Prime Minister

The Centre last year invited Colonel General D.G. Volkogonov, the first official biographer of Stalin in the Soviet Union, to come and talk to them about Stalin and Perestroika. General Volkogonov was till recently head of the military section of the historical institute of the Soviet army.

To our surprise, the General accepted the invitation. He was here last week. We organised a good programme for him: a meeting with historians and Soviet specialists at the Institution of Civil Engineers; a visit to Oxford, where he took part in one of Sir Michael Howard's seminars on the relation between civil and military power; a lecture in the London School of Economics; and, a press conference in the House of Lords. The General paid his own fare, we looked after him while here, and he was everywhere accompanied by a Soviet diplomat so the visit was semi-official.

In these four days, General Volkogonov talked extensively of his forthcoming life of Stalin and its implications. He has written this book on the basis primarily of the military archives which are still in his custody. It is plain that it will be printed in Russia in a very large edition and will play a part in Mr. Gorbachev's programme of educating the Russians about the evils of the past. There will be an edition in English later.

In Moscow it is plain General Volkogonov is an important man. He is a friend of Gorbachev, he has a large flat, country house, chauffeur driven car etc: a soviet general who is part of the present elite. He is very much part of the system.

The General was careful to mark off the boundaries of his subject. Thus he spoke formally of Lenin whom he called "a genius". He said that if Lenin had lived things would have been very much better. He also refused to have any doubts about the chances of Mr. Gorbachev's success. But where the General talked about Stalin, he allowed himself a very great deal of candour. Thus he described Stalin as a monster who could sign 3,000 death sentences in an afternoon then go to the cinema without emotion.

He said Stalin had executed in 1937-1938 1,500 officers of the rank of general (compared with 500 killed in the war) and no less than 43,000 officers all told. He believed it to be an open question whether or no Stalin had murdered his (second) wife; he said that Stalin went into the country once, in 1928; to factories twice; and only once got anywhere near the front in the war - 40 kilometres away. Stalin had no emotions. He maintained himself in power by building a wall of quotations from Lenin around him, and so made it possible to say that anyone who attacked him attacked Lenin. He had no possessions, and wrote all his own statements in longhand (usually in pencil).

/Much of

Much of this was known in the West before, but to my knowledge this was the first time that such an attack has been mounted by a Soviet spokesman. It went into much more detail than Khrushchev's "secret speech" did. He added quite a number of previously unknown points to Western knowledge e.g. that Beria seems to have destroyed Stalin's will.

The General personally was a man of charm and a sense of humour. He was a Siberian in origin and his father, an agronomist, was killed by Stalin. He talked extremely fluently. A brother is an agricultural labourer, a sister a teacher. He had perfect even courtly manners. He was a good propagandist for Gorbachev and showed much agility in answering questions, including difficult ones. He says that he has received death threats as a result of the publication of extracts from his book in periodicals in Russia (some people came up to him in a park and threatened him). He appears still to have the military archives in his own house in Moscow. Like many modern Russians, he had enthusiasm for anything to do with the past: he loved our Houses of Parliament (I think he is the first Soviet general to have spoken in a committee room there) and was pleased to have our Mrs. Brooke, a grandchild of the last Tsarist ambassador, as an interpreter. He is not without prejudices: at Oxford he said "I see you have a lot of coloured people. That will give you trouble one day. In the Soviet Union we have no coloured people. Of course we do have Moslems. But we keep them in the South."

He thought ambassador Zamyatin an unreconstructed Stalinist and that most people in Russia over sixty ~~are~~ are Stalinists. He impressed us all by his freedom from jargon and by a sense that he was in some way seeking a new ethical basis for his conduct. Dr. Dominic Lieven (LSE) believed that he was in some ways an ex-Stalinist himself now making his peace with God.

I have sent Percy Cradock (who met General Volkogonov at lunch on Thursday) a rough transcript of the General's remarks. We shall publish an edited version of these.

We gained from these discussions a most interesting picture of the mind of a man of Gorbachev's generation, and in that he talked without jargon an encouraging one.

Hugh Thomas

(4)

P 15/3

Prime Minister

CDP 15/3.

CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES

8 Wilfred Street, London SW1E 6 PL. Tel: 01-828 1176

Mar. 15, 1989

Dear Charles :

I thought the Prime Minister might be interested in the enclosed note abt. Gen. Volkogonov & I shd. be grateful if you wd give it to her.

Yrs ever

Hugh

CGK

C·P·S

CDP

CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES
8 Wilfred Street, London SW1E 6 PL. Tel: 01-828 1176

Mar. 17, 1989

Dear Charles.

Further to my recent ~~note~~ attempt, I enclose a copy of the remarks made recently by General Volkogonov about Stalin.

Yrs ever
Hugh

Chas. Powell Esq
10 Downing St
London SW1

CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES

Stalin and *Glasnost*: A Talk by General Volkogonov

Introduction

by Hugh Thomas

Some time last summer, extracts from a biography of Stalin by a certain General Volkogonov began to appear in Soviet periodicals. Readers in England noticed these in the BBC's admirable surveys of Russian press and radio produced by the monitoring service in Caversham. Among these readers were the Soviet Relations Study Group at the Centre for Policy Studies. One hot day in July, Dr. George Urban, then chairman of this group and himself the author of an outstandingly interesting collection of interviews, entitled *Stalinism* (published by Maurice Temple Smith), suggested that, if we wanted to hear more of General Volkogonov's views, we might invite him to visit us. An invitation might even be accepted, he said.

I confess that I listened to Dr. Urban with half an ear only. The chances of a Soviet General accepting the invitation of the Centre for Policy Studies to come to England seemed remote. Volkogonov's writings on military matters in the past had been known to be hard line: typical products of the age of Brezhnev. We sent an invitation, however. Nothing happened for a time. In the autumn I received a telephone call from the Soviet military attaché. General Volkogonov would like to come. When and what would be the

programme? I took a deep breath, suggested March 1989 and thought no more about it. In March nevertheless the General came.

The Centre organised two meetings for General Volkogonov, one on March 6 at the Institution of Civil Engineers, one in the House of Lords on March 9. General Volkogonov went to Sir Michael Howard's seminar on the relations between military and civil power at Christchurch Oxford and gave a lecture at the London School of Economics. I suppose that Soviet generals have often visited Oxford. I do not think that one has spoken before in a committee room of the House of Lords.

The text which we now present is a transcript of General Volkogonov's talk at the Institution of Civil Engineers. The talk was valuable both for what General Volkogonov had to say about Stalin and for the way that he said it. The talk was also important because of the light that it threw on Mr. Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost*, publicity, and *perestroika*, restructuring. As is usual with Soviet speakers, what was not said was of almost equal significance to what was.

First, General Volkogonov convinced his audience that he was a serious historian who probably knew as much about his subject as, say, Martin Gilbert knows about Churchill. Second, he spoke almost as a Western historian might: with tranquility, with doubts, with scepticism, with some reserves about the reliability of some sources. He reproached previous (Western) biographers for writing lives of Stalin with no access to archives and for basing themselves on anecdotes and rumours. In addition, his language was as free from Marxist jargon as it was from Marxist interpretations of history. It is true that, when pressed, he did talk favourably of Lenin and Marx and refused to say that those men

were responsible for Stalin's career and behaviour: a point which, of course, can be disputed. In this respect, he was clearly keeping closely to an agreed Soviet position of the moment. But it seems that the originality of the General's position was that, while talking of Stalin as, indeed, of Gorbachev, he was not talking as a Marxist. It seemed that for him, the human factor counted.

