their victims were German paratroopers in disguise. Many people were lynched on the way to police stations. A widescale operation against "subversive elements" was launched in Britain at the same time. Tens of thousands were ar-

rested and transported to Canada. Some of the transport ships were torpedoed by German U-boats.[77]

After the Pearl Harbor attack many "vigilant" Americans demanded the arrest of all people of Japanese descent in the United States. Submitting to these moods, the U.S. administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt ordered the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans in "detention camps" in the northern part of the USA, where they were kept for three years. Only later was it revealed that almost all of them were innocent and that the accusations which had been made against them were false.[78]

Though the USSR was not at war in 1937-38, a foreign military attack was expected to come any day. The Soviet Union was surrounded by fiercely authoritarian, militaristic, anti-communist and anti-Soviet regimes. In October 1936, Finland had fired across the Soviet frontier. That same month, Hitler and Mussolini formed the "Berlin-Rome Axis," extended with Japan the following month to create the "Anti-Comintern Pact."[79] The memory of the First World War and the Civil War — with the division of the country between the Whites and the Reds — was still vivid in the minds of millions of people. In both wars scares about secret enemies had led to mass arrests and executions. During the Civil War, accusations of treason and spying were rampant on both sides. Yet there were other factors in Soviet life which promoted mass hysteria.

Yezhovshina would not have developed to such an extent had it not been supported throughout all layers of Soviet society. The profound changes that had happened during industrialisation and collectivisation had

tremendously enhanced the effect of the transformation brought about by the October Revolution. These deep changes opened great opportunities for social growth and the realisation of the so-far hidden talents and capacities of millions of people. However, as has happened in any revolution, these changes also had negative side-effects.

The transformation of social status, political thinking and cultural values of the majority of the Soviet people developed within too short a time period. The swift rise from a low social and cultural level caused an effect similar to the aero-embolism experienced by divers when they rise to the sea surface too quickly. The opening up of new cultural frontiers was accompanied by the intrusion into people's consciousness of primitive ideas, rumours, prejudices, superstitions and distorted impressions about the world at large. The discarding of traditional moral values of pre-revolutionary life did not always result in the establishment of new, more advanced moral norms. Many people lost sight of what was good and what was bad, what was permissible and what was not. Crude egoism came out under the guise of "revolutionary morality."

As previously stated, the quality of the Party leadership at all levels left much to be desired and was inadequate for the international and domestic situation faced by the country. Apart from the predominantly low level of general education and lack of knowledge of Marxist theory, many of the functionaries used communist phraseology to conceal their egoistic motives and were prepared to go to any lengths in order to remain in the posts they had occupied for nearly two decades or to

move upwards in the Party hierarchy. Preoccupied with their own interests, they resorted to outmoded bureaucratic methods of management which ruined many good plans and intentions. It is not by chance that one of Stalin's favourite films was *Volga-Volga*, a satire of a typical provincial bureaucrat of that time.[80]

Millions of Soviet people were ready to explain complicated problems of everyday existence by the evil work of secret enemies. False accusations were made by those who considered that the revolution would not finish uprooting its enemies until all former representatives of the old exploiting classes had been physically annihilated.

At the same time there were a lot of people who had suffered catastrophic losses after the revolution. They wanted revenge and Yezhovshina gave them such a chance. Under the guise of helping authorities to wipe out "anti-Soviet elements," they discredited loyal communists.[81]

As the scope of reprisals increased, the number of false accusations grew. Yezhovshina revealed the worst features in human nature. Like the Party functionaries, many people wanted to get rid of their rivals, real or alleged. Describing the situation in the aeroplane industry, the famous Soviet pilot Mikhail Gromov recalled: "Arrests happened because aeroplane constructors accused each other of sabotage, espionage and subversive activities."[82] The same sort of thing was going on in other industries, agricultural enterprises, and urban and rural communities.

"We Defeated Stalin"

The main organisers of the reprisals were particularly active. An NKVD employee later recalled that Khrushchev, as Moscow Party first secretary, daily phoned the Moscow NKVD office to demand "more active work," saying: "It is not good that Moscow lags behind Kaluga and Ryazan in the number of arrests. After all, Moscow is the USSR capital!"[83]

At the same time, Khrushchev liquidated those in whom he saw potential competitors. During these reprisals of 1937-38, only three people remained free out of the 38 top Party functionaries in the Moscow city and provincial committees. One hundred and thirty-six of the 146 Party secretaries of the other cities, towns and districts of Moscow province were subjected to repression. Forty-five of the 63 members of the Moscow city committee disappeared, along with 46 of the 64 members of the Moscow provincial committee.[84]

Many other provincial and republican secretaries acted in a similar way, getting rid of possible pretenders for their jobs. In most cases the Party secretaries accused their colleagues of counter-revolutionary ideas and of collaboration with foreign intelligence services. Thus, in June 1937, the first secretary of the Uzbek central committee, Akmal Ikramov, demanded the dismissal of Faizulla Khodjaev, chairman of the Uzbekistan Council of People's Commissars, accusing him of connections with nationalist counter-revolutionary elements. Khodjaev not only was dismissed from his job but also was arrested.[85]

