Conversations with Stalin

MILOVAN DJILAS

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Milovan Djilas was born in 1911 in Montenegro, which he describes in his autobiography, *Land without Justice*. He was already known for his poetry and his revolutionary views at Belgrade University and joined the illegal Communist Party in 1932. Although arrested, tortured, and imprisoned for three years, he joined the party's Central Committee in 1938 and became a member of its Politburo in 1940. When Germany occupied Yugoslavia in 1941 he joined the Partisans and in 1944 headed a military mission to Moscow, which he visited again the next year. In 1947 he helped to establish the Cominform in Belgrade and in 1948 headed his last mission to Moscow, a few months before the break between Tito and Stalin.

As a result of growing disagreements, on account of critical articles written by Djilas, he was expelled from the Central Committee in 1954 and thereupon wrote *The New Class*, his famous exposure of bureaucracy and the Communist oligarchy. His life was now a procession of trials. Sentenced to a suspended sentence of three years for an interview he gave to the *New York Times*, he was later tried for criticizing the Yugoslavian inaction against Russian brutality in Hungary and imprisoned for three years. For *The New Class* a further seven years was added at a third trial, but he was conditionally released in 1961. In prison Djilas had been writing consistently, mainly about Montenegro, and *Conversations with Stalin* was written after his release. In April 1962 he was re-arrested and imprisoned for nine years for the publication of this book.

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Translated from the Serbo-Croat
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To the memory of
ANEURIN BEVAN

Contents

Note on the Spelling and Pronunciation of Serbo-Croat Words and Names

s = s as in sink

š = sh as in shift

c = ts as in mats

č = ch as in charge

ć = similar to, but lighter than, č – as in arch

ž = j as in French *jour*

z = z as in zodiac

j = y as in yell

nj = n as in neutral

g = g as in go

dj = g as in George

lj = li as in million

Foreword

It is in the nature of the human memory to rid itself of the superfluous, to retain only what has proved to be most important in the light of later events. Yet that is also its weak side. Being biased it cannot help adjusting past reality to fit present needs and future hopes.

Aware of this, I have endeavoured to present the facts as exactly as possible. If this book is still not free from my views of today, this should be attributed neither to malice nor to the bias of one who took part in those events, but rather to the nature of memory itself and to my effort to elucidate past encounters and events in the light of what I know now.

There is not much in this book that the well-versed reader will not already know from published memoirs and other literature. However, since an event becomes more comprehensible and tangible if explained in greater detail and from several vantage points, it may be useful if I, too, have my say. I hold that humans and human relationships are more important than dry facts, and so I have paid greater attention to them. And if the book contains anything that might be called literary, this too should be ascribed less to my style of expression than to my desire to make the subject as interesting, clear, and true as I can.

In 1955 or 1956, when I was working on my autobiography, the idea occurred to me to set apart my meetings with Stalin in a separate book which could be published first. However, I landed in jail, and while I was imprisoned I could not very well write a book of this kind, even though it would deal with the past, for it could not but touch on current political relations.

Only upon my release from prison, in January of 1961, did I return to my old idea. To be sure, this time, in view of changed conditions and the evolution of my own views, I had to approach this subject rather differently. For one thing, I now devoted greater attention to the psychological, the human

aspects of these historical events. Moreover, accounts of Stalin are still so contradictory, and his image is still so vivid, that I have also felt it necessary to present at the end, on the basis of personal knowledge and experience, my own conclusions about this truly enigmatic personality.

Above all else, I am driven by an inner compulsion to leave nothing unsaid that might be of significance to those who write history, and especially to those who strive for a freer human existence. In any case, both the reader and I should be satisfied if the truth is left unscathed, even if it is enveloped in my own emotions and judgements. For we must realize that the truth, however complete, about people and human relations can never be anything but the truth about particular persons, persons in a given time.

Belgrade
November 1961

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Raptures

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THE first foreign military mission to come to the Supreme Command of the Army of People's Liberation and Partisan Units of Yugoslavia was the British. It parachuted in during May 1943. The Soviet Mission arrived nine months later – in February 1944.

Soon after the arrival of the Soviet Mission the question arose of sending a Yugoslav military mission to Moscow, especially since a mission of this kind had already been assigned to the corresponding British Command. In the Supreme Command, that is, among the members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia who were working at headquarters at the time, there developed a fervent desire to send a mission to Moscow. I believe that Tito spoke about it to the Chief of the Soviet Mission, General Korneyev; however, it is quite certain that the matter was settled by a telegram from the Soviet Government. The sending of a mission to Moscow was of manifold significance to the Yugoslavs, and the mission itself was of a different character and had quite a different purpose from the one assigned to the British Command.

As is well known, it was the Communist Party of Yugoslavia that organized the Partisan and insurgent movement against the German and Italian forces of occupation in Yugoslavia and their domestic collaborators. While solving its national problems through the most ruthless kind of warfare, it continued to regard itself as a member of the world Communist movement, as something inseparable from the Soviet Union – 'the homeland of socialism'. Throughout the entire war the innermost agency of the Party, the Political Bureau, more popularly known by the abbreviated name Politburo, managed to keep

a connexion with Moscow by radio. Strictly speaking this connexion was with the Communist International – the Comintern – but at the same time it meant a connexion with the Soviet Government as well.

The special conditions brought on by war and the revolutionary movement's struggle for survival had already, on several occasions, led to misunderstandings with Moscow. Among the most significant I would mention the following.

Moscow could never quite understand the realities of the revolution in Yugoslavia, that is, the fact that in Yugoslavia simultaneously with the resistance to the forces of occupation a domestic revolution was also going on. The basis for this misconception was the Soviet Government's fear that the Western Allies, primarily Great Britain, might resent its taking advantage of the misfortunes of war in the occupied countries to spread revolution and its Communist influence. Like many other new phenomena, the struggle of the Yugoslav Communists was not in line with the settled views and indisputable interests of the Soviet Government and state.

Nor did Moscow understand the peculiarities of warfare in Yugoslavia. No matter how much the struggle of the Yugoslavs encouraged not only the military – who were fighting to preserve the Russian nation from the Nazi German invasion – but official Soviet circles as well, the latter nevertheless underrated it, if only because they compared it with their own Partisans and their own methods of warfare. The Partisans in the Soviet Union were an auxiliary, quite incidental force of the Red Army, and they never grew into a regular army. Because of their own experience, the Soviet leaders could not realize that the Yugoslav Partisans were capable of turning into an army and a government, and that in time they would develop an identity and interests which differed from the Soviet – in short, their own pattern of life.

In this connexion one incident stands out as extremely significant to me, perhaps even decisive. In the course of the so-called Fourth Offensive, in March 1943, a parley between the Supreme Command and the German commands took place.

The occasion for the parley was an exchange of prisoners, but its essence lay in getting the Germans to recognize the rights of the Partisans as combatants so that the killing of each other's wounded and prisoners might be halted. This came at a time when the Supreme Command, the bulk of the revolutionary army, and thousands of our wounded found themselves in mortal danger, and we needed all the help that we could get. Moscow had to be informed about all this, but we knew full well – Tito because he knew Moscow, and Ranković more by instinct – that it was better not to tell Moscow everything. Moscow was simply informed that we were negotiating with the Germans for the exchange of the wounded. However, in Moscow they did not even try to put themselves into our position, but distrusted us – despite the rivers of blood we had already shed – and replied very sharply. I remember – it was in a mill by the Rama River on the eve of our breakthrough across the Neretva in February 1943 – how Tito reacted to all this: 'Our first duty is to look after our own army and our own people.'

This was the first time that anyone on the Central Committee openly stated that our interests might be different from Moscow's. It was also the first time that I was consciously aware, independently of Tito's words but not unrelatedly, that this difference was essential if we wanted to survive in this life-and-death struggle between opposing worlds.

Still another example occurred on 29 November 1943, in Jajce, at the Second Session of the Anti-Fascist Council, where resolutions were passed that in fact amounted to the legalization of a new social and political order in Yugoslavia. At the same time there was formed a National Committee to act as the provisional government of Yugoslavia. During the preparation for these resolutions in meetings of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, we were determined that Moscow should not be informed until after it was all over. We knew from previous experience of Moscow and from its line of propaganda that it would not be capable of understanding. And indeed, Moscow's reactions to these resolutions were so

negative that some parts were not even broadcast by the radio station Free Yugoslavia, which was located in the Soviet Union to serve the needs of the resistance movement in Yugoslavia. Thus the Soviet Government failed to understand the most important act of the Yugoslav revolution – the one that transformed this revolution into a new order and brought it on to the international scene. Only when it became obvious that the West had understood the resolutions at Jajce did Moscow alter its stand and accept the realities.

Yet the Yugoslav Communists, despite all their bitterness over experiences whose significance they could comprehend only after the break with Moscow in 1948, and despite their differing ways of life, considered themselves to be ideologically bound to Moscow and regarded themselves as Moscow's most consistent followers. Though vital revolutionary and other realities were separating the Yugoslav Communists ever more thoroughly and irreconcilably from Moscow, they regarded these very realities, especially their own successes in the revolution, as proofs of their ties with Moscow and with the ideological programme that it prescribed. For the Yugoslavs, Moscow was not only a political and spiritual centre but the realization of an abstract ideal – the 'classless society' – something that not only made their sacrifice and suffering easy and sweet, but that justified their very existence in their own eyes.

The Yugoslav Communist Party was not only as ideologically unified as the Soviet, but faithfulness to Soviet leadership was one of the essential elements of its development and its activity. Stalin was not only the undisputed leader of genius, he was the incarnation of the very idea and dream of the new society. This idolatry of Stalin's personality, as well as of more or less everything in the Soviet Union, acquired irrational forms and proportions. Every action of the Soviet Government – for example, the attack on Finland – and every unpleasant feature in the Soviet Union – for example, the trials and the purges – was defended and justified. What appears even stranger, Communists succeeded in convincing themselves that such actions

were right and proper and in banishing the unpleasant facts from their minds.

Among us Communists there were men with a developed aesthetic sense and a considerable acquaintance with literature and philosophy, and yet we waxed enthusiastic not only over Stalin's views but also over the 'perfection' of the way he formulated them. I myself referred many times in discussions to the crystal clarity of his style, the penetration of his logic, and the aptness of his commentaries, as though they were expressions of the most exalted wisdom. But it would not have been difficult for me, even then, to detect that the style of any other author who wrote in the same way was drab, meagre, and an unblended jumble of vulgar journalism and the Bible. Sometimes the idolatry acquired ridiculous proportions: we seriously believed that the war would end in 1942, because Stalin said so, and when this failed to happen, the prophecy was forgotten – and the prophet lost none of his superhuman power. In actual fact, what happened to the Yugoslav Communists is what has happened to everyone in the long history of man who has ever subordinated his individual fate and the fate of mankind exclusively to one idea: unconsciously they described the Soviet Union and Stalin in terms required by their own struggle and its justification.

The Yugoslav Military Mission went to Moscow, accordingly, with idealized images of the Soviet Government and the Soviet Union on the one hand and with their own practical needs on the other. Superficially it resembled the mission that had been sent to the British, but in composition and conception it in fact marked an informal bond with a political leadership of identical views and aims. More simply: the Mission had to have both a military and a Party character.

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Thus it was no accident that, in company with General Velimir Terzić, Tito assigned me to the Mission in my role as a high Party functionary. (I had by then been a member of the

innermost Party leadership for several years.) The other members of the Mission were similarly selected as Party or military functionaries, and among them was one financial expert. The Mission also included the atomic physicist Pavle Savić, with the object of enabling him to pursue his scientific work in Moscow. We also had with us Antun Augustinčić, a sculptor, who was given a respite from the rigours of the war so that he might pursue his art. All of us, to be sure, were in uniform. I had the rank of general. I believe that I was selected partly because I knew Russian well – I had learned it in prison during the years before the war – and partly because I had never been to the Soviet Union before and so could not be suspected of any factional or deviationist past. Neither had the other members of the Mission ever been to the Soviet Union, but none of them had a good command of Russian.

It was the beginning of March 1944.

Several days were spent in assembling the members of the Mission and their gear. Our uniforms were old and motley, and since cloth was lacking, new ones had to be made from the uniforms of captured Italian officers. We also had to have passports in order to cross British and American territories, and so they were hastily printed. These were the first passports of the new Yugoslav state and bore Tito's personal signature.

The proposal arose almost spontaneously that gifts be sent to Stalin. But what kind and from where? The Supreme Command was situated at the time in Drvar, in Bosnia. The immediate surroundings consisted almost entirely of gutted villages, and pillaged desolate little towns. Nevertheless a solution was found: to take Stalin one of the rifles manufactured in the Partisan factory in Užice in 1941. It was quite a job to find one. Then gifts began to come in from the villages – pouches, towels, peasant clothing, and footwear. We selected the best of these – some sandals of untanned leather and other things that were just as poor and primitive. Precisely because they were of this character, we concluded that we ought to take them as tokens of popular goodwill.

One of the objects of the Mission was to arrange for Soviet

help for the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia. At the same time Tito had asked us to try to get UNRRA aid for the liberated areas of Yugoslavia either through the Soviet Government or other channels. We were to ask the Soviet Government for a loan of two hundred thousand dollars to cover the expenses of our missions in the West. Tito emphasized that we should make it clear that we would repay the sum as well as the aid in arms and medicine when the country was liberated. The Mission had to take with it the archives of the Supreme Command and of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

Most important of all, it had to find out whether the Soviet Government would recognize the National Committee as the provisional legal government, and would influence the Western Allies to do so too. The Mission was to maintain communications with the Supreme Command through the Soviet Mission, and it could also make use of the old channel of the Comintern.

Besides these tasks of the Mission, Tito asked me at our leave-taking to find out from Dimitrov, or from Stalin if I could reach him, whether there was any dissatisfaction with the work of our Party. This order of Tito's was purely formal – to call attention to our disciplined relations with Moscow – for he was utterly convinced that the Communist Party of Yugoslavia had brilliantly passed the test, and uniquely so. There was also some discussion about the Yugoslav Party émigrés (Communists who had gone to Russia before the war). Tito's attitude was that we were not to become involved in mutual recriminations with these émigrés, especially if they had anything to do with Soviet agencies and officials. At the same time Tito emphasized that I ought to beware of secretaries, for there were all kinds, which I understood to mean that we were not only to guard an already traditional Party morality, but that we were to avoid anything that might endanger the reputation and distinction of the Yugoslav Party and of Yugoslav Communists.

I was trembling with excitement at the thought that I was about to see the Soviet Union, the land that was the first in

history – I believed, with a belief more adamant than stone – to give meaning to the dream of visionaries, the resolve of warriors, and the suffering of martyrs, for I too had languished and suffered torture in prisons, I too had hated, I too had shed human blood, not sparing even that of my own brothers.

But there was also sorrow – at leaving my comrades in the midst of the battle and my country in a death struggle, one vast battlefield and smouldering ruin.

My parting with the Soviet Mission was more cordial than my encounters with it usually were. I embraced my comrades, who were as moved as I was, and set out for the improvised airfield near Bosanski Petrovac. We spent the whole day there inspecting the airfield and conversing with its staff, which already behaved as if they were running a regular and established service, and with the peasants, who had already grown accustomed to the new régime and to the inevitability of its victory.

Recently British planes had been landing here regularly at night, but not in great numbers – at most, two or three in the course of a single night. They transported the wounded and occasional travellers and brought supplies, chiefly medical. One plane had even brought a jeep not long before – a gift from the British Command to Tito. It was at this same airfield, a month earlier, at high noon, that the Soviet Military Mission had landed in a plane on skis. In view of the terrain and other circumstances, this was a real feat. It was also quite an unusual parade, in view of the considerable escort of British fighter planes.

I regarded the descent and subsequent take-off of my plane too as quite a feat: the plane had to fly low over jagged rocks in order to come in for a landing on the narrow and uneven ice and then take off again.

My country seemed sad and dark as I looked down on it. The mountains were pale with snow and gashed with black crevices, while the valleys were engulfed by the gloom, not a glimmer of light right across to the very sea. Below there was war, more terrible than any before, and on a soil that was used

to the tread and breath of war and rebellion. A people was at grips with the invader, while brothers slaughtered one another in even more bitter warfare. When would the lamps light up the villages and towns of my land again? Would it find joy and tranquillity after all this hatred and death?

Our first stop was Bari, in Italy, where there was a considerable base of Yugoslav Partisans – hospitals and storehouses, food and equipment. From there we flew toward Tunis. We had to travel a roundabout route because of the German bases on Crete and in Greece. We stopped in Malta on the way, as guests of the British Commander, and arrived in Tobruk for the night just in time to see the whole sky licked by a murky fire which rose from the ruddy rocky desert below.

The next day we arrived in Cairo. The British lodged us discreetly in a hotel and placed a car at our disposal. The shopkeepers and the staff took us for Russians because of the five-pointed stars on our caps, but it was pleasant to learn, as soon as we casually mentioned that we were Yugoslav or spoke Tito's name, that they knew of our struggle. In one shop the salesgirl greeted us by swearing at us in our own tongue, which she had innocently learned from émigré officers. A group of these same officers, carried away by a longing to fight and homesickness for their suffering land, declared themselves for Tito.

When I learnt that the chief of UNRRA, Lehman, was in Cairo, I asked the Soviet Minister to take me to him so that I might present him with our requests. The American received me without delay, but coldly, declaring that our requests would be taken into consideration at the following meeting of UNRRA and that UNRRA dealt only with legal governments as a matter of principle.

My primitive article of faith that Western capitalism was the irreconcilable enemy of all progress and of the small and oppressed found justification even in my first encounter with its representatives: I noted that Mr Lehman received us lying down, for he had his leg in plaster and was obviously troubled by this and by the heat, which I mistook for annoyance at our

visit, while his Russian interpreter – a hairy giant of a man with crude features – was for me the very image of a badman in a Western. Yet I had no reason to be dissatisfied with this visit to the obliging Lehman; our request was submitted and we were promised that it would be considered.

We took advantage of our three-day sojourn in Cairo to see the historic sights, and because the first chief of the British Mission in Yugoslavia, Major Deakin, was staying in Cairo, we were also his guests at an intimate dinner.

From Cairo we went to the British base at Habbaniya, near Baghdad. The British Command refused to drive us to Baghdad on the grounds that it was not quite safe. We thought that this was an excuse and that they were concealing a colonial terrorism no less drastic than the German occupation of our country. Instead of this, the British invited us to a sports event put on by their soldiers. We went, and had seats next to the Commander. We looked funny even to ourselves, let alone the polite and easygoing English, trussed as we were in belts and buttoned up to the Adam's apple.

We were accompanied by a major, a merry and goodhearted old fellow who kept apologizing for his poor knowledge of Russian – he had learned it at the time the British intervened at Archangel during the Russian Revolution. He was enthusiastic about the Russians (their delegations too had stopped at Habbaniya), not about their social system but about their simplicity and, above all, their ability to down huge glasses of vodka or whisky at one gulp 'for Stalin, for Churchill!'

The major spoke calmly, but not without pride, of battles with natives incited by German agents, and indeed, the hangars were riddled with bullets. In our doctrinaire way we could not understand how it was possible, much less rational, to sacrifice oneself 'for imperialism' – for so we regarded the West's struggle – but to ourselves we marvelled at the heroism and boldness of the British, who had ventured forth and triumphed in distant and torrid Asian deserts, so few in numbers and without hope of assistance. Though I was not capable at the time of drawing broad conclusions from this, it

certainly helped me to realize that on our globe there was not a single ideal only, but countless parallel human systems.

We were suspicious of the British and held ourselves aloof from them. Our fears were made especially great because of our naïve notions about their espionage – the Intelligence Service. Our attitudes were compounded of doctrinaire clichés, the influence of sensational literature, and the uneasiness of newcomers in the great wide world.

Certainly these fears would not have been so great had it not been for those sacks filled with the archives of the Supreme Command, for they also contained telegrams between ourselves and the Comintern. We found it suspicious too that the British military authorities everywhere had shown no more interest in these sacks than if they had contained shoes or cans. To be sure, I kept them at my side throughout the trip, and to avoid being alone at night, Marko slept with me. He was a pre-war Communist from Montenegro, simple but all the more brave and loyal for that.

It happened in Habbaniya one night that someone silently opened the door of my room. I was aroused even though the door did not creak. I spied the form of a native in the light of the moon, and, getting enmeshed in the mosquito net, I let out a shout and grabbed the revolver under my pillow. Marko sprang up (he slept fully clothed), but the stranger vanished. Most probably the native had lost his way or intended to steal something. But his mere appearance was enough to make us see the long arm of the British espionage in this, and we increased our already strict vigilance. We were very glad when, the next day, the British put a plane for Teheran at our disposal.

The Teheran through which we wandered, from the Soviet Command to the Soviet Embassy, was already a piece of the Soviet Union. Soviet officers met us with an easy cordiality in which traditional Russian hospitality was mixed in equal measure with the solidarity of fighters for the same ideal in two different parts of the world. In the Soviet Embassy we were shown the round table at which the Teheran Conference had been seated, and also the upstairs room in which Roose-

velt had stayed. There was nobody there now and all was as he had left it.

Finally a Soviet plane took us to the Soviet Union – the realization of our dreams and our hopes. The deeper we penetrated into its grey-green expanse, the more I was gripped by a new, hitherto hardly suspected emotion. It was as though I was returning to a primeval homeland, unknown but mine.

I had never had any Pan-Slavic feelings, nor did I look upon Moscow's Pan-Slavic ideas at that time as anything but a manoeuvre for mobilizing conservative forces against the German invasion. But this emotion of mine was something quite different and deeper, going even beyond the limits of my adherence to Communism. I recalled dimly how for three centuries Yugoslav visionaries and fighters, statesmen and sovereigns – especially the unfortunate prince-bishops of suffering Montenegro – made pilgrimages to Russia and there sought understanding and salvation. Was I not travelling their path? And was this not the homeland of our ancestors, whom some unknown avalanche had deposited in the wind-swept Balkans? Russia had never understood the South Slavs and their aspirations; I was convinced that this was because Russia had been tsarist and feudal. But far more final was my faith that, at last, all the social and other reasons for disagreements between Moscow and other peoples had been removed. At that time I looked upon this as the realization of universal brotherhood, but it was also my personal link with the essence of the primeval Slavic community. This was the homeland not only of my forebears but also of soldiers who were dying for the final brotherhood of man and man's final mastery of material things.

I lost myself in the surge of the Volga and limitless grey steppes and found my primeval self, filled with hitherto unknown emotions. I wanted to kiss the Russian soil, the Soviet soil which I was treading, and I would have done so had it not seemed a religious and theatrical thing to do.

In Baku we were met by a commanding general, a taciturn giant of a man made coarse by garrison life, war, and the ser-

vice – the incarnation of a great war and a great land opposing a ravaging invasion. In his rough cordiality he was nonplussed by our almost shy reserve: 'What kind of people are these? They don't drink, they don't eat! We Russians eat well, drink even better, and fight best of all!'

Moscow was gloomy and sombre and surprisingly full of mean buildings. But this did not matter beside our reception with honours according to rank and a friendliness which was deliberately unostentatious because of the Communist character of our struggle. Nothing could compare with the grandeur of the war that we believed would be mankind's last trial and that was our very life and our destiny. All was pale and meaningless beside the reality that was present on this very spot, in the Soviet land, a land that was also ours and mankind's, which had come forth from a nightmare into a tranquil and joyous reality.

3

They billeted us in the Red Army Centre, the TsDKA, a kind of hotel for Soviet officers. The food and all other amenities were very good. They gave us a car with a chauffeur, Panov, a man well on in years, simple, and somewhat bowed, but of independent views. There was also a liaison officer, Captain Kozovsky, a young and very handsome lad who was proud of his Cossack origin, all the more so since the Cossacks had 'washed away' their counter-revolutionary past in the present war. Thanks to him we were always sure, at any time, of obtaining tickets for the theatre, the cinema, or anything else.

But we were not able to make any serious contact with the leading Soviet figures, though I requested to be received by V. M. Molotov, then Commissar for Foreign Affairs, and, if possible, by J. V. Stalin, the Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. All my circuitous attempts to present our requests and needs were in vain.

In all this no help was to be had from the Yugoslav Embassy, which was still royalist, though Ambassador Simic and his

small staff had declared themselves for Marshal Tito. Although officially recognized, they were in fact more insignificant and accordingly more powerless than we.

Nor could we accomplish anything through the Yugoslav Party émigrés. They were few in number – decimated by purges. The most distinguished figure among them was Veljko Vlahović. We were the same age, both revolutionaries out of the revolutionary student movement of Belgrade University against the dictatorship of King Alexander. He was a veteran of the Spanish Civil War, while I was coming from an even more terrible war. He was a man of great personal integrity, highly educated and wise, though excessively disciplined and not independent in his views. He managed the radio station Free Yugoslavia, and his cooperation was valuable, but his connexions did not go beyond Georgi Dimitrov, who, since the Comintern had been dissolved, shared with D. Z. Manuilsky the direction of the section of the Soviet Central Committee for foreign Communist parties. We were well fed and graciously received, but as far as the problems we had to present and to solve were concerned, we could make no headway whatsoever. I must admit and indeed emphasize that, except for this, we were received with extraordinary geniality and consideration. But it was not until a month after our arrival, when Stalin and Molotov received General Terzić and me and this was published in the press, that all the doors of the ponderous Soviet administration and of the rarefied heights of Soviet society were magically thrown open.

The Pan-Slavic Committee, which had been created in the course of the war, was the first to arrange banquets and receptions for us. But one did not have to be a Communist to see that this institution was not only artificial but also quite hopeless. Its activity was centred on public relations and propaganda, and even in this it was obviously limited. Besides, its aims were not very clear. The Committee was composed almost entirely of Communists from the Slavic countries – the émigrés in Moscow who were in fact averse to the idea of closer Pan-Slavic relations. All of them tacitly understood that

it was a matter of resurrecting something long since outmoded, a transitional form meant to rally support around Communist Russia, or at least to paralyse anti-Soviet Pan-Slavic currents.

The very leadership of the Committee was insignificant. Its President, General Gundorov, a man prematurely grown old in every respect and of limited views, was not a man one could talk to effectively even on the simplest questions of how Slavic solidarity could be achieved. The Committee's Secretary, Mochalov, was rather more authoritative simply because he was closer to the Soviet security agencies – something that he concealed rather badly behind his extravagant manner. Both Gundorov and Mochalov were Red Army officers, but were among those who had proved to be unfit for the front. One could detect in them the suppressed dejection of men demoted to jobs that they did not consider their line. Only their secretary, Nazarova, a gap-toothed and excessively ingratiating woman, had anything resembling love for the suffering Slavs, though her activities too, as was later learned in Yugoslavia, were subordinated to Soviet security agencies.

In the Pan-Slavic Committee headquarters one ate well, drank even more, and mostly just talked. Long and empty toasts were raised, not much different from one another, and certainly not as beautiful as those of tsarist times. Their Pan-Slavic ideas struck me as completely out of date. So, too, was the Committee building – imitation baroque or something of the sort in the midst of a modern city.

The Committee was the result of an extempore, shallow, and not completely altruistic policy. However, the reader must understand that though all this was quite clear to me even at that time, I was far from viewing it with horror or amazement. The fact that the Pan-Slavic Committee was a naked instrument of the Soviet Government for influencing backward strata among the Slavs outside the Soviet Union and that its officials were dependent on and connected with both the secret and public agencies of the government – all this did not trouble me one bit. I was only disturbed by its impotence and superficiality, and above all by the fact that it could not open the

way for me to the Soviet Government and to a solution of Yugoslav problems. For I too, like every other Communist, had it inculcated in me and I was convinced that there could exist no opposition between the Soviet Union and another people, especially a revolutionary and Marxist party, as the Yugoslav Party indeed was. And though the Pan-Slavic Committee seemed too antiquated to me, and accordingly an unsuitable instrument for a Communist end, yet I considered it acceptable, especially as the Soviet leadership insisted on it. As far as its officials' connexions with security agencies were concerned, I had also learned to look upon these as almost divine guardians of the revolution and of socialism – 'a sword in the hands of the Party'.

The character of my insistence that I reach the summits of the Soviet Government should also be explained. Though I urged, I was neither importunate nor resentful of the Soviet Government, for I was trained to see in it something even greater than the leadership of my own Party and revolution – the leading power of Communism as a whole. I had already gathered from Tito and others that long waits – to be sure, by foreign Communists – were rather the style in Moscow. What troubled me and made me impatient was the urgency of the needs of a revolution, my own Yugoslav revolution.

Though nobody, not even the Yugoslav Communists, spoke of revolution, it was long since obvious that it was going on. In the West they were already writing a great deal about it. In Moscow, however, they obstinately refused to recognize it – even those who had, so to speak, every reason to do so. Everyone stubbornly talked only about the struggle against the German invaders and even more stubbornly stressed nothing but the patriotic character of that struggle, all the while conspicuously emphasizing the decisive role of the Soviet Union in the whole matter. Of course, nothing could have been further from my mind than the thought of denying the decisive role of the Soviet Party in world Communism, or of the Red Army in the war against Hitler. But on the soil of my land, and under conditions of their own, the Yugoslav Communists were

obviously waging a war independent of the momentary successes and defeats of the Red Army, a war, moreover, that was at the same time converting the political and social structure of the country. Both externally and internally the Yugoslav revolution had transcended the needs and accommodations of Soviet foreign policy, and this is how I explained the obstacles and lack of understanding which I was meeting.

Strangest of all was the fact that those who should have understood this best of all submissively kept still and pretended not to understand. I had yet to learn that in Moscow the discussion and especially the determination of political positions had to wait until Stalin, or at least Molotov, had spoken. This applied even to such distinguished persons as the former secretaries of the Comintern, Manuilsky and Dimitrov.

Tito and Kardelj, as well as other Yugoslav Communists who had been to Moscow, had reported that Manuilsky was particularly well disposed toward the Yugoslavs. This may have been held against him during the purges of 1936–7, in which almost the entire group of Yugoslav Communists had perished in the Party purge, but now, after the Yugoslav uprising against the Nazis, this could be taken for farsightedness. In any case, he injected into his enthusiasm for the Yugoslavs' struggle a certain dose of personal pride, though he knew none of the new Yugoslav leaders except, perhaps, Tito, and him only very slightly. Our meeting with him took place in the evening. Also present was G. F. Alexandrov, the noted Soviet philosopher and, much more important, chief of the section for agitation and propaganda of the Central Committee.

Alexandrov left no definite impress on me. Indefiniteness, or, rather, colourlessness, was his basic characteristic. He was a short, pudgy, bald man whose pallor and corpulence proclaimed that he never set foot outside his office. Except for a few conventional observations and benign smiles, he spoke not a word about the character and scope of the Yugoslav Communist uprising, though in my conversations, supposedly without design, I touched on these very points. Obviously the Central Committee had not yet determined its stand; thus,

as far as Soviet propaganda was concerned, it remained simply a struggle against invaders without any real repercussions for the internal Yugoslav state or for international relations.

Nor did Manuilsky take any definite stand. Yet he exhibited a lively, emotional interest. I had already heard of his oratorical gift. One could detect this gift even in his articles, and he fairly scintillated through the polish and vividness of his expression. He was a slight and already hunched veteran, dark-haired, with a clipped moustache. He spoke with a lisp, almost gently and – what astonished me at the time – without much energy. He was also this way in other things – considerate, affable to the point of joviality, and obviously a cultured man of the world.