In the details of his exposition, General Volkogonov sometimes did no more than confirm what has been said before: for example, by Svetlana Allilueva, Stalin's daughter, by Khrushchev (either in his secret speech of 1956 or in his memoirs), or by Djilas in *Conversations with Stalin*. Sometimes, however, he broke new ground: for example, in his discussion of Stalin's methods of work, and his desire to associate his colleagues in his often brutal decisions. I myself had not heard previously the details of the account which General Volkogonov gives of the death of Stalin's son Jacob in the concentration camp of Sachsenhausen. General Volkogonov's own methods of work seemed also interesting. No one gave him permission, he told us, to investigate the archives. But, at the same time, since he was director of the historical institute of the Soviet army, no one prevented him. That is why he has such a great library of xeroxed material in his flat in Moscow.

Of course, for practical politicians the significance of Volkogonov for Gorbachev's policies is bound to seem the most interesting side of this visit. Volkogonov is, as earlier indicated, remarkably free from ideology. Unlike Gorbachev, he did not find it necessary to surround himself as a justification by a barricade of Leninist quotations, even though he did not criticise Lenin, whom he regards as "a genius". All the same, if the official line should one day change and permit the replacement of Lenin as

guide and god in the Soviet system (and there are a few signs that that may happen), Volkogonov will not be completely wrongfooted. True, he calls Lenin "a genius". That is something which many opponents in the West would on reflection allow, even though they may utterly deplore what he did (and recall his justification of "terror" and his foundation of the CHEKA): it is hard to dispute that Lenin's combination of intellect and tactical skill amounted to something close to genius. General Volkogonov also spoke of the "bureaucracy" and other obstacles to change in the Soviet Union being encountered by Gorbachev as so many remnants of Stalinism. This means, of course, that enemies of Gorbachev are to be looked upon as real enemies of the people, "Stalinists", defenders of a system based only on power, behind which looms the shadow of the evil Georgian. "Evil" was a word often on Volkogonov's lips. The usage has not been usual in Russia since 1917. Volkogonov, it will be noticed, never talked of Brezhnev. If pressed, I suspect, that he would have suggested that Brezhnevism was a variety of Stalinism.

On the details of Mr. Gorbachev's programmes, it will be seen that General Volkogonov made a stout defence of the policies towards nationalities. I do not think that his questioners were at all convinced by this defence, though, all the same, it may be that Nazism's badly managed attempt to exploit the nationality question in the Soviet Union did have a counterproductive effect among some elements, even among the Ukrainian population. It was also obvious that General Volkogonov, like Gorbachev, has not quite decided how to treat Solzhenitsyn.

Each reader will find something different of value in General Volkogonov's text. I myself was particularly impressed by the way that he took Western writers and scholars

seriously. Indeed he quoted from Shakespeare, Shaw, etc., as if he really appreciated them.

Sceptics will question how far General Volkogonov should be looked upon as "sincere". The question is inadequate. Volkogonov is a product of his country's history as well as its historian. Like Mr. Gorbachev, he is plainly a determined Russian patriot who would like to see his country more successful and no doubt stronger, as Mr Gorbachev said in his own book *Perestroika*. Volkogonov showed himself a brilliant propagandist and advocate. He also, however, by implication, believes that differing points of view about policy have a part to play in the body politic. Thus he thought that the opponents of Stalin in the 1920s should "not have been looked upon as counter-revolutionaries", but merely as positive critics, whose views were worth hearing.

In dealing with "conservative" opponents, Mr. Gorbachev must be able to say that he is concerned to modernise his country and that the effects of his programme will be to fulfil in the end the dreams of Mr. Khrushchev and even of Stalin to catch up with the West. No doubt too a successful Gorbachevian Russia would constitute a headache for the West, if only because the pursuit of world power, of a traditional kind, may be a necessary substitute for Marxism-Leninism as a means of maintaining Russian unity. There are always likely to be *double entendres* in Soviet policy. All the same, and I write as one who has devoted a great deal of time to the study of the cold war, and at one time indeed in the 1950s can claim to have taken part in it, it does appear to me that General Volkogonov has made it evident that his country, under its present leadership, wants to have a rational, equable discussion about the history of the recent past; and that is, without doubt, a great step forward in a regime which in the past has used history as a political

instrument of the first importance. Khrushchev took the first blows against the tree of Stalin's legacy. But he did not bring it down. It looks as if one of Gorbachev's chief woodcutters, General Volkogonov, is completing Khrushchev's work. When dwelling on the "evil" of Stalin, Volkogonov struck some of us who talked to him that he was a man who, having been a career officer, was seeking for an ethical standard, almost in a neo-Kantian manner. The consequences may extend further than we can at the moment see. How long can a system last if the man who made the system what it is is described by one of the official historians as immoral? One of those looking after the visit in London told me afterwards that he thought that Volkogonov was, in this book, and in this visit, making his peace with God. Perhaps the Russian people, in spite of their Government's continuing heavy investment in armaments, may one day be doing the same?

CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES

General Volkogonov : Discussion on Stalin's rôle in modern history

Institution of Civil Engineers, London : 6th March 1989

Chairman : Lord Thomas of Swynnerton

LT I'm sure that you'd like me to welcome on your behalf General Volkogonov who has come here on the invitation of the Centre for Policy Studies to talk about the biography which he is writing about Stalin, and perhaps some of the implications of the life of Stalin. We welcome General Volkogonov, first of all because he is a Russian - and we would all like to think of Russia as a part of European civilisation; we welcome him also as a historian, since there are historians in the room who feel that the study of history is an important part of the understanding of the future. And we also welcome him as a friend and associate of Mr Gorbachev, whose work in the Soviet Union has attracted such sympathetic attention in so many countries.

The General has completed, I think, two of his three volumes of the life of Stalin. This work, which is the first ever to be written with the use of official papers, will soon appear in the Soviet Union and will be published shortly also in England - by Weidenfeld & Nicolson. I think there are many people in the room who have had different visions of Stalin in the past, including some who have had to negotiate with the government of Josef Stalin in the time of the war and

afterwards (1). Others have studied Stalin's work as historians. Others are simply interested in the rôle of great men in history. But I think all of us are aware of the significance and consuming interest of a book of this nature. It's a particular pleasure for us to welcome General Volkogonov at what I suppose is, on the one hand, the beginning of a very successful literary career - even if it may be that he is drawing to the end of his career as an active, serving soldier in the Soviet Army. It is often said in England that life begins at 60. General Volkogonov.