But some of those who not long before had demanded an increase in the quotas of arrests and executions became victims themselves in turn. In September

1937, Khodjaev's friends accused Ikramov of being a counter-revolutionary nationalist and he was arrested. In March 1938, both Khodjaev and Ikramov became defendants in the trial of the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites."[86]

Fig 1. Draft ballot paper for the elections under the 1936 USSR Constitution

BALLOT PAPER for the elections to the USSR Supreme Soviet August 31, 1937 Dnepropetrovsk district for the elections to the Council of Nationalities from the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic		
Leave on the ballot paper the surname of ONE candidate, for whom you vote, and strike out all the rest.		
	Surname, name, patronymic	Supported as candidate by:
1	PETROV Ivan Semenovich	the general assembly of workers and office employees of plant N22
2	SEMENOV Pyotr Ivanovich	the general meeting of members of the Lenin collective farm
3	SIVAKOV Semyon Petrovich	the Muravlino district committee of the Communist Party and the Muravlino district committee of the Young Communist League

Nonetheless, Stalin went on with his plan for conducting the elections. At the end of August 1937 he submitted to the Politburo a sample ballot paper drawn up by Yakov Yakovlev, who was responsible for the elec-

tion preparations. The sample had the format given in Fig 1[87] and was accepted unanimously.

Provisions were also made for a second round of voting if no candidate received an overall majority. Having considered a draft protocol, the Politburo adopted the following statement to be published by district election committees:

> "According to the voting results, the district election committee has established that none of the candidates for deputy has received an absolute majority of the votes. On the basis of article 107 of the Decree on the Elections to the USSR Supreme Soviet, the district election committee announces that a new election will be held between the following two candidates, who received the highest numbers of votes..."[88]

This new election was to be held within two weeks of the first round. Again this proposal was approved unanimously, and Yakovlev was instructed to prepare for printing both the approved ballot paper, and the protocol, for all election districts.[89]

On October 10, 1937, a new plenary meeting of the Central Committee was due to open to discuss the final arrangements for the coming elections. The events which followed showed that Stalin was unable to stop the resistance to his political reforms. The Central Committee meeting was delayed while a long discussion ensued in the Politburo.

There many of Politburo members spoke against the principle of alternative candidates, which had been approved unanimously six weeks before. Only Stalin,

Molotov, Andreev, Kalinin and Zhdanov still supported it. Even such Stalinist stalwarts as Voroshilov and Kaganovich changed sides.[90] Anatoly Lukyanov, chairman of the Supreme Soviet in 1989-91, recalled the words of Politburo veteran Anastas Mikoyan about this meeting: "We defeated Stalin."[91]

When the Central Committee finally assembled on October 11, most of its members spoke out for taking new measures against "counter-revolutionary elements" who were allegedly about to use the elections to the Supreme Soviet in order to seize power. Many of them demanded enlarged quotas for exile and execution (Pavel Postyshev of Kuibishev province, Edward Pramnek of Donetsk province, N.V. Margolin of Dnepropetrovsk province, Dmitry Kontorin of the Northern province, Y. Kaganovich of the Gorky province, etc.). Sometimes Stalin and Molotov interrupted the speakers with caustic remarks but in vain.[92]

The only one who protested against the reprisals was the first secretary of the Kursk province, G.S. Peskarov. In his speech he mentioned that Stalin and Molotov personally helped him to curb the witch-hunting in Kursk province.[93]

During the course of the meeting it became known that Yakov Yakovlev had been arrested, an action Yuri Zhukov connects with the continued offensive against those who opposed mass purges.[94] At the June 1937 plenum, according to Grover Furr,

> "Yakovlev and Molotov [had] criticized the failure of Party leaders to organise for independent Soviet elections" and "Yakovlev exposed and

> criticised the failure of first secretaries to hold secret elections for Party posts, relying instead on appointment ('co-optation'). He emphasised that Party members who were elected delegates to the soviets were not to be placed under the discipline of Party groups outside the soviets and told how to vote. They were not to be told how to vote by their Party superiors, such as the first secretaries. They were to be independent of them. And Yakovlev referred in the strongest terms to the need to 'recruit from the very rich reserve of new cadre to replace those who had become rotten or bureaucratised.' All these statements constituted an explicit attack on the first secretaries."[95]

By October 15-18, *i.e.* only a few days after his arrest, Yakovlev had confessed to working for the Trotskyite underground from the time of Lenin's death, and to co-operating with Trotsky through a German spy.[96] Most likely he was innocent, and was tortured by Yezhov's henchmen into confessing. Furr points out that Stalin was clearly taken by surprise at the confession, given the annotation and follow-up note that he made.[97] This episode again demonstrates the limitations of Stalin's power.