In describing the development of the uprising in Yugoslavia, I pointed out that there was being formed in a new way a government which was in essence identical with the Soviet. I made a special point of stressing the new revolutionary role of the peasantry; I practically reduced the uprising in Yugoslavia to a union between a peasant rebellion and the Communist *avant-garde*. Yet though neither he nor Alexandrov opposed what I was saying, they did not show in any way that they approved of my views. Even if I regarded it natural that Stalin's role was decisive in everything, still I expected from Manuilsky a greater independence and initiative in word and deed. I went away from my meeting with him impressed by the vitality of his personality and moved by his enthusiasm for the struggle in Yugoslavia, but also convinced that Manuilsky played no real role in the determination of Moscow's policies, not even concerning Yugoslavia.

When speaking of Stalin he attempted to camouflage extreme flattery in 'scientific' and 'Marxist' formulas. This way of speaking about Stalin went something like this: 'You know, it is simply incomprehensible that a single person could have played such a decisive role in a crucial moment of the war. And that so many talents should be combined in one person – statesman, thinker, and soldier.'

My suspicions about Manuilsky's insignificance were later

cruelly confirmed. He was made Foreign Minister of the Ukraine (he was a Ukrainian Jew by birth), which meant his final isolation from all important political activity. True, as Secretary of the Comintern he was Stalin's obedient tool, especially as his past had not been completely Bolshevik; he had belonged to a group of so-called *mezhraiontsy*, led by Trotsky, which had joined the Bolsheviks only on the eve of the 1917 Revolution. I saw him in 1949 at the United Nations. There he came out in the name of the Ukraine against the 'imperialists' and 'Tito's fascist clique'. There was nothing left of his oratory but bombast, and nothing of his penetrating thought but phrase-making. He was already a lost, senile, little old man who was rapidly disappearing as he slid down the steep ladder of the Soviet hierarchy.

This was not the case with Dimitrov. I met him three times during my stay – twice in the hospital of the Soviet Government, and the third time in his villa near Moscow. Each time he struck me as being a sick man. His breathing was asthmatic, the colour of his skin was either unhealthily red or pale, and spots around his ears were dried up as if from eczema. His hair was so sparse that it left exposed his withered yellow scalp. But his thoughts were quick and fresh, quite in contrast to his slow and tired movements. This prematurely old, almost crushed man still radiated a powerful conscious energy and vigour. His features showed this too, especially the strained look of his bulging bluish eyes and the convulsive way his nose and jaw stuck out. Though he did not voice his every thought, his conversation was frank and firm. It could not be said that he did not understand the situation in Yugoslavia, though he, too, thought it too soon – in view of relations between the USSR and the West – to announce that our movement was entirely Communist in character. Of course, I too felt that our primary propaganda effort should stress the struggle against the invader, and accordingly this meant not accentuating the Communist character of that struggle. But it was of the utmost importance to me that the Soviet leaders, and Dimitrov too, should realize that – in Yugoslavia at least –

it was senseless to insist on a coalition between the Communist and bourgeois parties, for the war and the civil war had already shown that the Communist Party was the only real political force. This view of mine meant that the Yugoslav Royal Government-in-exile, and indeed the monarchy itself, could no longer be recognized.

During our first meeting I described to Dimitrov the developments and the situation in Yugoslavia. He generously admitted that he had not expected that the Yugoslav Party would prove to be the most militant and most resourceful; he had placed greater hopes in the French Party. He recalled how Tito, on leaving Moscow at the end of 1939, swore that the Yugoslav Party would wash away the stain with which various factionalists had besmirched it and that it would prove itself worthy of the name which it bore, whereupon Dimitrov advised him not to swear, but to act wisely and resolutely. He recounted further: 'You know, when the question arose of appointing a Secretary of the Yugoslav Party, there was some wavering, but I was for Walter [this was Josip Broz's Party pseudonym at the time; later he adopted the name Tito]. He was a worker, and he seemed solid and serious to me. I am glad that I was not mistaken.'

Dimitrov remarked, almost apologetically, that the Soviet Government had not been in a position to help the Yugoslav Partisans in their greatest hour of need. He himself had personally interested Stalin in this. That was true: as early as 1941–2 Soviet pilots had tried to get through to Yugoslav Partisan bases, and some homeward-bound Yugoslav émigrés who had flown with them had been frozen.

Dimitrov also mentioned our negotiations with the Germans over the exchange of prisoners: 'We were afraid for you, but luckily everything turned out well.'

I did not react to this, nor would I have said any more than he had confirmed, even if he had insisted on the details. But there was no danger that he would say or ask something he shouldn't; in politics all that ends well is soon forgotten.

As a matter of fact, Dimitrov did not insist on anything;

the Comintern had really been dissolved, and his only job now was to gather information about Communist parties and to give advice to the Soviet Government and Party.

He told me how the idea of dissolving the Comintern first arose. It was at the time when the Baltic states were annexed by the Soviet Union. It was apparent even then that the main power in the spread of Communism was the Soviet Union, and that therefore all forces had to gather directly around it. The dissolution itself had been postponed because of the international situation, to avoid giving the impression that it was being done under pressure from the Germans, with whom relations were not bad at the time.

Dimitrov was a person who enjoyed Stalin's rare regard, and, what was perhaps less important, he was the undisputed leader of the Bulgarian Communist movement. Two later meetings with Dimitrov confirmed this. At the first I described conditions in Yugoslavia to the members of the Bulgarian Central Committee, and at the second there was talk of eventual Bulgarian–Yugoslav cooperation and of the struggle in Bulgaria.

Besides Dimitrov, the meeting with the Bulgarian Central Committee was attended by Kolarov, Chervenkov, and others. Chervenkov had greeted me on the occasion of my first visit, though he did not remain, and I took him to be Dimitrov's private secretary. He kept in the background at this second meeting as well – silent and unobtrusive, though I was later to gain a different impression of him. I had already learned from Vlahović and others that Chervenkov was married to Dimitrov's sister, that he was to have been arrested at the time of the purges – the 'exposé' of the political school where he was an instructor had already been published – but he took refuge with Dimitrov. Dimitrov intervened with the NKVD and made everything in order.

The purges were especially hard on the Communist émigrés, those members of illegal parties who had no one to turn to except the Soviet. The Bulgarian émigrés were lucky that Dimitrov was Secretary of the Comintern and a person with

such authority. He saved many of them. There was no one to stand behind the Yugoslavs; on the contrary, they dug graves for one another in their race for power in the Party and in their zeal to prove their devotion to Stalin and to Leninism.

Kolarov's old age was already apparent; he was past seventy and, moreover, had been politically inactive for many years. He was a kind of relic of the violent beginnings of the Bulgarian Party. He belonged to the '*tesni*' (literally, 'narrow'), the left wing of the Bulgarian Socialist Party, out of which later developed the Communist Party. In 1923 the Bulgarian Communists had given armed opposition to the military clique of General Tsankov which had just previously carried out a coup and killed the peasant leader Alexander Stambuliski. Kolarov had a massive head, more Turkish than Slavic, with chiselled features, strong nose, sensuous lips, but his thoughts were of times gone by and, I say it without rancour, of inconsequential matters. My description to Kolarov of the struggle in Yugoslavia could not be a mere analysis, it was also a horrible picture of ruins and massacres. Of some ten thousand pre-war Party members, hardly two thousand were still alive, while I estimated our current losses of troops and population at around one million two hundred thousand. Yet after this recital of mine all Kolarov could think of to say was to ask me a single question: 'In your opinion, is the language spoken in Macedonia closer to Bulgarian or to Serbian?'

The Yugoslav Communist leadership had already had serious altercations with the Central Committee in Bulgaria, which held that it should be allowed to run the Yugoslav Communist Party in Yugoslav Macedonia because it happened to be occupied by Bulgaria. The dispute was finally broken off by the Comintern, which approved the Yugoslav view, but only after Germany's attack on the USSR. Nevertheless, friction over Macedonia, as well as over questions about Partisan uprising against the Bulgarian occupiers, continued and got worse as the inevitable hour of the defeat of Germany, and with it of Bulgaria, approached. Vlahović, too, had seen the pretensions of the Bulgarian Communists in Moscow to

Yugoslav Macedonia. Dimitrov, I must admit, took a rather different line: for him the important matter was Bulgarian–Yugoslav *rapprochement*. But I do not believe that even he maintained that the Macedonians were a separate nationality, despite the fact that his mother was a Macedonian and that his attitude toward the Macedonians was distinctly sentimental.

Perhaps I was too bitter when I replied to Kolarov, 'I do not know whether the Macedonian language is closer to Bulgarian or Serbian, but the Macedonians are not Bulgars, nor is Macedonia Bulgarian.' Dimitrov found this embarrassing. He reddened and waved his hand: 'It is of no importance!' And he passed on to another question.

My memory of who attended the third meeting with Dimitrov is gone with the wind, but certainly Chervenkov could not have been absent. The meeting took place on the eve of my return to Yugoslavia, at the beginning of June 1944. It was to be devoted to cooperation between the Yugoslav and Bulgarian Communists. But it was hardly worth while discussing the matter, for the Bulgars in fact had no Partisan units at the time.

I insisted that military operations should begin in Bulgaria and that Partisan units should be formed there. I said it was folly to expect any sort of revolt in the Bulgarian Royal Army, for nothing of this kind had happened in Yugoslavia: from the old Yugoslav Army the Partisans got only individual officers, while the Communist Party had to create an army of small units in the course of a very stubborn struggle. It was evident that Dimitrov, too, shared these illusions, though he did agree that Partisan units should be formed at once.

It was obvious that he knew something I did not know. When I stressed that even in Yugoslavia, in which the occupation had destroyed the old state apparatus, a rather long time was needed to come to terms with its remnants, he interjected, 'In three or four months there will be a revolution in Bulgaria anyway; the Red Army will soon be on its borders!'

Though Bulgaria was not at war with the Soviet Union, it was clear to me that Dimitrov thought that the Red Army

would be the decisive factor. To be sure, he did not categorically declare that the Red Army would enter Bulgaria, but it was obvious that he knew even then that this would happen, and he was giving me a hint. Given Dimitrov's view and expectation, my insistence on Partisan operations and units lost any importance and meaning. The conversation became merely an exchange of opinions and brotherly greetings to Tito and the Yugoslav fighters.

It is worth recording Dimitrov's attitude toward Stalin. He, too, spoke of him with admiration and respect, but without any noticeable flattery or reverence. His relationship to Stalin was clearly that of a revolutionary who gave disciplined submission to the leader, but a revolutionary who did his own thinking. He particularly stressed Stalin's role in the war.

He said: 'When the Germans were outside Moscow, a general uncertainty and confusion ensued. The Soviet Government had withdrawn to Kuibishev. But Stalin remained in Moscow. I was with him at the time, in the Kremlin. They were taking out archives from the Kremlin. I suggested to Stalin that the Comintern should issue a proclamation to the German soldiers. He agreed, though he felt no good would come of it. Soon afterwards, I too had to leave Moscow. Stalin did not leave; he was determined to defend it. And at that most dramatic moment he held a parade in Red Square on the anniversary of the October Revolution. The divisions before him were leaving for the front. It is impossible to say how great was the effect on morale when people learned that Stalin was sitting in Moscow and when they heard his words. It restored their faith and raised their confidence, and it was worth more than a good-sized army.'

On that occasion I became acquainted with Dimitrov's wife. She was a Sudeten German, but this was kept quiet because of the general hatred of the Germans which came naturally to the ordinary Russians and which they understood more easily than anti-fascist propaganda.

Dimitrov's villa was tastefully luxurious. It had everything

– except joy. Dimitrov's only son was dead; a portrait of the pale young man hung in the father's study. The soldier who could once endure defeats and take pleasure in victories was now an old man already at the end of his powers. Dimitrov could no longer be happy or extricate himself from the silent encircling pity that met him at every step.

4

Several months before our arrival Moscow had announced that a Yugoslav Brigade had been formed in the Soviet Union. Some time before this, Polish and then Czech units had been formed. We in Yugoslavia could not imagine how such a great number of Yugoslavs came to be in the Soviet Union when even those few political émigrés who found themselves there had largely vanished in the purges.

Now, in Moscow, everything became clear to me. The bulk of the manpower in the Yugoslav Brigade was made up of the personnel of a regiment that the Croatian quisling Pavelić had sent to the Germans at the Soviet front as a token of solidarity. But Pavelić's army had no luck there; the regiment was shattered, taken prisoner at Stalingrad, and, after the usual purification, transformed, with Commander Mesić at its head, into the Yugoslav Anti-Fascist Brigade. A few Yugoslav political émigrés were collected from here and there and given political posts in the Brigade, while Soviet officers – both military specialists and those from Security – took over the outfitting and checking of the men.

In the beginning the Soviet representatives insisted that the Brigade's insignia be identical with those of the Yugoslav Royal Army, but when Vlahović objected, they agreed to introduce the insignia of the People's Liberation Army. It was hard to agree on these insignia by way of dispatches, but Vlahović nevertheless did what he could, and the resulting insignia were something of a compromise. On our insistence this matter too was finally settled.

There were no other essential problems concerning the

Brigade except our dissatisfaction that the same commander had been kept. But the Russians defended his position by saying that he had recanted and that he had influence over his men. My impression was that Mesić was deeply demoralized and that, like many, he had simply turned his coat to save himself from a prisoner-of-war camp. He was himself dissatisfied, for it was quite clear that he had no function in the unit whatever – his command was a pure formality.

The Brigade was stationed in a wood near the town of Kolomna. They lived in turf houses and drilled without regard to the cruel Russian winter. At first I was astonished at the harsh discipline that prevailed in the unit. There was a certain discrepancy, a contradiction between the aims that the unit was supposed to serve and the manner in which its men were supposed to be imbued with these aims. In our Partisan units there was a comradeship and solidarity, and punishment was strict only for looting and disobedience. Here everything was based on a blind submission which the Prussians of Frederick I might well have envied. However, we were not successful in changing this either, given the unyielding, harsh Soviet instructors on the one hand and men who had only yesterday fought on the side of the Germans on the other. We carried out an inspection, delivered a speech, discussed problems superficially, and left everything as it was, ending, to be sure, with the inevitable feast with the officers, who got drunk to a man toasting Tito and Stalin and embracing one another in the name of Slavic brotherhood.

One of our incidental duties was to arrange for the first medals of the new Yugoslavia to be made. In this we met complete understanding, and if the medals – especially the 1941 commemorative medal – turned out badly, it was less the fault of the Soviet factory than of our modesty and the poor quality of the designs we had brought from Yugoslavia.

Supervision of the foreign units was carried out by NKVD General Zhukov. Pale, thin, fair-haired, still young, and very resourceful, Zhukov was not without humour and a refined cynicism – not rare qualities for the members of a secret

service. Concerning the Yugoslav Brigade, he told me, 'It's not bad, considering the material we had to work with.' And that was true. If, later in Yugoslavia, it hardly distinguished itself in engagements with the Germans, this was not so much due to the fighting qualities of the men as because its organization and experience were not suitable for an army different from the Soviet and under conditions of warfare different from those on the Eastern Front.

General Zhukov held a reception in our honour. The military attaché of Mexico, in conversation with me, offered aid, but unfortunately we could not think of a way of getting it to our troops in Yugoslavia.

Just before my departure from Moscow, I was a guest at a dinner at General Zhukov's. He and his wife lived in a small two-room apartment. Everything was comfortable, but modest, though almost luxurious for Moscow, especially in time of war. Zhukov was an excellent civil servant and experience had persuaded him that force was more effective than ideology as the means of realizing Communism. The relationship between us became fairly intimate, yet at the same time reserved, for nothing could alter the differences in our habits and views. Political friendships are good only when each remains what he is. Before I left his apartment, Zhukov presented me with an officer's automatic gun – a modest gift, but suitable in time of war.

On the other hand, I had a quite different meeting with the representatives of the Soviet Secret Service. Through Captain Kozovsky I was visited in the TsDKA by a modestly dressed little man who did not hide the fact that he was from the State Security. We arranged for a meeting on the following day, in a manner so conspiratorial that, just because I had been an illegal worker for so many years, I felt it was all needlessly complicated, indeed a cliché. A car awaited me in a near-by street, and, after an involved ride, we transferred into another, only to be deposited in some street of the huge city from which we then walked to a third street, where someone from the window of an enormous apartment building threw down a

little key which enabled us finally to enter a spacious and luxurious apartment on the third floor.

The owner of the apartment – if she was the owner – was one of those clear-eyed northern blondes whose buxomness enhances their beauty and strength. Her radiant beauty played no role, at least in this instance, and it turned out that she was more important than the man who brought me. She did the questioning, and he recorded the answers. They were more interested in the men who were in the councils of the Communist Party than in men of other parties. It felt uncomfortably like a police interrogation, and yet I knew that it was my duty as a Communist to give them the information they wanted. Had some member of the Central Committee of the Soviet Party called me, I would not have hesitated. But what did these people want with data about the Communist Party and leading Communists when their job was to wage a struggle against the enemies of the Soviet Union and possible *provocateurs* within the Communist parties? Nevertheless I answered their questions, taking care to say nothing precise or negative, nor to give any hint of inner friction. I did this as much from moral repugnance at saying things about my comrades which they would not know as from an inner passionate aversion to those who I felt had no right to intrude into my intimate world, my views, and my Party. My embarrassment no doubt communicated itself to my hosts, for the business part of the meeting lasted hardly an hour and a half; thereupon it turned into a less forced comradely conversation over coffee and cakes.

My contacts with the Soviet public were more frequent and direct, for at that time the public's contact with foreigners from Allied countries was not severely restricted in the Soviet Union.

Because there was a war and we were the representatives of the only Party and people who had raised a revolt against Hitler, we excited every kind of curiosity. Writers came to us for new inspiration, film producers for interesting stories, journalists for articles and information, and young men and

girls who wanted our help in getting them flown to Yugoslavia as volunteers.

Pravda, their most authoritative daily, asked me for an article on the struggle in Yugoslavia, and *Novoye Vremya* one about Tito. In both cases I encountered difficulties over the editing of these articles. *Pravda* threw out almost everything that dealt with the character and political consequences of the struggle. The alteration of articles to fit the Party line was a part of our Party procedure. But it was done only when gross deviation or particularly delicate questions were involved. *Pravda*, however, threw out everything that had to do with the very essence of our struggle – the new régime and the social changes. It went even so far as to retouch my style, cutting out every figure of speech that was the least bit unusual, shortening sentences, and striking out turns of phrase. The article became grey and uninspired. After struggling with one of their editors, I gave in to this mutilation; it was senseless to create antagonism over something like that, and it was better to publish it as it was than not at all.

The affair with *Novoye Vremya* led to even more serious trouble. Their castration of my style and my ideas was somewhat less drastic, but they watered down or threw out almost everything that referred to the originality and extraordinary significance of Tito's personality. In my first conference with one of the editors of *Novoye Vremya*, I agreed to some immaterial changes. It was only at the second conference – when it became clear to me that in the USSR no one can be magnified except Stalin and when the editor openly admitted this in these words: 'It is awkward because of Comrade Stalin; that's the way it is here' – that I agreed to the other changes; all the more so since the article had preserved its essence and colour.

For me and for other Yugoslav Communists Stalin's leadership was indisputable. Yet I was still puzzled why other Communist leaders – Tito, for instance – could not be praised if they deserved it, from the Communist point of view.

It is worth noting that Tito himself was very flattered by

the article and that, to the best of my knowledge, the Soviet press had never published such high praise of any other living person.

This is to be explained by the fact that Soviet public opinion – that is, the opinion of the Party, since no other kind exists – was enthusiastic about the Yugoslav struggle. But also because in the course of the war the atmosphere of Soviet society had changed.

As I look back, I can say that the conviction spread spontaneously in the USSR that now, after a war that had demonstrated the devotion of the Soviet people to their homeland and to the basic achievements of the revolution, there would be no further reason for the political restrictions and for the ideological monopolies held by little groups of leaders, and especially by a single leader. The world was changing before the very eyes of the Soviet people. It was obvious that the USSR would not be the only socialist country and that new revolutionary leaders and tribunes were making their appearance.

Such an atmosphere and such opinions did not hinder the Soviet leaders at the time; on the contrary, these opinions contributed to the war effort. There was no reason for the leaders themselves not to encourage such illusions. After all, Tito, or, rather, the struggle of the Yugoslavs, was bringing about changes in the Balkans and in Central Europe that did not weaken the position of the Soviet Union but actually strengthened it. Thus there was no reason not to popularize and to help the Yugoslavs.

But there was an even more significant factor in this. Though allied with the Western democracies, the Soviet Union, or, rather, the Soviet Communists, felt alone in the struggle. They were fighting for their own survival and for their way of life. And in view of the absence of a second front, that is, major battles in the West at a time that was decisive for the fate of the Russian people, even the ordinary man and common soldier felt alone. The Yugoslav uprising helped dispel that loneliness on the part of the leaders and the people.

Both as a Communist and as a Yugoslav I was moved by the love and regard that I encountered everywhere, especially in the Red Army. With a clear conscience I inscribed in the guest book of an exhibition of captured German weapons: 'I am proud that there are no weapons here from Yugoslavia!' – for there were weapons there from all over Europe.

It was proposed that we visit the South-western Front – the Second Ukrainian Front – which was under the command of Marshal I. S. Koniev. We went by plane to Uman, a little town in the Ukraine – and into a seared wasteland which the war and a measureless human hatred had left in their wake.

The local Soviet arranged a supper and a meeting with the public figures of the town. The supper, which was held in a neglected, decrepit building, was hardly a gay affair. The Bishop of Uman and the Party Secretary were unable to conceal their mutual intolerance even though they were in the presence of foreigners, and though each in his own way was fighting against the Germans.

I had previously learned from Soviet officials that as soon as the war broke out, the Russian Patriarch began, without asking the Government, to distribute mimeographed encyclicals against the German invaders, and that they enjoyed a response which went far beyond his subordinate clergy. These appeals were also attractive in form: against the monotony of Soviet propaganda they shone out with the freshness of their ancient and religious patriotism. The Soviet Government quickly adapted itself and began to look to the Church, too, for support, despite the fact that they continued to regard it as a remnant of the old order. In the misfortunes of war, religion was revived and made headway, and the chief of the Soviet Mission in Yugoslavia, General Korneyev, said that many people – and very responsible people at that – considered turning to Orthodoxy, in a moment of mortal danger from the Germans, as a more permanent ideological motive force. 'We would have saved Russia even through Orthodoxy if that were unavoidable!' he explained.

Today this sounds incredible. But only to those who do not

realize the weight of the blows that the Russian people suffered, to those who do not understand that every human society inevitably adopts and develops those ideas that are, at a given moment, best suited to maintaining and expanding the conditions of its existence. Though a drunkard, General Korneyev was not stupid, and he was deeply devoted to the Soviet system and to Communism. To one like myself, who had grown up with the revolutionary movement and who had to fight for survival by insisting on ideological purity, Korneyev's hypotheses seemed absurd. Yet I was not at all amazed – so widespread had Russian patriotism, not to say nationalism, become – when the Bishop of Uman raised a toast to Stalin as the 'unifier of the Russian lands'. Stalin understood intuitively that his government and his social system could not withstand the blows of the German Army unless they leant for support on the older aspirations and beliefs of the Russian people.

The Secretary of the Uman Soviet smouldered with bitterness at the Bishop's skilful and discreet emphasis on the role of the Church, and even more at the passive attitude of the population. The Partisan unit which he commanded was so weak in numbers that he was hardly able to deal with the pro-German Ukrainian gendarmerie.

Indeed, it was not possible to conceal the passive attitude of the Ukrainians toward the war and toward Soviet victories. The people seemed to me sombre and reserved, and they paid no attention to us. Although the officers with whom we were in contact concealed the Ukrainians' behaviour, or pretended it was better than it was, our Russian chauffeur cursed the Ukrainians' mothers because their sons had not fought better, so that now the Russians had to liberate them.

The next day we set out through the Ukrainian spring mud – in the tracks of the victorious Red Army. The destroyed, twisted German equipment which we encountered so frequently added to the picture of the skill and power of the Red Army, but we marvelled most of all at the toughness and self-denial of the Russian soldier, who was capable of enduring days, weeks, buried in mud up to the waist, without bread or

sleep, under a hurricane of fire and steel brought by the desperate onslaughts of the Germans.

Even today, without any biased, dogmatic, or romantic enthusiasm, I still rate the qualities of the Red Army, and particularly its Russian core, very highly. It is true that the Soviet commanding cadres, to say nothing of the soldiers and NCOs, receive a one-sided education in politics, but in every other respect they are encouraged to show initiative and broaden their knowledge. The discipline is severe and unquestioning, but not unreasonable, considering the principal aims and tasks of the army. The Soviet officers are not only technically very proficient, but they are also the most talented and boldest section of the Soviet intelligentsia. Though relatively well paid, they do not constitute a caste in themselves, and though not too much Marxist doctrine is required of them, they are expected to be extremely brave and not to fall back in battle – for example, the command centre of the corps commander at Iași was three kilometres from the German lines. Stalin had carried out sweeping purges, especially in the higher commanding echelons, but these had had less effect than is sometimes believed, for he did not hesitate at the same time to elevate younger and talented men; every officer who was faithful to him and to his aims knew that his ambitions would meet with encouragement. The speed and determination with which he carried out the transformation of the top command in the midst of the war confirmed his adaptability and willingness to open careers to men of talent. He acted in two directions simultaneously: he introduced in the army absolute obedience to the Government and to the Party and to him personally, and he spared nothing to achieve military preparedness, a higher standard of living for the army, and quick promotion for the best men.

It was in the Red Army, from an army commander, that I first heard a thought that was strange to me then, but bold. He had come to the conclusion that when Communism triumphed in the whole world wars would then take on a final bitterness. According to Marxist theories, which the Soviet

commanders knew as well as I, wars are purely the product of class struggle, and because Communism would abolish classes the necessity for men to wage war would also vanish. But this general, and many other Russian soldiers, came to realize some further truths in the horrors of war – just as I was later to do in the worst battle in which I ever took part: that human struggles would take on their final bitterness only when all men came to be subject to the same social system, for the system would not stand by itself and various sects would undertake the reckless destruction of the human race for the sake of its greater 'happiness'. Among these Soviet officers, trained in Marxism, this idea was not explicit or on the surface. But I did not forget it, nor did I regard it as being insignificant then. Even if they did not consciously know that not even the society which they were defending was free from profound and antagonistic differences, still they vaguely discerned that though man cannot live outside an ordered society and without ordered ideas, his life is also subject to other compelling forces.

We became inured to all sorts of things in the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, as children of the Party and the Revolution who acquired faith in themselves and the faith of the people through ascetic purity, we could not help being shocked at the drinking party that was held for us on the eve of our departure from the front in Marshal Koniev's headquarters, in a village in Bessarabia.

Girls who were too pretty and too extravagantly made up to be waitresses brought in vast quantities of the choicest victuals – caviare, smoked salmon and trout, fresh cucumbers and pickled aubergines, boiled hams, cold roast pigs, hot meat pies and piquant cheeses, borshch, sizzling steaks, and finally cakes a foot thick and platters of tropical fruit under which the tables began to sag.

Even earlier one could see that the Soviet officers were secretly looking forward to the feast. Thus they all came ready to gorge and to guzzle. But the Yugoslavs went as if to great trial: they had to drink, despite the fact that this did not agree

with their 'Communist morality', that is, with the habits prevailing in their army and Party. But they behaved splendidly, especially as they were not used to alcohol. Only by a tremendous exertion of will power and sense of duty did they withstand so many 'bottoms-up' toasts, and remain on their feet at the end.

I always drank little and cautiously, excusing myself on account of my headaches, from which I really suffered at the time. Our General Terzić looked tragic. He had to drink even if he did not feel like it, for he did not know how to refuse a Russian colleague who would call for a toast to Stalin just a second after not having spared himself for Tito.

Our escort seemed even more tragic to me. He was a colonel from the Soviet General Staff, and because he was 'from the rear', the Marshal and his generals picked on him, taking full advantage of their higher rank. Marshal Koniev paid no attention to the fact that this colonel was fairly weak; he had been brought back to work on the General Staff after having been wounded at the front. He simply commanded the colonel: 'Colonel, drink up a hundred grammes of vodka to the success of the Second Ukrainian Front!' A silence ensued. All turned to the colonel. I wanted to intercede for him. But he got up, stood at attention, and drank. Soon beads of sweat broke out on his pale high forehead.

But not everyone drank: those who were on duty and in contact with the front did not. Nor did the staff drink at the front, except when there was definitely a lull. They said that during the Finnish campaign Zhdanov asked Stalin to authorize an issue of one hundred grammes of vodka a day per soldier. From that time on, the custom remained in the Red Army, except that the issue was doubled before attacks: 'The soldiers feel more relaxed!' it was explained to us.

Nor did Marshal Koniev drink. He had no superior to order him to do so; besides, he had liver trouble, and so his doctors forbade him to. He was a blond, tall man of fifty, with a very energetic bony face. Though he abetted gluttony, for he held to the official 'philosophy' that 'the men have to have

a good time now and then', he himself was above that sort of thing, being sure of himself and of his troops at the front.

The author Boris Polevoi accompanied us to the front as a correspondent for *Pravda*. Though he became all too easily enthusiastic over the heroism and virtues of his country, he told us an anecdote about Koniev's superhuman coolness and courage. Finding himself at a look-out post under fire from German mortars, Koniev pretended to be looking through his binoculars, but was actually watching out of the corner of his eye to see how his officers were taking it. Every one of them knew that he would be demoted on the spot if he showed any vacillation, and no one dared point out to him the danger to his own life. And this went on. Men fell dead and were wounded, but he left the post only after the inspection was over. On another occasion shrapnel struck him in the leg. They took off his boot and bandaged the leg, but he remained at the post.

Koniev was one of Stalin's new wartime commanders. His promotion had been less rapid than Rokossovsky's, whose career was much more sudden and stormy. He joined the Red Army just after the revolution as a young worker, and gradually rose through the ranks and through the army schools. But he, too, made his career in battle, which was typical of the Red Army under Stalin's leadership in the Second World War.

Taciturn as usual, Koniev explained to me in a few words the course of the campaign at Korsun-Shevchenkovsky, which had just been completed and which was compared in the Soviet Union with the one at Stalingrad. He described, somewhat gleefully, Germany's latest catastrophe: some eighty, or even a hundred, thousand Germans had refused to surrender and had been forced into a narrow space, then tanks smashed their heavy equipment and machine-gun posts while the Cossack cavalry finally finished them off. 'We let the Cossacks cut them up for as long as they wished. They even hacked off the hands of those who raised them to surrender!' the Marshal said with a smile.

I must admit that at that moment I also rejoiced over the fate that had befallen the Germans. In my country too Nazism had, in the name of a 'master race', waged war without any of the humane considerations that had previously been shown. And yet I had another feeling at the time – horror that it should be so, that it could not be otherwise.

As I sat on the right of this remarkable figure, I was eager to clear up certain questions that particularly interested me. First of all: Why had Voroshilov, Budyonny, and others who had held high commands when the Soviet Union entered the war been removed from their posts?

Koniev replied: 'Voroshilov is a man of inexhaustible courage. But – he was incapable of understanding modern warfare. His merits are enormous, but – the battle has to be won. During the Civil War, in which Voroshilov came to the fore, the Red Army had practically no planes or tanks against it, while in this war it is precisely these machines that are playing the vital role. Budyonny never knew much, and he never studied anything. He showed himself to be completely incompetent and permitted awful mistakes to be made. Shaposhnikov was and remains a technical staff officer.'