GV Ladies and gentlemen. I greatly appreciate your interest in such a significant and tragic era in Soviet history. As an introduction, let me say a few general words about someone who for 30 years was virtually the head of our government (2). I'm not exactly new to writing. I have written quite a number of books, but they were all of a political and military character rather than historical. But about ten years ago I thought now how is it that we have books about Truman, about Churchill, De Gaulle, Cromwell, Mao Tse-tung, about other historical figures of such a stature but not one single honest work about a man who left such a huge impression on our history. I did not receive any permission; but on the other hand, nobody prohibited the writing of an honest book. But with the help of my position (until recently I had quite a high rank in the military circles) I was able to have access to just about all the archive material and at the moment I have in my possession (a xerox admittedly) archive on Stalin and Trotsky of a kind that I think nobody in the Soviet Union has at their disposal; thousands upon thousands of directives, orders, notes and such like; I have them all at home. Moreover, as I began this work about ten years, I have been able to meet many many people who were in

direct contact with Stalin; people of his circle. These were former Politburo members, marshals, doctors, professors, and so on and so forth. The title of my book is *Triumph and Tragedy*. I wanted to put forward the thought that the triumph of one man leads invariably to a tragedy; to a tragedy of a whole nation. But even though Stalin himself is an extremely interesting figure as a historical study, he is not the be-all and end-all of everything. I would say that for the past four years in our country the central figure for discussion has been Stalin. But this is on the surface. I think that in looking at Stalin, people are looking deeper, painfully examining their own history. They look at reality: what is there now; and are trying to lift the curtain on what is to come.

Before answering your questions, to give an outline of Stalin, I would just like to say a few things. He had an extremely powerful, but very evil, mentality. He was a strong man but he was a man of negative will; negative strength; with a phenomenal memory, but an evil memory. There was only one thing in the world that he loved; that was power; nothing else; a man who had only one method to resolve any problem - be they social, be they economic - that method was brute force. But the problem of Stalin is a multifaceted one; interlinked, but multifaceted. There's Stalin and Lenin, for example; Stalin and socialism; Stalin and the war; Stalin and the terror, and so on, and so on; very many separate aspects. I've often asked myself, using Shakespeare's words (someone is going to have to prompt me) "under the burden of my imperfection ..."; how under the burden of his sins, all his negative aspects, he was able to rise to the position of being a leader of a nation. And thinking about the genesis of this, we can say that the results of Stalinism, the outcomes, can still be felt today.

A political leader can die three deaths: physically, he died a long time ago; but politically he hasn't fully died even today; historically, unfortunately, he will never die. He has left an enormous dent in the shield of our history. I've had occasion to see truly dramatic documents. He was not just the First Consul - that was Cæsar. I can find no precedent in history for the degree of power he wielded. And Stalinism survives ... I would say remnants of Stalinism are the following: in the field of social consciousness; the mummified remains of dogmatism; in the social-political sphere; total bureaucracy; in the economic sphere - economics by directive, economy by directives; and in the political methodology generally; its enforcement - force. And before I try to answer your questions, I would like to make one more observation. The greatest difficulty a historian who takes upon himself the task of writing about someone like Stalin is to determine the correlation between Stalin and the people; the dictator and the people.

Three months before Trotsky was killed, he wrote: *"I'm in the noose, in the labyrinth of a monstrous contradiction. Fully rejecting Stalin, I don't know how I can leave untouched the people and the ideas he used".* In other words, Trotsky admitted that he was incapable of resolving this contradiction. I'm not at all certain that I will succeed either. I've had recourse to thousands of new documents in writing my book; documents which have never been published; and the testimony, the evidence, of many many people who knew Stalin. But the most important, and I'd like to finish on this, Stalinism must *must* be buried once and for all in order to breathe faith and hope into our people. One of the main obstacles to *perestroika* today is the spectre of Stalinism. This may seem funny from the outside, but

perestroika is opposed by many things in reality today which are the product of the past. So as a historian, as a doctor of philosophy, I will be expressing my personal viewpoint today. I see a deep dialectic connection between that which is happening today and our history. Thank you for your attention. I am prepared to answer your questions.

LT Thank you very much for that wonderful introduction both to your book and to a new study of the period of Stalin's rule. I'm sure there are a very great number of questions which we would like to put to you and perhaps I could have the first one from James Sherr, from the University of Oxford.

JS General, yours is a not only difficult task but a controversial task and perhaps to some extent in this country as much as in your own. I wonder, therefore, if I can begin with a controversial question. In his Jubilee speech in October 1987, Mr. Gorbachev spoke as you did about Stalin's character and personality; somewhat less graphically, but in similar terms. But when it came to the question of Stalin's policies, whilst criticising a number of decisions, the clear verdict was that in the main essentials, Stalin was correct. He was correct in his opposition to Trotsky and Bukharin; the collectivisation, in its main outlines, was correct, as were the Five-year Plans and the main strategy during the war. Would your own criticism stop short of Stalin's policies and would you share this particular verdict?

GV Gorbachev spoke one-and-a-half years ago and, for that time, that was the right thing to say. But, of course, in the meantime, a great deal of new material - new data - has come to light. I agree with what Gorbachev said at that time but I think now the atmosphere is conducive to assessing

Stalin in the light in which I spoke in my introduction. It can't be denied that an industrially backward country was made an industrial one. Stalin's rôle in the war should not be undervalued. But at the same time, it is not permissible to overlook the price which was paid for these achievements. So my personal point of view is that Stalin is a negative figure in the historical context; he's a dictator and dictators cannot be the yardstick of progress. But, alas, the appearance of dictators in history is not a random one and Stalin's - like Cæsar's - appearance at that point can be explained by a whole number of factors. The Central Committee of the Communist Party has started issuing a very interesting journal: *The Izvestia of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.* I think a great many interesting, and heretofore unpublished, documents will appear in this journal and this will make it possible to clarify everything that needs to be clarified. Also, I would like to remind you that it was the Party which began the demystification of Stalin at the 20th Party Conference through Khrushchev, and I think the time will come when the Party will give a definitive analysis of this phenomenon; the analysis will sum up the criticism which has been gradually gathering force over the past twenty years - even though the ultimate judgement will always be made by history; and the jury at this historical trial are the people and this trial is in progress.

LT I can see General that you have shaken a usually rather talkative group and perhaps I can put a question myself to you -

GV Concrete questions

LT Could you say something about Stalin's knowledge of that feeling for Marxism and Marxism-Leninism.

GV I think Stalin was a Marxist and a revolutionary up to a certain period. He lacked, of course, Trotsky's brilliant erudition; not the same intellectual greatness as Lenin; not Bukharin's knowledge of economics; in many things theoretically, he was way below the abilities of Kamenev and Zinoviev (3). But the greatest secret of Stalin, why he became what he did, is the following: Stalin was able to monopolise Leninism. He became the sole interpreter, the sole "defender", in inverted commas, of Lenin. Bernard Shaw said that everyone takes from Homer that which suits him best; Stalin took what he needed from Lenin and interpreted it in the way that he needed. He surrounded all his activities with a veritable wall of Leninist thoughts and therefore he became unreachable. It turned out that if anyone were to speak against Stalin, he was then *de facto* speaking against Lenin as well. This is a classical example of Stalin the dogmatist and I would say that those who were the trail-blazers in pragmatics were delighted: what a wonderful pupil Stalin was! So to a significant degree, Stalin was able to turn Marxism into a sort of secular religion and I think this is one of the secrets why nobody could get at him. But the revolutionaries liked this. For whatever occasion arose, he had a Lenin quote ready. He always spoke as though he were the mouthpiece for Lenin, for Marx, for Engels. And ultimately he was able to get rid of all his opponents. So, theoretically, he was prepared for everything but he was dogmatic in his accomplishment of it.

LT Sir Frank Roberts. General, Sir Frank was many years in Moscow, including Ambassador in Moscow in the 60s. He spent his life dealing with the effects of Stalin.