Yet the Central Committee members did not dare to vote against the ballot paper and the district election committee protocol previously approved by Stalin and other members of Politburo, despite the fact that their substance implied elections with a number of candidates. This ballot paper format remained in use for all elections in the USSR up to its demise in 1991. The

wording, "Leave on the ballot paper the surname of ONE candidate, for whom you vote, and strike out all the rest," remained unchanged despite the fact that until 1989 there was always only ONE candidate on the ballot paper.

Stalin Strikes Back

Numerous accounts of the elections, which took place on December 12, 1937, confirm an atmosphere without fear or intimidation. This can be understood as follows:

— Throughout the first 20 years of Soviet life, voters had grown accustomed to SINGLE-candidate-elections.

— Despite the enormous scope of the reprisals, the vast majority of Soviet people were not even aware of them. The fact that the great majority of arrests took place among former kulaks, White Guards, members of anti-Soviet parties and penal criminals meant that these people were small minorities of the population.

— The end of 1937 coincided with the end of the Second Five-Year Plan, which had brought great improvement in the lives of most of the people.

— Soviet propaganda turned election day into a great festivity with a lot of music and singing and dancing.

People who came to voting stations liked the fact that they were asked to proceed to closed booths where they were invited to read the ballot paper. There was a pencil for those who wished to strike out the name of the only candidate. Although voters had a choice

of striking out or not striking out that name, many of them considered the election to be sort of a referendum for Soviet power or against it. The outcome, with over 99 per cent voting for candidates of the "Bloc of communists and non-Party people," indicates that there was widespread support for the Soviet order, for the Communist Party led by Stalin.

Yet there was one significant minority where the negative effect of the reprisals became greater and greater as the number of arrests grew. This minority, which constituted slightly more than 1 per cent of the population, was composed of communists. As stated in Part 1 of this article, the proportion of communists among the arrests was 8.5 per cent. So it meant that communists had about 8.5 times the chance of being arrested than did most of the non-Party population.

At the same time, for every arrested communist, there were nine or ten communists who were expelled from the Party. In line with age-old practice, every applicant for Party membership had to be sponsored by three existing members. When a member was arrested, all three of the sponsors were automatically expelled from the Party. Often the secretary of the Party organisation and the members of its leading committee also had to leave for "losing political vigilance."[98] In many cases the relatives of the arrested communist were also expelled. The mother of the author of this article was expelled from the Party because her brother and her sister who lived in different cities were arrested. (Later her membership was restored.)

The reduction of the Party ranks from 2,800,000 to 1,588,852 over the period 1934-39 allowed Vadim

Kozhinov to claim that 1,220,932 communists had been executed.[99] In fact, most of them were alive but they were far from being happy and well. The purge meant that 43.6 per cent of communists had been expelled from the Party. At a time when the USSR was on the threshold of war, the number of members of the ruling party had decreased by a factor of almost two, and those who had been turned out of the Party now had strong grudges against the authorities.

In Part 2 of this article, I noted that in March 1937 Stalin had spoken about a Kolomna plant where there were 1,400 communists but 2,000 former members who had been expelled. At that time, Stalin had censured "the ruthless inhuman policy regarding common members of the Party" and said that summary expulsions served the interests of the enemies of socialism. But what had happened at a single plant in a small town now occurred throughout the whole big country.

Stalin was unable to defend former kulaks and priests because he himself would be accused of lenience towards the class enemies. But, as the leader of the Communist Party, he wanted to defend members who were being maltreated. For him, those who were responsible for such maltreatment were mortal enemies of the Communist Party.

Yet Stalin was extremely cautious in preparing his counter-offensive. The report to the plenary meeting of the Central Committee which was convened in January 1938 was made, not by a member of the Politburo and not even by a member of the Central Committee, but by Georgy Malenkov, chairman of one of the departments of the Central Committee apparatus. The

position of the speaker suggested that the report would deal with trivial matters. This impression was strengthened by a lengthy and clumsy title for the report, which was reminiscent of an ancient novel: *'On the errors of Party organisations in expelling communists from the Party, and on formal and bureaucratic attitudes towards the appeals of those expelled from the Party, and on measures to eliminate these shortcomings*.'

But suddenly Malenkov in his report bitterly attacked wholesale expulsions of communists from the Party on the basis of arbitrary accusations. Both his report, and the resolution which followed it, had numerous examples of ruthless treatment of communists. In many local Party organisations more than half the members had been expelled. The resolution described those responsible for this as

> "certain careerist communists, who are striving to become prominent and to be promoted by recommending expulsions from the Party, through the repression of Party members"

and further stated that

> "numerous instances are known of disguised enemies of the people, wreckers and double-dealers, organising, for provocational ends, the submission of slanderous depositions against Party members and, under the semblance of 'heightening vigilance,' seeking to expel from the Party ranks honest and devoted communists, in this way diverting the blow from themselves and retaining their own positions in the Party's ranks... [They] try through

measures of repression to beat up our Bolshevik cadres and to sow excess suspicion in our ranks."[100]

This meant that the tide of repression was now being turned. The weapon of reprisal had backfired and was starting to destroy those who less than a year before had called for quotas of arrests and executions.