'And Stalin?' I asked.

Taking care not to show surprise at the question, Koniev replied, after a little thought: 'Stalin is universally gifted. He is brilliantly able to see the war as a whole, and this makes it possible for him to direct it so successfully.'

He said nothing more, nothing that might sound like the stock glorification of Stalin. He passed over in silence the purely military side of Stalin's direction. Koniev was an old Communist, firmly devoted to the Government and to the Party, but, I would say, with his own firm views on military questions.

Koniev also presented us with gifts: for Tito, his personal binoculars, and for us, pistols. I kept mine until the Yugoslav authorities confiscated it at the time of my arrest in 1956.

The front abounded in examples of the personal heroism and unyielding tenacity and initiative of the common soldiers.

Russia was all last-ditch resistance, sacrifice, and determination to win in the end. In those days Moscow abandoned itself childishly – and so did we – to 'salutes': fireworks that greeted victories behind which loomed fire and death, and also bitterness. For this was a joy too for Yugoslav fighters suffering the misfortune of their own country. It was as though nothing else existed in the Soviet Union except this gigantic, compelling effort of a vast land and a population of many millions. I, too, saw nothing else, and in my bias identified the patriotism of the Russian people with the Soviet system, which was the object of my dreams and my struggle.

5

It must have been about five o'clock in the afternoon, just as I had completed my lecture at the Pan-Slavic Committee and had begun to answer questions, when someone whispered to me to finish immediately because of an important and pressing matter. Not only we Yugoslavs but also the Soviet officials had treated this lecture as more than usually important. Molotov's assistant, A. Lozovsky, had introduced me to a select audience. Obviously the Yugoslav problem was becoming more and more acute among the Allies.

I excused myself, or they made my excuses for me, and was whisked out into the street in the middle of the meeting. There they crammed me and General Terzić into a strange and not very imposing car. Only after the car had driven off did an unknown colonel from the State Security inform us that we were to be received by Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin. By that time our Military Mission had been moved to a villa in Serebrenny Bor, a Moscow suburb. I remembered the gifts for Stalin, but feared that we would be late if we went so far out of our way to get them. But the infallible State Security had taken care of that too; the gifts lay next to the Colonel in the car. Everything then was in order, even our uniforms; for some ten days or so we had been wearing new ones made in a Soviet factory. There was nothing to do but

be calm and listen to the Colonel, and ask him as little as possible.

I was already accustomed to asking no questions. But I could not suppress my excitement. It sprang from the very depths of my being. I was aware of my own pallor and of my joyful, and at the same time almost panic-stricken, agitation.

What could be more exciting for a Communist, one who was coming from war and revolution, than to be received by Stalin? This was the greatest possible recognition of the heroism and suffering of our Partisan fighters and our people. In dungeons and in the holocaust of war, and in the no less violent spiritual crises and clashes with the internal and external foes of Communism, Stalin was something more than a leader in battle. He was the incarnation of an idea, transfigured in Communist minds into pure idea, and thereby into something infallible and sinless. Stalin was the victorious battle of today and the brotherhood of man of tomorrow. I realized that it was by chance that I personally was the first Yugoslav Communist to be received by him. Still, I felt a proud joy that I would be able to tell my comrades about this encounter and say something about it to the Yugoslav fighting men as well.

Suddenly everything that had seemed unpleasant about the USSR disappeared, and all disagreements between ourselves and the Soviet leaders became unimportant and trifling, as if they had never happened. Everything disagreeable vanished before the moving grandeur and beauty of what was happening to me. My own fate was of no account compared to the struggle being waged, and our disagreements were of no importance beside the obvious inevitability of the realization of our idea.

The reader should know that at that time I believed that Trotskyites, Bukharinites, and other oppositionists in the Party were indeed spies and wreckers, and that therefore the drastic measures taken against them as well as all other so-called class enemies were justified. If I had observed that those who had been in the USSR in the period of the purge in the mid thirties tended to leave certain things unsaid, I

believed the things in question were not essential or had been exaggerated: it was cutting into good flesh in order to get rid of the bad, as Dimitrov once put it in a conversation with Tito. Therefore I regarded all the cruelties that Stalin committed exactly as his propaganda had portrayed them – as inescapable revolutionary measures that only added to his stature and his historic role. I cannot rightly tell even today what I would have done had I known the truth about the trials and the purges. I can say with certainty that my conscience would have undergone a serious crisis, but I might well have continued to be a Communist – with faith in a Communism that was more ideal than the one that existed. For with Communism as an idea the essential thing is not what is being done but why. Besides it was the most rational and most intoxicating, all-embracing ideology for me and for those in my divided and desperate land who so desired to leap over centuries of slavery and backwardness and to by-pass reality itself.

I had no time to compose myself, for the car soon arrived at the gates of the Kremlin. Another officer took charge of us at this point, and the car proceeded through cold and clean courtyards in which there was nothing alive except slender budless saplings. The officer called our attention to the Tsar Cannon and Tsar Bell – those absurd symbols of Russia that were never fired or rung. To the left was the monumental bell tower of Ivan the Great, then a row of ancient cannon, and we soon found ourselves in front of the entrance to a rather low long building such as those built for offices and hospitals in the middle of the nineteenth century. Here again we were met by an officer, who conducted us inside. At the bottom of the stairs we took off our overcoats, combed ourselves in front of a mirror, and were then led into a lift which discharged us at the second floor into a rather long red-carpeted corridor.

At every turn an officer saluted us with a loud click of the heels. They were all young, handsome, and stiff, in the blue caps of the State Security. On this visit and on each of my later ones, I was astonished at the cleanliness, so perfect that

it seemed impossible that men worked and lived here. Not a speck on the carpets or a spot on the burnished door-knobs.

Finally they led us into a somewhat small office in which General Zhukov was already waiting. A small, fat, and pock-marked old official invited us to sit down while he himself slowly rose from behind a table and went into the neighbouring room.

Everything occurred with surprising speed. The official soon returned and informed us that we could go in. I thought that I would pass through two or three offices before reaching Stalin, but as soon as I opened the door and stepped across the threshold, I saw him coming out of a small adjoining room through whose open doors an enormous globe was visible. Molotov was also there. Stocky and pale and in a perfect dark blue European suit, he stood behind a long conference table.

Stalin met us in the middle of the room. I was the first to approach him and introduce myself. Then Terzić did the same, reciting his whole title in a military tone and clicking his heels, to which our host replied – it was almost comical – by saying: 'Stalin.'

We also shook hands with Molotov and sat down at the table so that Molotov was to the right of Stalin, who was at the head of the table, while Terzić, General Zhukov, and I were to the left.

The room was not large, rather long, and devoid of any opulence of décor. Above a not too large desk in the corner hung a photograph of Lenin, and on the wall over the conference table, in identical carved wooden frames, were portraits of Suvorov and Kutuzov, looking very much like the chromo-lithographs one sees in the provinces.

But the host was the plainest of all. Stalin was in a marshal's uniform and soft boots, without any medals except a golden star – the Order of Hero of the Soviet Union, on the left side of his breast. In his stance there was nothing artificial or posturing. This was not that majestic Stalin of the photographs or the newsreels – with the stiff, deliberate gait and

posture. He was not quiet for a moment. He toyed with his pipe, which bore the white dot of the English firm Dunhill, or drew circles with a blue pencil around words indicating the main subjects for discussion, which he then crossed out with slanting lines as each part of the discussion was nearing an end, and he kept turning his head this way and that while he fidgeted in his seat.

I was also surprised at something else: he was of very small stature and ungainly build. His torso was short and narrow, while his legs and arms were too long. His left arm and shoulder seemed rather stiff. He had quite a large paunch, and his hair was sparse, though his scalp was not completely bald. His face was white, with ruddy cheeks. Later I learned that this coloration, so characteristic of those who sit long in offices, was known as the 'Kremlin complexion' in high Soviet circles. His teeth were black and irregular, turned inward. Not even his moustache was thick or firm. Still the head was not a bad one; it had something of the common people, the peasants, the father of a great family about it – with those yellow eyes and a mixture of sternness and mischief.

I was also surprised at his accent. One could tell that he was not a Russian. But his Russian vocabulary was rich, and his manner of expression very vivid and flexible, and full of Russian proverbs and sayings. As I realized later, Stalin was well acquainted with Russian literature – though only Russian – but the only real knowledge he had outside Russian limits was his knowledge of political history.

One thing did not surprise me: Stalin had a sense of humour – a rough humour, self-assured, but not entirely without subtlety and depth. His reactions were quick and acute – and conclusive, which did not mean that he did not hear the speaker out, but it was evident that he was no friend of long explanations. Also remarkable was his relation to Molotov. He obviously regarded him as a very close associate, as I later confirmed. Molotov was the only member of the Politburo whom Stalin addressed with the familiar pronoun *ty*, which is in itself significant when one remembers that

Russians normally use the polite form *vy* even among very close friends.

The conversation began by Stalin asking us about our impressions of the Soviet Union. I replied: 'We are enthusiastic,' – to which he rejoined: 'And we are not enthusiastic, though we are doing all we can to make things better in Russia.' It is engraved in my memory that Stalin used the term *Russia*, and not Soviet Union, which meant that he was not only inspiring Russian nationalism but was himself inspired by it and identified himself with it.

But I had no time to think about such things then, for Stalin passed on to relations with the Yugoslav Government-in-exile, turning to Molotov: 'Couldn't we somehow trick the English into recognizing Tito, who alone is fighting the Germans?'

Molotov smiled – with a smile in which there was irony and self-satisfaction: 'No, that is impossible; they are perfectly aware of developments in Yugoslavia.'

I was delighted by this direct, straightforward manner, which I had not till then encountered in Soviet official circles, let alone in Soviet propaganda. I felt that I was in the right place, and moreover with a man who treated realities in a familiar open way. It is hardly necessary to explain that Stalin was like this only among his own men, that is, among Communists of his line who were devoted to him.

Though Stalin did not promise to recognize the National Committee as a provisional Yugoslav government, it was evident that he was interested in confirming it. The discussion and the line he took were such that I did not even bring up the question directly; that is, it was obvious that the Soviet Government would do this immediately if it considered the conditions ripe and if developments did not take a different turn – through a temporary compromise between Britain and the USSR, and in turn between the National Committee and the Yugoslav Royal Government.

Thus this question remained unsettled. A solution had to wait and be worked out. However, Stalin made up for this by

being much more positive on the question of increasing aid to the Yugoslav forces.

When I mentioned a loan of two hundred thousand dollars, he called this a trifle, saying that we could not do much with this amount, but that the sum would be allocated to us immediately. At my remark that we would repay this as well as all shipments of arms and other equipment after the liberation, he became genuinely angry: 'You insult me. You are shedding your blood, and you expect me to charge you for the weapons! I am not a merchant, we are not merchants. You are fighting for the same cause as we are. We are duty bound to share with you whatever we have.'

But how would the aid come?

It was decided to ask the Western Allies to establish a Soviet air base in Italy which would help the Yugoslav Partisans. 'Let us try,' said Stalin. 'We shall see what attitude the West takes and how far they are prepared to go to help Tito.'

I should note that such a base – consisting of ten transport planes, if I remember right – was soon established.

'But we cannot help you much with planes,' Stalin explained further. 'An army cannot be supplied by plane, and you are already an army. Ships are needed for this. And we have no ships. Our Black Sea fleet is destroyed.'

General Zhukov intervened: 'We have ships in the Far East. We could transfer them to our Black Sea harbour and load them with arms and whatever else is needed.'

Stalin interrupted him rudely and categorically. He had been restrained and almost impish; now another Stalin suddenly made his appearance. 'What in the world are you thinking about? Are you in your right mind? There is a war going on in the Far East. Somebody is certainly not going to miss the opportunity of sinking those ships. The ships have to be bought. But from whom? There is a shortage of ships just now. Turkey? The Turks don't have many ships, and they won't sell any to us anyway. Egypt? Yes, we could buy some from Egypt. Egypt will sell – Egypt would sell anything, so they'll certainly sell us ships.'

Yes, that was the real Stalin, who did not mince words. But I was used to this in my own Party, and I myself partial to this manner when the time came to reach a final decision.

General Zhukov swiftly and silently made note of Stalin's decisions. But the ships were never bought and the Yugoslavs were never supplied by Soviet ships. The chief reason for this was, no doubt, the progress of operations on the Eastern Front – the Red Army soon reached the Yugoslav border and was thus able to assist Yugoslavia by land. I maintain that at the time Stalin had made up his mind about helping us.

This was the gist of the conversation.

In passing, Stalin expressed interest in my opinion of individual Yugoslav politicians. He asked me what I thought of Milan Gavrilović, the leader of the Serbian Agrarian Party and the first Yugoslav Ambassador to Moscow. I told him: 'A shrewd man.'

Stalin commented, as though to himself: 'Yes, there are politicians who think shrewdness is the main thing in politics – but Gavrilović impressed me as a stupid man.'

I added, 'He is not a politician of broad horizons, though I do not think it can be said that he is stupid.'

Stalin inquired where Yugoslav King Peter II had found a wife. When I told him that he had taken a Greek princess, he shot back mischievously, 'How would it be, Vyacheslav Mikhailovich, if you or I married some foreign princess? Maybe some good could come of it.'

Molotov laughed, but in a restrained manner and noiselessly.

At the end I presented Stalin with our gifts. They looked particularly primitive and wretched now. But he did not disparage them in the least. When he saw the peasant sandals, he exclaimed: '*Lapti!*' – the Russian word for them. As for the rifle, he opened and shut it, hefted it, and remarked:

'Ours is lighter.'

The meeting had lasted about an hour.

It was already dusk as we were leaving the Kremlin. The officer who accompanied us obviously caught our enthusiasm.

He looked at us happily and tried to ingratiate himself with every little word. The northern lights can be seen at Moscow at that time of year, and everything was violet-hued and shimmering – a world of unreality more beautiful than the one in which we had been living.

Somehow that is how it felt in my soul.

6

But I was to have still another, even more significant and interesting, encounter with Stalin. I remember exactly when it occurred: on the eve of the Allied landing in Normandy.

This time too no one told me anything in advance. They simply informed me that I was to go to the Kremlin, and around nine in the evening they put me in a car and drove me there. Not even anyone in the Mission knew where I was going.

They took me to the building in which Stalin had received us, but to other rooms. There Molotov was preparing to leave. While he put on his overcoat and hat, he told me that we were having supper at Stalin's.

Molotov is not a very talkative man. When he was with Stalin, in a good mood, and with those who thought as he did, contact was easy and direct. Otherwise Molotov remained impassive, even in private conversation. All the same, he asked me in the car what languages I spoke besides Russian. I told him that I spoke French. Then we talked about the strength and organization of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. I emphasized that at the beginning of the war the Yugoslav Party was illegal and relatively few in numbers – some ten thousand members, but excellently organized. I added, 'Like the Bolshevik Party in the First World War.'

'You are wrong,' Molotov retorted. 'The First World War found our Party in a very weak state, its organization not connected but scattered, and with a small membership. I remember,' he continued, 'how at the beginning of the war I came

illegally from Petrograd to Moscow on Party business. I had nowhere to spend the night but had to risk staying with Lenin's sister.' Molotov also mentioned the name of that sister, and, if I remember correctly, she was called Marya Ilyinichna.

The car sped along at a fairly good speed – about sixty miles an hour, and met with no traffic obstacles. Apparently the traffic police recognized the car in some way and gave it a clear path. Once out of Moscow, we struck out on an asphalt road which I later learned was called the Government Highway because only Government cars were permitted on it for a long time after the war. Is this still true today? Soon we came to a barrier. The officer in the seat next to the chauffeur flashed a little badge through the windscreen and the guard let us through without any formalities. The right window was down. Molotov noticed that I was suffering from the draught and began to raise the window. Only then did I notice that the glass was very thick and it occurred to me that we were riding in an armoured car. I think it was a Packard, for Tito got the same kind in 1945 from the Soviet Government.

Some ten days before that supper the Germans had carried out a surprise attack on the Supreme Staff of the Yugoslav Army of National Liberation in Drvar. Tito and the military missions had to flee into the hills. The Yugoslav leaders were forced to undertake long strenuous marches in which valuable time for military and political activities was lost. The problem of food also became acute. The Soviet Military Mission had been informing Moscow in detail about all this, while our Mission in Moscow was in constant contact with responsible Soviet officers, advising them how to get aid to the Yugoslav forces and the Supreme Staff. Soviet planes flew even at night and dropped ammunition and food supplies, though actually without much success, since the packages were scattered over a wide forest area which had to be quickly evacuated.

On the way Molotov wished to know what I thought about this situation. His interest was intense, but quite impersonal – as if he were concerned only to obtain a true picture.

We drove about twenty miles, turned left on to a side road

and soon came to a clump of young fir trees. Again there was a barrier, then a short ride, and the gate. We found ourselves before a not very large villa which was also in a thick clump of firs.

We no sooner went through the door into a small hall than Stalin appeared – this time in shoes and dressed in his plain tunic, buttoned up to his chin, and known so well from his pre-war pictures. Like this he seemed even smaller, but also simpler and completely at home. He led us into a small and surprisingly empty study – no books, no pictures, just bare wooden walls. We seated ourselves around a small writing table, and he immediately began to ask questions about what had happened to the Yugoslav Supreme Staff.

The very manner of his inquiry showed a sharp contrast between Stalin and Molotov. With Molotov it was impossible to tell what he was thinking or how he had arrived at his thoughts. His mind remained sealed and inscrutable. Stalin, however, was of a lively, almost restless temperament. He always questioned – himself and others; and he argued – with himself and others. I will not say that Molotov did not easily get excited, or that Stalin did not know how to restrain himself and to dissimulate; later I was to see both in these roles. But Molotov was almost always the same, with hardly a shade of variety, regardless of what or who was under consideration, whereas Stalin was completely different in his own, Communist, milieu. Churchill has described Molotov as a complete modern robot. That is correct. But that is on one, external side of him. Stalin was no less a cold calculator than he. But precisely because his was a more passionate and many-sided nature – though all sides were equally strong and so convincing that it seemed he never dissembled but was always truly experiencing each of his roles – he was more penetrable and offered greater possibilities. Molotov seemed to look upon everything – even upon Communism and its final aims – as relative, as something to which he had to, rather than ought to, subordinate his own fate. It was as though for him there was nothing permanent, as though there was only a transitory

reality which presented itself differently each day and to which he had to offer himself and his whole life. For Stalin, too, everything was transitory. But that was his philosophical view. Behind that impermanence and within it, certain great and final ideas lay hidden – his ideals, which he could approach by moulding or twisting the reality and the living men who comprised it.

In retrospect it seems to me that these two, Molotov, with his relativism, with his gift for detailed daily routine, and Stalin, with his fanatical dogmatism and, at the same time, broader horizons, his driving quest for further, future possibilities, these two ideally complemented one another. Molotov, though impotent without Stalin's leadership, was indispensable to Stalin in many ways. Though both were unscrupulous in their methods, it seems to me that Stalin selected these methods carefully and fitted them to the circumstances, while Molotov regarded them in advance as being incidental and unimportant. I maintain that he not only incited Stalin into doing many things, but that he also sustained him and dispelled his doubts. And though, in view of his greater versatility and penetration, Stalin claims the principal role in transforming a backward Russia into a modern industrial imperial power, it would be wrong to underestimate Molotov's role, especially as the practical executive.

Molotov even seemed physically suited to such a role: thorough, deliberate, composed, and tenacious. He drank more than Stalin, but his toasts were shorter and calculated to produce a particular political effect. His personal life was also unremarkable, and when, a year later, I met his wife, a modest and gracious woman, I had the impression that any other might have served his regular, necessary functions.

The conversation with Stalin began with his excited questions about what would happen to the Yugoslav Supreme Staff and the units around it. 'They will starve to death!' he exclaimed.

I tried to show him that this could not happen.

'And why not?' he went on. 'How many times have soldiers

starved to death! Hunger is the terrible enemy of every army.'

I explained to him, 'It is country in which one can always find something to eat. We have been in much worse situations without starving to death.' I succeeded in calming and assuring him.

He then turned to the question of sending aid. The Soviet front was still too distant for fighter planes to be able to escort transports. At one point Stalin flared up, upbraiding the pilots: 'They are cowards – afraid to fly during daytime! Cowards, by God, cowards!'

Molotov, who was informed on the whole problem, defended the pilots: 'No, they are not cowards. Far from it. It is just that fighter planes have too short a range and the transports would be shot down before they ever reached their target. Besides, their payload is insignificant. They have to carry their own fuel to get back. That is the only reason why they have to fly at night and carry a small load.'

I supported Molotov, for I knew that Soviet pilots had volunteered to fly in daytime, without the protection of fighter planes, in order to help their fellow-soldiers in Yugoslavia.

At the same time I completely agreed with Stalin in insisting that, in view of the serious and complicated circumstances and tasks to be done, Tito must find himself a more permanent headquarters where he could be free from daily insecurity. There is no doubt that Stalin also transmitted this view to the Soviet Mission, for it was just at that time, on their insistence, that Tito agreed to evacuate to Italy, and from there to the island of Vis, where he remained until the Red Army got to Yugoslavia. Of course Stalin said nothing about this evacuation, but the idea was taking shape in his mind.

The Allies had already agreed to establish a Soviet air base in Italy for aid to the Yugoslav soldiers, and Stalin stressed the urgency of sending transport planes there and getting the base itself going.

Apparently encouraged by my optimism about the final outcome of the current German offensive against Tito, he then

took up our relations with the Allies, primarily with Great Britain, which was, as I realized even then, the principal reason for the meeting with me.

The substance of his suggestions was, firstly, that we ought not to 'frighten' the English, by which he meant that we ought to avoid anything that might alarm them into thinking that a revolution was going on in Yugoslavia or an attempt at Communist control. 'What do you want with red stars on your caps? The form is not important but what is gained, and you – red stars! By God, there's no need for stars!' Stalin exclaimed angrily.

But he did not hide the fact that his anger was not very great. It was a reproach, and I explained to him: 'It is impossible to abolish the red stars because they have already become a tradition and have come to mean something to our fighters.'

He stuck to his opinion, but without great insistence, and then turned to another aspect of relations with the Western Allies, and continued, 'Perhaps you think that just because we are the allies of the English we have forgotten who they are and who Churchill is. There's nothing they like better than to trick their allies. During the First World War they constantly tricked the Russians and the French. And Churchill? Churchill is the kind of man who will pick your pocket of a kopeck if you don't watch him. Yes, pick your pocket of a kopeck! By God, pick your pocket of a kopeck! And Roosevelt? Roosevelt is not like that. He dips in his hand only for bigger coins. But Churchill? Churchill – will do it for a kopeck.'

He kept stressing that we ought to beware of the Intelligence Service and of English duplicity, especially with regard to Tito's life. 'They were the ones who killed General Sikorski in a plane and then neatly shot down the plane – no proof, no witnesses.'

In the course of the meeting Stalin kept repeating these warnings, which I passed to Tito upon my return and which probably influenced his decision to make his conspiratorial

night flight from Vis to Soviet-occupied territory in Rumania on 21 September 1944.

Stalin then moved on to relations with the Yugoslav Royal Government. The new royal representative was Dr Ivan Šubašić, who had promised to arrange relations with Tito and to recognize the National Liberation Army as the chief force in the struggle against the forces of occupation. Stalin urged. 'Do not refuse to hold conversations with Šubašić – on no account must you do this. Do not attack him immediately. Let us see what he wants. Talk to him. You cannot be recognized right away. You must find a half-way position. You ought to talk with Šubašić and see if you can't reach a compromise somehow.'

His urging was not categorical, though it was determined. I passed all this on to Tito and to the members of the Central Committee, and it probably helped to bring about the well-known Tito–Šubašić Agreement.

Stalin then invited us to supper, but in the hallway we stopped before a map of the world on which the Soviet Union was coloured in red, which made it conspicuous and bigger than it would otherwise seem. Stalin waved his hand over the Soviet Union and, referring to what he had just been saying against the British and the Americans, he exclaimed, 'They will never accept the idea that so great a space should be red, never, never!'

I noticed that on the map the area around Stalingrad was encircled from the west by a blue pencil mark. Apparently Stalin had done this in the course of the Battle of Stalingrad. He detected my glance, and I had the impression that it pleased him, though he did not betray his feelings in any way.

I do not remember the reason, but I happened to remark, 'Without industrialization the Soviet Union could not have preserved itself and waged such a war.'

Stalin added, 'It was precisely over this that we quarrelled with Trotsky and Bukharin.'

And this was all – here in front of the map – that I ever

heard from him about those opponents of his: they had *quarrelled*!

In the dining room two or three people from the Soviet high command were already waiting, standing, though there was no one from the Politburo except Molotov. I have forgotten them. Anyway they were silent and withdrawn the whole evening.

In his memoirs Churchill vividly describes an improvised dinner with Stalin at the Kremlin. But that is the way Stalin's dinners were in general.

In a spacious and unadorned, though tasteful, dining room, the front half of a long table was covered with all kinds of foods on warmed heavy silver platters as well as beverages and plates and other utensils. Everyone served himself and sat where he wished around the free half of the table. Stalin never sat at the head, but he always sat in the same chair – the first to the left of the head of the table.

The variety of food and drink was enormous – with meats and hard liquor predominating. But everything else was simple and unostentatious. None of the servants appeared except when Stalin rang, and the only occasion for this was when I asked for beer. Everyone ate what he pleased and as much as he wanted; only there was rather too much urging and daring us to drink and there were too many toasts.

Such a dinner usually lasted six or more hours – from ten at night till four or five in the morning. One ate and drank slowly, during a rambling conversation which ranged from stories and anecdotes to the most serious political and even philosophical subjects. Unofficially and in actual fact a significant part of Soviet policy was shaped at these dinners. Besides they were the most frequent and most convenient entertainment and only luxury in Stalin's otherwise monotonous and sombre life.

Apparently Stalin's co-workers were used to this manner of working and living – and spent their nights dining with Stalin or with one of their own number. They did not arrive in their offices before noon, and usually stayed in them till

late evening. This made the work of the higher administration difficult and complicated, but it adapted itself, even the diplomatic corps when they had contacts with members of the Politburo.

There was no established order in which members of the Politburo or other high officials attended these dinners. Usually they were those who had some connexion with the business of the guest or with current issues. But apparently the circle was narrow, and it was an especial honour to be invited to such a dinner. Molotov was the only person who was always present, and I think this was not only because he was Commissar, that is, Minister for Foreign Affairs, but also because he was in fact Stalin's deputy.

At these dinners the Soviet leaders were at their closest, most intimate with one another. Everyone would tell the news from his departments, whom he had met that day, and what plans he was making. The sumptuous table and considerable, though not immoderate, quantities of alcohol enlivened spirits and increased the atmosphere of cordiality and informality. An uninstructed visitor might hardly have detected any difference between Stalin and the rest. Yet it existed. His opinion was carefully noted. No one opposed him very hard. It all rather resembled a patriarchal family with a crotchety head whose foibles always made his kinsfolk somewhat apprehensive.

Stalin ate food in quantities that would have been enormous even for a much larger man. He usually chose meat, which was a sign of his mountain origins. He also liked all kinds of local specialities in which this land of various climes and civilizations abounded, but I did not notice that any one dish was his particular favourite. He drank moderately, usually mixing red wine and vodka in little glasses. I never noticed any signs of drunkenness in him, whereas I could not say the same for Molotov, let alone for Beria, who was practically a drunkard. As all to a man over-ate at these dinners, the Soviet leaders ate very little and irregularly during the day, and many of them dieted on fruit and juices one day in each week, for the sake of *razgruzhenie* (unloading).

It was at these dinners that the destiny of the vast Russian land, of the newly acquired territories, and, to a considerable degree, of the human race was decided. And even if the dinners failed to inspire those spiritual creators – the 'engineers of the human spirit' – to great deeds, many such deeds were probably buried there for ever.

Still I never heard any talk of inner-Party opposition or how to deal with it. Apparently this came largely under the jurisdiction of Stalin and the Secret Police, and since the Soviet leaders were also human, they gladly forgot about conscience, especially as any appeal to conscience would be dangerous to their own fate.

I shall mention only what seemed significant to me in the casual conversation that rambled imperceptibly from subject to subject at that session.

Calling to mind earlier ties between the South Slavs and Russia, I said, 'But the Russian tsars did not understand the aspirations of the South Slavs – they were interested in imperialistic expansion, and we are concerned with liberation.'

Stalin agreed, but in a different way: 'Yes, the Russian tsars lacked horizons.'

Stalin's interest in Yugoslavia was different from that of the other Soviet leaders. He was not concerned with the sacrifices and the destruction, but with what kind of internal relations had been created and what the actual power of the rebel movement was. He did not gather even this information through questioning, but in the course of the conversation itself.

At one point he expressed interest in Albania. 'What is really going on over there? What kind of people are they?'

I explained: 'In Albania pretty much the same thing is happening as in Yugoslavia. The Albanians are the most ancient Balkan people – older than the Slavs, and even the ancient Greeks.'

'But how did their settlements get Slavic names?' Stalin asked. 'Haven't they some connexion with the Slavs?'

I explained this too. 'The Slavs inhabited the valleys in

earlier times – hence the Slavic place names – and then in Turkish times the Albanians pushed them out.'

Stalin winked mischievously. 'I had hoped that the Albanians were at least a little Slavic.'

In telling him about the methods of warfare in Yugoslavia and its ferocity, I mentioned that we did not take German prisoners because they killed all our prisoners.

Stalin interrupted laughing: 'One of our men was leading a large group of German prisoners, and on the way he killed all but one. They asked him, when he arrived at his destination: "And where are all the others?" "I was just carrying out the orders of the Commander-in-Chief," he said, "to kill every one to the last man – and here is the last man." '

In the course of the conversation, he remarked about the Germans, 'They are a queer people, like sheep. I remember from my childhood: wherever the ram went, all the rest followed. I remember also when I was in Germany before the Revolution: a group of German Social Democrats came late to the Congress because they had to wait to have their tickets confirmed, or something of the sort. When would Russians ever do that? Someone has said well: "In Germany you cannot have a revolution because you would have to step on the lawns." '

He asked me to tell him what the Serbian words were for certain things. Of course the great similarity between Russian and Serbian was apparent. 'By God,' Stalin exclaimed, 'there's no doubt about it: we're the same people.'

There were also anecdotes. Stalin liked one in particular which I told. 'A Turk and a Montenegrin were talking during a rare moment of truce. The Turk wondered why the Montenegrins constantly waged war. "For plunder," the Montenegrin replied. "We are poor and hope to get some booty. And what are you fighting for?" "For honour and glory," replied the Turk. To which the Montenegrin rejoined, "Everyone fights for what he hasn't got." ' Stalin commented roaring with laughter: 'By God, that's deep: everyone fights for what he hasn't got.'

Molotov laughed too, but again sparely and soundlessly. Humour was something which he was quite unable to give or take.

Stalin asked which leaders I had met in Moscow, and when I mentioned Dimitrov and Manuilsky, he remarked, 'Dimitrov is a cleverer man than Manuilsky, much cleverer.'

At this he remarked on the dissolution of the Comintern, 'They, the Westerners, are so sly that they mentioned nothing about it to us. And we are so stubborn that had they mentioned it, we would not have dissolved it at all! The situation with the Comintern was becoming more and more abnormal. Here Vyacheslav Mikhailovich and I were racking our brains, while the Comintern was pulling in its own direction – and the discord grew worse. It is easy to work with Dimitrov, but with the others it was harder. Most important of all, there was something abnormal, something unnatural about the very existence of a general Communist forum at a time when the Communist parties should have been searching for a national language and fighting under the conditions prevailing in their own countries.'

