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Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above, 1928-1941

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Eventually he broke with Johnson, who perceived McNamara's disenchantment with the war and moved him to the World Bank. At his peak, McNamara had been a strong cabinet officer and at the same time a key presidential officer in that he accurately represented the president's views to the defense bureaucracy. In this sense, he was intensely loyal to Johnson. Perhaps he was too loyal—who knows what would have happened had he articulated his misgivings earlier?

Of course, the fault was on the military side as well as on the civilian. Had the senior military stood up to Lyndon Johnson and Robert McNamara and laid on the line their misgivings about such issues as failure to call up the reserves or the incremental strategy being pursued, there is no telling what the result might have been. At the least there would have been a public debate before it was too late, and at best either the war would not have been fought or it would have been fought quickly and decisively without tearing apart American society.

Shapley's final judgments on all this are somewhat ambiguous. "That is the glory and tragedy of Robert Strange McNamara: He feels he must decide and then act, whether to save South Vietnam then or to save the planet today. Cooler heads may recognize the limits of their powers and decline to change the world. They may refrain from the constant manipulation McNamara engaged in and still

does. Not he. For better or worse McNamara shaped much in today's world—and imprisoned himself."

The book is nicely written and covers an impressive number of issues. Perhaps too many—the reading is a bit tedious, and at times somewhat superficial. Though this work will probably not be the definitive biography of McNamara, it will be the best for many years, and it is well worth reading.

DOUGLAS KINNARD
Richmond, Virginia

Tucker, Robert C. *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above, 1928–1941*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1990. 707pp. \$29.95

Events occurring in the Soviet Union since 1985—Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika and his initiatives to end the Cold War, severe economic decline, and the centrifugal forces of national self-assertion, all accelerated by the failed coup of August 1991—have diminished the military and ideological threats to the West and, consequently, should facilitate a less biased study of Russian history during the Soviet period. As the Cold War recedes further, so too will the unnatural consensus that has existed in the Anglo-American school of Soviet studies.

One of the deficiencies of mainstream Sovietology has been its assumption that the uniquely dreadful and excessive policies hatched in the neurotic mind of Joseph Stalin

(forced, reckless collectivization and industrialization, the widespread campaigns of terror, the decapitation of the Soviet military, and his megalomaniacal aspirations toward totalitarian control) were merely the continuation or logical development of the legacy of Vladimir Ilich Lenin and the Bolshevik revolution. Although Professor Stephen F. Cohen (in his 1975 paper "Bolshevism and Stalinism") exposed the flaws of this consensus view, it still thrives today. Given this consensus, Robert C. Tucker's antithetical views about Stalinism are quite noteworthy.

A professor emeritus of political science at Princeton University, Tucker produced his first volume about Stalin, *Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879-1929*, in 1973. The sequel under consideration here not only was "in preparation for over fifteen years" but also has incorporated new evidence that has surfaced recently. Lest the reader overlook the subtitle of his book, Tucker repeats his essential conclusion in the preface: "The Soviet System took shape under the impact not of one revolution but of two."

In assessing the legacy of Lenin, Tucker properly attaches equal significance to Lenin's later writings and policies, which advocated gradual, antibureaucratic reform and a New Economic Policy (NEP). Stalin (and subsequently mainstream Western Sovietology) ignored Lenin's gradualist prescriptions, preferring instead to cite the earlier, more radical passages

of the Bolshevik leader as justification for his own extreme measures. However, one need only believe it plausible (if not axiomatic) that prescriptions for revolutionary seizure of power might differ from those for actually ruling to understand the different strains of the Leninist legacy. These differences have not escaped Tucker, who adduces evidence to demonstrate the reformist nature of Bolshevik rule under Lenin. He then proceeds to demonstrate how these norms were demolished by Stalin.

Stalin, Tucker believes, suffered from a psychoneurosis brought on by childhood beatings administered by his drunken father. As a substitute for the self-hatred they generated, Stalin created an ideal self. Seeing himself in a heroic light, Stalin emulated Peter the Great (in forcing the Soviet Union to become a world power), Ivan the Terrible (by purging the party aristocrats, the Old Bolsheviks), and the revered Lenin (by creating socialism in the second October Revolution). Tucker's close attention to Stalin's voracious reading of history adds weight to this interpretation.