Pavel Postyshev, Politburo alternate member and first secretary of Kuibishev province, was blamed for condoning reprisals and removed from the Politburo at the January 1938 plenum; and soon after he was expelled from the Party and arrested.[101] This signified that from now on those leading Party figures who had demanded the establishment of troikas and quotas for arrests and executions were no longer immune from punishment. Soon accusations were levelled against Eikhe and others — ostensibly of involvement in espionage and a rightist conspiracy, although the real reasons were the unleashing of mass repressions. And they got the same treatment.[102] Yet no word of criticism was made regarding Yezhov and the NKVD.

In March 1938, the Moscow trial of the "Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" took place. Bukharin, Rykov, Krestinsky, Yagoda and almost all other defendants were sentenced to death. All over the USSR there were meetings at which the participants glorified the NKVD and Yezhov. The name of Yezhov followed that of Stalin in final cheers of speeches, though Yezhov was just an alternate Politburo member. Many NKVD employees even thought of Yezhov as a possible successor to Stalin.[103]

At that time some people in Yezhov's entourage

warned him that soon the Politburo might start to investigate the role of the NKVD in the arrests and executions. But Yezhov would not heed the warnings. He was eager to "expose" those political leaders who still stood between him and Stalin and presented obstacles on his way to the top.

The loss of realism in Yezhov was amplified by his growing alcoholism.[104] Later Stalin would complain that it was difficult to find him: "In the NKVD they answered that he had gone to the Central Committee. In the Central Committee they did not meet him. At last he was found at his home but he was dead drunk."[105]

Drunkenness did not stop Yezhov from ambitious plans, and he prepared "cases" against Postyshev, Kosior, Khatevich, Eikhe and many other provincial and republican secretaries who were arrested in 1938.

As many of Yezhov's assistants became restless, some of them started to prepare a coup d'état.[106] It is not known for sure whether Yezhov participated in these plans or not,[107] but when he was arrested in his personal study documents were found which could have been used for fabricating cases against Malenkov and some other Party leaders including Stalin.[108]

At the same time, some important NKVD leaders wanted to escape from possible punishment. In June 1938, Genrikh Liushkov, who was NKVD chief for the Far East, crossed the Manchurian border and went to the Japanese military; he was shot by the Japanese in August 1945, when the Red Army was liberating Manchuria.[109] In November 1938, A.I. Uspensky, head of the NKVD in the Ukraine, feigned suicide by drowning and tried to hide, but he was found and ar-

rested the following April.[110] Khrushchev had become Ukraine Party first secretary in January 1938, and it has been argued that he must have been guilty of the same crimes as Uspensky since they were both in the same "troika."[111]

On November 17, 1938, the USSR Council of the People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued a joint *Decree about Arrests, Prosecutor Supervision and Course of Investigation*, signed by Molotov and Stalin. It spoke about the "greatest mistakes and distortions in the work of the NKVD" during "mass operations," and asserted that "enemies of the people and foreign secret service spies penetrated the NKVD... [and] consciously deformed Soviet laws, conducted massive and unjustified arrests..."[112] The decree liquidated the "troikas" and forbade any new mass arrests.

On December 9, 1938, Yezhov was dismissed as head of the NKVD and replaced by Lavrentii Beria. Yet Yezhov remained Commissar of Water Transportation and an alternate member of the Politburo for several months.

Soon the liberation of prisoners of Yezhovshina began. Approximately 25 per cent of those who had been in prison camps were freed. But, among the military, a higher proportion was released: out of the 25,000 army officers who had been arrested in 1937-38, 13,000 were liberated. Among them were future Marshal Rokossovky and other military leaders who played important roles in the Second World War. However, 8,000 officers remained in prison camps and about 4,000 had already been executed.

At the 18th Party Congress, which convened in March 1939, nothing was said about Yezhovshina. Yet in his report to the congress, Andrei Zhdanov spoke at length about slanderers who were busy discrediting communists.[113]

The events of the previous years had resulted in significant changes in the ranks of Congress delegates. Though the proportion of delegates who had joined the Party before 1920 was, at 19.4 per cent, still high and more than double the tally of veterans among all Party members (8.3 per cent), it had decreased by a factor of four compared with the 17th Congress (80 per cent). This meant that many of the Party veterans no longer belonged to its elite. Furthermore, as credentials committee chairman Georgy Malenkov reported, the proportion of delegates with a university education had increased to 26.5 per cent compared with only 10 per cent at the 17th Congress; while the proportion with secondary education had increased from 31 per cent to 46 per cent. The Party elite had become younger and its level of education was increased. This is what Stalin had wanted to achieve for a long time, though he did not intend it to be achieved through repressions.

Lessons of 1937-38

Apart from the tragedies of many people who became victims of mass reprisals there was another negative and longstanding aspect of these events: lessons which should have been drawn from them were belated, partial, grossly insufficient and in many respects absolutely wrong. All this resulted in even greater damage

to the USSR and world socialism than the repressions themselves.