In the course of the evening two dispatches arrived: Stalin handed me both to read.

One reported what Šubašić had said to the United States State Department. Šubašić's line was this: We Yugoslavs cannot be against the Soviet Union nor can we pursue an anti-Russian policy, for Slavic and pro-Russian traditions are very strong among us.

Stalin remarked, 'This is Šubašić scaring the Americans. But why is he scaring them? Yes, scaring them! But why, why?'

And then he added, probably noticing the astonishment on my face, 'They steal our dispatches, we steal theirs.'

The second dispatch was from Churchill. He announced that the landing in France would begin on the next day. Stalin began to make fun of the dispatch. 'Yes, there'll be a landing, if there is no fog. Until now there was always something that put it off. I suspect tomorrow it will be some-

thing else. Maybe they'll meet with some Germans! What if they meet with some Germans! Maybe there won't be a landing then, but just promises as usual.'

Hemming and hawing in his usual way, Molotov began to explain: 'No, this time it will really be so.'

My impression was that Stalin did not seriously doubt that there would be an Allied landing, but his aim was to ridicule it, especially the reasons for its previous postponements.

As I sum up that evening today, it seems to me that Stalin was deliberately frightening the Yugoslav leaders in order to weaken their ties with the West, and at the same time he tried to subordinate their policy to his interests and to his relations with the Western states, especially Great Britain.

As a result of his ideology and methods, his personal experience and historical heritage, he trusted nothing but what he held in his fist, and everyone beyond the control of his police was a potential enemy. Because of the conditions of war, the Yugoslav revolution had been wrested from his control, and the force that was generating behind it was becoming too conscious of its power for him to be able simply to give it orders. He was conscious of all this, and so he was simply doing what he could – exploiting the anti-capitalist prejudices of the Yugoslav leaders against the Western states. He tried to bind those leaders to himself and to subordinate their policy to his.

The world in which the Soviet leaders lived – and that was my world too – seemed to me to be slowly taking on a new aspect: a horrible unceasing struggle on all sides. Everything was being stripped bare and reduced to strife which changed only in form and in which only the stronger and the more cunning could survive. I had been full of admiration for the Soviet leaders long before this, now I became intoxicated with enthusiasm for the immeasurable will-power and vigilance which were never relaxed for a moment.

It was a world in which there was no choice but victory or death.

That was Stalin – the builder of a new social system.

On taking my leave, I again asked Stalin if he had anything to say about the work of the Yugoslav Party. He replied, 'No, I have not. You yourselves know best what is to be done.'

On arriving at Vis, I reported this to Tito and to the other members of the Central Committee. And I summed up my Moscow trip: the Comintern factually no longer existed, and we Yugoslav Communists had to shift for ourselves. We had to depend primarily on our own forces.

As I was leaving after that dinner, Stalin presented me with a sword for Tito – the gift of the Supreme Soviet. To go with this magnificent and exalted gift I added my own modest one, on my way back via Cairo: an ivory chess set. I do not think there was any symbolism there. But it does seem to me that even then there was suppressed inside me a world different from Stalin's.

From the clump of firs around Stalin's villa there rose the mist and the dawn. Stalin and Molotov, tired after another sleepless night, shook hands with me at the entrance. The car bore me away into the morning and to a not yet awakened Moscow, bathed in the blue haze of June and the dew. There came back to me the feeling I had had when I set foot on Russian soil: the world is not so big after all when viewed from this land. And perhaps not unconquerable – with Stalin, with the ideas that were supposed finally to have revealed to man the truth about society and about himself.

It was a beautiful dream – in the reality of war. It never even occurred to me to decide which of these was the more real, just as I would not be able today to decide which, the dream or the reality, failed more to live up to its promises.

Men live in dreams and in realities.

2

Doubts

1

My second trip to Moscow, and thus my second meeting with Stalin, would probably never have taken place had I not been a victim of my own frankness.

Following the penetration of the Red Army into Yugoslavia and the liberation of Belgrade in the autumn of 1944, men and parties of men in the Red Army committed so many serious assaults on citizens and on members of the Yugoslav Army that a political problem arose for the new régime and for the Communist Party.

The Yugoslav Communists idealized the Red Army. Yet they themselves dealt unmercifully with even the most petty looting and crime in their own ranks. They were more dumbfounded than were the ordinary people, who through inherited experience expected looting and crime from every army. The problem was a real one. Worse still, the foes of Communism were exploiting these incidents by Red Army soldiers in their fight against the not yet fully established régime, and against Communism in general. The entire problem was complicated because the Red Army commands were deaf to complaints, and so gave the impression that they themselves condoned the attacks and the attackers.

As soon as Tito returned to Belgrade from Rumania – at which time he also visited Moscow and met Stalin for the first time – this question had to be taken up.

At a meeting held at Tito's, which I attended with Kardelj and Ranković – the four of us were the best-known leaders of the Yugoslav Party – it was decided to discuss this with the chief of the Soviet Mission, General Korneyev. In order to make Korneyev understand just how serious the whole matter was, we decided that not only Tito should talk to him, but

that all three of us should attend the meeting along with two of the most distinguished Yugoslav commanders – Generals Peko Dapčević and Koča Popović.

Tito put the problem to Korneyev in an extremely mild and polite form, which only made Korneyev's crude and offended rejection all the more astonishing. We had invited Korneyev as a comrade and a Communist, and here he shouted, 'In the name of the Soviet Government I protest against such insinuations against the Red Army, which has . . .'

All efforts to convince him were in vain. There suddenly loomed within him the picture of himself as the representative of a great power and of a 'liberating' army.

It was then that I said, 'The problem lies in the fact, too, that our enemies are using this against us and are comparing the attacks by the Red Army soldiers with the behaviour of the English officers, who do not indulge in such excesses.'

Korneyev reacted to this with gross lack of understanding. 'I protest most sharply against the insult to the Red Army in comparing it with the armies of capitalist countries.'

Only later did the Yugoslav authorities gather statistics on the lawless acts of the Red Army soldiers. According to complaints filed by citizens, there were 121 cases of rape, of which 111 involved rape with murder, and 1,204 cases of looting with assault – figures that are hardly insignificant if it is borne in mind that the Red Army crossed only the north-eastern corner of Yugoslavia. These figures show why the Yugoslav leaders had to consider these incidents as a political problem, all the more serious because it had become an issue in the domestic struggle. The Communists also regarded this problem as a moral one. Could this be the ideal and long-awaited Red Army?

The meeting with Korneyev ended without results, though we did notice later that the Soviet commands treated their soldiers' misdemeanours more strictly. As soon as Korneyev left, some of the comrades reproached me, some mildly and others more sharply, for what I had said. It truly never crossed my mind to compare the Soviet Army with the British – Britain had only a mission in Belgrade – but I was stating

obvious facts and presenting my reaction to a political problem, and I had been provoked too by the lack of understanding and intransigence of General Korneyev. It was certainly far from my mind to insult the Red Army, which was at the time no less dear to me than to General Korneyev. In view of the position I held, I could not keep silent when women were being violated – a crime I have always regarded as being among the most heinous – and when our soldiers were being abused and our property pillaged.

These words of mine, and a few other matters, were the cause of the first friction between the Yugoslav and Soviet leaders. Though actually more serious causes than these were to arise, it was these very words that were to be most frequently cited as the reason for the indignation of the Soviet leaders and their representatives. I may mention incidentally that this was certainly the reason why the Soviet Government did not present me with the Order of Suvorov when it distributed them to some other leading members of the Yugoslav Central Committee. For similar reasons it also passed over General Peko Dapčević. This caused Ranković and me to suggest to Tito that he decorate Dapčević with the Order of Yugoslav National Hero, to counter this snub. Those words of mine were also one of the reasons why Soviet agents in Yugoslavia began, early in 1945, to spread rumours about my 'Trotskyism'. They themselves were forced to abandon this measure, not just because of the senselessness of such charges, but because our relations improved.

Nevertheless, because of my declaration, I soon found myself almost isolated, not particularly because my closest friends condemned me – though there were indeed some severe reproaches – or because the Soviet leaders had exaggerated and blown up the entire incident, but perhaps more profoundly because of my own inner experiences. That is to say, I found myself even then in the dilemma in which every Communist who had adopted the Communist idea with good will and altruism finds himself. Sooner or later he must confront the incongruity between that theory and the practice of the Party

leaders. In this case, however, it was not because of the discrepancy between an ideal depiction of the Red Army and the actual deeds of its members; I too was aware that, though it was the army of a 'classless' society, the Red Army could 'not yet' be all that it should be, and that it still had to contain 'remnants of the old'. My dilemma was created by the indifferent, not to say benign, attitude of the Soviet leaders and Soviet commands toward crime, revealed by their refusal to recognize it and by their protests whenever it was brought to their attention. Our own intentions were good: to preserve the reputation of the Red Army and of the Soviet Union, which the propaganda of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia had been building up for years. And what did these good intentions of ours encounter? Arrogance and a rebuff typical of a big state towards a small one, of the strong toward the weak.

This dilemma was made much more acute because of the efforts of Soviet representatives to use my basically well-intentioned words to support their arrogant and critical attitude to the Yugoslav leadership.

What was it that prevented the Soviet representatives from understanding us? For what reason were my words exaggerated and twisted? Why were the Soviet representatives exploiting them in this perverted form for their political ends – to portray the Yugoslav leaders as ungrateful to a Red Army which at a certain moment was supposed to have played the principal role in liberating the capital city of Yugoslavia and installing the Yugoslav leaders there?

But there was no answer to these questions, nor could there be at that time.

Like many others, I too was perturbed by other acts of the Soviet representatives. For example, the Soviet Command announced that it was presenting as aid to Belgrade a gift of a large quantity of wheat, but it turned out that this was in fact wheat that the Germans had collected from Yugoslav peasants and had stored on Yugoslav territory. The Soviet Command looked upon that wheat, and much else besides, simply as their spoils of war. Moreover, Soviet intelligence agents were

recruiting, *en masse*, émigré white Russians, and even Yugoslavs; some of these people were in the very machinery of the Central Committee. Against whom and why were these people employed? Also, in the field of agitation and propaganda, which I directed, friction with Soviet representatives was acutely felt. The Soviet press systematically distorted and belittled the struggle of the Yugoslav Communists, while Soviet representatives sought, at first cautiously and then more and more openly, to subordinate Yugoslav propaganda to Soviet needs and Soviet patterns.

And the drinking parties of the Soviet representatives, which were becoming more and more like real bacchanalia and to which they were trying to entice the Yugoslav leaders, could only confirm in my eyes and in the eyes of many others the incongruity between Soviet ideals and actions, their profession of ethics in words and their amorality in deeds.

The first contact between the two revolutions and the two governments, though they were founded on similar social and ideological bases, could not but lead to friction. And since it occurred within an exclusive and closed ideology, the friction was bound to be expressed at first as a moral dilemma and a feeling on the part of the Yugoslavs of sorrow and regret that the centre of orthodoxy did not understand the good intentions of a small Party and a poor land.

Since men do not necessarily react consciously, I suddenly 'discovered' man's indissoluble bond with nature – I reverted to the hunting trips of my early youth and suddenly noticed that there was beauty outside the Party and the revolution.

But the bitterness was just beginning.

2

During the winter of 1944–5 a large Government delegation journeyed to Moscow; it included Andrija Hebrang, a member of the Central Committee and Minister of Industry, Arso Jovanović, Chief of the Supreme Staff, and Mitra Mitrović, my wife at the time. Apart from the political reactions, she

was also able to tell me the human reactions of the Soviet leaders, to which I was particularly sensitive.

The delegation, both individually and as a whole, suffered constant recriminations about the general situation in Yugoslavia and certain of the Yugoslav leaders. The Soviet officials usually began with the correct facts, and then exaggerated them and made generalizations. To make matters worse, the chief of the delegation, Hebrang, stuck closely to the Soviet representatives, submitting written reports to them and shifting Soviet displeasure on to other members of the delegation. Hebrang's motive for this behaviour seemed to be, as far as I could make out, his grudge because he had been removed from the position of Secretary of the Communist Party in Croatia, and even more because of his craven behaviour while in prison. This did not become known until later, and he was behaving like this in order to conceal his cowardice.

To give information to the Soviet Party was at that time not in itself considered a deadly sin, for no Yugoslav Communist set his own Central Committee against the Soviet. Moreover, information on the situation in the Yugoslav Party was available and accessible to the Soviet Central Committee. But Hebrang's object was to undermine the Yugoslav Central Committee. It was never discovered what he was reporting. But from the time he took and from what individual members of the delegation related, it was possible to conclude without any doubt that even at this time Hebrang was giving information to the Soviet Central Committee with the aim of getting its support and inciting it against the Yugoslav Central Committee in order to bring about changes within it that would suit him. To be sure, all of this was done in the name of principle and justified by the more or less obvious lapses and faults of the Yugoslavs. The real reason, though, lay in this: Hebrang believed that Yugoslavia should not construct its economy and economic plans independently of the USSR, while the Central Committee supported close cooperation with the USSR but not to the detriment of our own independence.

The moral *coup de grâce* to that delegation was dealt, of course, by Stalin. He assembled the entire delegation in the Kremlin and treated it to the usual feast as well as to a scene such as might be found only in Shakespeare's plays.

He criticized the Yugoslav Army and the way it was administered. But I was the only one he attacked personally. And in what a way! He spoke emotionally about the sufferings of the Red Army and about the horrors that it was forced to undergo fighting for thousands of kilometres through devastated country. He wept, crying out: 'And such an army was insulted by no one else but Djilas! Djilas, of whom I could least have expected such a thing, a man whom I received so well! And an army which did not spare its blood for you! Does Djilas, who is himself a writer, not know what human suffering and the human heart are? Can't he understand it if a soldier who has crossed thousands of kilometres through blood and fire and death has fun with a woman or takes some trifle?'

He proposed frequent toasts, flattered one person, joked with another, teased a third, kissed my wife because she was a Serb, and again shed tears over the hardships of the Red Army and Yugoslav ingratitude.

Stalin and Molotov almost theatrically divided the roles between them according to their inclination: Molotov coldly spurred on the issue and aggravated feelings, while Stalin fell into a mood of tragical pathos. The climax of his mood certainly came when Stalin exclaimed, kissing my wife, that he made his loving gesture at the risk of being charged with rape.

He spoke very little or not at all about Parties, Communism, Marxism, but very much about the Slavs, about the ties between the Russians and the South Slavs, and – again – about the heroic sacrifices and suffering of the Red Army.

Hearing about this, I was truly shaken and dazed. Today, it seems to me that Stalin made me the scapegoat not so much for my 'outburst', but because he intended to win me over in some way. Only my sincere enthusiasm for the Soviet Union and for himself as a person could have prompted him to do this.

Immediately upon my return to Yugoslavia I had written an

article about my 'Meeting with Stalin' which pleased him greatly. A Soviet representative had called my attention to the fact that in subsequent editions I ought to cut out the observation that Stalin's feet were too big and that I should stress more the intimacy between Stalin and Molotov. At the same time Stalin, who sized up people quickly and who was always particularly skilful in exploiting people's weaknesses, must have known that he could not win me over through my political ambitions, for I had none, nor on an ideological basis, for I did not love the Soviet Party more than the Yugoslav. He could only influence me through my emotions – through my sincerity and my enthusiasm – and so he took that course.

But though my sensitivity and sincerity were my strong points, they easily turned into something quite opposite when I encountered insincerity and injustice. For this reason Stalin did not dare recruit me openly. I became all the more adamant and determined as experience showed me the Soviet's unjust imperialistic ambitions, that is, as I freed myself of my sentimentality.

Today it is truly difficult to decide how much of Stalin's action was play-acting and how much was real rancour. I personally believe that with Stalin it is impossible to separate the one from the other. With him, pretence was so spontaneous that it seemed he himself became convinced of the truth and sincerity of what he was saying. He very easily adapted himself to every turn in the discussion of any new topic, and even to every new personality.

At any rate, the delegation returned quite bewildered and depressed.

Meanwhile, my isolation deepened, now also because of Stalin's tears over my 'ingratitude' towards the Red Army. Though more and more isolated, I did not give in to lethargy. I turned increasingly to my pen and to books, finding within myself an escape from the difficulties and misunderstanding that beset me.

3

Time took its toll. Relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union could not remain where they had been fixed by military missions and armies. Ties multiplied and relations proliferated, becoming more and more clearly international in form.

In April a state delegation was to leave to sign a treaty of mutual assistance with the Soviet Union. The delegation was led by Tito, and he was accompanied by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Šubašić. In the delegation there were also two economic ministers – B. Andrejev and N. Petrović. That I became part of this delegation may certainly be ascribed to the desire to resolve the dispute over the 'insult' to the Red Army by direct contact. Tito simply included me in the delegation, and because there were no objections from the Soviet side, I boarded the Soviet plane with the rest.

It was the beginning of April, and because of the inclement weather the plane bounced the whole time. Tito and most of his suite became ill. Even the pilots suffered. I too felt sick – but in a different way.

I felt uneasy – from the moment that I first learned of my trip up to my encounter with Stalin – as though I were a penitent of some sort. Yet I was not penitent, nor did I have any real reason for being so. Around me in Belgrade there had been created an increasingly electric atmosphere, as though I was someone who had sunk low – 'made a mess of it' – and so there was nothing left for me but to redeem myself in some way, to throw myself entirely on Stalin's generosity.

The plane neared Moscow, and the already familiar feeling of isolation welled up inside me. For the first time I felt my comrades, brothers in arms, lightly abandoning me because any contact with me might endanger their position in the Party and make it appear as though they, too, had 'deviated'. Even in the plane itself I was not free of this. The relationship between myself and Andrejev, made intimate by war and suffering in prison – for these reveal a man's character and

human relations better than anything else – was always marked by good-natured joking and frankness. But now? He seemed to pity me, powerless to help me, while I did not dare approach him – for fear of humiliating myself, but even more for fear of forcing him into an inconvenient and unwanted fraternization with me. So too with Petrović, whom I knew well during my onerous life and work in the underground; our friendship was predominantly intellectual, but now I would not have dared start one of our interminable discussions of Serbian political history. As for Tito, he kept quiet about the whole affair, as though nothing had happened, and revealed no definite feeling or view about me. Nevertheless, I suspected that, in his own way – for political reasons – he was on my side, and that this was why he was bringing me along and why he was not taking a stand.

I was experiencing my first conflict between my simple human conscience, that is, the common human propensity for the good and the true, and the environment in which I lived and to which my daily activity bound me, namely, a movement circumscribed by its own abstract aims and fettered by its actual possibilities. This conflict did not at this time, however, take that shape in my consciousness; rather, it appeared as a clash between my good intentions to better the world and the movement to which I belonged and the lack of understanding on the part of those who made the decisions.

My anxiety grew with every moment, every yard closer to Moscow.

Beneath me sped a land whose blackness was just emerging from the melting snow, a land riven by torrents and, in many places, by bombs – desolate and uninhabited. The sky, too, was cloudy and sombre, impenetrable. There was neither sky nor earth for me as I passed through an unreal, perhaps dream, world which I felt at the same time to be more real than any in which I had hitherto lived. I flew wavering between sky and earth, between conscience and experience, between desire and possibility. In my memory there has remained only that unreal and painful wavering – with not a trace of those initial

Slavic feelings or even hardly any of those revolutionary raptures that marked my first encounter with the Russian, the Soviet land, and its leader.

And besides all this there was Tito's air-sickness. Exhausted, green, he exerted the last ounce of will-power to recite his speech of greeting and to go through the ceremonies. Molotov, who headed the reception committee, shook hands with me coldly, without smiling or showing any sign of recognition. It was also unpleasant to have them take Tito to a special villa while putting the rest of us up in the Metropole Hotel.

The trials and tribulations got worse. They became more like a campaign.

The next day, or the day after that, the telephone in my apartment rang. A seductive female voice sounded. 'This is Katya.'

'Katya who?' I asked.

'It's me, Katya. Don't you remember? I have to see you. I simply must see you.'

A string of Katyas passed quickly through my head – but I did not know one of them – and on their heels came suspicion. The Soviet Intelligence Service knew that in the Communist Party of Yugoslavia views on personal morality were strict and they were setting a trap to blackmail me later. I found it neither strange nor new that 'socialist' Moscow, like every metropolis, teemed with unregistered prostitutes. I knew even better, however, that they could not make contact with high-ranking foreigners, who were tended and watched here better than anywhere on earth, unless the Intelligence Service wanted it. Apart from these thoughts, I did what I would have done anyway; I said calmly and curtly, 'Let me alone!' – and I put down the receiver.

I suspected that I was the only target in this transparent and dirty bit of business. Nevertheless, in view of my high rank in the Party, I felt I had to find out whether the same thing had happened to Petrović and Andrejev, and, besides, I wanted to complain to them man to man. Yes, their telephones had rung too, but instead of a Katya, it was a Natasha

and a Vova! I explained my own experience, and practically ordered them not to make any contact.

I had mixed feelings – relief that I was not the only target, but also deepening doubts. What did it all mean? It never occurred to me to inquire of Dr Šubašić whether a similar attempt had been directed at him. He was not a Communist, and it would be awkward for me to show up the Soviet Union and its methods in a bad light before him, especially as they were aimed against Communists. I was quite certain, though, that no Katya had approached Šubašić.

I was not yet able to draw the conclusion – that the Communists were mere tools by which Soviet hegemony was to establish itself in the countries of Eastern Europe. Yet I suspected as much. I was horrified by such methods and resented having my character subjected to such underhand treatment.

At that time I was still capable of believing that I could be a Communist and remain a free man.

4

Nothing significant occurred over the treaty of alliance between Yugoslavia and the USSR. The treaty was the usual thing, and my job was simply to check the translation.

The signing took place in the Kremlin on the evening of 11 April, in a very small official circle. No members of the public – if such an expression may be used in that environment – except Soviet cameramen were present.

The sole striking episode occurred when Stalin, holding a glass of champagne, turned to a waiter and invited him to clink glasses. The waiter became embarrassed, but when Stalin uttered the words: 'What, you won't drink to Soviet–Yugoslav friendship?' he obediently took the glass and drank it bottoms up. There was something demagogic, even grotesque, about the entire scene, but everyone looked upon it with beatific smiles, as an expression of Stalin's regard for the common people and his closeness to them.

This was my first opportunity to meet Stalin again. His

attitude was ungracious, though it did not have Molotov's frigid stiffness and artificial amiability. Stalin did not address a single word to me personally. The dispute over the behaviour of the Red Army soldiers was obviously neither forgotten nor forgiven. I was left to go on turning over the fires of purgatory.

Nor did he say anything at the dinner for the inner circle, in the Kremlin. After dinner we saw some films. Because of Stalin's remark that he was tired of gunfire, they put on, not a war film, but a shallow, happy, collective-farm movie. Throughout the performance Stalin made comments – reactions to what was going on, in the manner of uneducated men who mistake reality for actuality. The second film was a pre-war one on a war theme: 'If War Comes Tomorrow' (*'Esli zavtra voina . . .'*). The war in that film was waged with the help of poison gas, while at the rear of the invaders – the Germans – rebellious elements of the proletariat were breaking out. At the end of the film Stalin calmly remarked, 'Not much different from what actually happened, only there was no poison gas and the German proletariat did not rebel.'

Everyone was tired of toasts, of food, of films. Again without a word, Stalin shook hands with me too, but by now I was more nonchalant and calm, though I could not say why. Perhaps because of the easier atmosphere. Or was it my own inner determination and resolution? Probably both. In any event – life is possible without Stalin's love.

A day or two later there was a formal dinner in Catherine Hall. According to Soviet protocol at the time, Tito was seated to the left of Stalin and to the right of Kalinin, then President of the Supreme Soviet. I was seated at Kalinin's left. Molotov and Šubašić sat opposite Stalin and Tito, while the other Yugoslav and Soviet officers sat around in a circle.

The stiff atmosphere seemed all the more unnatural because all present, except Dr Šubašić, were Communists, yet they addressed one another as 'Mister' in their toasts and adhered strictly to international protocol, as though this was a meeting of the representatives of differing systems and ideologies.

Apart from the toasts and the protocol, we acted like

comrades toward one another, that is, like men who were close to one another, men who were in the same movement, with the same aims. This contrast between formality and reality was all the more marked because relations between the Soviet and Yugoslav Communists were still cordial, unmarred by Soviet imperialism and competition for prestige in the Communist world. However, life is no respecter of desires or designs, but imposes patterns which no one is capable of foreseeing.

Relations between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies were still in their wartime honeymoon, and the Soviet Government wished, by observing this formality, to avoid complaints that they were not treating Yugoslavia as an independent nation just because it was Communist. Later, after it had become entrenched in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Government was to insist on dropping protocol and other formalities as 'bourgeois' and 'nationalist' prejudices.

Stalin broke the ice. Only he could do it, for only he was not exposed to the danger of being criticized for a *faux pas*. He simply stood, lifted his glass, and addressed Tito as 'Comrade', adding that he would not call him 'Mister'. This restored real amity and livened up the atmosphere. Dr Šubašić, too, smiled happily, though it was difficult to believe that he was doing so sincerely; pretence was not lacking in this politician, who was without ideas and without any stable foundations whatever.

Stalin began to make jokes, to direct sallies and thrusts across the table, and to grumble cheerfully. Once revived, the atmosphere did not flag.

Old Uncle Kalinin, who could barely see, had difficulty finding his glass, plate, bread, and I kept helping him solicitously the whole time. Tito had paid him a protocol visit just an hour or two before and had told me that the old man was not entirely senile. But from what Tito had reported, and from the remarks Kalinin made at the banquet, one could only conclude the opposite.

Stalin certainly knew of Kalinin's decrepitude, for he made

heavy-footed fun of him when the old man asked Tito for a Yugoslav cigarette. 'Don't take any – those are capitalist cigarettes,' said Stalin, and Kalinin confusedly dropped the cigarette from his trembling fingers, whereupon Stalin laughed and the expression on his face was like a satyr's. A little later Stalin himself proposed a toast in honour of 'our President', Kalinin, but this was a polite phrase obviously picked for someone who for long had been nothing more than a mere figurehead.

Here, in a rather broader and more official circle, the deification of Stalin was more palpable and obvious. Today I have come to the opinion that the deification of Stalin, or the 'cult of the personality', as it is now called, was at least as much the work of Stalin's circle and the bureaucracy, who required such a leader, as it was his own doing. Of course, the relationship changed. Turned into a deity, Stalin became so powerful that in time he ceased to pay attention to the changing needs and desires of those who exalted him.

An ungainly dwarf of a man passed through gilded and marbled imperial halls, and a path opened before him; radiant, admiring glances followed him, while the ears of courtiers strained to catch his every word. And he, sure of himself and his works, obviously paid no attention to all this. His country was in ruins, hungry, exhausted. But his armies and marshals, heavy with fat and medals and drunk with vodka and victory, had already trampled half of Europe under foot, and he was convinced they would trample over the other half in the next round. He knew that he was one of the cruellest, most despotic figures in human history. But this did not worry him a bit, for he was convinced that he was carrying out the will of history. His conscience was troubled by nothing, despite the millions who had been destroyed in his name and by his order, despite the thousands of his closest collaborators whom he had murdered as traitors because they doubted that he was leading the country and people into happiness, equality, and liberty. The struggle had been dangerous, long, and all the more underhanded because the opponents were few in number and weak.

But he succeeded, and success is the only criterion of truth! For what is conscience? Does it even exist? It had no place in his philosophy, much less in his actions. After all, man is the product of productive forces.

Poets were inspired by him, orchestras blared cantatas in his honour, philosophers in institutes wrote tomes about his sayings, and martyrs died on scaffolds crying out his name. Now he was the victor in the greatest war of his nation and in history. His power, absolute over a sixth of the globe, was spreading farther and farther. This convinced him that his society contained no contradictions and that it was superior to every other society in every way.

He joked, too, with his courtiers – 'comrades'. But he did not do this purely out of a ruler's generosity. Royal generosity was visible only in the manner in which he did this: his jokes were never at his own expense. No, he joked because he liked to descend from his Olympian heights; after all, he lived among men and had to show from time to time that the individual was nothing without the collective.

I, too, was swept up by Stalin and his witticisms. But in one little corner of my mind and of my moral being I was awake and troubled: I noticed the tawdriness, too, and could not accept inwardly Stalin's manner of joking – nor his deliberate avoidance of saying a single human, comradely word to me.

5

Still I was pleasantly surprised when I, too, was taken to an intimate dinner in Stalin's villa. Dr Šubašić naturally knew absolutely nothing about it. Only we Yugoslav Communist ministers were there, and, on the Soviet side, Stalin's closest associates: Malenkov, Bulganin, General Antonov, Beria, and, of course, Molotov.

As usual, at about ten o'clock at night we found ourselves around Stalin's table. I had arrived in the car with Tito. At the head of the table sat Beria, to his right Malenkov, then I and Molotov, then Andrejev and Petrović, while to the left sat

Stalin, Tito, Bulganin, and General Antonov, Assistant Chief of the General Staff.

Beria was also a rather short man – in Stalin's Politburo there was hardly anyone taller than himself. He, too, was somewhat plump, greenish, and pale, and with soft damp hands. With his square-cut mouth and bulging eyes behind his pince-nez, he suddenly reminded me of Vujković, one of the chiefs of the Belgrade Royal Police who specialized in torturing Communists. It took an effort to dispel the unpleasant comparison, which was all the harder to forget because the similarity extended even to his expression – a certain self-satisfaction and irony mingled with a clerk's obsequiousness and solicitude. Beria was a Georgian, like Stalin, but one could not tell this at all from the looks of him. Georgians are generally bony and dark. Even in this respect he was nondescript. He could have passed more easily for a Slav or a Lett, but mostly for a mixture of some sort.

Malenkov was even smaller and plumper, but a typical Russian with a Mongol admixture – dark, with prominent cheekbones, and slightly pock-marked. He gave one the impression of being a withdrawn, cautious, and not very personable man. It seemed as though under the layers and rolls of fat there moved about still another man, lively and adept, with intelligent and alert black eyes. He had been known for some time as Stalin's unofficial stand-in in Party matters. Practically all matters pertaining to Party organization and the promotion and demotion of officials were in his hands. He was the one who had invented 'cadre lists' – detailed biographies and autobiographies of all members and candidates of a Party of many millions – which were guarded and systematically maintained in Moscow. I took advantage of my meeting with him to ask for Stalin's work *On the Opposition* (*Ob oppozitsii*), which had been withdrawn from public circulation because of the numerous citations from Trotsky, Bukharin, and others it contained. The next day I received a used copy of the work, and it is now in my library.

Bulganin was in a general's uniform. He was rather stout,

handsome, and unmistakably Russian, with an old-fashioned goatee, and extremely reserved in his expression. General Antonov was still young, very handsome, dark, and lithe. He, too, did not join in the conversation unless it concerned him.

Seated across from Stalin, face to face, I suddenly gained confidence, though he did not turn to me for a long time. Not until the atmosphere had been warmed by liquor, toasts, and jesting did Stalin find the time ripe to resolve the dispute with me. He did it in a half-joking manner. He filled for me a little glass of vodka and bade me drink to the Red Army. Not understanding his intention immediately, I wished to drink to his health. 'No, no,' he insisted, smiling and regarding me searchingly, 'just for the Red Army! What, you won't drink to the Red Army?'