FR General, it is a very great pleasure to meet you today and I've really got two points I wanted to raise; one past and another affecting more the present. I suppose I'm one of the few people in this room who actually negotiated with Stalin during the Berlin blockade and attended a lot of other negotiations - with Churchill, Eden, Bevin - between 1939 and 1947; and what was really rather surprising was that here was this man, with this (well, from our point of view) criminal record which you have brought out - the way he dealt with his own people - which we all knew; not necessarily the public, but the people dealing with him. But yet you had the situation during the war when such great statesmen as Roosevelt and Churchill really did begin to feel - affection would be too far - but they talked about Stalin as 'if only we treat him like a member of our club, he will perhaps behave like a member of our club'. And Roosevelt did seriously think - I think Churchill by that time was rather more sceptical - that the post-war international situation could be built on the relationship he had established with Stalin. It wasn't just a 'we're in the war together and we've got to fight a war together'. I've always asked myself how this came about.

One thing that occurred to me when one saw him was that Stalin was so extremely unlike the two other great dictators of the period. For us, dictators were people like Hitler and Mussolini; bombastic people who shouted at you and tried to impress you. Whereas to us - to me - meeting Stalin, he was first of all very small; smaller even than I am; he had a very soft voice; with us he never shouted at

all. Another clever feature was that when the going was rough, and in writing he could send very rough messages indeed, but when it was negotiating it was rather left to Molotov or even to Vyshinsky. I know in our Berlin blockade negotiations we had about seven or eight meetings. We only met Stalin twice. Only then, when he obviously thought there was a possibility of an agreement. So having had a very rough time with Mr Molotov, we suddenly found a rather agreeable Stalin. I mean, he wasn't giving anything away; but easy to negotiate with. And I've always asked myself, was this only with foreigners that he had this very skilful method of negotiation or did he behave in the same kind of way with his own people whom, after all, he could send to Siberia or shoot - as in fact he did? So that's my question of the past. For the present, what has struck me very much talking to some other distinguished Russians I've met recently, is that they are disposed - and I think Mr. Gorbachev is himself - to ascribe entirely to Stalin what went wrong with the revolution; to Stalin, the various evil ways of achieving sometimes perhaps great patriotic objectives. But there are people, of course, who would say that clearly Stalin was a much more evil character than Lenin but nevertheless the <u>seeds</u> of Stalinism were already there under Lenin. But Russians I've spoken to today they won't accept that at all. They say: no, no, no; Lenin is the untarnished hero; it all went wrong under Stalin. I wonder whether you could say something about that too?

GV I think you have really put your finger on some of the more outstanding psychological characteristics of Stalin. For Stalin's contemporaries, he was somehow like a statue which was illuminated by sunlight on one side and couldn't be illuminated on all sides. And everyone saw that sunlit side.

But the other side, the side that was in shadow, nobody really saw that; even his immediate entourage. I'll give one example, quoting a document from memory: on the 12th December 1938, Stalin and Molotov signed 30 lists of people condemned to death; altogether that was 3,187 people; and after that they went off to see two movies. When I read - after I'd read these documents, I went home; I couldn't sleep; it was as though I could hear the voices of all these people. Yes, it's a fact. Stalin was very civil in his general behaviour. He didn't raise his voice. He moved smoothly. He hardly every raised his voice in fact. But beyond this, what you could say surface respectability - gentility - there was total and uncontrolled power ... We didn't know a lot at that time. I would say that no amount of success, no amount of achievement, can excuse criminality of this kind. Otherwise we would be forced to have recourse all the time to double standards of morality.

To understand Stalin as a personality, it's very important to bear one point in mind: Stalin was a political man through and through. But politics and policies which don't go in step with morality can become a false value. I've read thousands of documents by Stalin and nowhere do you encounter any mention of things like conscience or honour or generosity or compassion. These were non-existent for him. So I would say that a great deal of what was achieved that was positive was not done by Stalin; it was by virtue of the people. And it's the achievement of the Soviet people; the enormous patience; the feeling of endeavour; incredible patience. As for the correlation between Stalin and Lenin, I must voice something that may seem like a heresy on the surface anyway. I personally am convinced that Lenin was a genius; and any genius usually is not understood fully by his contemporaries. Lenin's greatest tragedy lay in that he was

higher, so much higher than his contemporaries, the people who surrounded him; and many of his ideas, profound ideas, were not fully understood by his contemporaries. And the fact that Stalin remained in the post of General Secretary is the fault of Lenin's entourage. It took Lenin nine months to get through to make people understand what Stalin was, before he wrote a directive that Stalin must be removed from the post of General Secretary at all costs. And the most interesting thing is that it wasn't Stalin's political weaknessess that made him suspect [to Lenin] but his moral - the moral character ... his ethical lack ... his moral inadequacy - which would have repercussions for subsquent events. And I think that, if Lenin had lived another five or six years, then historical events would have taken a completely different turn. After Lenin's death, Stalin dispensed completely with words like 'democracy' and 'humanism'. So I would not agree with the thoughts that have ... are being voiced by some today: that all of Stalin's excesses were a logical consequence of Lenin and his ideas. I don't think so. Yes, without a doubt, Lenin was forced to take very harsh measures during the revolutionary years; but a revolution is a revolution. And the Russian revolutionaries always tended towards radicalism. So I would say that what Stalin did was not due to Lenin, but despite.

In response to a question by Jonathan Lewis, General Volkogonov said:

I think I've probably read most of the books written about Stalin in the West. Unfortunately I don't know any English but I do have French and German and I read in those languages and also, luckily, my wife knows English so she translates for me. I was particularly impressed by Robert Tucker's book about Stalin; I've met Robert Tucker

personally. Isaac Deutscher ... It's a very interesting book ... Souvarine ... (4). The list is a long one. There are many books and I think I've got them all. You may ask why I've overlooked Trotsky's book on Stalin; he managed to write six chapters of it. I've got just about everything that Trotsky has written, both at home and abroad - in exile. And I think that his life of Stalin is the weakest thing that Trotsky wrote. He wrote it and really all that came off his pen was hatred; ink and hatred. My opinions of the strengths and weaknesses of the Western 'Staliniana', let's say - the Western works are characterised by suppositions and analytical moments, analytical desires and I would say from my own point of view, what's history? There's a paradox here. History is like a prophecy which has been reversed into the past (5). You'll say, why prophecy? Because a great deal of what we don't know, of which we have no concrete evidence from the past, we have to reconstruct ourselves. And this is not a negative thing. So Western material about Stalin, without having access to a great many original sources, is in a way forced to think, to analyse, maybe to follow through a logical supposition but nonetheless, a *supposition*. The greatest weakness I think of Western literature on Stalin is that it hasn't sufficient basis in documents. I've met Roy Medvedev. I'm sure you all know his name; a Soviet historian (6); I have a great respect for him. He himself has admitted that never on any occasion has he been in any archive. Of course you can write volumes and volumes on the evidence of witnesses, or even following through a logical theory but I don't think that's enough. Only the facts ... the combining of documents together with human witness and logic, only that can give the necessary synthesis.

LT Could we just ask the General whether he would like to respond to that question about Kirov?