The initial damage occurred in the years that followed immediately after 1938:

— Firstly, though Yezhov, Eikhe, Postyshev and many others were dismissed and arrested, some of those who were active in organising reprisals (like Khrushchev) continued to occupy high posts.

— Secondly, the people guilty of mass repression were also accused of other crimes which they did not commit (belonging to counter-revolutionary organisations and cooperation with foreign intelligence services). Using falsehood against those who resorted to falsehood made it difficult to understand the true mainsprings of the repression.

— Thirdly, despite the partial liberation of prisoners immediately after the end of Yezhovshina, no attempt was made to reassess all the verdicts of 1937-38. Besides, many of the cases were not made public.

At that time silence surrounded these tragic events. While the trials of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Pyatakov, Radek, Bukharin and Rykov were widely reported by the mass media there was not a word said about those of Postyshev, Eikhe, Vareikis, Yezhov and many others. Nothing was said about the number of arrests and executions of 1937-38.

To a great extent this silence might be explained by the difficulties faced by the country. At the brink of imminent war the leaders of the USSR could not afford to reveal the country's weak points, especially in the sphere of defence. Perhaps this was especially true with regard to the details of trials of Tukhachevsky and oth-

ers, Yenukudze and Peterson. And still the total silence which surrounded all the trials prevented a certain determination of whether the defendants were guilty or not, and of what their real guilt was if the prosecutions were correct.

As a result of all these circumstances the main issues which led to the reprisals — the resistance of influential Soviet leaders to the new Constitution, especially to general, secret voting with alternative candidates; the quotas for arrests and capital punishments demanded by Party secretaries — remained secret for many decades.

This protracted silence led to extremely negative consequences. The information about executions and political prisoners could not be hidden completely and it penetrated in the forms of frightening rumours. They became a breeding ground for a vast literature about tortures, executions and labour camps which was published outside the USSR.

The release of political prisoners and their rehabilitation was a much belated step in bringing justice (contrary to the current versions, begun not at Khrushchev's initiative and not after his report to the 20th Congress, but in 1953). Moreover, these releases and rehabilitations should have been supplemented by honest and true explanations for why the reprisals happened. Such explanations would have needed to take into account the many factors which were at work at the time and the contradictions within the socialist society, the Communist Party, its leaders and ordinary Soviet people. A profound study of these factors could lead to a better understanding of the social, political, ideologi-

cal, cultural and moral processes inside Soviet society.

Instead of the historic truth about these events, Khrushchev in February 1956 presented a garbled story, the main goal of which was to conceal his own misdeeds. Khrushchev's primitive version, which put all the blame on Stalin, was accepted first and foremost because the real truth was not known by most of the people.

Khrushchev concealed not only his own negative role but also that of his colleagues in organising the reprisals. Depicting Eikhe and other Party secretaries with martyrs' halos, he concealed their inadequacies as leaders, their devotion to personal interests at the expense of ideological principles and national and international interests, their brutal disregard for human lives and their cruelty.[114]

Despite the efforts of many foreign scholars to find explanations for these events, the Soviet Union was the only country which could reveal the truth about them, as the real documents were kept in the Soviet archives. Yet in Khrushchev's time these archives were kept closed and there existed only one version of the repressions of 1937-38 — that narrated by Khrushchev himself.

In Brezhnev's time the Khrushchev version, according to which Stalin was the main culprit, was not widely used. Virulent attacks on Stalin were stopped and a number of reminiscences about his time were published. Yet both Stalin's life and the story of 1937-38 were still taboo. Silence continued to cover these tragic events.

The loud "revelations" of the last years of Gor-

bachev's perestroika contributed little to the study of the truth about these events. The primitive explanations presented by Khrushchev were replaced by even more primitive explanations, which were used exclusively for propaganda aimed at destroying socialism and restoring capitalism.

The wholesale rehabilitation, at the rate of two thousand cases per day by one committee, made people believe that all the conspiracies against the Soviet state were products of Stalin's paranoiac fantasies. The Soviet people were told every day that "honest communist leaders" could not betray their country, that it was impossible for them to work for the restoration of capitalism. As a result the Soviet people became immune to any real evidence of treachery of national interests and ideological principles. This explains why they were so slow to recognise the treason of Gorbachev, Alexander Yakovlev and the rest. It explains why they failed to see the advance of capitalist restoration and the invasion of transnational companies.

Khrushchev's and later versions of the events of 1937-38 did not say a word about the responsibility of ordinary people in making false accusations. Trying to please the broad public these versions failed to mention numerous evidences of human envy and human evil which contributed substantially to the developments of 1937-38. These versions ignored the profound contradictions of human consciousness. The primitive descriptions of complex social phenomena served to demobilise the self-critical capacities of people and to make them easier prey for manipulation.