I drank, of course, though even with Stalin I avoided drinking anything but beer, first, because alcohol did not agree with me, and, second, because drunkenness did not agree with my views, though I was never a teetotaller.

Thereupon Stalin asked me about the affair of the Red Army. I explained to him that it had not been my intention to insult the Red Army, but I had wished to call attention to irregularities of certain of its members and to the political difficulties they were creating for us.

Stalin interrupted: 'Yes, you have, I know, read Dostoevsky? Do you see what a complicated thing is man's soul, his psyche? Well then, imagine a man who has fought from Stalingrad to Belgrade – over thousands of kilometres of his own devastated land, across the dead bodies of his comrades and dearest ones! How can such a man react normally? And what is so awful in his amusing himself with a woman, after such horrors? You have imagined the Red Army to be ideal. And it is not ideal, nor can it be, even if it did not contain a certain percentage of criminals – we opened up our prisons and stuck everybody into the army. There was an interesting case. An Air Force major wanted to have a woman, and a chivalrous engineer appeared to protect her. The major drew a gun: 'Ekh, you mole from the rear!' – and he killed the chivalrous

engineer. They sentenced the major to death. But somehow the matter was brought before me, and I made inquiries – I have the right as commander-in-chief in time of war – and I released the major and sent him to the front. Now he is one of our heroes. One has to understand the soldier. The Red Army is not ideal. The important thing is that it fights Germans – and it is fighting them well; the rest doesn't matter.'

Soon afterwards when I returned from Moscow, I heard, to my horror, of a far more significant example of Stalin's 'understanding' attitude toward the sins of Red Army personnel. While crossing East Prussia, Soviet soldiers, especially the tank units, had regularly shelled and killed all the German civilian refugees – women and children. Stalin was informed of this and asked what should be done. He replied: 'We lecture our soldiers too much; let them have some initiative!'

That night at his villa, he then asked: 'And what about General Korneyev, the chief of our Mission, what kind of man is he?'

I avoided saying anything bad about him and about his Mission, though all sorts of things could have been brought up, but Stalin himself concluded: 'The poor man is not stupid, but he is a drunkard, an incurable drunkard!'

After that Stalin even joked with me, on seeing that I was drinking beer. As a matter of fact, I don't even like beer. Stalin commented: 'Djilas here drinks beer like a German, like a German – he is a German, by God, a German.'

I did not find this joke at all to my liking; at that time hatred for the Germans, even for those few Communist émigrés, was at its height in Moscow, but I took it without anger or inner resentment.

With this, it appeared, the dispute over the behaviour of the Red Army was resolved. Stalin's relations with me became as cordial as they had been before.

And so it went on, until the rift between the Yugoslav and Soviet Central Committees, in 1948, when Molotov and Stalin dredged up in their letters that same dispute over the Red Army and the way I had 'insulted' it.

Stalin teased Tito with obvious deliberateness – in a manner that had in it as much malice as jest. He did it by speaking unfavourably of the Yugoslav Army while flattering the Bulgarian Army. That previous winter Yugoslav units including many recruits who were engaged for the first time in very serious frontal attacks had suffered defeats, and Stalin, who was apparently well informed, took the opportunity to point out, 'The Bulgarian Army is better than the Yugoslav. The Bulgars had their weaknesses and enemies in their ranks. But they executed a few score – and now everything is in order. The Bulgarian Army is very good – drilled and disciplined. And yours, the Yugoslav – they are still Partisans, unfit for serious front-line fighting. Last winter one German regiment broke up a whole division of yours. A regiment beat a division!'

A bit later Stalin proposed a toast to the Yugoslav Army, but he did not forget to add to it, 'But which will yet fight well on level ground!'

Tito had refrained from reacting to Stalin's comments. Whenever Stalin made some witty remark at our expense, Tito looked at me silently with a restrained smile, and I returned his look with understanding and sympathy. But when Stalin said that the Bulgarian Army was better than the Yugoslav, Tito could not stand it, and shouted that the Yugoslav Army would quickly rid itself of its weaknesses.

One could detect in the relation between Stalin and Tito something special, tacit – as though these two had a grudge against one another, but each was holding back for his own reasons. Stalin took care not to offend Tito personally in any way, but at the same time he kept making underhand digs about the situation in Yugoslavia. On the other hand, Tito treated Stalin with respect, as one would one's senior, but resentment could also be detected, especially at Stalin's remarks about Yugoslavia.

At one point Tito revealed that there were new phenomena in socialism and that socialism was now being achieved in ways different from those of the past, which gave Stalin an

opportunity to say, 'Today socialism is possible even under the English monarchy. Revolution is no longer necessary everywhere. Just recently a delegation of the British Labour Party was here, and we talked about this in particular. Yes, there is much that is new. Yes, socialism is possible even under an English king.'

As is well known, Stalin never upheld such a view publicly. The British Labour Party soon gained a majority at the elections and nationalized over twenty per cent of the industrial production. Nevertheless, Stalin never recognized these measures as being socialistic nor the Labour Party as being socialists. I maintain that he did not do so primarily because of differences and clashes with the Labour Government in foreign policy.

In the course of the conversation about this, I interjected that in Yugoslavia the government was essentially of the Soviet type; the Communist Party held all the key positions and there was no serious opposition party. But Stalin did not agree with this. 'No, your government is not Soviet – you have something in between De Gaulle's France and the Soviet Union.'

Tito remarked that in Yugoslavia something new was taking shape. But this discussion remained unfinished. Within myself I could not agree with Stalin's view; neither did I think that I differed with Tito.

Stalin presented his views on the distinctive nature of the war that was being waged: 'This war is not as in the past; whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his own social system. Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army has power to do so. It cannot be otherwise.'

He also pointed out, without going into long explanations, the meaning of his Pan-Slavic policy. 'If the Slavs keep united and maintain solidarity, no one in the future will be able to move a finger. Not even a finger!' he repeated, emphasizing his thought by cleaving the air with his forefinger.

Someone expressed doubt that the Germans would be able to recuperate within fifty years. But Stalin was of a different opinion. 'No, they will recover, and very quickly. It is a highly

developed industrial country with an extremely skilled and numerous working class and technical intelligentsia. Give them twelve to fifteen years and they'll be on their feet again. And this is why the unity of the Slavs is important. But even apart from this, if the unity of the Slavs exists, no one will dare move a finger.'

At one point he got up, hitched up his trousers as though he was about to wrestle or to box, and cried out emotionally, 'The war will soon be over. We shall recover in fifteen or twenty years, and then we'll have another go at it.'

There was something terrible in his words: a horrible war was still going on. Yet there was something impressive, too, about his realization of the paths he had to take, the inevitability that faced the world in which he lived and the movement that he headed.

The rest of what was said that evening was hardly worth remembering. There was much eating, even more drinking, and countless senseless toasts were drunk.

Molotov recounted how Stalin stung Churchill. 'Stalin proposed a toast to secret agents and to the Secret Service, thus alluding to Churchill's failures at Gallipoli in the First World War, which occurred because the British lacked sufficient information.' Molotov also cited, not without glee, Churchill's bizarre sense of humour. 'Churchill declared in Moscow, in his cups, that he deserved the highest order and citation of the Red Army because he had taught it to fight so well, thanks to the intervention at Archangel.' One could see that in general Churchill had left a deep impression on the Soviet leaders as a far-sighted and dangerous 'bourgeois statesman' – though they did not like him.

During the drive back to his villa, Tito, who also could not stand large quantities of liquor, remarked in the car: 'I don't know what the devil is wrong with these Russians that they drink so much – sheer decadence!' I, of course, agreed with him and tried in vain, after who knows how many attempts, to find an explanation of why Soviet high society drank so desperately and determinedly.

On returning to town from the villa in which Tito was housed, I collected my impressions of that night in which actually nothing significant had happened: there were no points of disagreement, and yet we seemed farther apart than ever we had been. Every dispute had been resolved for political reasons, as something hardly to be avoided in relations between independent states.

At the end of our visit (following the dinner with Stalin), we spent an evening at Dimitrov's. To occupy the time, he invited two or three Soviet actors, who gave short performances.

Of course there was talk of a future union between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, but it was very general and brief. Tito and Dimitrov exchanged Comintern reminiscences. All in all, it was more a friendly gathering than a political meeting.

Dimitrov was alone at the time because all the Bulgarian émigrés had long since gone to Bulgaria – in the footsteps of the Red Army. One could tell that Dimitrov was tired and listless, and we knew at least part of the reason, though nothing was said about it. Although Bulgaria had been liberated, Stalin would not permit Dimitrov's return, with the excuse that it was not yet the right time, for the Western states would take his return as an open sign of the establishment of Communism in Bulgaria – as though such a sign was not evident enough without this. There had been talk of this, too, at Stalin's dinner. Winking ambiguously, Stalin had said, 'It is not yet time for Dimitrov to go to Bulgaria: he's well off where he is.'

Though there was nothing to prove it, still it was suspected even then that Stalin was preventing Dimitrov's return until he himself settled affairs in Bulgaria. These suspicions of ours did not yet imply Soviet hegemony, though there were premonitions of this too, but we saw the matter as a necessary result of Stalin's alleged fears that Dimitrov might push matters towards the left too soon in Bulgaria.

But even this was significant and sufficient – for a beginning. It evoked a whole series of questions. Stalin was a genius, but Dimitrov was hardly a nobody. By what token

did Stalin know better than Dimitrov what ought to be done in Bulgaria? Did not holding Dimitrov in Moscow against his will undermine his reputation among Bulgarian Communists and the Bulgarian people? And, in general, why this intricate game over his return, in which the Russians were not accountable to anyone, not even to Dimitrov?

In politics, more than in anything else, the beginning of everything lies in moral indignation and in doubt of the good intentions of others.

6

We returned via Kiev, and at our wish and that of the Soviet Government we remained two or three days to visit the Ukrainian Government.

The Secretary of the Ukrainian Party and Premier of the Government was N. S. Khrushchev, and his Commissar for Foreign Affairs was Manuilsky. It was they who met us and it was with them that we spent the entire three days.

At the time, in 1945, the war was still on and one was permitted to express modest wishes. Khrushchev and Manuilsky expressed one – that the Ukraine might establish diplomatic relations with the 'people's democracies'.

However, nothing came of it. Stalin soon enough encountered resistance even in the 'people's democracies', so that it hardly would occur to him to encourage anything like Ukrainian independence. As for the eloquent and lively old veteran Manuilsky – a minister without a ministry – he later made speeches in the United Nations for two or three years, only to disappear one day and to sink into the anonymous mass of victims of Stalin's or someone else's displeasure.

Khrushchev's destiny was quite different. But at that moment no one could have surmised it. Even then he was in the top political leadership – and had been since 1939 – though it was considered that he was not as close to Stalin as Molotov and Malenkov were, or even Kaganovich. In the upper Soviet hierarchy he was held to be a very clever politician with a

great capacity in economic and organizational matters, though not as a writer or speaker. He came to leadership in the Ukraine after the purges of the mid thirties, but I am not acquainted with – nor was I then interested in – his part in them. But it is well known how one rose in Stalin's Russia: certainly by dint of determination and dexterity during the bloody 'anti-kulak' and 'anti-Party' campaigns. This would have had to be especially true for the Ukraine, where in addition to the aforementioned 'deadly sins' there was 'nationalism' as well.

Though he had achieved success while still relatively young, there was nothing surprising about Khrushchev's career in the light of Soviet conditions: he made his way through schools, political and ordinary, as a worker, and climbed the Party ladder by means of his devotion, alertness, and intelligence. Like most of the leaders, he belonged to the new post-revolutionary Stalinist generation of Party and Soviet officials. The war found him in the highest position in the Ukraine. Because the Red Army had to withdraw from the Ukraine before the Germans, he was given a high political post in it, but not the highest – he was still in the uniform of a lieutenant general. He returned as chief of the Party and the Government in Kiev after the expulsion of the Germans.

We had heard somewhere that he was not a Ukrainian by birth, but a Russian. Though nothing was said about this, he himself avoided mentioning it, for it would have been embarrassing if not even the Premier of the Ukrainian Government was a Ukrainian! It was indeed unusual even for us Communists, who were able to justify and explain away everything that might cast a shadow over our ideal picture of ourselves, that among the Ukrainians, a nation as numerous as the French and in some ways more cultured than the Russians, there was not a single person capable of being premier of the Government.

Nor could it be concealed from us that the Ukrainians had deserted *en masse* from the Red Army as the Germans advanced into their regions. After the expulsion of the Germans,

some two and a half million Ukrainians were drafted into the Red Army. Although minor operations were still being carried out against Ukrainian nationalists (one of their victims was the gifted Soviet General Vatutin), we still could not quite accept the explanation that this state of affairs in the Ukraine was caused entirely by stubborn Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism. A question remained to be answered: Where did this nationalism come from if the peoples of the USSR were really equal?

We were bewildered and astonished at the marked Russification of public life. Russian was spoken in the theatre, and there were even daily newspapers in Russian.

However, it was far from our intention to blame our solicitous host, N. S. Khrushchev, for this or anything else, for, as a good Communist, he could do nothing else but carry out the orders of his Party, his Leninist Central Committee, and his leader and teacher, J. V. Stalin. All Soviet leaders have distinguished themselves by their practicality and by their directness, at least in Communist circles. N. S. Khrushchev stood out from the rest in both respects.

Neither then nor now – after carefully reading his speeches at congresses – did I have the impression that his knowledge went beyond the limits of classical Russian literature and Russian history, while his grasp of theory was on the level of an intermediate Party school. Beside this external knowledge gathered from courses, much more important is the knowledge that he gained as a self-taught man, by constantly improving himself, and, even more, the experience he gained from his lively and many-sided activities. It is impossible to determine the quantity and quality of that knowledge, for equally astonishing is his knowledge of some rare fact and his ignorance of some elementary truths. His memory is excellent and he expresses himself vividly and graphically.

Unlike other Soviet leaders, he was unrestrained and very talkative, although like them he was fond of using folk proverbs and sayings. This was a kind of fashion at the time and proof of one's ties with the people. With him, however, there was

less artificiality about this because of his naturally simple and unaffected behaviour and manner of speaking. He also had a sense of humour. Unlike Stalin's humour, which was predominantly intellectual and, as such, cynical, Khrushchev's humour was typically folksy and thus often almost crude, but it was lively and inexhaustible. Now that he has attained the most exalted heights of power and is in the gaze of the whole world, one can tell that he is careful of his pose and manner of expression, but he has remained basically unchanged. Beneath the present Soviet chief of state and Party it is not difficult to discern a man of the popular masses. Yet I should add that he suffers less than any self-taught Communist or half-educated scholar from a feeling of inferiority, that is, he feels no need to hide his personal ignorance and weaknesses behind an external brilliance and wide generalizations. The commonplaces with which his conversation abounds are the expression of both real ignorance and Marxist maxims learned by rote, but even these he presents with conviction and frankness. The language and manner with which he expresses himself encompass a wider circle than the one to which Stalin spoke, though he, too, addresses himself to the same Party public.

In his not very new, unpressed general's uniform, he was the only one among the Soviet leaders who delved into details, into the daily life of the Communist rank and file and the ordinary people. Let it be understood: he did not do this with the aim of changing the system, but of strengthening and improving things under the existing system. He did look into matters and remedy them, while others issued orders from offices and received reports.

None of the Soviet leaders went to collective farms, except occasionally to attend some feast or parade. Khrushchev accompanied us to a collective farm and, without harbouring in any little corner of his mind the slightest doubt of the justice of the system itself, he not only clinked huge glasses of vodka with the collective farmers, but he also inspected the garden hotbeds, peeped into the pigsty, and began discussing practical problems. During the ride back to Kiev he kept coming

back to the question of the collective farms and openly talked about their shortcomings.

We could see his extraordinarily practical sense on a grand scale at a meeting of the economic sections of the Ukrainian Government. Unlike Yugoslav ministers, his commissars were excellently acquainted with matters and, what was more important, they assessed possibilities realistically.

Rather short and stocky, but brisk and agile, he was strongly hewn and of one piece. He more or less bolted down impressive quantities of food – as though wishing to spare his artificial steel jawbone. While Stalin and his entourage seemed to be gourmands, I felt that it was all the same to Khrushchev what he ate and that the important thing was to fill up, as it is to any hard worker, if, of course, he has the means. His board was also opulent – stately but impersonal. Khrushchev is not a gourmand, though he eats no less than Stalin did and drinks even more.

He possesses an extremely powerful vitality and, like all practical men, a great ability to adapt. I do not think he would trouble himself much over the choice of methods as long as they brought him practical results. But like all popular demagogues who often themselves believe what they say, he would find it easy to abandon impractical methods and readily justify the change by appeals to moral reasons and the highest ideals. He likes to quote the proverb 'In a fight don't stop to pick cudgels.' It serves him well to justify the cudgel even when there is no fight. Everything I have said here is not at all what one would say about Khrushchev today. Still I have given my impressions from another time, and also, along the way, my incidental reflections of today.

At that time I could not detect in Khrushchev any disapproval of Stalin or Molotov. Whenever there was talk of Stalin, he spoke of him with respect and stressed their closeness. He told how, on the eve of the German attack, Stalin had phoned him from Moscow warning him to be on the alert, for he had information that the Germans might begin operations the next day – 22 June. I offer this as a fact, and not in

order to refute Khrushchev's charges against Stalin concerning the unexpectedness of the German attack. That unexpectedness was the consequence of Stalin's error in political judgement.

Nevertheless, in Kiev one felt a certain freshness – thanks to Khrushchev's limitless vigour and practicality, to Manuilsky's enthusiasm, to the beauty of the city itself, which, with its unobstructed horizons and with its hills overlooking a vast muddy river, was reminiscent of Belgrade. Though Khrushchev left the impression of strength, self-confidence, and realism, and Kiev one of conscious and cultivated beauty, the Ukraine has remained associated in my memory with a loss of personality, with weariness and hopelessness.

The more I delved into the Soviet reality, the more my doubts multiplied. The reconciliation of that reality and my human conscience was becoming more and more hopeless.

3

Disappointments

I

My third encounter with Stalin came early in 1948. This was the most significant encounter, for it took place on the eve of the rift between the Soviet and the Yugoslav leaders. It was preceded by significant events and changes in Yugoslav–Soviet relations.

Relations between the Soviet Union and the West had already begun to take the shape of the Cold War between two blocs. The key events leading to this, in my opinion, were the Soviet rejection of the Marshall Plan, the civil war in Greece, and the creation by some Communist parties of an Information Bureau, the Cominform. Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union were the only two East European countries that were decisively against the Marshall Plan – the former largely out of revolutionary dogmatism, and the latter for fear that American economic aid might shake up the empire it had so recently acquired militarily.

As Yugoslav delegate to the Congress of the Communist Party of France in Strasbourg, I found myself in Paris just at the time Molotov was having conversations with the representatives of the Western states about the Marshall Plan. Molotov received me in the Soviet Embassy, and we agreed to boycott the Marshall Plan, and also in our criticism of the French Party, with its so-called 'national line'. Molotov was especially interested in my impressions of the Congress, and he remarked about the periodical *La Nouvelle Démocratie*, of which Duclos was the editor and which purported to express the united view of the Communist parties: 'That isn't what is needed and what ought to be done.'

About the Marshall Plan, Molotov wondered whether a conference should not be called in which the Eastern countries

would also participate, but only for propaganda reasons, with the aim of exploiting the publicity and then walking out of the conference at a convenient moment. I was not enthusiastic about this variation either, though I would not have opposed it had the Russians insisted; such was the line taken by my country's Government. However, Molotov received a message from the Politburo in Moscow that he should not agree even to this.

Immediately upon my return to Belgrade I learned that a conference of East European countries was to be held in Moscow to discuss the Marshall Plan. I was designated to represent Yugoslavia. The real aim of the conference was to bring collective pressure to bear on Czechoslovakia, whose Government was not against participating in the Marshall Plan. The Soviet plane was already waiting at the Belgrade airfield, but I did not fly the next day, for a telegram arrived from Moscow stating that there was no need for the conference – the Czechoslovak Government had abandoned its original line.

That same conformity with the Soviet Union, though for reasons other than the Soviet Union's, showed itself also in the creation of the Cominform. The idea that it was necessary to create some agency that could facilitate the coordination and exchange of views among the Communist parties had been discussed as early as 1946; Stalin, Tito, and Dimitrov had talked about it in the spring of the same year. However, its realization had been postponed for many reasons, mostly, to be sure, because everything depended on the Soviet leaders' judgement of when the time was ripe. It ripened in the autumn of 1947, most probably in connexion with the Soviet rejection of the Marshall Plan and the establishment of Soviet domination over Eastern Europe.

At the inaugural meeting – in western Poland, that is, on former German territory – the only two delegations that were decidedly for the Cominform were the Yugoslav and the Soviet. Gomulka was opposed, cautiously but unequivocally holding out for the 'Polish path to socialism'.

In connexion with this, I might mention as a curiosity that it was Stalin who thought up the name of the Cominform's organ, *For a Lasting Peace – For a People's Democracy*, with the idea that the Western press would have to repeat the slogan each time it quoted something from it. But Stalin's expectation was not fulfilled: because of the length and transparent propaganda of its name, the newspaper was – as though for spite – most frequently referred to simply as 'the organ of the Cominform'. Stalin also decided in the end where the seat of the Cominform was to be. The delegates had agreed on Prague. The Czech representative, Slansky, hurried to Prague by car that evening to consult Gottwald about this. But that night Zhdanov and Malenkov talked with Stalin (for not even in that remote *pension* in a distant city did they fail to have a direct telephone connexion with Moscow), and though Gottwald was reluctant to agree, Stalin ordained that the seat should be in Belgrade.

This double-dealing was also going on in the heart of Yugoslav–Soviet relations: on the surface there was complete political and, especially, ideological agreement, but really our practice and judgement were quite different.

When a rather comprehensive delegation of the top Yugoslav leaders – Tito, Ranković, Kidrić, Nešković – stayed in Moscow in the spring of 1946, relations between the two leading groups appeared to be more than cordial. Stalin embraced Tito, referred to his role as of European importance and flagrantly belittled the Bulgars and Dimitrov. But soon afterwards there came the tension and discord over joint-stock companies.

The friction went on underground all the time. Invisible to the non-Communist world, it broke out in closed Party councils, over recruiting for the Soviet Intelligence Service; which was particularly inconsiderate of the state and Party machines. It broke out also in the sphere of ideology chiefly because the Soviets disparaged the Yugoslav revolution. When the Yugoslavs ranked Tito next to Stalin, the Soviet representatives swallowed it with obvious distaste, and they were

particularly sensitive about Yugoslavia's independent association with the other East European countries and the growth of her prestige among them.

The friction soon carried over into economic relations, especially when it became obvious to the Yugoslavs that, apart from their ordinary commercial ties, they could not count on Soviet aid in carrying out their five-year plan. When Stalin detected resistance he stressed that it was not good for friendly and allied countries to use joint-stock companies, and promised to furnish all possible aid, but at the same time his traders exploited the economic advantage they gained as a result of exacerbated Yugoslav–Western relations and from the Yugoslav illusion that the USSR was an unselfish state with no territorial ambitions.

Except for Albania, Yugoslavia had been the only East European country to free itself from the Nazi invasion and at the same time carry out a domestic revolution without the decisive help of the Red Army. It had gone the farthest in effecting a social transformation, and yet it was also situated in what was in days to come the most exposed salient in the Soviet bloc. In Greece a civil war was being fought. Yugoslavia had been accused in the United Nations of giving it material aid and inspiring it; while Yugoslav relations with the West, and especially with the United States, were strained to breaking point.

When I think back, it seems to me that the Soviet Government not only looked with satisfaction at this worsening of Yugoslav–Western relations but even incited it, taking care, of course, not to go beyond the limits of its own practical interests. Molotov almost embraced Kardelj in Paris after two American planes had been shot down in Yugoslavia, though he also warned him not to shoot down a third. The Soviet Government took no direct action over the uprising in Greece, practically leaving Yugoslavia to face the music alone in the United Nations, nor did it undertake anything decisive to bring about an armistice – not until Stalin found it to his interest.

So, too, the decision that Belgrade should be the seat of

the Cominform was, on the surface, a form of recognition of the Yugoslav revolution. Behind it lay the secret Soviet intention to lull the Yugoslav leaders into a state of self-satisfaction at their own revolution and to subordinate Yugoslavia to some supposed international Communist solidarity – in fact, to the hegemony of the Soviet state, or, rather, to the insatiable demands of the Soviet political bureaucracy.

It is time something was said about Stalin's attitude to revolutions, and thus to the Yugoslav revolution. Because Moscow had always refrained at the crucial moment from supporting the Chinese, Spanish, and in many ways even the Yugoslav revolutions, the view prevailed, not without reason, that Stalin was generally against revolutions. This is, however, not entirely correct. His opposition was only conditional, and arose only when the revolution went beyond the interests of the Soviet state. He felt instinctively that the creation of revolutionary centres outside Moscow could endanger its supremacy in world Communism, and of course that is what actually happened. That is why he helped revolutions only up to a certain point – as long as he could control them – but he was always ready to leave them in the lurch whenever they slipped out of his grasp. I maintain that not even today is there any essential change in this respect in the policy of the Soviet Government.

In his own country Stalin had subjected all activities to his views and to his personality, so he could not behave differently outside. Having identified domestic progress and freedom with the interests and privileges of a political party, he could not act in foreign affairs other than as a dictator. And like everyone else he must be judged by his actual deeds. He became himself the slave of the despotism, the bureaucracy, the narrowness, and the servility that he imposed on his country.

It is indeed true that no one can destroy another's freedom without losing his own.

2

The occasion for my departure to Moscow was the divergence between the policy of Yugoslavia and that of the USSR over Albania. In late December 1947 a dispatch came from Moscow in which Stalin demanded that someone of the Yugoslav Central Committee – he spoke of me only by name – should come in order to bring the two Governments' Albanian policy into line.

This divergence in policy appeared in various ways, most noticeably after the suicide of Naku Spiru, a member of the Albanian Central Committee.

Yugoslavia and Albania had been gradually drawing together in all fields. Yugoslavia was sending experts of all kinds to Albania, and in ever increasing numbers. Food was shipped to Albania, though Yugoslavia itself was suffering a shortage. The creation of joint-stock companies had begun. Both Governments agreed in principle that Albania ought to unite with Yugoslavia, which would have solved the question of the Albanian minority in Yugoslavia.

The conditions that the Yugoslav Government presented to the Albanian were far more favourable and just to the Albanians than those, by comparison, that the Soviet Government had offered to the Yugoslavs. Apparently, however, the problem lay not in the degree of justice but in the very nature of these relations. A part of the Albanian leadership was intimately and secretly against the Yugoslav approach.

Naku Spiru – slight, frail, very sensitive, with a fine intellect – directed the economic affairs of the Albanian Government at the time and was the first to rebel against Yugoslavia, demanding that Albania develop independently. His stand provoked a sharp reaction not only in Yugoslavia but in the Albanian Central Committee as well. He was especially opposed by Koči Xoxe, Albanian Minister of the Interior, who was later shot on the charge that he was pro-Yugoslav. A worker from southern Albania and a veteran revolutionary, Xoxe enjoyed the reputation of being the most stable Party

man despite the fact that Enver Hoxha – an undoubtedly better-educated and far more agile personality – was Secretary-General of the Party and Premier of the Government. Hoxha, too, joined in the criticism against Spiru, even though his actual position remained unclear. Poor Spiru, finding himself isolated and charged with chauvinism and probably on the brink of being expelled from the Party, killed himself. With his death he started something he never could have imagined – the worsening of Yugoslav–Albanian relations.

To be sure, the affair was hushed up from the public. Later, after the open break with Yugoslavia in 1948, Enver Hoxha put Spiru on a pedestal as a national hero. But in the summits of both countries the affair left a bad impression which could not be dispelled by assertions concerning Spiru's cowardice, petty bourgeois spirit, and the like, which always abound in the Communist arsenal of clichés.

The Soviet Government was excellently informed both about the real causes of Spiru's death and about all Yugoslavia's activities in Albania. Her Mission in Tirana grew more and more numerous. Besides, relations between the three Governments – the Soviet, Albanian, and Yugoslav – were such that the last two did not particularly conceal their relations from the first, though it should also be said that the Yugoslav Government did not consult the Soviet about the details of its policy.

Soviet representatives made more and more frequent complaints about certain Yugoslav measures in Albania, while the group around Hoxha and the Soviet Mission were observed to be drawing ever closer together. Every once in a while a complaint by this or that Soviet representative came to the surface: why were the Yugoslavs forming joint-stock companies with the Albanians when they refused to form the same in their own country with the USSR? Why were they sending their instructors to the Albanian Army when they had Soviet instructors in their own? How could Yugoslavs provide experts for the development of Albania when they themselves were seeking experts from abroad? How was it that all of a

sudden Yugoslavia, itself poor and underdeveloped, intended to develop Albania?

Along with these differences between the Soviet and the Yugoslav Governments, Moscow's tendency to replace Yugoslavia's position in Albania became all the more evident, which seemed extremely unjust to the Yugoslavs since it was not the USSR that proposed to unite with Albania, nor was the USSR even a bordering neighbour of Albania. It became clearer and clearer that the Albanian leaders were turning to the Soviet Union and this was expressed more and more forcibly in their propaganda.

The Soviet Government's invitation to remove disagreement over Albania was accepted with both hands in Belgrade, though it has remained unclear to this day why Stalin emphasized that I was the person he wanted to come to Moscow.

It seems to me that he had two reasons. I probably had given him the impression of being a forthright and candid man. I expect that was the opinion of me among the Yugoslav Communists too. So I was the right man for a straightforward discussion about a complicated and very delicate question. However, I also believe that he intended to win me over in order to split and so weaken the Yugoslav Central Committee. He already had Hebrang and Žujović on his side. But Hebrang had been thrown out of the Central Committee and put under secret investigation because of his unexplained behaviour while in prison during the war. Žujović was a prominent figure, but even as a member of the Central Committee he did not belong to the inner circle that had formed around Tito in the course of the struggle for the unity of the Party and during the revolution itself.

In 1946, when staying in Moscow, Tito had told Stalin that I suffered from headaches, and Stalin had invited me to visit him in the Crimea for a rest cure. But I did not go, largely because Stalin's invitation had not been made again through the Embassy, and so I took it to be a polite gesture, made simply because the conversation had turned to me.

Thus I set out for Moscow – on 8 January, if I remember correctly, and certainly not far from that date – with ambiguous feelings: I was flattered that Stalin had invited me specifically, but I also had vague, unspoken suspicions that this was not by chance and that Stalin's intentions toward Tito and the Yugoslav Central Committee were not entirely honourable.

I received no special orders or instructions in Belgrade, nor were any instructions necessary, for I was a member of the inner circle of leaders and *au courant* with Albanian–Yugoslav relations. We had already decided to insist that Soviet representatives should not hinder the already announced policy of Yugoslav–Albanian unification by their tactless actions or by taking a different line.

Representatives of the Yugoslav Army took this excellent opportunity to send with me their own delegation, which was to present requests for munitions and for help in developing our armaments industry. This delegation included the then Chief of the General Staff, Koča Popović, and the head of the Yugoslav armaments industry, Mijalko Todorović. Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, then director of political administration in the army, also travelled with us, in order to acquaint himself with the experience of the Red Army in that area.