GV There have been, there are, and there will be, mysteries and secrets in history. But the fact that they're there makes it possible to open up and find the answers to them. Mystification should be put aside. I think the concrete situation, as far as the concrete events surrounding the death of Kirov, and of Stalin's wife, these will remain secrets (7). We will never know them fully. After Kirov's death, you could say three layers of people, three strata, were completely destroyed. You could say in a way it is like the mysteries and the constant wonderings about the death of Kennedy. Nobody will really know. There are so many factors. I think certainly Stalin did have some relationship to Kirov's death but he certainly gave no written order about it. And I doubt very much whether the future will yield any definite evidence as to Stalin's interest, as it were, in Kirov's death. Our historiography unfortunately, at the moment, is rife with all sorts of ideas and theories about Stalin; both trivial and significant ones. One writer has claimed that Stalin used to like to go for walks in the woods and fire ants' nests! But Stalin never ventured into the woods so of course that is nonsense! One serious writer has said that when Stalin's wife was buried, Stalin stood there and looked up from under beetling brows at everyone who was at the funeral to see who was there and who wasn't there; whereas I have established with recourse to documents that Stalin didn't even go to the cemetery for her funeral; and ideas and guesses of this kind really are detrimental to finding the truth. There is no need to invent new crimes for Stalin. He had quite an impressive toll of real crimes.

Mr. Malcolm Macintosh: Stalin, I think, started his purge of the Red Army in 1937 ... What are the General's views on his real motives? Was it fear or was it ... fear of ... dissidents? Or in the case of men like Tuckachevsky, was it personal jealousy?

GV Thank you. I understand your question. I'd like to say a couple of words about Stalin as a military leader. Stalin was a behind-the-desk commander. He only came to the front once whereas, for example, Roosevelt, despite physical handicaps, was just about everywhere; on cruises, on ships. Churchill travelled here, there and everywhere. But Stalin moved between two points: his *dacha* and the Kremlin; a distance of eight kilometres. But once in 1942 when Beria came along - the Germans were already approaching the Caucasus then - and started telling Stalin the details of his visit to the front and how close he was to smelling war, that flung him off his feet, off his own "heroism" at the moment. Stalin, who was an extremely clever man (I've mentioned this), couldn't help thinking that what would history say about him as a military leader if he hadn't paid a single visit to the front at that stage. And in July 1943 preparations were put under way for a visit by Stalin to the front. There were all sorts of versions, scenarios; all this was kept in great secrecy. So, finally there was an old railway line near the *dacha*; an old dilapidated train was placed on it, with a wagonful of firewood, water, a little old engine to pull it; for camouflage, Stalin went in that to the Kalinin and to the Western fronts; two fronts. The closest he actually came to the front line was 40 kilometres. He met two of the commanders, future marshals Sokholovsky and Yerovinta. He spent two hours talking to them; spent the night in the village of Kharasova; actually I have visited all the places

where Stalin had been: the *dacha*, this village in Potsdam; I tried to be wherever Stalin set foot. I've been to try to get the feel, the atmosphere. So Stalin had this meeting with them and that night he travelled back to Moscow and he certainly never met the troops. And as soon as he got to Moscow, back to Moscow, the first thing he did was dictate two telegrams: one, to President Roosevelt: "I apologise for not having responded to your last communication; in recent times I keep spending more and more time at the various fronts." The next one was to Churchill: "I have delayed in responding; I've just returned from the front; I go there very frequently now." You can check that, I think. We certainly have a record of this and I'm sure you have that in your archives as well.

But Stalin had one great advantage, and this is something that must be acknowledged no matter what one thinks of him - and certainly I think it's an enormous advantage; it wasn't his thinking as a strategist above that of the front line leaders; nor indeed was it his understanding of the military art; it's just that Stalin concentrated in his hands so much power during the war that not a single one of the military commanders came anywhere near that: political; economic; military; total power. I think this monopoly of power in one man's hands played a particularly tragic rôle in '41 and '42.

Now to get back to your other question. Stalin received translations, one copy of everything that was written by Trotsky from abroad. I don't think anybody, no matter who they are, likes to read negative things about themselves. But Stalin was able to read, re-read and read again everything bad that was written about him and while he did so he fired his own hatred - fuelled the fires of his own hatred. And at the end of 1936 Stalin was given a copy of a book written by

Trotsky in Norway *The Betrayed Revolution*. And I've seen in this book certain places are - I'll repeat them from memory - which Stalin underlined in red pencil. Trotsky wrote something along the lines "I know that quite a number of military people who surround Stalin, do not share his views. Moreover," wrote Trotsky "a political revolution is very possible." In other words, a political revolution; a plot; some kind of conspiracy. And then Trotsky said: "I'm offering the slogan 'Down with Stalin!' " And having read this, Stalin - who was suspicious of anything and everything - I should think was absolutely shattered by this and until Trotsky was killed in 1940 Stalin was afraid of him. So also his suspicions grew towards the military specialists who'd remained from, you know, the period of the revolution from the Tsarist army. And he once floated this idea, or resurrected it, in a very narrow circle talking to Yezhov, Molotov and Voroshilov. Yezhov, a total nonentity - morally, physically, in any way you like - understood Stalin's thought immediately and immediately began the fabrication of cases against senior military personnel who had served in the pre-revolutionary Tsarist army (8). You know a great deal but I'd like to mention one thing which I always found quite astounding; in '37 and '38, Stalin destroyed 1,500 people who, you could say, were of General rank (Generals were reintroduced as a rank only in 1940) but those of equivalent ranking. Whereas in the war against Hitler the Germans managed to destroy, despite everything - imprisonment, death - only a third of that figure. For ten years as a Colonel-General myself, I tried to assemble the names of those ranks destroyed; those who were executed and also those who were imprisoned and then subsequently died in imprisonment. I have two huge volumes of their names at home; a martyrology you could say; 43,000 officers died as a result of Stalin's purges (9). I don't

think that any army could ever have been weakened to such an extent anywhere; and all this due to Stalin's incredible degree of suspicion; his hostility; his fears; and I think in this we see one of the catastrophic reasons for failures of the beginning of the war.

LT May I say, General, that Mr Macintosh is not only the author of a famous history of the Soviet army called *Juggernaut*, but his own political experience began in Bulgaria when he had to act as the representative of the British Control Commission at a particularly unpleasant piece of Stalin's policy, the execution of the entire old Bulgarian parliament, by the Bulgarian Communists, 102 people, and the Regent and others, in early 1945.

Mr Floyd: The General has already mentioned the fact that Khrushchev's de-Stalinisation began many years ago. Could he comment? Could he say something about why Krushchev failed ...?..

LT ... Mr Floyd was for many years the Soviet correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*

GV I wish the greatest possible success to Gorbachev in the enormous task that he has undertaken; I think everyone wants him to succeed in this because the first attempt, by Khrushchev, unfortunately was not entirely successful and I think there are lessons to be learned from Khrushchev's unfortunately failed attempt at de-Stalinisation. I would say Khrushchev made two attempts: at the 20th Party Congress and also the 22nd. But he failed to take into account that bureaucracy is desired, not only for the bureaucrats themselves but also for millions and millions of people who

have become accustomed to living within this sort of framework - everything clear; everything decided; and irrespective of whether you work well, you work badly, you will still get your due. I would say in fact that bureaucracy as such has a definite influence on the formation of a new type of personality. It's inconceivable to say that Stalinism could have passed without a trace for several generations. It's wrong ... it's too simplistic to say that the difficulties encountered by Gorbachev are confined to opposition by certain people, or small groups of people; it's all much more complex than that. The system itself - the actual technology of power; the functioning of the economic sector - all that still bears the stamp of the past.