The last 20 years have perpetuated these anti-Soviet

and anti-communist versions which are being served up for daily brainwashing of the Russian population. This propaganda seeks not only to wipe out, from the people's historic memory, the "good points" of Soviet life. Concentrating attention on the most tragic and sordid pages of Soviet history, these bourgeois interpretations ignore all the complexities and contradictions of Soviet life. People are fed with horror stories about mass hunger, poverty and terror which ostensibly constituted the lot of almost every Soviet person. The role of the Devil in this fictional Hell belongs to Stalin.

Yet there is another factor at work which makes it difficult to arrive at a true and balanced assessment of Stalin and his role in the events of the 1930s. The disgust for the present capitalist regime, with its extreme social inequality and corruption at all levels of government, makes politically naive and not well-informed people yearn for a strong man who would punish the exploiters severely. Many people see in Stalin a figure in the past who was able to perform such deeds. These people do not want to hear that Stalin was not responsible for most of the arrests and executions. They tend to believe that almost all the victims of the 1930s were as guilty of the charges against them as members of the present ruling class of Russia are guilty now of plundering the nation.

Since most of the authors of the books mentioned in Part 1 relied on real historical documents, they attempted to draw a true and balanced picture of Stalin and the events of 1937-38. Most of these authors do not conceal the fact that Stalin was also responsible for the reprisals. He was too slow in halting the activities of Ye-

nukidze, Yagoda and others who tried to recreate the atmosphere of the "Red Terror," and unleashed purges in the Party in 1935. Relying on his own antipathy towards the former opposition leaders, and trying to turn their punishments into examples for those opposed to the new Constitution, Stalin did not bother to check many of the dubious accusations made at the Moscow trials.

Stalin also yielded too quickly to the demands by Central Committee members for quotas of arrests and executions. Though he was correct in dismissing those who were responsible for unleashing the mass repressions of 1937-38, he did not try to expose their guilt but condoned false accusations against Eikhe, Postyshev and others. Though he favoured partial liberation of the victims of the reprisals, and many times personally intervened to get people out of prison, Stalin failed to start mass reassessment of the verdicts of 1937-38 and mass rehabilitation of innocent victims.

One of Stalin's most important mistakes was that he abstained from making a profound analysis of these tragic events. In doing so, he could have made a critical assessment of the Party bureaucracy and come to understand the dangers that this layer presented to communist principles, to the very existence of the Soviet state and even to himself personally. Though he actively promoted a new generation of Party members who had a good education, experience of work at modern enterprises and were not yet spoilt by excessive power and privilege, Stalin was too slow in getting rid of Khrushchev, Beria and others. These were the people who later prevented medical assistance being brought to him on

March 1, 1953 after he was found lying unconscious on a floor of his country house.[115]

A further grave mistake of Stalin was his slowness in finishing the political reform of the USSR which he had initiated in the 1930s. His attempts at promoting theoretical reassessment of the Soviet experience and practical steps towards continuation of the political reform in the 1950s came too late. His heirs did all their best to stop these efforts and to reinstate the position of the Party bureaucracy. In the long run this led to capitalist restoration.

The authors of the books mentioned in Part 1 tried to show that the real Stalin differed from both the demonic character drawn by bourgeois propaganda and the idealised figure of a leader who was incapable of mistakes. That is why Yuri Zhukov called his main book on the events of the 1930s *A Different Stalin*.

It is obvious that Stalin was a man of his age. His age was a time when most of the world's people lived under either the colonial yoke or dictatorial regimes. The bourgeois democracies of the West appeared to be fragile, as fascist or militarist dictatorships were established in a number of European countries and as most of the remaining so-called "democratic countries" were occupied by nazi Germany and its allies. The democratisation of the Soviet political system in the 1930s presented a marked contrast to a world which was about to be turned into a big extermination camp. These attempts of Stalin went along with his other successful efforts directed at saving the USSR and the whole world from the greatest enemy of humanity — nazi Germany.

Despite the constant efforts of the capitalist class of

Russia to distort Soviet history by limiting it to stories about the inhabitants of the GULAG camps, there are indications that people are starting to rebuff bourgeois brainwashing. Over the last 2-3 years, in numerous Russian TV and radio programmes, the vast majorities of the audiences have supported those who were attacking the official versions of the Soviet past. From 75 per cent to 90 per cent of these audiences voted in favour of collectivisation and industrialisation, approved the Soviet government's efforts to build up the armed forces before the war and condemned Tukhachevsky for his Bonapartist plot. It is clear that people are starting to reject the falsification of the Soviet past.

The active protests against the fraud by Russia's rulers during the Duma elections show that people are waking up from the perpetual lies. Liberation from bourgeois propaganda requires full knowledge about the Soviet past and the drawing of profound lessons from its experience.