We set out by train for Moscow, in good spirits and in even better faith – and also with the set view that Yugoslavia should solve its problems in its own way and largely through its own resources.

3

This view was aired even before it should have been, at a dinner in the Yugoslav Embassy in Bucharest which was attended by Ana Pauker, the Rumanian Foreign Minister, and several Rumanian officials.

All the Yugoslavs, except Ambassador Golubović, who later emigrated as an adherent of Moscow, said more or less openly that the Soviet Union could not be an absolute model in 'the building of socialism', for the situation had changed and

conditions and circumstances differed in the individual countries of Eastern Europe. I noticed that Ana Pauker was carefully silent, or else agreed with something reluctantly, and tried to avoid talking about such delicate questions. One of the Rumanians – I believe it was Bodnaraș – opposed our views, and another – his name I have unfortunately forgotten – cordially agreed with us. I regarded a conversation of this sort as awkward, for I was convinced that every word would reach the ears of the Russians and they would be unable to understand them as being anything but 'anti-Soviet' – a synonym for all the evils of this earth. At the same time however, I could not retract the opinions I had expressed, so I tried to tone down my views, stressing the merits of the USSR and the theoretical importance of Soviet experience. But all this was of hardly any use, for I myself had stressed that everyone ought to blaze his own path according to his own actual circumstances. Nor could the awkwardness be dispelled. I had a premonition; I knew that the Soviet leaders had no liking for subtleties and compromises, least of all within their own Communist ranks.

Though we were only passing through Rumania, we found reason for our criticism everywhere. First, as to the relations between the Soviet Union and the other East European countries: these countries were still being held under actual occupation, and their wealth was being extracted in various ways, most frequently through joint-stock companies in which the Russians barely invested anything except German capital, which they had simply declared a prize of war. Trade with these countries was not conducted as elsewhere in the world, but on the basis of special arrangements according to which the Soviet Government bought at lower and sold at higher than world prices. Only Yugoslavia was an exception. We knew all that. And the spectacle of misery as well as our awareness of impotence and subservience among the Rumanian authorities could only heighten our indignation.

We were most taken aback by the arrogant attitude of the Soviet representatives. I remember how horrified we were at

the words of the Soviet Commander in Iaşi: 'Oh, this dirty Rumanian Iaşi! And these Rumanian maize-eaters (*mamalizhniki*)!' He also repeated Ehrenburg's and Vishinsky's *bon mot*, which was aimed at the corruption and stealing in Rumania: 'They are not a nation, but a profession!'

Especially in that mild winter, Iaşi was truly a sprawling backwater of a Balkan town whose beauties – its hills, gardens, and terraces – could be detected only by the experienced eye. Yet we knew that Soviet towns looked hardly better, if not indeed worse. It was this attitude of a 'superior race' and the conceit of a great power that angered us the most. The obliging and deeply respectful Russian attitude to us not only accenuated the abasement of the Rumanians all the more but it inflated our pride in our own independence and in our intellectual freedom.

We had already accepted it as a fact of life that the Russian treatment of the Rumanians was 'possible even in socialism' because 'Russians are like that' – backward, long isolated from the rest of the world, and dead to their revolutionary traditions.

We were bored after a few hours in Iaşi until the Soviet train with the Soviet Government's carriage arrived for us, accompanied, to be sure, by the inevitable Captain Kozovsky of the Soviet State Security who continued to specialize in the Yugoslavs. This time he was less unreserved and sunny than before, probably only because he was now faced by ministers and generals. An intangible, undefinable, coldly official attitude intruded itself in the relations between ourselves and our Soviet 'comrades'.

Our sarcastic comments did not spare even the railway carriage in which we travelled, and which deserved no better despite its comfortable accommodation, the excellent food, and the good service. We thought it comical with its huge brass handles, old-fashioned fussy décor, and a toilet so lofty that one's legs dangled in mid air. Was all this necessary? Does a great state and a sovereign power have to show off? And what was most grotesque of all in that car, with its pomp

of tsarist days, was the fact that the attendant kept, in a coop in his compartment, a chicken which laid eggs. He was poorly paid and miserably clothed, and he said apologetically: 'What am I to do, Comrades? A working-man must make out as best he can. I have a big family – and life is hard.'

Though the Yugoslav railway system could hardly boast of punctuality either, here no one seemed to worry when a train was several hours late. 'We'll get there,' one of the conductors would simply reply. Russia seemed to confirm the unchangeability of its human and national soul; all its essential qualities seemed to be working against rapid industrialization and an omnipotent management.

The Ukraine and Russia, buried in snow up to the eaves, still bore the marks of the devastation and horrors of war – burned-down stations, barracks, and the sight of women wrapped in shawls and living on hot water (*kipyatok*) and a piece of rye bread, who were busy clearing the tracks.

This time, too, only Kiev left an impression of discreet beauty and cleanliness, culture and a feeling for style and taste, despite its poverty and isolation. Because it was night, there was no view of the Dnieper and the plains merging with the sky. Still it all reminded one of Belgrade – the future Belgrade, with a million people and so well planned and built. We stopped in Kiev only briefly, to be switched to the train for Moscow. Not one Ukrainian official met us. Soon we were on our way into a night white with snow and dark with sorrow. Only our car sparkled with the brilliance of comfort and abundance in this limitless desolation and poverty.

4

Just a few hours after our arrival in Moscow we were deep in a cordial conversation with the Yugoslav Ambassador, Vladimir Popović, when the telephone on his desk rang. The Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs was asking if I was tired, for Stalin wished to see me immediately, that same evening. Such haste is unusual in Moscow, where foreign Communists

have always waited long, so that there was a saying that went round among them: It is easy to get to Moscow but hard to get out again. To be sure, even if I had been tired, I would have accepted Stalin's invitation most willingly. Everyone in the delegation regarded me with enthusiasm, though also not without envy, and Koča Popović and Todorović kept reminding me not to forget why they, too, had come along, even though I had taken advantage of our travelling together to acquaint myself in detail with their requests.

My joy over the impending meeting with Stalin was sober and not unmixed, if only because of the haste with which it had come. This misgiving never left me the whole night that I spent with him and other Soviet leaders.

As usual, at about nine o'clock in the evening, they took me to the Kremlin, to Stalin's office. Gathered there were Stalin, Molotov, and Zhdanov. The last, as I knew, was in the Politburo and responsible for maintaining relations with foreign parties.

After the customary greetings, Stalin immediately got down to business: 'So, members of the Central Committee in Albania are killing themselves over you! This is very inconvenient, very inconvenient.'

I began to explain: Naku Spiru was against linking Albania with Yugoslavia; he isolated himself in his own Central Committee. I had not even finished when, to my surprise, Stalin said: 'We have no special interest in Albania. We agree to Yugoslavia swallowing Albania! . . .' At this he gathered together the fingers of his right hand and, bringing them to his mouth, he made as if to swallow them.

I was astonished, almost struck dumb by Stalin's manner of expressing himself and by the gesture of swallowing, but I do not know whether this was visible on my face, for I tried to make a joke of it and to regard this as Stalin's customary forcible and picturesque manner of expression. Again I explained: 'It is not a matter of swallowing, but unification!'

At this Molotov interjected: 'But that is swallowing!'

And Stalin added, again with that gesture of his: 'Yes, yes.

Swallowing! But we agree with you: you ought to swallow Albania – the sooner the better.'

Despite this manner of expression, the whole atmosphere was cordial and more than friendly. Even Molotov said his piece about swallowing with an almost humorous amiability which was hardly usual with him.

My motives for a *rapprochement* and unification with Albania were those of a sincere revolutionary. I considered, as did many others, that unification – with the truly voluntary agreement of the Albanian leaders – would not only be of direct value to both Yugoslavia and Albania, but would also finally put an end to the traditional intolerance and conflict between Serbs and Albanians. Its particular importance, in my opinion, lay in the fact that it would make possible the amalgamation of our considerable and compact Albanian minority with Albania as a separate republic in the Yugoslav–Albanian Federation. Any other solution to the problem of the Albanian national minority seemed impracticable to me, since the simple transfer of Yugoslav territories inhabited by Albanians would arouse violent opposition in the Yugoslav Communist Party itself.

I had for Albania and the Albanians a special predilection which could only strengthen the idealism of my motives: the Albanians, especially the northern ones, are in their mentality and way of life akin to the Montenegrins from whom I spring, and their vitality and determination to maintain their independence is unequalled in human history.

Though it did not even occur to me to differ with the view of my country's leaders and to agree with Stalin, still Stalin's interjections for the first time confronted me with two thoughts. The first was the suspicion that something was not right about Yugoslavia's policy toward Albania, and the other was that the Soviet Union had united with the Baltic countries, by swallowing them. It was Molotov's remark that put this thought in my mind.

Both thoughts merged into a single uncomfortable feeling that something was wrong.

The thought that there might be something obscure and

inconsistent about Yugoslav policy toward Albania did not, however, make me admit that this policy was one of 'swallowing'. Yet it did strike me that this policy did not correspond with the will and the desires of the Albanian Communists, which, for me, as a Communist, were identical with the aspirations of the Albanian people. Why *did* Spiru kill himself? He was not 'petty bourgeois' and 'burdened by nationalism'; on the contrary he was a Communist and a Marxist. And what if the Albanians wanted their state to be separate from us, just as we wanted ours to be separate from the Soviet Union? If the unification were carried out despite Albanian wishes and by taking advantage of their isolation and misery, would this not lead to irreconcilable conflicts and difficulties? Ethnically peculiar and with an ancient identity, the Albanians as a nation were young and hence filled with an irrepressible and still unfulfilled national consciousness. Would they not consider unification as the loss of their independence, as a rejection of their individuality?

As for the other thought – that the USSR had swallowed the Baltic states – I linked it with the first, repeating as if to convince myself: We Yugoslavs do not wish, do not dare, to take that road to unification with Albania, nor is there any immediate danger that some imperialistic power, such as Germany, might bring pressure on Albania and use it as a base against Yugoslavia.

But Stalin brought me back to reality. 'And what about Hoxha, what is he like in your opinion?'

I avoided a direct and clear answer, but Stalin expressed just the same opinion of Hoxha that the Yugoslav leaders had come to hold. 'He is a petty bourgeois, inclined toward nationalism? Yes, we think so too. Does it seem that the strongest man there is Xoxe?'

I confirmed his leading questions.

Stalin ended the conversation about Albania, which lasted barely ten minutes: 'There are no differences between us. You personally write Tito a dispatch about this in the name of the Soviet Government and submit it to me by tomorrow.'

I was afraid that I could not have understood, so I sounded him out, and he repeated that I was to write the dispatch to the Yugoslav Government in the name of the Soviet Government.

At that moment I took this to be a sign of special confidence in me and as the highest expression of agreement with the Yugoslav policy toward Albania. However, while writing the dispatch the next day, the thought occurred to me that it might some day be used against my country's Government, and so I formulated it carefully and very briefly, something like this: Djilas arrived in Moscow yesterday and, at a meeting held with him on the same day, there was expressed complete agreement between the Soviet Government and Yugoslavia concerning the question of Albania. That dispatch was never sent to the Yugoslav Government, nor was it ever used against it in later clashes between Moscow and Belgrade.

The rest of the conversation did not last long either and revolved idly around such uneventful questions as the location of the Cominform in Belgrade and its newspaper, Tito's health, and the like.

However, I seized an opportune moment and raised the question of supplies for the Yugoslav Army and our war industry. I stressed that we frequently encountered difficulties with Soviet representatives because they refused to give us this or that, using 'military secrets' as an excuse. Stalin rose shouting, 'We have no military secrets from you. You are a friendly socialist country – we have no military secrets from you.'

He then went to his desk, called Bulganin on the phone, and gave a short order: 'The Yugoslavs are here, the Yugoslav delegation – they should be heard immediately.'

The whole conversation in the Kremlin lasted about half an hour, and then we set out for Stalin's villa for dinner.

5

We seated ourselves in Stalin's car, which seemed to me to be the same as the one in which I rode with Molotov in 1945. Zhdanov sat in the back to my right, while Stalin and Molotov sat in front of us on the folding seats. During the trip Stalin turned on a little light on the panel in front of him under which hung a pocket watch – it was almost ten o'clock – and I observed directly in front of me his already hunched back and the bony grey nape of his neck with its wrinkled skin above the stiff marshal's collar. I reflected: He is one of the most powerful men of today, and here are his associates; what a sensational catastrophe it would be if a bomb now exploded in our midst and blew us all to pieces! But this thought was only fleeting and ugly and so unexpected even to myself that it horrified me. With a sad affection, I saw in Stalin a little old grandfather who, all his life, and still now, looked after the success and happiness of the whole Communist race.

While waiting for the others to gather together, Stalin, Zhdanov, and I found ourselves in the entrance hall of the villa, by the map of the world. I again glanced at the blue pencil mark that encircled Stalingrad – and again Stalin noticed it; I could not fail to observe that my scrutiny pleased him. Zhdanov also noticed this exchange of glances, joined us, and remarked, 'The beginning of the Battle of Stalingrad.'

But Stalin said nothing to that.

If I remember well, Stalin began to look for Königsberg, for it was to be renamed Kaliningrad – and in so doing we came across places around Leningrad that still bore German names from the time of Catherine. This caught Stalin's eye and he turned to Zhdanov, saying curtly: 'Change these names – it is absurd that these places should still bear German names!' At this Zhdanov pulled out a small notebook and recorded Stalin's order with a little pencil.

After this Molotov and I went to the lavatory, which was in the basement of the villa. It contained several cubicles and urinals. Molotov began to unbutton his trousers even as we

walked, remarking: 'We call this unloading before loading!' whereupon I, who had lived for a long time in prisons, where a man is forced to forget his modesty, felt ashamed in the presence of Molotov, an older man, so I entered a cubicle and shut the door.

After this both of us proceeded to the dining room, where Stalin, Malenkov, Beria, Zhdanov, and Voznesensky were already gathered. The last two are new characters in these memoirs.

Zhdanov, too, was rather short, with a brownish clipped moustache, a high forehead, pointed nose, and a sickly red face. He was well educated and was regarded in the Politburo as a great intellectual. Despite his well-known narrowness and dogmatism, I would say that his knowledge was not inconsiderable. Although he had some knowledge of everything, even music, I would not say that there was a single field that he knew thoroughly – a typical intellectual who became acquainted with and picked up knowledge of other fields through Marxist literature. He was also a cynic, in an intellectual way, but all the uglier for this because behind the intellectualism one unmistakably sensed the potentate who was 'magnanimous' toward men of the spirit and the pen. This was the period of the 'Decrees' – decisions by the Soviet Central Committee concerning literature and other branches of the arts which amounted to a violent attack against even those minimal freedoms in the choice of subject and form that had survived (or else had been snatched from) bureaucratic Party control during the war. I remember how that evening Zhdanov told as if it were the latest joke how his criticism of the satirist Zoshchenko had been taken in Leningrad: they simply confiscated Zoshchenko's ration coupons and did not give them back to him until after Moscow's magnanimous intervention.

Voznesensky, the Chairman of the Planning Commission of the USSR, was barely past forty – a typical Russian, blond and with prominent cheekbones, a rather high forehead, and curly hair. He gave the impression of being an orderly, cultured, and above all withdrawn man, who said little and always

had a happy inward smile. I have previously read his book on the Soviet economy during the war, and it gave me the impression that the author was a conscientious and thoughtful man. Later that book was criticized in the USSR, and Voznesensky was liquidated for reasons that have remained undisclosed to this day.

I was well acquainted with Voznesensky's elder brother, a university professor who had just been named Minister of Education in the Russian Federation. I had had some very interesting discussions with the elder Voznesensky at the time of the Pan-Slavic Congress in Belgrade, in the winter of 1946. We had agreed not only about the narrowness and bias of the prevailing theories of 'socialist realism', but also about the appearance of new phenomena in socialism (that is, communism) with the creation of the new socialist countries and with changes in capitalism which had not yet been discussed theoretically. It is probable that his handsome contemplative head also fell in the senseless purges.

The dinner began with someone – I think that it was Stalin himself – proposing that everyone guess how many degrees below zero it was, and that everyone be punished by being made to drink as many glasses of vodka as the number of degrees he guessed wrong. Luckily, while still at the hotel, I had looked at the thermometer, and I added to the number to allow for the temperature drop during the night, so that I missed by only one degree. I remember that Beria missed by three and remarked that he had done so on purpose so that he might drink more glasses of vodka.

Such a beginning to a dinner forced upon me a heretical thought: these men shut up in their narrow circle might well go on inventing even more senseless reasons for drinking vodka – the length of the dining room in feet or of the table in inches. And who knows, perhaps that's what they do! At any rate, this allocation of glasses of vodka according to the temperature reading suddenly made me clearly aware of the confinement, the inanity and senselessness of the life these Soviet leaders were living gathered about their superannuated

chief even as they played a role that was decisive for the human race. I recalled that the Russian tsar, Peter the Great, likewise held such suppers with his assistants at which they gorged and drank themselves into a stupor while ordaining the fate of Russia and the Russian people.

This impression of the vacuity of such a life did not recede but kept recurring during the course of the dinner despite my attempts to suppress it. It was especially strengthened by Stalin's age, by conspicuous signs of his senility. No amount of respect and love for his person, which I stubbornly nurtured inside myself, was able to erase that realization from my mind.

There was something both tragic and ugly in his senility. The tragic was invisible – but I was aware of it in my mind as I reflected that even so great a figure must inevitably fall into a decline. The ugly kept cropping up all the time. Though he had always enjoyed eating well, Stalin was now quite gluttonous, as though he feared that there would not be enough of the food he wanted left for him. On the other hand, he drank less and more cautiously, as though measuring every drop – to avoid any ill affects.

His intellect was in even more apparent decline. He liked to recall incidents from his youth – his exile in Siberia, his childhood in the Caucasus; and he would compare everything recent with something that had happened long ago: 'Yes, I remember, the same thing. . . .'

I could hardly believe how much he had changed in two or three years. When I had last seen him, in 1945, he was still lively, quick-witted, and had a pointed sense of humour. But that was during the war and it had been, it would seem, Stalin's last effort and had taken him to his limit. Now he laughed at inanities and shallow jokes. On one occasion he not only failed to get the political point of an anecdote I told him about how he had got the better of Churchill and Roosevelt, but he even seemed to be offended, as old men sometimes are. I perceived an embarrassed astonishment on the faces of the rest of the party.

In one thing, though, he was still the Stalin of old: stubborn, sharp, suspicious whenever anyone disagreed with him. He even cut Molotov, and one could feel the tension between them. Everyone paid court to him, avoiding any expression of opinion before he expressed his, and then hastening to agree with it.

As usual, they hopped from subject to subject – and I shall proceed likewise in my account.

Stalin spoke up about the atom bomb: 'That is a powerful thing, pow-er-ful!' His expression was full of admiration, so that one was given to understand that he would not rest until he too had the 'powerful thing'. But he did not mention that he had it already or that the USSR was working on it.

On the other hand, when Kardelj and I met with Dimitrov in Moscow a month later, Dimitrov told us as if in confidence that the Russians already had the atom bomb, and an even better one than the Americans', that is, the one exploded over Hiroshima. I maintain that this was not true, but that the Russians were just on the way to making an atom bomb. But this is what I was told, and so I set it down here.

Both that night and again soon after, in a meeting with the Bulgarian and Yugoslav delegations, Stalin stressed that Germany would remain divided: 'The West will make Western Germany their own, and we shall turn Eastern Germany into our own state.'

This thought of his was new, but understandable; it proceeded from the whole trend of Soviet policy in Eastern Europe and toward the West. I could never understand the statements by Stalin and the Soviet leaders, made before the Bulgars and the Yugoslavs in the spring of 1946, that all of Germany must be ours, that is, Soviet, Communist. I asked one of those present how the Russians meant to bring this about. He replied, 'I don't know myself!' I suspect that not even those who made the statements actually knew how, but were caught up by the flush of military victories and by their hopes for the economic and political dissolution of Western Europe.

Toward the end of the dinner Stalin unexpectedly asked me why there were not many Jews in the Yugoslav Party and why these few played no important role in it. I tried to explain to him that there were not many Jews in Yugoslavia to begin with, and most belonged to the middle class. I added, 'The only prominent Communist Jew is Pijade, and he regards himself as being more of a Serb than a Jew.'

Stalin began to recall: 'Pijade, short, with glasses? Yes, I remember, he visited me. And what is his position?'

'He is a member of the Central Committee, a veteran Communist, the translator of *Das Kapital*,' I explained.

'In our Central Committee there are no Jews!' he broke in, and began to laugh tauntingly. 'You are an anti-Semite, you too Djilas, you too are an anti-Semite!'

I took his words and laughter to mean the opposite, as I should have – as the expression of his own anti-Semitism and as a provocation to get me to declare my opinion of the Jews, particularly Jews in the Communist movement. I laughed softly and kept quiet, which was not difficult for me for I had never been an anti-Semite and I divided Communists solely into the good and the bad. Stalin himself quickly abandoned this slippery subject, being content with his cynical provocation.

At my left sat the taciturn Molotov, and at my right the loquacious Zhdanov, who told of his contacts with the Finns and admiringly emphasized their punctuality in delivering reparations: 'Everything on time, expertly packed, and of excellent quality.'

He concluded, 'We made a mistake in not occupying Finland. Everything would have been fine if we had.'

Molotov: 'Ach, Finland – that is a peanut.'

At that very time Zhdanov was holding meetings with composers and preparing a 'decree' on music. He liked operas and asked me in passing, 'Do you have opera in Yugoslavia?'

Surprised at his question, I replied, 'In Yugoslavia operas are being presented in nine theatres!' At the same time I thought: How little they know about Yugoslavia! Indeed, they are hardly even interested in it, except as a place on the map.

Zhdanov was the only one who was drinking orangeade. He explained to me that he did this because of his bad heart. I asked him, 'How serious is your illness?'

With a restrained smile he replied with his customary mockery, 'I might die at any moment, and I might live a very long time.' He certainly seemed very sensitive on the subject, and he reacted quickly and too easily.

A new five-year plan had just been promulgated. Without turning to anyone in particular Stalin announced that the teachers' salaries ought to be increased. And then to me: 'Our teachers are very good, but their salaries are low – we must do something.'

Everyone uttered a few words of agreement while I recalled, not without bitterness, the low salaries and wretched conditions of Yugoslav cultural workers and my impotence to help them.

Voznesensky kept silent the whole time; behaving like a junior among seniors. Stalin addressed him directly only with one question: 'Could we find the means, outside the Plan, to build the Volga–Don Canal? A very important job! We must find the means! A terribly important job from the military point of view as well: in case of war they might drive us out of the Black Sea – our fleet is weak and will go on being weak for a long time. What would we do with our ships in that case? Imagine how valuable the Black Sea Fleet would have been during the Battle of Stalingrad if we had had it on the Volga! That canal is of first-class, first-class importance.'

Voznesensky agreed that the means could be found, took out a little notebook and made a note of it.

I had long been more or less privately interested in two questions, and I wished to ask Stalin for his opinion. One was a matter of theory: neither in Marxist literature nor anywhere else could I ever find an explanation of the difference between 'people' and 'nation'. Since Stalin had long been reputed among Communists to be an expert on the nationalities question, I sought his opinion, pointing out that he had not treated this in his book on the nationalities question, which had been

published even before the First World War and since then was considered the authoritative Bolshevik view.

At my question Molotov first joined in: '"People" and "nation" are both the same thing.'

But Stalin did not agree. 'No, nonsense! They are different!' And he began to explain simply: '"Nation"? You already know what it is: the product of capitalism with certain characteristics. And "people" – these are the workers of a given nation, that is, workers of the same language, culture, customs.'

And concerning his book *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, he observed: 'That was Ilyich's – Lenin's view. Ilyich also edited the book.'

The second question involved Dostoevsky. Since my early youth I had considered Dostoevsky in many ways the greatest writer of the modern age, and I could never quite accept the Marxist attacks on him.

Stalin also answered this simply: 'A great writer and a great reactionary. We are not publishing him because he is a bad influence on youth. But, a great writer!'

We turned to Gorky. I pointed out that I regarded as his greatest work – both in method and in the profundity of its picture of the Russian Revolution – *The Life of Klim Samgin*. But Stalin disagreed, avoiding the subject of method. 'No, his best things are those he wrote earlier: *The Town of Okurov*, his stories, and *Foma Gordeyev*. And as far as the picture of the Russian Revolution in *Klim Samgin* is concerned, there is very little revolution there and only a single Bolshevik – what was his name: Lyutikov, Lyutov?'

I corrected him: 'Kutuzov – Lyutov is an entirely different character.'

Stalin concluded: 'Yes, Kutuzov! The revolution is portrayed from one side, and inadequately at that; and from the literary point of view, too, his earlier works are better.'

It was clear to me that Stalin and I did not understand one another and that we could not agree, though I had had an opportunity to hear the opinions of important critics who, like himself, considered these particular works of Gorky his best.

Speaking of contemporary Soviet literature, I, as more or less all foreigners do, referred to Sholokhov's strength. Stalin observed: 'Now there are better ones!' – and he cited two names, one of them a woman's. Both were unknown to me.

I avoided a discussion of Fadeyev's *Young Guard*, which even then was under attack because its heroes were not 'Party' enough, and Alexandrov's *History of Philosophy*, which was criticized on quite opposite grounds – for its dogmatism, shallowness, and banality.

It was Zhdanov who repeated Stalin's remark about K. Simonov's book of love poems: 'They should have published only two copies – one for her, and one for him!' At which Stalin smiled demurely while the others roared.

The evening could not go by without vulgarity – from Beria, of course. They forced me to drink a small glass of *peretsovka* – strong vodka with pepper (in Russian, *perets* means pepper, hence the name for this drink). Sniggering, Beria explained, in very coarse language, that this liquor had a bad effect on the sex glands. Stalin gazed intently at me as Beria spoke, ready to burst into laughter, but he remained serious when he saw how sour I was.

Besides all this I could not forget the extraordinary similarity between Beria and the Belgrade Royal Police official Vujković; it even grew to such proportions that I felt as though I was actually in the fleshy and damp clutches of Vujković–Beria.

But what was most important to me was the atmosphere that I felt so strongly behind the words spoken during the course of that six-hour dinner. Behind what was said, something more important was noticeable – something that ought to have been spoken, but that no one could or dared bring up. The forced conversation and the choice of topics made it seem quite real, almost perceptible to the senses. I was even inwardly sure of its content: it was criticism of Tito and of the Yugoslav Central Committee. In that situation I would have regarded such criticism as tantamount to an attempt by the Soviet Government to win me over to them. Zhdanov was particularly

energetic, not in any concrete, tangible way, but by infusing a certain cordiality, even intimacy into his conversation with me. Beria fixed me with his clouded green, staring eyes while a selfconscious sarcasm almost dripped from his square flabby mouth. Over them all stood Stalin – attentive, exceptionally moderate, and cold.

The silent gaps between topics became longer and longer, and the tension grew, both in and around me. I quickly worked out my strategy of resistance. I think it had already been half consciously in the making inside me even earlier. I would simply point out that I saw no differences between the Yugoslav and Soviet leaders, that their aims were the same and so on. A dumb obstinacy welled inside me, and though I had never before felt any inner vacillation, still I knew, knowing myself, that my defensive position might easily turn into an offensive one if Stalin and the rest forced me into the moral dilemma of choosing between them and my conscience – or, rather, between their Party and mine, between Yugoslavia and the USSR. In order to prepare the ground, I referred to Tito and to my Central Committee several times in passing, but in a way that would not lead my interlocutors to speak out as they intended.

Stalin attempted to make the conversation personal and intimate, but without success. He reminded me of his invitation, made through Tito in 1946, and, he asked me: 'And why did you not come to the Crimea? Why did you refuse my invitation?'

I expected that question, and yet I was rather unpleasantly surprised that Stalin had not forgotten about it. I explained: 'I waited for an invitation through the Soviet Embassy. I felt awkward about forcing myself on you and troubling you.'

'Nonsense, no trouble at all. You just didn't wish to come!' Stalin tested me.

But I drew back into myself – into chill reserve and silence.

And so nothing happened. Stalin and his group of cold, calculating conspirators – for I felt them to be so – certainly noticed my resistance. This is just what I wanted. I had eluded

them, and they did not dare provoke that resistance. They probably thought they had avoided a premature and therefore false, erroneous step, but I became aware of their underhand game and felt inside myself an inner, hitherto unknown, strength which was capable of rejecting even that by which I lived.

Stalin ended the dinner by raising a toast to Lenin's memory: 'Let us drink to the memory of Vladimir Ilyich, our leader, our teacher – our all!'

We all stood and drank in mute solemnity, which in our drunkenness we soon forgot, but Stalin continued to bear an earnest, grave, and even sombre expression.

We left the table, but before we began to disperse, Stalin turned on a huge automatic record player. He even tried to dance, in the style of his homeland. One could see that he had some sense of rhythm, But he soon stopped, with the resigned explanation, 'Age has crept on me and I am already an old man!'

But his associates – or, rather, courtiers – began to reassure him, 'No, no, nonsense. You look fine. You're bearing up wonderfully. Yes, indeed, for your age . . .'

Then Stalin turned on a record on which the coloratura warbling of a singer was accompanied by the yowling and barking of dogs. He laughed with an exaggerated, immoderate mirth, but when he saw how puzzled and unhappy I looked, he explained, almost as though to excuse himself, 'Well, still it's clever, devilishly clever.'

All the others remained behind, but were already preparing to leave. There was truly nothing more to say after such a long session, at which everything had been discussed except the reason why the dinner had been held.

6

We waited no more than a day or two before they invited us to the General Staff to present our requests. Earlier, while yet on board the train, I mentioned to Koča Popović and

Mijalko Todorović that their requests seemed excessive and unrealistic to me. The thing I could not begin to understand was why the Russians should agree to build up the Yugoslav munitions industry when they did not wish to give us any real help in developing our civilian industry, and it seemed even less likely to me that they would give us a war fleet when they lacked one themselves. The argument that it was all the same whether Yugoslavia or the USSR had a fleet on the Adriatic, since both were parts of a united Communist world, seemed especially unconvincing to me because of the cracks that were appearing in that very unity, not to speak of Soviet distrust of everything beyond their grasp and their unconcealed primary concern for the interests of their own state. However, since all these requests had been worked out and approved in Belgrade, there was nothing left for me but to go through with them.

The General Staff was housed in a shoddy and pretentious building which they had tried to improve inside by smothering it in gilt and garish hangings. The meeting was presided over by Bulganin, surrounded by the highest military experts, among whom was also the Chief of the General Staff, Marshal Vasilyevsky.

First I presented our needs generally, leaving the detailed presentation to Todorović and Popović. The Soviet officials did not commit themselves but they carefully went into our problems and took notes on everything. We left satisfied, convinced that things were moving at last and that the real concrete work would soon begin.

It indeed looked like it. Todorović and K. Popović were soon invited to further meetings. But everything came to an abrupt halt, and Soviet officials hinted that 'complications' had set in and that we would have to wait.

It was clear to us that something was going on between Moscow and Belgrade, though we did not know exactly what, nor can I say that we were surprised. In any case, the fact that we were critical of the Soviet reality and of Moscow's attitude to Belgrade could only make the postponement of

our talks all the more unbearable, especially since we found ourselves without anything to do, forced to kill time in conversation and by attending Moscow's theatres, which though old-fashioned were unsurpassed of their kind.