Stalin's need to secure his ideal self had a much darker side, however, which compelled him to obliterate any unflattering reminders of his real self. Therefore, when his reckless campaign to collectivize and industrialize the Soviet Union resulted in chaos, breakdowns, and famine, Stalin simply denied the famine, suppressed the peasant uprisings, put industrialists on trial for "wrecking,"

and subsequently shipped many of these unfortunates to labor camps (thereby industrializing and urbanizing the Soviet East). The bungling and scapegoating upset many party members, especially the Old Bolsheviks who had personal knowledge of Stalin's many mistakes, excesses, and undistinguished past. Since their very presence was a standing rebuke to Stalin's ideal self, they had to go. Many were tortured into confessing that they were traitors, wreckers, plotters, and would-be assassins—the very crimes committed by Stalin. Subsequently most were executed or sent to the labor camps (the “Gulag”). Such confessions allowed Stalin to remain blameless.

The terror was long-lasting and wide-ranging. At its worst, during 1937–38, four and one-half to five and one-half million “enemies” were arrested; 800,000 to 900,000 were executed (Tucker accepts the figures from a recent study by D.V. Volkogonov). To ease the burden of processing the new prisoners, those already in the Gulag were placed on restricted diets that would ensure they were quickly worked to death.

The Soviet military was decapitated by the terror. During 1937–38, “over 3,000 naval commanders and 38,679 army men were ordered shot.” Of the 101 members of the Soviet high command, ninety-one were arrested, at least eighty were executed. The terror struck down not only army and navy commanders but also fleet and corps commanders.

Finally, given the logic of the terror, the executioners and torturers themselves had to be shot or sent to the Gulag.

Stalin's revolution extinguished not only many independent minds but also independence of mind. It transformed Soviet society into a “limp, fear-stricken mass” where *skloka* (“base, trivial hostility, unconscionable spite breeding petty intrigues”) became the norm. Stalin also destroyed the Communist Party “save as an organ of his autocracy subordinate to his police.”

In summation, Tucker concludes, “However confusing these things were for contemporaries, they need not confuse later historians. Stalin's was a Bolshevism of the radical right. As such it was wayward, deeply deviationist, and questionably Bolshevik save insofar as it could and did lay claim to all that was harsh, repressive and terrorist in Lenin's legacy. . . . As a Bolshevism of the radical right, Stalin's Russian national Bolshevism was akin to Hitler's German National Socialism.”

This work is excellent in its balance, nuance, and painstaking scholarship. This reviewer was disappointed only by the lack of evidence and emphasis in support of Tucker's contention that foreign (external) concerns were primary under Stalin. One need not dispute his conclusion that Stalin hoped to advance socialism through territorial expansion (by exploiting conflicts between the “imperialist” states) to argue that Tucker's own evidence and emphasis support

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the primacy of domestic issues, the construction of "Socialism in One Country," in Stalin's scheme of things.

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Philadelphia, Penna.

Volkogonov, Dmitri. Harold Shukman, trans. *Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy*. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991. 642pp. \$29.95
General Dmitri Volkogonov's book is a powerful biography of one of the central figures of twentieth-century history. It is primarily a political biography, but readers will find that the author also addresses aspects of diplomatic and military affairs. Needless to say, any work that improves our understanding of Stalin is noteworthy.

Volkogonov, currently an adviser to Boris Yeltsin, is not the typical Stalin biographer. A retired Soviet Army colonel general, former deputy chief of the Main Political Section of the Soviet military and former head of the Institute of Military History, Volkogonov served his country admirably and loyally, despite the fact that his own father was arrested and executed during Stalin's purges in the late 1930s. Volkogonov, who also earned a Ph.D. from the Lenin Military Academy, began to question the system, and its history, in the 1950s. The advent of Mikhail Gorbachev allowed him to complete his work, and the original Russian-language edition of *Stalin* appeared in the Soviet Union

in 1988. Volkogonov then turned his attention to a comprehensive study of Lenin and, at the Institute of Military History, began writing and directing work on a planned ten-volume, glasnost-era Soviet history of the Second World War.

Unfortunately, in the spring of 1991 Volkogonov's honesty and revisionism led to confrontation with senior Soviet military leaders, including Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev (then Mikhail Gorbachev's military adviser), General Mikhail Moiseyev (then chief of the general staff), and Dmitri Yazov (then minister of defense). One Soviet official, upset by Volkogonov's quest for truth, chided the Institute of Military History's director, "The documents should be used according to the purpose they are intended for." But Volkogonov, repelled by this challenge to history, told his accusers, "We don't need sugary patriotism, we need the truth." Volkogonov resigned, announcing that he could not "write a false history."

The author's sense of openness and honesty and his unparalleled access to official military and Communist Party archives set this biography of Stalin apart. According to Volkogonov, some of the triumphs achieved by the Soviet people in the 1930s and 1940s are attributable to the system, although many others were achieved in spite of, not because of, Stalin's handiwork. And of course Volkogonov recounts in detail the tragedy of a people condemned to suffer and languish under the weight of the cruel,