ENDNOTES

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12. I. Deutscher, *Stalin: A Political Biography* (Oxford University Press, 1967), 351.
13. J.V. Stalin, "Concluding Words at the Plenum of the CC of the CPSU, March 5, 1937," in *Sweep Away Obstacles in the Path of Soviet Democracy* (London: Friends of the Soviet Union [World Committee], 1937), 38.
14. L.D. Trotsky, quoted in I. Deutscher, *The Prophet Outcast: Trotsky 1929–1940* (Oxford University Press, 1987), 167–68.
15. J.V. Stalin, "The Tasks of Business Executives," in *Leninism* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1940), 366.
16. J.V. Stalin, "Report to the 17th Congress of the CPSU (B)," in

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17. F. Engels, "Socialism in Germany," in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 27, 244.
18. M. Gorky, L. Auerbach, and S.G. Firin, eds., *The Stalin White Sea–Baltic Canal: The History of Its Construction* (Moscow, 1934).
19. Deutscher, *Stalin: A Political Biography* (Pelican ed.), 349.
20. J.V. Stalin, "Interview with Roy Howard," March 1, 1936, http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1936/03/01.htm.
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35. W.L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (Arrow Books, 1991), 447.
36. Shirer, *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 411.
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38. J.V. Stalin, "On the Draft Constitution of the USSR," in *Leninism* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1940), 58–78,

http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1936/11/25.htm.

39. L. Feuchtwanger, *Moscow 1937* (London: Gollancz/Left Book Club, 1937), chap. 7.
40. Feuchtwanger, *Moscow 1937*, chap. 6.
41. Khrushchev, "Speech to the 20th Congress of the CPSU."
42. J.A. Getty, *Origins of the Great Purges* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), chap. 6.
43. J.V. Stalin, "Report to the Plenum of the CC of the CPSU, March 3, 1937," in *Sweep Away Obstacles*, 12, http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1937/03/03.htm.
44. J.V. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 14 (Russian ed.) (Moscow, 1997), 190–91.; an edited version may be found in Stalin, "Concluding Words," in *Sweep Away Obstacles*, 28, http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1937/03/05.htm.
45. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 14 (Russian ed.), 205; the closest in the English version is "the wrong policy of some of our comrades on the question of expelling and reinstating members of the Party, the heartless attitude of some of our comrades towards the fate of individual members of the Party and individual workers, artificially creates a number of discontented and embittered people, and thus creates these reserves for the Trotskyites." (Stalin, "Concluding Words," *Sweep Away Obstacles*, 38.) —*Ed*.
46. Stalin, "Concluding Words," in *Sweep Away Obstacles*, 30.
47. Stalin, "Report to the Plenum," in *Sweep Away Obstacles*, 24; also in *Works*, vol. 14 (English ed.), 271, https://archive.org/details/CollecdWorksVolume14.
48. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 14 (Russian ed.), 199–200.
49. Stalin, "Concluding Words," 30.
50. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 14 (Russian ed.), 194.
51. Khrushchev, in his "Speech to the 20th Congress of the CPSU," said not a word about Stalin's plan of mass re-education of the Party functionaries. (Khrushchev, "Speech to the 20th Congress of the CPSU.")
52. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 224.
53. Bailey, *The Conspirators*.
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ry i bor'ba za vlast' v 1930-e gody (Moscow: Veche, 2002), 281.

55. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 225.
56. D. Volkogonov, *Triumf i tragediya: politicheskii portret I.V. Stalina* (Moscow: Novosti, 1989), 531; published in English as *Triumph and Tragedy: The Political Portrait of J.V. Stalin* (Prima Lifestyles, 1996).
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58. F. Chuev, *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym* (Moscow: Terra, 1991), 442; published in English as *Molotov Remembers: Inside Kremlin Politics; Conversations with Felix Chuev* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1993).
59. Reminiscences from members of the author's family who were present at the time.
60. Conversation between Meshik and the author's father, First Main Administration of the USSR Council of Ministers.
61. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 225.
62. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 14 (Russian ed.), 224.
63. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 14 (Russian ed.), 224.
64. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 14 (Russian ed.), 224.
65. V.I. Pyatnitsky, *Zagovor protiv Stalina* (Moscow: Sovremennik, 1998).
66. Zhukov, *Inoi Stalin*, 439. He also wrote that mass reprisals became "beneficial to the NKVD since it was a punitive organisation by origin. Having finished with the 'exposure' and arrest of real or alleged supporters of Trotsky, Zinoviev and Bukharin, its very existence became useless. Therefore, it is quite possible that Yezhov, a Party functionary by origin, who had been secretary of the Mari-El republican committee and of the Semipalatinsk province of Kazakhstan, did not lose his feeling of solidarity with other Party secretaries."

It helped him reach an understanding with Eikhe and other first secretaries and he was ready to help them get rid of those who would vote against them and who would vote for alternative deputies. — *Y.E.*

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books.eserver.org/fiction/innocence/brokensword.html.