None of the ordinary Soviet people dared to visit us, for although we were from a Communist country, we still fell into the category of foreigners, with whom citizens of the USSR could not associate according to the letter of the law. All our contacts had to be through official channels in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in the Central Committee. That annoyed and offended us, especially as there were no such limitations in Yugoslavia, least of all for the representatives and citizens of the USSR. All this prompted us to draw critical conclusions.

Our criticism had not yet been properly formulated, but it was constantly fed by examples taken from our actual experience. Vukmanović–Tempo had discovered faults in the army buildings which he did not conceal. In order to lessen our boredom, Koča Popović and I gave up our separate apartments in the Moskva Hotel, but we did not get an apartment together until an 'electrician' had put it in order, which we took to mean that listening devices had been installed. Although the Moskva was a new hotel and the largest in Moscow, nothing in it worked as it should – it was cold, the taps leaked, and the baths, brought from Eastern Germany, could not be used because the floor flooded as soon as you pulled out the plug. The bathroom had no key, and Popović caustically remarked that the architect knew that the key would only get lost so he put the lavatory near the door where one could keep the door closed with one's foot.

I kept remembering with nostalgia my stay in the Metropole Hotel in 1944. Everything was old there, but it worked, and the superannuated staff spoke English and French and served one with grace and precision. But in the Moskva Hotel ... One day I heard groaning in the bathroom. I came upon two workmen there. One of them was repairing some fixtures on the ceiling, and the other was holding him up on his shoulders. 'For heaven's sake, Comrades,' said I, 'why don't you get a

ladder?' They replied, grumbling, 'We've asked the management for one time and again, but it's no use – we always have a hard time like this.'

Walking about we viewed 'beautiful Moscow', most of which was a big village, neglected and undeveloped. The chauffeur Panov, to whom I had sent a watch as a gift from Yugoslavia and with whom I had established a cordial relationship, found it impossible to believe that there were more cars in New York and Paris, although he did not hide his dissatisfaction with the quality of the new Soviet cars.

In the Kremlin, when we visited the imperial tombs, the girl who showed us round spoke of 'our tsars' with sentimental national pride. The superiority of the Russians was vaunted everywhere and assumed grotesque forms.

And so on down the line . . . At every step we discovered hitherto unnoticed aspects of the Soviet reality: it was backward, primitive, chauvinistic, and suffered from a big-power complex, although it had made heroic and superhuman efforts to outgrow the past and to overtake the natural course of events.

Knowing that in the thick skulls of the Soviet leaders and political officials the smallest criticism was taken as evidence of an anti-Soviet attitude, we stuck together in our own circle when in the presence of Russians. Since we were also a political mission, we began to call each other's attention to anything 'awkward' that we might do or say. Our defensive position became conscious and deliberate. We knew that listening devices were being used, and I remember how we began to watch what we were saying in the hotel and in offices, and to turn on the radios during conversations.

The Soviet representatives must have noticed this. The tension and suspicion grew apace.

By that time Lenin's sarcophagus, which had been evacuated from Moscow and hidden somewhere in the interior during the war, had been brought back to Red Square. One morning we went to visit it. The visit itself would not have been important had it not also made us feel a new sense of resistance that we had not felt before. As we descended slowly

into the mausoleum, I saw how simple women in shawls were crossing themselves as though approaching the reliquary of a saint. I, too, was overcome by a feeling of mysticism, something forgotten from a distant youth. Moreover, everything was so arranged as to evoke just such a feeling in a man – the granite blocks, the stiff guards, the invisible source of light over Lenin, and even his body, dried and white as chalk, with little sparse hairs, as though somebody had planted them. Despite my respect for Lenin's genius, it seemed unnatural to me, and above all anti-materialist and anti-Leninist, this mystical gathering around Lenin's mortal remains.

Even if we had not been idle we still would have wished to see Leningrad, the city of the Revolution and the city of many beauties. I approached Zhdanov about this, and he graciously agreed. But I also noticed a certain reserve. The meeting lasted barely ten minutes. But he did not fail to ask me what I thought of Dimitrov's statement in *Pravda*, on the occasion of his visit to Bucharest, in which he urged the coordination of economic plans and the creation of a customs union between Bulgaria and Rumania. I replied that I did not like the statement, for it treated Bulgarian–Rumanian relations in isolation and was premature. Neither was Zhdanov satisfied with the statement, though he did not bring out his reasons; they came out soon afterwards and will be presented later at greater length.

Somewhere around that time Boddan Crnobrnja arrived in Moscow as a representative of Yugoslavia's foreign trade, and when he found he could not overcome some basic obstacles with the Soviet agencies, he begged me to come with him on a visit to Mikoyan, the Minister of Foreign Trade.

Mikoyan received us coldly, and betrayed his impatience. Among our requests was one that the Soviets deliver to us the railway wagons from their zones of occupation which they had already promised us – for many of these cars had been taken out of Yugoslavia, and the Russians could not use them because their track gauge was broader than ours.

'And how do you mean that we give them to you – under what conditions, at what price?' Mikoyan asked coldly.

I replied, 'That you give them to us as gifts!'

He replied curtly, 'My business is not giving gifts, but trade.'

In vain, too, were the efforts Crnobrnja and I made to change the agreement on the sale of Soviet films, which was unfair and damaging to Yugoslavia. Excusing himself on the grounds that the other East European countries might consider it a precedent, Mikoyan refused even to take up the question. He was quite different, however, when the subject turned to Yugoslav copper. He offered to pay in any currency or in kind, in advance, and in any amounts.

Thus we got nowhere with him except to prolong sterile and endless negotiations. It was obvious that the wheels of the Soviet machine had ground to a halt as far as Yugoslavia was concerned.

The trip to Leningrad, however, refreshed us, and brought us some relief.

Until I visited Leningrad I could not have believed that anyone could have shown more heroism and sacrifice than the Partisans in Yugoslavia and the people who lived in their territory. But Leningrad surpassed the Yugoslav revolution, if not in heroism then certainly in collective sacrifice. In that city of millions, cut off from the rear, without fuel or food, under the constant pounding of heavy artillery and bombs, about three hundred thousand people died of hunger and cold during the winter of 1941–2. Men were reduced to cannibalism, but there was no thought of surrender. Yet that is only the general picture. Not until we came into contact with the realities – with particular cases of sacrifice and heroism and with the living men who had been involved or had witnessed them – did we feel the grandeur of the epic of Leningrad and the strength that human beings – the Russian people – are capable of when the foundations of their spiritual and political existence and their way of life are threatened.

Our encounter with Leningrad's officials added human warmth to our admiration. They were all, to a man, simple, educated, hard-working people who had taken on their shoulders and still bore in their hearts the tragic greatness of the

city, but they lived lonely lives and were glad to meet men from another clime and culture. We got along with them easily and quickly – as men who had survived a similar fate. Though it never occurred to us to complain about the Soviet leaders, still we observed that these men approached the life of their city and citizens – that most cultured and most industrialized centre in the vast Russian land – in a simpler and more human way than the officials in Moscow.

It seemed to me that I could very quickly arrive at a common political language with these people simply by employing the language of humanity. Indeed, I was not surprised to hear two years later that these people, too, had failed to escape the mills of totalitarianism just because they dared also to be men.

This bright, yet sad, Leningrad interlude of ours was marred by one unpleasant blot – our escort, Lesakov. Even at that time one might meet officials in the Soviet Union who had emerged from the lower strata of the working masses. He seemed to be an illiterate country bumpkin, and one could see that he had been an ordinary worker until recently. These deficiencies would not have been vices had he not tried to conceal them and made a conspicuous display of pretentions beyond his capacities. In actual fact, he had not made his way up by his own strength of character and ability, but he had been dragged to the top and planted in the Central Committee machine, in which he was responsible for Yugoslav affairs. He was a cross between an intelligence agent and a Party official. He behaved in a thoroughly 'Party' manner, acted the part of a Party man, and made a clumsy job of collecting information about the Yugoslav Party and its leaders.

Slight as he was, with creased face and short yellow teeth, a tie that was always askew and a shirt that kept spilling out of his trousers, always afraid he might look 'uncultured', Lesakov would have been pleasant as an ordinary workingman had he not been given such an important job to do and so kept provoking us – and usually me – into unpleasant discussions. He boasted of how 'Comrade Zhdanov purged all the

Jews from the Central Committee machine!' – and yet at the same time he sung the praises of the Hungarian Politburo, which then consisted almost entirely of Jewish émigrés, which made me think that, despite its covert anti-Semitism, the Soviet Government found it convenient to have Jews at the top in Hungary because they were rootless and thus all the more dependent upon its will.

I had already heard and observed that when they wanted to get rid of someone in the Soviet Union but lacked convincing reasons to do so, they usually spread some infamy about him through agents of the Secret Police. So it was that Lesakov told me 'in confidence' that Marshal Zhukov had been sacked for looting jewellery in Berlin – 'You know, Comrade Stalin cannot stand immorality!' – and about the Assistant Chief of the General Staff, General Antonov: 'Imagine, he was exposed as being of Jewish origin!'

It was obvious, too, that Lesakov was, despite the limitations of his intelligence, well informed about affairs in the Yugoslav Central Committee and the methods of its work. 'In no Party in Eastern Europe,' said he, 'is there such a closely watched foursome as yours.'

He did not mention the names of that foursome, but I knew without asking that that he was referring to Tito, Kardelj, Ranković, and myself. But after a little thought I came to the conclusion that, like Molotov's Finns, we were 'peanuts' in the eyes of the Soviet leadership.

7

After days of idleness, Koča Popović decided to return to our country, leaving Todorović in Moscow to attend the outcome, that is, to wait for the Soviet leadership to take pity and to resume talks. I would have gone off with Popović had not a message arrived from Belgrade announcing the arrival of Kardelj and Bakarić, and thus I had to join them in conversations with the Soviet Government concerning 'the complications that had set in'.

Kardelj and Bakarić arrived on Sunday, 8 February 1948. The Soviet Government had in fact invited Tito, but in Belgrade they made the excuse that Tito was not feeling well – even from this, one could see the mutual distrust – so Kardelj came in his stead. Invited simultaneously was a delegation from the Bulgarian Government, that is, the Central Committee, about which the ubiquitous Lesakov informed us, deliberately stressing that the 'top brass' had arrived from Bulgaria.

Before that, on 29 January, *Pravda* had disavowed Dimitrov and dissociated itself from his 'problematic and fantastic federations and confederations' and customs unions. This was an admonition and a foretaste of the tangible measures and stiffer course that the Soviet Government would undertake.

Kardelj and Bakarić were lodged in a villa near Moscow, and so I moved in with them. That same night, while Kardelj's wife was sleeping, and Kardelj was lying next to her, I sat down on the bed beside him and, as softly as I could, told him my impressions of my stay in Moscow and of my contacts with the Soviet leaders. My conclusion was that we could not count on any serious help but had to rely on our resources, for the Soviet Government was carrying on its own policy of domination, trying to force Yugoslavia down to the level of the occupied East European countries.

Kardelj told me, then or just after his arrival, that the direct cause of the dispute with Moscow was the agreement between the Yugoslav and Albanian Governments allowing two Yugoslav divisions to enter Albania. The divisions were already being formed, while a regiment of the Yugoslav fighter Air Force was already in Albania when Moscow vigorously protested, refusing to accept as a reason that the Yugoslav divisions were needed to defend Albania from possible attack by the Greek 'monarcho-fascists'. In his dispatch to Belgrade, Molotov threatened an open breach.

The day after Kardelj's arrival, while walking in the park where we were watched by Soviet agents on whose faces we read fury at our having a conference that they could not over-

hear, Kardelj and I continued our conversation, in Bakarić's presence. It covered more ground and was more thorough in its analyses, and, despite insignificant differences in our conclusions, we were completely unanimous. As usual, I was more severe and downright than the others.

No one informed us of anything and there was not a sign from the Soviet side until the next evening, 10 February, when they picked us up in a car at nine o'clock and drove us to the Kremlin, to Stalin's office. There we waited fifteen minutes or so for the Bulgars – Dimitrov, Kolarov, and Kostov – and as soon as they arrived, we were all immediately taken in to Stalin. We were seated so that to the right of Stalin, who was at the head, sat the Soviet representatives – Molotov, Zhdanov, Malenkov, Suslov, Zorin; to the left were the Bulgars – Kolarov, Dimitrov, Kostov; then the Yugoslav representatives – Kardelj, myself, Bakarić.

At the time, I submitted a written report of that meeting to the Yugoslav Central Committee, but as I cannot get at it today, I shall rely on my memory and on what has already been published about the meeting.

The first to be called upon to speak was Molotov, who, with customary terseness, announced that serious differences had arisen between the Soviet Government on the one hand and the Yugoslav and Bulgarian Governments on the other, which was 'impermissible from both the Party and the political point of view'.

As examples of these differences he cited the fact that Yugoslavia and Bulgaria had signed a treaty of alliance not only without the knowledge of, but contrary to, the views of the Soviet Government, which held that Bulgaria should not sign any political treaties before signing a peace treaty.

Molotov wished to dwell rather longer on Dimitrov's statement in Bucharest about the creation of an East European Federation, in which Greece was included, and a customs union and coordination of economic plans between Rumania and Bulgaria. But Stalin cut him short. 'Comrade Dimitrov gets too carried away at press conferences – doesn't watch

what he's saying. And everything he says, that Tito says, is assumed by people abroad to be said with our knowledge. For example, the Poles have been visiting here. I asked them: What do you think of Dimitrov's statement? They said: A good thing. And I tell them that it isn't a good thing. Then they reply that they, too, think it isn't a good thing – if that is the opinion of the Soviet Government. For they thought that Dimitrov had issued that statement with the knowledge and concurrence of the Soviet Government, and so they approved of it. Dimitrov later tried to amend that statement through the Bulgarian telegraph agency, but he didn't help matters at all. Moreover, he mentioned that Austria–Hungary had in its day obstructed a customs union between Bulgaria and Serbia, which naturally prompts the conclusion: the Germans were in the way earlier, now it is the Russians. There, that's what is going on!'

Molotov continued that the Bulgarian Government was going ahead and establishing a federation with Rumania without even consulting the Soviet Government about this.

Dimitrov tried to smooth things over, emphasizing that he had spoken of federation only in general terms.

But Stalin interrupted him: 'No, you agreed on a customs union, on the coordination of economic plans.'

Molotov followed up Stalin: '... and what is a customs union and economic coordination but the creation of a state?'

At that moment the point of the meeting suddenly became clear, though no one expressed it, namely that no relations between the 'people's democracies' were permissible that were not in the interests and had not the approval of the Soviet Government. It became evident that to the Soviet leaders, with their great-power mentality (which was expressed in the concept of the Soviet Union as 'the leading force of socialism'), and especially as they were always conscious that the Red Army had liberated Rumania and Bulgaria, Dimitrov's statements and Yugoslavia's obstinacy and lack of discipline were not only heresy but a denial of the Soviet Union's 'sacred' rights.

Dimitrov tried to explain, to justify himself, but Stalin kept interrupting without letting him finish. Here, at last, was the real Stalin. His wit now turned into crude malice and his aloofness into intolerance. Still, he kept restraining himself and succeeded in keeping his temper. Without losing even for a moment his sense of the actual state of affairs, he upbraided the Bulgars and bitterly reproached them, for he knew they would submit to him, but in fact he had his sights fixed on the Yugoslavs – as in the peasant proverb, 'She scolds her daughter in order to reproach her daughter-in-law.'

Supported by Kardelj, Dimitrov pointed out that Yugoslavia and Bulgaria had not announced a signed treaty at Bled but only a statement that an agreement had been reached leading to a treaty.

'Yes, but you didn't consult with us,' Stalin shouted. 'We learn about your doings in the newspapers. You chatter like women from the housetops whatever occurs to you, and then the newspapermen get hold of it.'

Dimitrov continued, obliquely justifying his position on the customs union with Rumania, 'Bulgaria is in such economic difficulties that without cooperation with other countries it cannot develop. As far as my statement at the press conference is concerned, it is true that I was carried away.'

Stalin interrupted him, 'You wanted to shine, to be original. It was completely wrong, for such a federation is inconceivable. What historic ties are there between Bulgaria and Rumania? None. And we need not speak of Bulgaria and, let us say, Hungary or Poland.'

Dimitrov remonstrated, 'There are essentially no differences between the foreign policies of Bulgaria and the Soviet Union.'

Stalin, decidedly and firmly: 'There are serious differences. Why hide it? It was Lenin's practice always to recognize errors and to remove them as quickly as possible.'

Dimitrov, placatingly, almost submissively: 'True, we erred. But through errors we are learning our way in foreign politics.'

Stalin, harshly and tauntingly: 'Learning! You have been

in politics fifty years – and now you are correcting errors. Your trouble is not errors, but that you are taking a line different from ours.'

I glanced at Dimitrov out of the corners of my eyes. His ears were red, and big red blotches had appeared on his face covering his spots of eczema. His sparse hair straggled and hung in lifeless strands over his wrinkled neck. I felt sorry for him. The lion of the Leipzig Trials, who had defied Göring and fascism from the dock at the time of their greatest power, now looked dejected and dispirited.

Stalin went on: 'A customs union, a federation between Rumania and Bulgaria – this is nonsense. A federation between Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania is another matter. There there are historic and other ties. This is the federation that should be created, and the sooner the better. Yes, the sooner the better – right away, if possible, tomorrow! Yes, tomorrow, if possible! Agree on it immediately.'

Someone, I think it was Kardelj, observed that a Yugoslav–Albanian federation was already in the making.

But Stalin was firm, 'No, first a federation between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, and then both with Albania.'

And then he added, 'We think that a federation ought to be formed between Rumania and Hungary, and also Poland and Czechoslovakia.'

The discussion calmed down for a while.

Stalin did not develop this question of federation further. He did repeat later, in the form of a directive, that a federation between Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania should immediately be formed. But from his stated position and from vague allusions by Soviet diplomats at the time, it seemed that the Soviet leaders were also toying with the thought of reorganizing the Soviet Union by joining to it the 'people's democracies' – the Ukraine with Hungary and Rumania, and Byelorussia with Poland and Czechoslovakia, while the Balkan states were to be joined with Russia. However vague and hypothetical all these plans may have been, one thing is certain: Stalin sought an arrangement of the East European countries that would

strengthen and secure Moscow's domination and hegemony for a long time to come.

Just as it seemed that the question of a customs union, that is, the Bulgarian–Rumanian agreement, had been settled, old Kolarov, as though recalling something important, began to argue. 'I cannot see where Comrade Dimitrov erred, for we previously sent a draft of the treaty with Rumania to the Soviet Government and the Soviet Government made no comment about the customs union except as regards the definition of the aggressor.'

Stalin turned to Molotov: 'Had they sent us a draft of the treaty?'

Molotov, without getting confused, but somewhat bitterly: 'Well, yes.'

Stalin, with angry resignation: 'We, too, commit stupidities.'

Dimitrov latched on to this new fact. 'This was precisely the reason for my statement. The draft had been sent to Moscow. I did not suppose that you could have anything against it.'

But Stalin remained unyielding. 'Nonsense. You rushed headlong like a Komsomol youth. You wanted to astound the world, as though you were still Secretary of the Comintern. You and the Yugoslavs do not let anyone know what you are doing, but we have to find out everything on the street. You face us with a *fait accompli*!'

Kostov, who was in charge of Bulgaria's economic affairs at the time, wished to say something too. 'It is hard to be a small and underdeveloped country. . . . I would like to raise some economic questions.'

But Stalin cut him short, telling him to go to the relevant ministries and pointing out that this was a meeting to discuss the differences in the foreign policy of three governments and parties.

Finally Kardelj was called upon to speak. He was red and, as he usually did when he was excited, he hunched his head down between his shoulders and made pauses in his sentences where they did not belong. He pointed out that the treaty

between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, signed at Bled, had been previously submitted to the Soviet Government, but that the Soviet Government had made no comment other than to suggest that its duration should be 'twenty years' instead of 'for all time'.

Stalin kept glancing silently and not without reproach at Molotov, who hung his head and with clenched lips tacitly confirmed what Kardelj had said.

'Except for that suggestion, which we adopted,' Kardelj continued, 'there were no differences. . . .'

Stalin interrupted him, no less angrily though less offensively than he had interrupted Dimitrov. 'Nonsense! There are differences, and grave ones. What do you say about Albania? You did not consult us at all about the entry of your army into Albania.'

Kardelj replied that we had had the consent of the Albanian Government.

Stalin shouted, 'This could lead to serious international complications. Albania is an independent state. What do you think? Justification or no justification, the fact remains that you did not consult us about sending two divisions into Albania.'

Kardelj explained that none of this was yet final and added that he did not remember a single foreign problem about which the Yugoslav Government had not consulted the Soviet.

'It's not so,' Stalin cried. 'You don't consult at all. That is not your mistake, but your policy – yes, your policy!'

Kardelj, cut short, fell silent and did not press his view.

Molotov took up a piece of paper and read a passage from the Yugoslav–Bulgarian treaty: that Bulgaria and Yugoslavia would 'work in the spirit of the United Nations and support all action directed at the preservation of peace and against all hotbeds of aggression'.

'What is the meaning of this?' Molotov asked.

Dimitrov explained that these words signified solidarity with the United Nations in the struggle against hotbeds of aggression.

Stalin broke in: 'No, this is preventive war – the commonest Komsomol stunt; a tawdry phrase which only brings grist to the enemy mill.'

Molotov returned to the Bulgarian–Rumanian customs union, emphasizing that this was the beginning of a merger between the two states.

Stalin broke in with the observation that customs unions are generally unrealistic. Since the discussion had again subsided somewhat, Kardelj remarked that some customs unions had shown themselves not to be so bad in practice.

'For example?' Stalin asked.

'Well, for example, Benelux,' Kardelj said cautiously, 'where Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg joined together.'

Stalin: 'No, Holland didn't. Only Belgium and Luxembourg. That's nothing, insignificant.'

Kardelj: 'No, Holland is included too.'

Stalin stubbornly: 'No, Holland is not.'

Stalin looked at Molotov, at Zorin, at the rest. I wanted to tell him that the syllable *ne* in Benelux came from the Netherlands, the Dutch name for Holland, but since everyone else was silent, I held my tongue and Holland remained outside Benelux.

Stalin returned to the coordination of economic plans between Rumania and Bulgaria. 'That is senseless, for instead of cooperation there would soon be a quarrel. The unification of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia is another matter – they have things in common, ancient aspirations.'

Kardelj pointed out that at Bled it had also been decided to work gradually toward federation between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, but Stalin interrupted in more precise terms: 'No, but immediately – tomorrow! First Bulgaria and Yugoslavia ought to unite, and then let Albania join them later.'

Stalin then turned to the uprising in Greece: 'The uprising in Greece will have to fold up.' (He used for this the word *svernut*, which means literally *to roll up*.) 'Do you believe' – he turned to Kardelj – 'in the success of the uprising in Greece?'

Kardelj replied, 'If foreign intervention does not grow, and if serious political and military errors are not made.'

Stalin went on, without paying attention to Kardelj's opinion: 'If, if! No, they have no prospect of success at all. What, do you think that Great Britain and the United States – the United States, the most powerful state in the world – will permit you to break their line of communication in the Mediterranean? Nonsense. And we have no navy. The uprising in Greece must be stopped, and as quickly as possible.'

Someone mentioned the recent successes of the Chinese Communists. But Stalin remained adamant: 'Yes, the Chinese comrades have succeeded, but in Greece there is an entirely different situation. The United States is directly engaged there – the strongest state in the world. China is a different case, relations in the Far East are different. True, we, too, can make a mistake. Here, when the war with Japan ended, we invited the Chinese comrades to agree on a means of reaching a *modus vivendi* with Chiang Kai-shek. They agreed with us in word, but in deed they did it their own way when they got home: they mustered their forces and struck. It has been shown that they were right, and we were not. But Greece is a different case – we should not hesitate, but let us put an end to the Greek uprising.'

Not even today am I clear on Stalin's motives in condemning the uprising in Greece. Perhaps he thought that to create still another Communist state – Greece – in the Balkans, when not even the others were reliable and subservient, could hardly have been in his interest, to say nothing of possible international complications, which were becoming more and more threatening and even if they did not drag him into war, they might endanger positions he had already won.

Stalin's motive for trying to pacify the Chinese revolution was undoubtedly opportunism in his foreign policy. He may well also have anticipated future danger to his own work and to his own empire from the new Communist great power, especially since there were no prospects of subordinating it internally. At any rate, he knew that every revolution, just

because it is new, becomes a new epicentre of revolution and shapes its own government and state, and this was what he feared in China, especially as it was a phenomenon as portentous as the October Revolution.

The discussion began to flag, and Dimitrov mentioned the development of further economic relations with the USSR, but Stalin cut him short again: 'We shall talk about this with the joint Bulgarian–Yugoslav Government.'

When Kostov complained about the injustice of an agreement on technical aid, Stalin told him to submit a note – '*zapisochka*' – to Molotov.

Kardelj asked what line we should take about the Italian Government's demand that Somalia be placed under its trusteeship. Yugoslavia was not inclined to support that demand, but Stalin took the opposite view and he asked Molotov if a reply had been made to that effect. He explained his position thus: 'In the old days kings who could not agree over the booty, used to give disputed territories to their weakest vassal so they could snatch them from him later at some opportune moment.'

Stalin did not forget, somewhere before the close of the meeting, to cloak the reality – his demands and orders – with Lenin and Leninism. He declared, 'We too, Lenin's disciples, often had differences with Lenin himself, and even quarrelled over some things, but later we would talk it all out, establish our positions and – we would go forward.'

The meeting had lasted about two hours.

This time Stalin did not invite us to dinner in his home. I must confess that I felt a sadness and an emptiness because of this, so great was my own human, sentimental fondness for him still.

I felt a cold void and bitterness. In the car I tried to tell Kardelj how indignant I was at the meeting, but he felt crushed and motioned me to be quiet.

This does not mean that we did not agree, but we reacted in different ways.

The depth of Kardelj's distress was most evident the next

day, when they took him to the Kremlin to sign – without explanation or ceremony – with Molotov a treaty on consultation between the USSR and Yugoslavia, and he put his signature in the wrong place, so that he had to sign over again.

The same day, according to an agreement made in Stalin's ante-room, we went to Dimitrov's for lunch – to agree on a federation. We did it mechanically – in the last throes of discipline and the authority of the Soviet Government. The conversation over this was short and listless on both sides; we agreed that we would get in touch again as soon as all had arrived in Sofia and Belgrade.

Nothing, of course, came of all this, for a month later Molotov and Stalin began to attack the Yugoslav leadership in their letters, and were supported by the Bulgarian Central Committee. The federation with Bulgaria turned out to be a snare – it would crack the unity of the Yugoslav Communists – a snare into which no idealist would now put his neck. Although on the surface everything was kept quiet, and it appeared that we were united, the protagonists were already adopting extreme positions. This was the prelude to what was to come later, the open division between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, which occurred in June 1948.

One of the things I remember from that meeting with the Bulgarian delegation is Kostov's helpfulness, almost tenderness toward us. This was all the more unexpected for in high Yugoslav Communist circles he was considered an opponent of Yugoslavia, and by the same token a Soviet man. Yet he was also for Bulgarian independence, and therefore disliked the Yugoslavs because he thought that they were the Soviets' chief henchmen and were even trying to dominate Bulgaria and its Communist Party. Kostov was later shot on the false charge that he was in the service of Yugoslavia, while the Yugoslav press kept attacking him, almost to his last day – such was the distrust and misunderstanding that grew in Stalin's shadow.

It was on that occasion that Dimitrov said what he did about the atom bomb, and then, as though in passing, while

accompanying us out of his villa, 'The object of all this has not been to criticize my statement, it's really about something quite different.'

Dimitrov certainly knew as much as we did. But he did not have the forces, and perhaps he himself lacked the strength of the Yugoslav leaders.

I did not fear that anything could happen to us in Moscow; after all, we were the representatives of a foreign independent state. And yet I kept calling to mind the Bosnian forests, in whose depths we hid safely during the most violent German offensives and at whose clear cold springs we always found rest and comfort. I even said, I think to Kardelj, in a manner that he might well have found exaggerated, 'If only we can get back to our hills and forests as soon as possible!'

We left three or four days later. They drove us to the airport at Vnukovo at dawn and put us on the plane without any honours. As we flew, I felt more and more like a happy child, but I also felt a serious, stern joy, and I gradually forgot about Stalin's story of General Sikorski's fate.

It was hard to believe that I was the same person who four years earlier had eagerly travelled to the Soviet Union with an open heart and a disciple's devotion.

Once again a dream had been snuffed out under the weight of reality.

Could this mean that a new dream might grow?

Conclusion

MANY people, among them Trotsky, of course, have stressed Stalin's criminal, bloodthirsty passions. I can neither confirm nor deny them, since the facts are not that well known to me. Recently it was made public in Moscow that he had probably killed the Leningrad Secretary, Kirov, to give himself a pretext for settling accounts with the opposition within the Party. He probably had a hand in Gorky's death, for it was depicted too prominently in his propaganda as the work of the opposition. Trotsky even suspects that he killed Lenin with the excuse that he was shortening his misery. It is claimed that he killed his own wife, or at all events, was so cruel to her that she killed herself. The romantic legend spread by Stalin's agents, and which I, too, had heard, is really too naïve – that she was poisoned while tasting food before her good husband ate it.

Every crime was possible for Stalin, and there was not one he had not committed. Whatever standards we use to take his measure, he has the glory of being the greatest criminal in history – and, let us hope, for all time to come. For in him was joined the criminal senselessness of a Caligula with the refinement of a Borgia and the brutality of a Tsar Ivan the Terrible.

I was more interested, and am still more interested, in how such a dark, cunning, and cruel man could ever have led one of the greatest and most powerful states, not just for a day or a year, but for thirty years. This is what Stalin's present critics – I mean his successors – must explain; and until they do so they will only confirm that in the main they are continuing his work and that they are made up of the same elements and are governed by the same ideas, patterns, and methods as he was. For it is not merely true that Stalin took advantage of the desperate exhaustion of Russian post-revolutionary society in order to gain his own ends, but it is also

true that certain strata of that society, that is to say, the ruling political bureaucracy of the Party, needed just such a man – one who was reckless in his determination and extremely practical in his fanaticism. The ruling Party followed him doggedly and obediently – and he led it from victory to victory, until, carried away by power, he began to sin against it as well. Today this is all it reproaches him for, passing in silence over his many greater and certainly no less brutal crimes against the 'class enemy' – the peasantry and the intelligentsia, and also the left and right wings within the Party and outside it. And as long as that Party fails to shake off in its theory and especially in its practice, everything that comprised the very originality and essence of Stalin and of Stalinism, that is to say the strict ideological conformity and so-called monolithic structure of the Party, it will be a bad but certain sign that it has not emerged from under Stalin's shadow. Thus the present joy over the liquidation of Molotov and the so-called anti-Party group, despite the odiousness of his personality and the depravity of his views, seems to me to be shallow and premature. For the essence of the problem is not whether one group is better than another, but whether either should exist at all – and whether, at least as a beginning, the ideological and political monopoly of a single group in the USSR shall be ended. Stalin's dark presence continues to hover over the Soviet Union and, provided there is not a war, I fear that it will go on hovering for a long time. Despite the curses against his name, Stalin still lives in the social and spiritual foundations of Soviet society.

The speeches and solemn declarations, with their references to Lenin, cannot change the substance. It is much easier to expose some crime of Stalin's than to conceal the fact that it was this man who 'built socialism', who gave rise to the foundations of present Soviet society and of the Soviet empire. All this shows that Soviet society, despite its gigantic technical achievements, and perhaps largely because of them, has barely begun to change, that it is still imprisoned in its own, Stalinist, dogmatic framework.