Four years ago, when all this started - *perestroika, glasnost* - I would say that we all tended to be romantics about this; we thought that it was enough to want things to change and that they would. Personally I'm an optimist, but I think several times things are going to get worse before they get better. But there's no viable alternative; we don't have any other way out; and, just speaking as a member of society, I think we must all strain every sinew to help Gorbachev to move forward, progressively; indeed, to a better future. And occasionally the Western attitude brings to mind to me the following association. You probably know the works of the wonderful American science fiction writer, Robert - Arthur Clarke. He has written a wonderful story which, well, in Russian translates into *Sunlit Sails*. There's a race on in outer space between cosmic yachts, and Clarke says that even in the twenty-first century there will be differences; different world views; but that the competition will shift, not just between people living on one planet but between planets and galaxies coming up against each other. I think Clarke has tended to overlook the fact that people living on

one planet have a great deal more in common than that which divides them; and I think the West has tended to underrate the enormous changes which are taking place in Marxism now; in the theory; in the policies; acknowledging the primacy of general human interests above the interests of purely Party factors. And I think this is one of the most important steps and achievements of Gorbachev in this process of de-Stalinisation because Stalinism is based on confrontation; total confrontation; and I think that the 'de-Stalinisation', if you like, of international relations - that is the basis of this sort of planetary union. When human interests are the cardinal ones; they're the points of reference; co-operation; humanism; justice. These are not utopian concepts. I love English literature very much, so I'd like to bring another example out of that literature to illustrate my point. Bernard Shaw had a very interesting idea about a super human being. But this man has nothing to do with the Nietzschean concept of the super being and I personally like Shaw's concept: that we must strive for a super being; one who is compassionate; one who is humane; who's a positive force. And I think in that way that he has drawn an outline of that ideal towards which we ought to strive. So to sum up. Yes, certainly we're facing a great many difficulties; I would say perhaps it's a very critical time right now; but I'm an optimist and I think we'll be able to come through and win through.

LT The Reverend Michael Bourdeaux, the President of Keston College.

MB ... you, General Volkogonov, were obviously very moved by the revelations you discovered in the Stalin ... perhaps tell us .... stories about the physical conditions of

those archives; were they attached to your command? That's the general question. Then, more specifically, does this lead you to any reflection on Stalin's nationality policy as compared with Gorbachev's ... Where is the Soviet Union going with its nationality policy in the light of what happened in the past ...?..

GV I managed to gain access to many archives and I would like to stress that I've said earlier that nobody allowed me access; but then again, nobody forbade me access. But in order to facilitate my work, I retired voluntarily from my position as the Head of the Military Historical Institute and I think that the best archives, the more complete archives, are the military ones; simply because the military leaders were usually among the higher echelons of the Party, so that the military archives included not just purely military material but also material with political and other allusions, simply because the military leadership was involved in other aspects. The Central Party archive has a collection which is popularly known as "the Stalin cupboard" and there are a great many interesting documents there. One should also say that Stalin - unlike many contemporary military leaders, political leaders - wrote all his own notes. For example, I looked at his address to the 18th Party Congress in '39; 80% of his address was written by hand; in other words, he spoke from handwritten notes. So the apparatus, the Party apparatus, had prepared the address but he'd crossed out just about all of it and re-written it himself. It's hard to imagine a contemporary politician who doesn't have a secretary, researchers, and so on. But it was a facet of Stalin. He just wrote the material himself, although he had assistants. Particularly impressive and interesting were, for example, such things as I found about twenty to thirty

notes about the size of these little notebooks here referring ... come from the 1920s, in which he writes, for example, a note: "Dear Yllenid Mytriovnev" - he was writing to Stassiva who was a technical secretary; "Could you advance me twenty roubles before the next payday; I promise to return it in August". Then a subsequent note: "Could you advance from the Party funds thirty roubles until the next payday; I'll return them next month". So, there were notes like that; a couple of dozen of them, even though he was the General Secretary.

After his death, a list was compiled of his personal belongings. I've seen this list. He had two suits; a greatcoat; felt boots; not a single decent picture; and all the books didn't belong to him; they're all Party literature. And there are some people who are apologists for Stalin who point this out as a positive feature; they say, see how unavaricious, how generous and how unmaterialistic he was! And they don't understand that, for someone like that, someone who had power of life and death over countless millions of people, small material goods are of no importance; the only thing that is important is power. His priorities, his values were completely different to your average middle-class citizen. So, to return to your question; yes, the archives are being opened up; they're being opened up far too slowly; we would like them to be opened up more quickly. Our Institute of Military History is preparing a comprehensive edition of various military documents from the general staff and so on; these will be coming out in volumes one after the other. I've already mentioned that there's a new journal out now, *Izvestia of the Central Committee*, and this journal will print just documents; where probably Khrushchev's [secret] address to the Party, with a 30-year delay, is going to be published; an address which the whole world knows but to

which we had no access. Of course, historians have known them; I've had it among my documents, but the general public has not. And I think that the opening of the archives is a very hopeful sign and I think that in time, I'm certain of this, that the archives will become accessible to - not just the Soviet historians, but to others.

As for the nationalities' question, I would not deny that, in Stalin's time, the nationality - the whole nationalities issue was badly handled. Stalin could launch repressions against entire nations. He was cruel towards certain nations. But I would say, on the whole, that we have achieved a multi-nationality and this has been turned into a source of strength. Hitler had a specific plan towards the destruction of the Soviet Union; we know that this strategy failed and, because of that, I would say that it's wrong. It would be wrong to paint the nationalities picture just in dark colours. There were certain successes, not because of Stalin but possibly because of the relations which had developed among people - traditionally among the various peoples which form the Soviet Union. At the moment in our country, unfortunately, there are certain very negative facets in the sphere of the nationalities question and preparations are under way for a Party Plenum devoted to the nationalities question. But I have an idea of my own, drawing it from the history of Russia; not the Soviet Union but Russian history of the past. Russia was always a multi-national State and the degree of toleration extended by one nation to another also cannot just be written off. One can't overlook the economic and cultural ties which existed and continue to exist within the framework of the Union. And any attempt to de-stabilise them will have repercussions, not just for one republic but will have a knock-on effect for the others as well. And I think the solution - this is my personal

viewpoint, but I think this will be the viewpoint of the Government - lies in granting a greater degree of autonomy and independence in the economic, cultural, and so on, sphere; on a regional basis. But it should also not be to the detriment of the central ties, as it were; the binding forces which keep the Union together. Ways will be devised. Reforms will be devised which will satisfy both the central interests and the interests of the individual republics. We need a new type, a better type, of relationship - a basis for relations - between the various national groups and I think we will be able to find this basis without threatening the integrity of the Union. I don't think that idea would find support.

LT I now ask Dr. George Urban, who himself has written a book entitled *Stalinism* - among many books - I can't help wondering whether he would wish to write another book after considering what we've heard this morning. At all events, he has a question which will perhaps assist in the business of literary revision. Dr. Urban.