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71. NKVD Operational Order No. 00447, July 30, 1938, quoted in P.R. Gregory, *Lenin's Brain and Other Tales from the Secret Soviet Archives* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2008), 48–49, http://media.hoover.org/sites/default/files/documents/Lenins_Brain_Paul_Gregory_43.pdf.
72. Zhukov, *Inoi Stalin*, 439.
73. Naumov, *Krovavyi karlik*, 122.
74. Naumov, *Krovavyi karlik*, 125–29; M. Tumshis and A. Papchinsky, *1937: Bolshaya chistka — NKVD protiv Cheka* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2009), 103–4.
75. Zagladin et al., *Istoriya Rossii*.
76. Alexei Rybin, an employee of the NKVD at that time, and a former bodyguard of Stalin, later participated in the rehabilitation commission and recalled: "Working on the cases of those who had been subjected to reprisals in the 1930s, we came to the sad conclusion that millions of people participated in the fabrication of accusations. It seemed as if almost everyone had become caught up in a psychosis. Almost everyone was eager to expose 'enemies of the people.' By their reports about the alien activities and persons working for foreign intelligence services, people drowned each other." See the collection of memoirs L.V. Markova, ed., *Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin* (Moscow: Iris-Press, 1994), 53–55.
77. L. de Jong, *The German Fifth Column in the Second World War* (University of Chicago Press, 1956); published in an abridged form in Russian as *Nemezkaya pyataya colonna vo vtoroi mirovoi voine* (Moscow: Foreign Literature Publishing House, 1958).
78. See, for example, S. Terkel, *American Dreams: Lost and Found* (New York: The New Press, 1980), 161–71.
79. Zhukov, *Inoi Stalin*, 285–309; quoted in G. Furr, "Stalin and the Struggle for Democratic Reform, Part 1," para. 58,

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80. See "Volga-Volga," Seagull Films Archive, http://www.seagullfilms.com/archive/Red-Hollywood/volga-volga.
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83. K. Stolarov, *Butchers and Victims* (Moscow, 1998), 122; Yu. Kachanovsky, *Stalin's Dictatorship* (Moscow, 2004), 60.
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86. *Report of the Court Proceedings*, 1, 5, 212–43, 339–64.
87. Zhukov, *Inoi Stalin*, illustration between 256 and 257.
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90. Zhukov, *Inoi Stalin*, 470.
91. The information is from the author's personal conversation with Anatoly Lukyanov.
92. Zhukov, *Inoi Stalin*, 479–83.
93. Yu.N. Zhukov, *Tayny Kremlya: Stalin, Molotov, Beria, Malenkov* (Moscow: Terra-Knizhnyy Klub, 2000), 43; quoted by Furr, "Stalin and the Struggle for Democratic Reform," para. 101. [Peskarov was himself arrested in September 1938 and shot in March 1939 ("Izvestia," February 8, 2001, 9; quoted by H. Wydra, *Communism and the Emergence of Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 178.)]
94. Zhukov, *Inoi Stalin*, 469–78.
95. Furr, "Stalin and the Struggle for Democratic Reform," paras.

81–82, citing Zhukov, *Inoi Stalin*, 424–27, and Zhukov, *Tayny Kremlya*, 39–40, quoting from archival documents.

96. G. Furr, *Khrushchev Lied* (Kettering, OH: Erythros Press & Media, 2011), 51.
97. Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*, 112.
98. The conclusion is based on the author's family testimony as well as other witnesses regarding the events of 1937-38.
99. Kuzhinov, *Pravda stalinskikh repressiy*.
100. R.H. McNeal, ed., *Resolutions and Decisions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, vol. 3 (University of Toronto Press, 1974), 18; cited by L. Martens, *Another View of Stalin* (Antwerp: EPO, 1994), 190, 312.
101. J.A. Getty and O.V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 514–17, 533ff.
102. Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*, 51–52, points out that the only thing released from Eikhe's case file is a letter to Stalin — *i.e.* the charges are not known. He speculates that, because Eikhe was tried and executed at the same time as Yezhov, the real charges against him were not espionage but conspiracy to commit torture and executions without evidence.
103. Naumov, *Krovavyi karlik*, 216.
104. F. Chuev, *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym*, 399.
105. S. Beria, *My Father — Lavrenty Beria* (Moscow: Sovremennik, 1994), 81.
106. Naumov, *Krovavyi karlik*, 235.
107. Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*, 75, refers to Yezhov's own confession of involvement in a Rightist conspiracy and with German military espionage, as well as in a conspiracy to assassinate Stalin or another Politburo member, and seize power by coup d'état. However, there is good reason to doubt the validity of these claims: when Beria replaced Yezhov as NKVD chief, many prisoners were freed but some of the innocent victims of Yezhovshina continued to be imprisoned. Moreover, people continued to be accused of conspiracies and espionage though they were either guilty of other things or were not guilty at all.
108. A. Malenkov, *O moiem ottse Georgii Malenkov* (Moscow: NTS Teknoekos, 1992), 34–35.

109. Naumov, *Krovavyi karlik*, 79-139.
110. Naumov, *Krovavyi karlik*, 231; see also Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*, 74.
111. Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*, 75.
112. "Nouvelles de Moscou," June 30, 1992, 15; cited by Martens, *Another View of Stalin*, 192, 312.
113. *Proceedings of the 18th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)*, 519–24.
114. See G. Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*.
115. See Martens, *Another View of Stalin*, 291–92.