Despite this criticism, there does seem to be some hope that in the foreseeable future new ideas and phenomena may appear which, though they may not shake Khrushchev's 'monolithism', will at least show up its contradictions and what it really is. At the moment more drastic changes are impossible. Those who govern are still themselves too poor to find dogmatism and monopoly of rule unnecessary or a hindrance, while the Soviet economy can still exist enclosed in its own empire and can absorb the losses caused by its separation from the world market.

Of course, the value of much that is human depends on the point of view from which it is seen.

So it is with Stalin.

If we take the point of view of humanity and freedom, history does not know a despot as brutal and as cynical as Stalin was. He was methodical, all-embracing, and total as a criminal. He was one of those rare and terrible dogmatists capable of destroying nine-tenths of the human race to 'make happy' the remaining tenth.

However, if we wish to determine what Stalin really meant in the history of Communism, then he must for the present be regarded as by far the most important figure after Lenin. He did not substantially develop the ideas of Communism, but he championed them and brought them to realization in a society and a state. He did not construct an ideal society – this is impossible in the very nature of man and human society, but he transformed backward Russia into an industrial power and an empire that is more and more resolutely and implacably aspiring to world mastery.

From the point of view of success and political acumen, Stalin is hardly surpassed by any statesman of his time.

I am, of course, far from thinking that success in political struggles is the only criterion. Even less do I wish to identify politics with amorality, though I do not deny that, just because politics involve a struggle for the survival of particular human communities, they are apt to be marked by a disregard for normal morality. For me great politicians and great statesmen

are those who can join ideas and realities, those who can go forward steadfastly toward their aims while at the same time adhering to the basic moral values.

All in all, Stalin was a monster who, while adhering to abstract, absolute, and fundamentally utopian ideas, in practice had no criterion but success – and this meant violence, and physical and spiritual extermination.

However, let us not be unjust to Stalin. What he wished to accomplish, and even that which he did accomplish, could not be accomplished in any other way. The forces that swept him forward and that he led, with their absolute ideals, could have no other kind of leader but him, given the relations between Russia and the rest of the world, nor could they have been served by different methods. The creator of a closed social system, he was at the same time its instrument and, in changed circumstances and all too late, he became its victim. Although unsurpassed in violence and crime, Stalin was still the leader and organizer of a certain social system. Today he rates very low, pilloried for his 'errors', through which the leaders of that same system intend to redeem both the system and themselves.

And yet, despite the fact that it was carried out in cheap theatrical style, Stalin's dethronement proves that the truth will out even if only after those who fought for it have perished. The human conscience is implacable and indestructible.

Unfortunately, even now, after the so-called de-Stalinization, the same conclusion can be reached as before: those who wish to live and to survive in a world different from the one Stalin created and which still exists and is still as strong as ever must fight for their lives.

Biographical Notes on the Author and Other Chief Characters

MILOVAN DJILAS was free on parole for fifteen months following his imprisonment for more than four years on charges of 'slandering' and writing opinions 'hostile to the people and the state of Yugoslavia'. He was, up to the time of his expulsion from the Communist Central Committee in January of 1954, one of the four chiefs of the Yugoslav Government, at times a Minister, head of the Parliament, and Vice-President.

Djilas was born in 1911 in Montenegro, the fateful land he describes poetically in the autobiography of his youth, *Land Without Justice*. At the age of eighteen he went to Belgrade to the University and won early recognition for his poetry and short stories – and notoriety as a revolutionary. He joined the illegal Communist Party in 1932 and was subsequently arrested by the Royal government, tortured, and imprisoned for three years. By the time he was twenty-seven he was a member of the Central Committee of the Party, and in 1940 a member of its Politburo.

Following the German occupation of Yugoslavia in 1941, Djilas became a Partisan leader. In 1944, as a Partisan General he headed a military mission to Moscow; the following year, as a Minister in the post-war Tito government, he went again to Moscow to hold talks with Stalin, Molotov, and other Russian leaders. In 1947 he took part in the formation of the Cominform, which had its headquarters, at Stalin's insistence, in Belgrade. In 1948 he once again headed a Yugoslav delegation to Moscow in a futile attempt to stave off the break between the two Communist states that occurred later in the same year.

Ideological disagreements between the Party leadership and Milovan Djilas arose in Yugoslavia beginning in 1953. He wrote articles critical of the bureaucracy he was later to call 'the new class', and in January of 1954 he was expelled from the Central Committee. During this period he devoted himself to the writing

of *The New Class*, which was to become known the world over for its analysis of Communist oligarchy, and *Land Without Justice*. The year following his break with the Party, 1955, found Djilas being tried and sentenced (a sentence of three years was passed but suspended) for 'hostile propaganda' arising from an interview he gave to the *New York Times*. After the uprising in Hungary, Djilas criticized the Yugoslav Government's position toward the brutal Soviet action and was, as a result, sentenced to three years in prison. The manuscripts of his two books were, shortly before he was arrested, sent out of Yugoslavia, and the publication of *The New Class* caused him to be brought from prison and, following a third trial, given a further sentence of seven years.

Djilas was conditionally released from Sremska Mitrovica – the very same prison where he had, ironically, suffered as a Communist rebel at the hands of the pre-war Royal government – in January of 1961. While in confinement he wrote steadily and he has since completed three books: a massive and scholarly biography of the great Montenegrin prince-poet-priest Njegoš; a historical and fictional account of Montenegro during the First World War; and sixteen short stories (or tales). The present work, *Conversations with Stalin* (in Serbian *Susreti sa Staljinom*), was written during the short period he was free.

On 7 April 1962, Milovan Djilas was rearrested by the Yugoslav authorities, presumably in connexion with the then forthcoming publication of *Conversations with Stalin*.

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GEORGI FYODOROVICH ALEXANDROV (1908–). Leading Soviet philosopher and Communist Party member since 1928. He worked in the Agitation and Propaganda Section (Agitprop) of the Central Committee from 1934 and was its head from 1939 to 1947. His book *History of Western European Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century*, published in 1944, was officially attacked by Zhdanov for presenting Marxism as a part of the Western philosophical tradition. In 1950 he was official commentator on the philosophical implications of Stalin's articles on linguistics. He served as Minister of Culture in 1954–5, after which he joined the Institute of Philosophy of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences in Minsk.

VLADIMIR BAKARIČ (1912–). Croatian who joined the Communist underground in 1933 as a student and was sentenced in 1934 to three years in prison. In 1941 he joined the Partisans. After the war he became Premier of Croatia. In 1946 he was a member of the Yugoslav delegation to the Peace Conference in Paris. He is the chief Communist leader in Croatia.

LAVRENTY PAVLOVICH BERIA (1899–1953). Georgian Communist who made a career in the Soviet Secret Police – the Cheka, OGPU, and NKVD. Commissar for Internal Affairs from 1938 to 1948 and Deputy Prime Minister in charge of security from 1941 to 1953, he ended the Great Purge by liquidating his predecessor, N. I. Yezhov, and many other officials: he also directed the reign of terror, not only in the Soviet Union but in the satellite states, that marked Stalin's last years. He was purged in the struggle for power following Stalin's death.

SEMYON MIKHAILOVICH BUDYONNY (1883–). Marshal of the Soviet Union, from 1935. He was active in the Revolution of 1917. From 1939 he has been a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and in 1940 was first Vice-Commissar of Defence.

NIKOLAI IVANOVICH BUKHARIN (1888–1938). Leading Bolshevik theorist and member of the Politburo from 1918 to 1929 who supported Stalin against Trotsky but was himself stripped of power by Stalin as leader of the Right Opposition and executed during the Great Purge. Many of his ideas have found expression in post-Stalin revisionism, especially in Poland, Hungary, and East Germany.

NIKOLAI ALEXANDROVICH BULGANIN (1895–). Soviet politician. He joined the Communist Party in 1917, and was a member of the Supreme Soviet from 1937 to 1958. From 1941 to 1944 he was a member of the Military Council, and the following year served on the State Defence Committee. Other posts he has held have been: Deputy People's Commissar of Defence (1944–7), Minister of Defence (1947–9 and 1953–5), Chairman of the Council of Ministers (1955–8), member of the

Politburo (1948–52), member of the Presidium (1952–8), and Prime Minister (1955–8).

VULKO CHERVENKOV (1900–). Bulgarian Communist leader who joined the Party in 1919. He was forced to flee from Bulgaria to the USSR in 1925 with his wife, Dimitrov's sister, for his complicity in the Sofia Cathedral bomb outrage. He completed his studies at the Lenin Party School in the USSR and joined the Agitation and Propaganda Section of the Communist International. In 1937, during the Great Purge, he was made director of the Lenin School, which post he held until the school was closed in 1941. During the Second World War he managed the Soviet radio station Khristo Botev, which broadcast to Bulgaria. On 9 September 1944, he returned to Bulgaria to take over the Secretariat of the Communist Party. In January 1950 he succeeded Kolarov as Premier. In November of the same year he became Secretary-General of the Party but gave up the post after Stalin's death. He served as Minister of Culture and was eventually reinstated in the Politburo.

BOGDAN CRNOBRNJA (1916–). Yugoslav teacher who joined the Partisans during the Second World War. After the liberation, he served as Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and of Foreign Affairs. Since 1955 he has been Yugoslav Ambassador to India.

PEKO DAPČEVIĆ (1913–). Communist Yugoslav general. He joined the Party in 1933 as a student at the University of Belgrade. His first military experience came in 1936 as a company commander in the International Brigade during the Spanish Civil War. With the invasion of Yugoslavia in 1941, he led the Partisan uprising in his native Montenegro and thereafter rose rapidly to the Supreme Headquarters of the Army of People's Liberation. In 1954 he was awarded the medal of People's Hero. The following year he commanded the Yugoslav Fourth Army in the Yugoslav zone of Venezia–Giulia, the hinterland of Trieste, and was then assigned to direct the guerrilla action in Northern Greece. From 1953 he served as Chief of the Yugoslav General Staff, but was demoted because he was indirectly implicated in

the Djilas affair; it was his actress wife, Milena Vrajak, whom Djilas defended against the 'New Class'.

GEORGI DIMITROV (1882–1949). Bulgarian Communist leader who was one of the organizers of the Bulgarian Communist Party in 1909. After a career as underground activist and union organizer in Bulgaria, he was released from prison through Russian intervention in 1921 and for the next two decades served in the Comintern. He was General Secretary of the Communist International in Moscow for nine years, and was the author of the Popular Front policy of the thirties. He gained world-wide prominence as a result of his trial, and acquittal, in Berlin in 1933 for complicity in the Reichstag fire. After the Second World War he gave up his Soviet citizenship and returned to Bulgaria to assume leadership of the Communists there and to carry out the communization of that country. He became premier in 1946.

MAXIM GORKY (1868–1936). Russia's leading revolutionary novelist. His works – notably *Mother*, *The Artamonov Business*, and *Klim Samgin* – were a condemnation of capitalist society. Though he gave considerable financial support to the Bolsheviks, he opposed their seizure of power and lived in exile from 1921 to 1928. Upon his return, he headed the Writers' Union and was declared founder of the school of Socialist Realism. A close friend of Stalin's, he became a leading apologist for the Soviet régime. He died in allegedly mysterious circumstances in 1936. Official blame for his death was placed on the 'Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rightists' and the Trotskyites during the Bukharin show trial of 1938. Since then, Stalin himself has been accused of complicity in his death.

ANDRIJA HEBRANG (1899–1948). Yugoslav Communist leader from Croatia. He spent twelve years in prison before the Second World War for his activities in the trade-union movement. Upon his release he became Secretary of the Croatian Communist Party. He was a leader of the National Liberation Movement from the start in 1941, and held high offices after the war, among them Minister of Industry, member of the Presidium of both the Yugoslav and Croatian Constituent Assemblies, and

Chairman of the Federal Planning Commission. In 1946 the Party's Central Committee investigated his past and found him guilty of cowardice during the war and of collaboration with the Croatian Fascist Ustaši. He was also declared a 'fractionalist' and relieved of his posts. In 1948 he was arrested, allegedly while trying to escape to Rumania. He committed suicide while awaiting trial. Some sources claim he was murdered in jail.

ENVER HOXHA (1908–). Leading Albanian Communist leader. He was educated in France and Belgium and taught French in Albanian schools. He was a founder of the Albanian Communist Party in 1941 and of the Albanian National Liberation Movement in 1942. In 1943 he became Secretary-General of the Albanian Communist Party, which post he held until 1954, when it was abolished. He has since served as First Secretary of the Party's Central Committee. In 1946 he was Premier, Foreign Minister, Defence Minister, and Commander-in-Chief of Albania's armed forces.

ARSO JOVANOVIČ (d. 1948). Professional pre-war Yugoslav army officer from Montenegro. He joined the Partisans and organized the People's Liberation Army, of which he was Chief of the General Staff until the end of 1946, when he was replaced by Koča Popović. He was openly on the side of the Soviet Union in the Tito–Cominform break in 1948. He was shot by border guards while trying to escape to Rumania.

LAZAR MOISEYEVICH KAGANOVICH (1893–). Communist of humble Jewish origin who was a Party organization man. He rose to power as one of Stalin's chief henchmen. During the Second World War he was a member of the State Defence Committee and subsequently held high posts in the Caucasus and the Ukraine. His influence declined in Stalin's last years, perhaps in part because of the anti-Semitic campaign. After Stalin's death he became prominent once again, but was divested of all power in 1957 as a member of the 'anti-Party group'.

EDVARD KARDELJ (1907–). Yugoslav Communist leader generally regarded as second to Tito. A Slovenian schoolteacher, he joined the Party in 1928. He was jailed for two years in 1931.

From 1934 to 1937 he studied in the Comintern's Lenin School in Moscow and served as a professor there. He collaborated with Tito in the reorganization of the Yugoslav Communist Party before the war, and became a member of its Politburo in 1940. During the war he served in the Partisan Supreme Command and became Vice-Premier of the Provisional Government founded in 1943. He retained this post when the Government was constitutionally established in 1945. Since 1951 he has also served as Foreign Minister and as president of the commission in charge of the reorganization of the Government. He is regarded as a top ideologist in the Yugoslav Communist Party.

NIKITA SERGEYEVICH KHRUSHCHEV (1894–). Chairman of the Soviet Council of Ministers and First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. A locksmith by trade, he rose through the ranks of the Communist Party chiefly through his activities in the Ukraine. Following the Civil War, in which he served as a political commissar of a Partisan detachment, he was sent to the Workers' School at Kharkov University. Thereafter he ascended the ladder of Party posts up to the Politburo (candidate member in 1935) and Central Committee. In 1938 he was put in charge of carrying out a purge in the Ukraine, and during the Second World War he served there in various army posts. After the war he was transferred from the Ukraine to Moscow, where he became a full member of the Party's Central Committee and Presidium in 1952. After Stalin's death, in 1953, he was elected First Secretary and eventually replaced Malenkov.

BORIS KIDRIĆ (1919–53). Yugoslav Communist leader of Slovenian origin. He joined the Party in 1928 and lived the life of a constantly hunted underground revolutionary. He joined the Partisans in 1941, and became political commissar for Slovenia. In 1945 he was made Premier of Slovenia and continued a harsh programme of establishing Communist hegemony there. In 1946 he was sent to Moscow to study the Soviet economy. From his return, in the autumn of the same year, to his death, he was virtual director of the entire Yugoslav economy. His administration is associated with the ruthless collectivization of agriculture, abandoned after his death, and vigorous drives for higher production in industry. He was a member of the Politburo.

SERGEI MIRONOVICH KIROV (1886–1934). Leading Bolshevik revolutionary and Politburo member in 1930. He at first supported Stalin in his rise to power but opposed his personal rule after the Seventeenth Party Congress in 1934. His assassination in December 1934, probably at Stalin's behest, set off the Great Purge.

VASSIL KOLAROV (1877–1950). Bulgarian Communist who succeeded Dimitrov as Premier in 1949. Like Dimitrov, he was a veteran of the Communist International and was its General Secretary in 1922. Following the Second World War, he left the USSR to return to Bulgaria, where he held the posts of Provisional President of the Bulgarian Republic (1946), Vice-President of the Council of Ministers, and Foreign Minister (1949).

IVAN STEPANOVICH KONIEV (1897–). Marshal of the Soviet Union. He distinguished himself during the Second World War, especially in the liberation of Kharkov (1943) and Kirovograd (1944). After the war he was Soviet representative on the Allied Control Commission in Vienna. From 1946 to 1955 he was Commander-in-Chief Land Forces, and from 1955 First Deputy Minister of Defence and Commander-in-Chief of the Warsaw Pact forces. He resigned from this post in 1960 on grounds of ill health. He was chairman of the special court that sentenced Beria in 1953.

TRAICHO KOSTOV (1897–1949). Bulgarian Communist leader. He was a member of the Politburo and Deputy Prime Minister who, though an anti-Titoist, was associated with a 'Bulgaria-first' outlook. Stripped of power in March 1949 and indicted in December of that year, he created a sensation by repudiating his confession at the trial. He was executed.

GEORGI MAXIMILIANOVICH MALENKOV (1902–). Soviet Communist Party leader who worked his way through the Party machine to become a member of the Central Committee in 1939, where he was placed in charge of the administration of cadres. In 1941 he became a candidate member of the Politburo and served on the State Defence Committee throughout the Second World

War. After the war he served as Secretary of the Central Committee and Deputy Prime Minister. He succeeded Stalin as Prime Minister in the era of 'collective leadership' but was forced to step down after a public admission of failure in 1955. In 1957, as a member of the 'anti-Party group', he was stripped of power.

DMITRI ZAKHAROVICH MANUILSKY (1883–). Soviet Communist Party official and diplomat. He joined the Party in 1903. As an underground revolutionary, he suffered arrest and exile. After the Revolution of 1917 most of his posts were in his native Ukraine. However, he was even more active in the Communist International, serving as Secretary of the Presidium from 1928 to 1943. During the war he served as a political officer in the Red Army. He was also Foreign Minister for the Ukraine from 1945 to 1952, and a head of the Ukrainian delegation to the United Nations in 1952.

ANASTAS IVANOVICH MIKOYAN (1895–). Armenian Communist who has been especially prominent as director of Soviet foreign trade and food industries. A candidate member of the Politburo in 1926, he became a full member in 1935. He has also been Deputy Prime Minister since 1937. After Stalin's death he consistently supported Khrushchev and has become one of the most influential leaders of the Soviet Communist Party. He is generally regarded as a 'reasonable' Communist and achieved some popularity in the West, especially as a result of his American visit in 1958.

MITRA MITROVIĆ (1912–). Yugoslav Communist Party member since 1933. She was prominent in the Partisan ranks during the Second World War. After 1945 she served for several years as Minister of Education for Serbia. More recently she has risen to posts of federal rank in both the Executive Council of the Government and the Central Committee of the Party.

VYACHESLAV MIKHAILOVICH MOLOTOV (1890–). A Bolshevik since 1906 and a specialist in Party organization. He ascended the ladder, largely as Stalin's lieutenant, until he was second in power only to Stalin. From 1926 he was a member of

the Politburo and of the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. He was Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars – that is, Prime Minister – throughout the thirties, and Deputy Chairman until 1957. He was best known to the world as Soviet Commissar (from 1946, Minister) for Foreign Affairs. In 1957 he was stripped of power as a member of the 'anti-Party group' in association with Malenkov, Kaganovich, and others, and has since held relatively minor posts abroad.

BLAGOJE NEŠKOVIĆ (1907–). Serbian Communist who fought in the Spanish Civil War and joined Tito's Partisans in 1941. In 1945 he was Premier of Serbia. A member of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party, he was accused of deviation in 1952 and stripped of his posts.

ANA PAUKER (1893–). Rumanian Jew (*née* Robinsohn) who was a founder of the Rumanian Communist Party in 1921, and married the chairman, Marcel Pauker. In 1924 they both left Rumania for Moscow to work in Comintern headquarters. In 1936 she returned to Rumania, where she was arrested; her husband, in Moscow, fell in the Great Purge. Returned to Moscow in an exchange of prisoners, she became a member of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. During the Second World War she directed the Soviet radio station for broadcasts to Rumania and helped organize the Tudor Vladimirescu Division of Rumanian prisoners of war in the USSR. She returned to Rumania with the Red Army, and on 7 November 1947 became Foreign Minister and, soon after, Vice-Premier as well. In 1952 she fell from power, as a 'deviationist'.

MOSA PIJADE (1889–195?). Theoretician of the Yugoslav Communist Party. He was the oldest member in the Party when it was organized in 1920. Sentenced to twenty years in prison for spreading Communism in trades unions, he translated Marx's *Das Kapital* while serving his term in Sremska Mitrovica Penitentiary, the same jail to which Djilas was later sentenced under the Tito régime. During the Second World War he and Djilas led the uprising in Montenegro, which started a ruthless civil war in that province. After the war he served as Vice-President of the Constituent Assembly and, later, of the Federal People's

Assembly. In 1954, as a result of the Djilas affair, he became President of the Assembly. A member of the Yugoslav Communist Central Committee and Politburo, he was, until his death, in the inner circle around Tito.

KOČA POPOVIĆ (1908–). Scion of a prominent Belgrade family, Paris-trained lawyer, and poet. He joined the Yugoslav Communist Party in 1933 and fought in the Spanish Civil War. Upon his return he was arrested, but continued his underground activities after being released. In 1941 he joined the Partisans and rose to the highest ranks in the army and Government He served as Chief of the General Staff from 1945 to 1953. Since 1946 he has held the post of Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia.

ALEXANDAR-MARKO RANKOVIĆ (1909–). Yugoslav Communist Party leader, who joined the Serbian Youth Section of the Party in 1927. He spent five years in various prisons, where he got to know Tito and Pijade. In 1937, when Tito reorganized the Party, he was in the Politburo and has remained a top Communist ever since. After the liberation struggle, of which he was a leading organizer, he became best known as Minister of the Interior and Director of the Military and Secret Police. He and Kardelj are generally regarded as being next to Tito in power.

KONSTANTIN KONSTANTINOVICH ROKOSSOVSKY (1896–). A native Pole who joined the Red Army in 1919 and made a brilliant military career in the Soviet Union. He was one of the USSR's most outstanding generals during the Second World War. For his part in the defence of Moscow, Stalingrad, and Kursk, he was twice awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, and became a Marshal in 1944. In 1949 he was officially transferred to the Polish Army and held the posts of Polish Minister of Defence, Commander-in-Chief, Deputy Prime Minister, and member of the Politburo of the Polish Communist Party. In November 1956 the Gomulka régime had him transferred back to the Soviet Union, where he has since served as Deputy Minister of Defence.

PAVLE SAVIĆ (1909–). Paris-trained Yugoslav nuclear physicist and member of the Communist Party since 1939. He

fought in the liberation struggle and was attached to Supreme Headquarters. In 1949 he received an award for his work on low temperatures.

RUDOLF SLANSKY (1901–52). Czech Communist leader. He became director of the Communist daily *Rudé Právo* in 1926. In 1928 he was elected to the Central Committee of the Party. He was a member of the Czechoslovak delegation to the last congress of the Comintern, in 1935. After Czechoslovakia's partition by Hitler, Slansky fled to the USSR, where he worked until 1944 in the Comintern. He returned to Czechoslovakia with the Red Army and became Secretary-General of the reconstituted Czechoslovak Communist Party. He attended the Cominform meetings of 1947, 1948, and 1949. In September 1951 he was demoted from his leadership and, three months later, was arrested for 'criminal activities'. In 1952 he was hanged.

IVAN ŠUBAŠIĆ (1892–1955). Croatian politician. He was Governor (*Ban*) of Croatia from August 1939, and went into exile during the war. On 1 June 1944 he was appointed Premier of the Yugoslav Royal Government-in-exile at the insistence of the Allies. He merged his cabinet with Tito's after the Tito–Šubašić Agreement concluded on the island of Vis. In the Provisional Government, he served as Foreign Minister, until the coalition broke down.

MIKHAIL ANDREYEVICH SUSLOV (1902–). Communist Party leader in the USSR. He joined the Party in 1921, entered the Central Committee in 1941, and was a high-ranking political officer during the war. In 1946 he became head of the Agitation and Propaganda Section of the Central Committee, and in 1947 Secretary. In 1949–50 he served as editor-in-chief of *Pravda*. His chief posts since then have been chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Soviet Union (1954) and member of the Central Committee's Presidium (1955). Generally regarded as doctrinaire, he has nevertheless supported Khrushchev in defeating the 'anti-Party group'.

MIJALKO TODOROVIĆ (1913–). Yugoslav Communist leader. He began his Party career in the youth movement. He

fought in the Partisan ranks during the Second World War. After the liberation he served in the Ministry of Defence, as Director of the Extraordinary Administration of Supply, Minister of Agriculture, and Chief of the Council for Agriculture and Forestry.

ALEXANDR MIKHAILOVICH VASILYEVSKY (1895–). Leading Soviet general and Chief of the Soviet General Staff at the time of the Battle of Stalingrad. He was made a Marshal in 1943, and was commander of the Byelorussian Front in 1945. Since then he has served as Minister of War.

NIKOLAI F. VATUTIN (1901–44). Soviet general. With Koniev and Malinovsky, he distinguished himself in the liberation of the Ukraine from the German Army.

VELJKO VLAHOVIĆ (1914–). Montenegrin member of the Yugoslav Communist Party since 1935. He fought in the Spanish Civil War and was especially active in organizing the Communist Youth League of Yugoslavia. During the Second World War he directed the Free Yugoslavia radio station. He returned to Yugoslavia at the end of 1944 to serve as editor of the Communist daily, *Borba*, and as Deputy Foreign Minister. He has gained considerable reputation as a theoretician, especially since Djilas's fall.

NIKOLAI ALEXEYEVICH VOZNESENSKY (1903–50). Leading Soviet economist. During the Great Purge, he rose rapidly to the post of Chairman of the State Planning Commission (Gosplan), which plans and coordinates the whole Soviet economy. He was also Deputy Prime Minister in 1939 and a member of the State Defence Committee during the war. Candidate member of the Politburo in 1941 and full member in 1948, he was stripped of all his posts in 1949 during Malenkov's campaign against Zhdanov's followers, and was arrested and shot on Stalin's orders.

SVETOZAR VUKMANOVIĆ-TEMPO (1912–). Montenegrin who joined Yugoslav Communist Youth in 1933 and became a Party member in 1935. His speciality in underground work was organizing clandestine presses. During the Second World War

he served in Partisan Supreme Headquarters and was Tito's personal representative in Macedonia. In 1943 he was Chief Political Commissar in the People's Liberation Army. After the war he was active in the Federal Assembly and Central Planning and Central Economic Commissions. He is one of the closest collaborators of Tito.

KOČI XOXE (d. 1948). Albanian Communist leader who, thanks to Yugoslav backing, became the most powerful man in the Albanian Communist Party just after the Second World War, as Minister of the Interior and head of the Secret Police. At the time of the Tito–Cominform break, he was executed on charges of Trotskyite and Titoist activities.

ANDREI ALEXANDROVICH ZHDANOV (1896–1948). Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee from 1935. He was a candidate member of the Politburo in 1934 and a full member in 1939. In charge of ideological affairs, he made Socialist Realism in the arts obligatory and directed the post-war campaign against Western cultural influences. During the Second World War he was a leader in the defence of Leningrad. He was prominent in the founding of the Cominform. Died 1948.

GEORGI KONSTANTINOVICH ZHUKOV (1894–). Marshal of the Soviet Union. He served in the Bolshevik forces in 1917. In 1941 he was Chief of Staff of the Red Army and conducted the defence of Moscow against the Germans. He was First Vice-Commissar of Defence in 1942, and the following year was promoted to Marshal. Forced to resign Defence Ministry in 1957.

VALERIAN ALEXANDROVICH ZORIN (1902–). Soviet diplomat. Among the posts he has held have been: Assistant General Secretary of the National Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (1941), Ambassador to Czechoslovakia (1945–8), Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (1948), and Ambassador to the German Federal Republic (1956–8). Since 1960 he has been Permanent Soviet Representative to the United Nations.

MIKHAIL MIKHAILOVICH ZOSHCHENKO (1895–1958). Soviet author best known for his satirical works and his treatment of the bewildered 'little man' in Soviet society. In 1946 Zhdanov made him a prime target in the Party campaign to impose its control over cultural life. He was expelled from the Writers' Union and lived in obscurity until his death.

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Two recent Pelican books
are described on the
following pages

Some Opinions of this Book

'Here are the most revealing passages ever written not only about Stalin but also about the Soviet political arena in which Mr Krushchev received his education.

'In fact this disturbing, brilliant book is new in spirit from beginning to end; and it is all one great secret given recklessly away. Because here, for the first time, a man who was a senior Communist politician, who has talked as a Communist with Stalin and his creatures, relaxed, behind drawn blinds, writes of what he saw and heard as a human being writing about human beings. All the abuse of Stalin so far, from Trotsky through Tito to Krushchev, has been doctrinal, has thus carefully concealed the human secret.

'Djias does not abuse Stalin. He has done a much more dangerous thing. He has helped us to understand him. The one thing forbidden all good Communists is any attempt to understand Stalin, because this cannot be done without letting in light, as this short book blindingly does, into the hidden areas of the Soviet Union, of the Krushchev Government, of the Communist system and its policies – including the Yugoslav wing. Stalin is to be rejected, not understood. Mr Krushchev and the Communist system (but who will call it a system after reading this book?) are to be accepted, not understood' – Edward Crankshaw in the *Observer*

'He writes with superb ability to grasp a scene and make it stick in the mind. Maybe this is his chief importance. Historians will argue about him for long enough' – A. J. Arthur in the *Scotsman*

'By any test, this is an extraordinary and absorbing book – a classic contribution to the great controversies about Socialism and freedom.

'In the space of 173 pages the author appears to describe, analyse and pass judgement upon a whole epoch, a whole society, a whole theory. Yet only rarely does he resort to sweeping generalizations. The eye of Milovan Djilas is so acute and his mind so perceptive that he achieves most of his effect by the selection of detail. Small incidents and large themes are perfectly moulded together' – Michael Foot in *Tribune*

'The author's claim that in producing this pompous treatise he was "driven by an inner compulsion to leave nothing unsaid that might be of significance to those who write history" is both pretentious and laughable as is the book itself' – *Daily Worker*

Conversations with Stalin

This is one of the gravest political books of today, not only because of the extraordinary events it records but also – and chiefly – because of the authority with which the author speaks.

Milovan Djilas was for years Tito's closest associate. He was Vice-President of Yugoslavia; he sat in an inner cabinet of four; and he led three important missions to Moscow. These pages witness the slow disenchantment of a sincere and idealistic revolutionary.

It was certainly not in Djilas's interest – as it may have been in Khrushchev's – to blacken Stalin or expose the power-mad imperialism which for years wore the Comintern as its mask. As he progressively revealed his revulsion against Russia and many of the results of Communism – in articles, in *The New Class*, in a famous interview with the *New York Times*, and in his championship of the Hungarians in 1956 – he was successively isolated, expelled from the Central Committee in 1954, and eventually imprisoned for ten years.

But Djilas never ceased to speak out. *Conversations with Stalin* was written on his conditional release in 1961. In 1962 he was re-arrested.

Opinions of this courageous book, by Edward Crankshaw, Michael Foot, and others, are printed inside this cover.