GU I just wonder whether the General does not fear that the speed and thoroughness - and indeed I would say the recklessness - of de-Stalinisation has begun to threaten the Soviet system itself? Isn't it resented by the ordinary people who had a great stake in Stalinism? Isn't the famous letter which appeared in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* by Nina Andreyeva last year a sure sign that a large part of the Soviet population is extremely unhappy about de-Stalinisation because it feels that its past, its honour, almost its very existence, is being dragged into the dust-heap day after day by the sort of revelations that we've had over the past couple of years? Now I have a subsidiary question here: General Volkogonov, whose writings I very much admire, gave an interview in *Trud*,

the journal *Trud* last June; and in it he said the following: "Ultimately the cult was not created only by Stalin himself. It was also created by others. In this context, we are all responsible for it". I'd be very much interested in how the General would interpret this notion that 'we are all responsible for it', and what sort of consequences does he think ought to be drawn from this. Thank you.

GV This is a very interesting series of questions that you ask. But as a philosopher as well as a historian I try to analyse a whole spectrum of social phenomenona. Allow me to illustrate. After extracts out of my book were published in *Pravda*, in *The Literary Gazette*, in a number of other publications, I received 4,000 letters in the period of a month. So, as a sociologist might say, they were probably a representative sample. It's not a gallup poll but it does give a picture of the reaction to the concept which I set out. You know some of the elements of my concept of the situation. The main element, the pivotal moment, is that we must change. If we wish to remain a great power, a great nation, we must undertake certain very serious changes; and basing my ideas on documentary evidence, ... what was the reaction? Out of these 4,000 letters (my wife helped in the sorting and the reading of them, and the letters are still coming in), so I would say that 60-65% of these letters do support my idea that we must change; we must change in order to continue for the better. And I think, despite the damage that has been inflicted on socialist ideas, they do still have something for the future; they still have reserves which can be drawn. And about 60-65% feel that, yes, the truth must be told in order to move forward. But 20-25% are against. The writers of these kind of letters are proceeding from Stalinism; a negative approach, I would say, to some degree or another,

towards those changes which are taking place today. It's not as though the writers of these letters are against improvements: that our life generally should become better. They are simply afraid of - as you said - the speed of these changes; the momentum. Many are not so much afraid of the economic situation; they are afraid of the whole atmosphere which has been created by *glasnost*. This is hard in a society where, for decades, you have been able to foretell ahead who would say what; what would be written in the newspapers; and so, for many, the changes now are almost akin to anarchy. I think you could say our country, our society as a whole, is just learning the alphabet of democracy. And one should understand these people.

As for the other 10% or so of the letters, they simply express intellectual ferment. They fully understand that there is no going back to the past; that that's not tenable; but equally unacceptable, they find the situation at the moment; and, really, they have no clear conception of what does the future hold; what can the future hold; and because of that you do get divisions in societies; in, say, appraisals of Stalinism; this is inevitable. But I think the majority of our society, and certainly our leadership, understands that the way forward will be painful; very difficult. I don't think that these processes will put the Soviet system, as a system, under threat. But I think there will be immense social changes which perhaps will be seen by some as a moving away from, or even as a heresy of, socialism. But these changes will take place. I think we've probably only now come to realise how complex, how difficult, are the problems that we have thrown out to be looked at and discussed. But as I've said, I'm an optimist. And if you look back at our history, our people have shown that they have immense strength; and immense patience; a great deal of

inherited wisdom; a faith in high ideals. And I think we shall be able to emerge with honour out of this extremely trying social dilemma.

GU What about the responsibility?

GV Yes, I have said that it would be over-simplistic to ascribe all the blame to one person. I think that everybody is responsible, but to their own degrees. The entourage was greatly responsible for what happened; the Party; and the people, of course, too. There is always the voice of conscience which must always exist. But, in our society, there <u>was</u> an unfortunate tendency to agree; to nod at the right moment; but not to oppose. Yet it's a great and indisputable maxim of science that one must dispute. But, from the archives, I've learned that there were a great many of people who protested in Stalin's time but, alas, their voices were not heard. These protests were not very daring; not very loud; but they were there. So when I say that 'everybody' was responsible, I was thinking in the broader historical concept, because you can't just lift the responsibility off a nation entirely for what happened. You would introduce too fatalistic a note; then everything would hinge on the fact whether we are unlucky or [lucky] in this or that particular leader. The ruling factor, after all, is the <u>degree</u> of democracy which extends or which influences the leadership or leading forces of any society. And I think we are standing at the moment at the beginning of this particular path.

LT Alan Bullock. Lord Bullock is, of course, the biographer not only of Hitler but also of Ernest Bevin.

LB Could I take us back for a moment to the question of documentation. As I understand what the General has said, he has had access to Central Committee archives. That, I presume, is where the bulk of the material is. I want to ask two questions, if I may. First, do those archives contain - Stalin archives, executive notes by Stalin - do they contain many records of conversations, of negotiations? Did Stalin have someone there to take down Minutes of all his discussions?

GV I can't say that I have seen every single documents in the country; and this is why it could be said that maybe what I have written is a sketch, rather than the total portrait of Stalin. I think there will be books later on; further literature which will proceed from the bases being laid down now. But I think I have seen the most comprehensive archives; that's the archive of the October revolution and the military archives. I did not have access to all the Party archives; even though I did see a lot - but certainly not the entire archives. (For you personally, perhaps it would be interesting to know that we have enormous Nazi archives which were brought back after the war. I think the numbers of these particular documents would run into millions.)

As for whether there was a stenographic or other record kept of Stalin's meetings and discussions, it was very very rare for concrete discussions on important matters to be minuted as they went along. This was done only at meetings of the Politburo and the Central Committee. In other cases, you can establish what was under discussion and what the

result was. But then, there are other documents: for example, Molotov's diplomatic papers, and I have had access to them; Malenkov's, Khrushshev's working notes. And a great deal can be resurrected from that; by working backwards from the resolutions taken on this or that matter; the military archives, the military documents, for example, with which I am more at home than any others. The orders, directives, other documents that were personally signed by Stalin; people like Zukhov, would frequently annotate these documents to say when the discussion took place and further details like that for their own information.

It's very interesting to look at Stalin's personal resolutions; always very laconic; about 90% of them written out in lead pencil; either red or blue pencil; he very rarely used a pen. I've hundreds of them; xeroxes of the more interesting resolutions like that. Stalin was always very categorical with his assessments. But he tried to avoid writing the harsher - the more, you might say, the more bloodstained/blunt things; he tried to avoid putting them down on paper. For example, there's a list which was submitted to him in '37; a large list of Party workers who were to be executed; and he would write "approved", then "I" *[sic; not "J"]* then "St"; not his full name; just an abbreviation like that; and then made a point of ensuring that the signatures of the other Politburo would be on that document as well. He thought about history; what would history say about him? He didn't want to remain the sole executioner and he preferred to do it in a group.

LB May I just ask one other question; what is better than what the General had access to?

GV The KGB archives, the '37 and '38, they are the same archives as those of the Ministry of Internal Affairs at the time: the MVD. And copies of just about all those documents, the ones relevant to the Terror years, are in the archive of the Supreme Court and I would suggest that the archives of all the Secret Services - not just ours, but in just about every country - they're beyond a double layer of veils and curtains. The CIA and other Secret Services are very careful to safeguard their secrets. I think you will agree that your Secret Services too are not too keen to show everything that they possess to the world.

LB I was thinking about records of the camps.

GV There are such lists and they are being opened up now; in fact there's s special committee which does send information to, say, relatives of the victims of the camps; if they ask for it, they are supplied with whatever information there is. ... In my own case, my father was executed in 1937, but, to this day I have not been able to establish when he was executed, where he was executed, and where he was buried; despite all my efforts to find out about this. And here you have the paradox of the system. That my father was executed; my mother was sent into exile; and yet, at the age of 40, I was given the opportunities by the State to become a General at the age of 40; a professor at the age of 38. So you do get this paradox of repression, on one hand, and yet care for those who serve, as it were, on the other.

LT I'm going to take first - they tell me they're going to a meeting quite early - first Mr Nils Taube of Jacob Rothschild Holdings

NT General, we've heard discussion about the expansion of the Russian empire. ... There was, before 1918, no real democracy in Russia. And when put to the test, countries which were part of the Russian Empire, voted to leave the Russian Empire. ... Does he not think it is possible, if democracy does ... into Russia, there'll be outlying countries will vote ... perhaps want something different ...

GV I think there are people - maybe whole groups in the various republics - who would certainly say 'yes' in reply to your questions. But I think that there is a basic difference in what you say and the situation in our republics at the moment. When the USSR was formed in 1922, of course, there could be no talk about colonies of any description. It was a union of republics on an equal basis; this was formulated under Lenin. And I think as a whole that was a progressive decision at the time. It's a totally different matter that Stalin perpetrated a number of very serious errors in the nationalist policies. For example, the deportations of what was known as the 'nationalist bourgeoisie'; repressions of entire ethnic groups; significant violations of the rights of various national groups. And I think that the events of today are aimed at giving a greater degree of independence for national cultures. It's expressed in very acute ways in many respects - for example, in the Baltics. But one should remember that in those very same Baltic states there are a lot of Russians, Byelorussians, Ukrainians and the percentage of those other ethnic groups is frequently no less than the percentage of that national group itself. And this is an objective fact and one that must be borne in mind; justice towards one group should not turn into injustice against another. I think the differences, the contradictions - indeed, the conflicts - taking part in several regions today

will be resolved; and they can be resolved without resorting to the extreme measures of which, I think, you're speaking.

LT Sir Frank Roberts has another question, I think.

FR Thank you very much. Well, we've dealt a lot with the pre-war and the war and the effect today. I wanted to ask just two questions which relate to the post-war period. The first is: here was Stalin who came out of the war the acknowledged leader; he didn't have to fight for power any more; he had all the power in his hands and was highly regarded at the time; and yet within a few years - in fact almost immediately, as we now know - he was starting yet another Terror which ended up in 1953 with the Doctors' plot; and Molotov was jolly nearly afraid of being bumped off himself; Mayakovsky had been sent to prison long before that; Molotov's wife to Siberia; and so on; theatre people like Mikhoels had been murdered, and so on (10); and whilst one can, in an entirely amoral way, understand what he was doing before the war to acquire and retain power, one cannot see what he could have had in mind by the second Terror - excepting only that he was this frightfully suspicious character; I wonder if you could cast a bit more light upon that?

And the second question, which arose from your very interesting report on what Stalin left behind him; no books; in that immediate post-war period when I was in Moscow, Stalin was supposed - and, indeed, there's a lot of evidence - to take rather a keen, I mean not always a very helpful but a very keen, interest in the arts. Shostakovich and Prokoviev were summoned to the Kremlin; not a very pleasant meeting, but still, he was interested in music; Tarle, the great Soviet historian, I remember, told us that Stalin had not only

read his first volume on Nicholas I but when Zdhanov had condemned the second volume, Stalin rang up Tarle in the middle of the night to say: I've read your second volume and I find it very good; and Tarle had the presence of mind to say: will you please tell Zdhanov and get the condemnation taken away (11). Similarly, consider the first production of *Boris Godunov* after the war, which we were all looking forward to. If you hadn't got to the first night you never saw it because it was then taken off since Stalin had been to see it and hadn't liked it; so it's very odd to me that this man had no books at all; no interest in them; so his interest in the arts - was it purely political, or not?

GV As regard to your first question, indeed it's interesting that, immediately after the war, when seemingly there was no reason for it, Stalin launched the second wave - maybe not a very noticeable one but certainly a wave - of terror; what need had he? People who returned from the war, especially those who had had contact with the Allies, with the intelligentsia, treasured a hope that after the war a great many things would change. For example, after 1812 - after Napoleon's defeat - how many free liberal ideas were brought back from Paris! And there was an unexpressed yet definite hope among the people about the imminence of positive change. There was a hope of greater democracy; of freedom; they weren't really very well expressed, or solidified, but they were there. And this was further fuelled by the fact that immediately after the war there was a decline in repression; there wasn't this visible and tangible repressive atmosphere.

Stalin felt this very, very quickly; much more quickly than others. And the first sign that - you know, that this would not go on - was the resolution ... in the journals *Zvezda* and *Bolshevik*. It wasn't the journals

themselves that were in question but this was Stalin's way of showing that nothing is going to change; the system must remain as it is. Yes, it was the preservation of the system; he put paid to any hopes that maybe somehow it could be brought down. Yet, objectively speaking, you could ask, what need for it? He had consolidated his position; the system had withstood the test so - why do anything else? But every action has a reaction and certainly not all the creative intelligentsia were able to go along with it. So, on the one hand, in 1947, you have Stalin taking the death penalty off the statute books, but at the same time you have a rising number of people being liquidated towards the end of the '40s. This was the third terrible wave; the first was '29-30; the second in 1937-38; and this third wave '47-49 where you did not have the death penalty but you had an enormous people arrested and exiled.

I would say that in certain cases Stalin exhibited almost a maniacal attachment, a manic attachment, towards terror. He was not paranoid. He wasn't psychologically disturbed. He was morally ill. For example, in 1948 he dictated the following resolution ... - I cite from memory -: "Create 20 special camps and make the first available for the Trotskyists" (of whom there were none left). "Mensheviks, for the White Hussars, for dangerous Nationalists ..." In other words, people who had already been destroyed! Yet here you have the directive to establish twenty camps to hold them. So he probably assumed that there would be a re-emergence; that there would be neo-Trotskyists, neo-Hussars, neo-Mensheviks, and so on. The camps were to be created and these people were to be sought out and put into them. And in six months' time, sure enough, those twenty camps were full.

At the same time it was on Stalin's orders that people who served sentences of, say, eight or ten years, could

not - upon completion of their sentence - return to their previous residence but would have to stay in those regions where they had served their sentence and remain there as free labourers, so to speak.

I think that it is an unprecedented historical fact that Stalin, who destroyed thousands upon thousands upon thousands of people, in that same time managed to acquire the love of yet more people. Towards the end of his life Stalin became even more suspicious of everything and his main idea, his fixation, was that nothing should change; that things should go on; pick up from the way they were before the war. And this brought about, not the conservation of society but the stagnation of it.

George Vassilchikov (12): I have a question on what you have just been saying. ... The first one is, did you find in your military archives any records of Stalin's orders regarding the prisoners of war who were returned to Russia and then were themselves either sent to the Gulag? And the second question relates to the famous Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Recently, only a few months ago, Mr Falin (13), who is a very well-known man, denied the existence of the secret protocols. Now the whole world knows that they exist; have you any idea when they will be officially acknowledged to exist?

GV I would like to say that even though the Soviet Union was not a member of the Geneva Convention, German prisoners were treated as well as was possible under the circumstances. For example, workers received 400 grams of bread and prisoners received 700; and there were certainly no atrocities comparable to the ones perpetrated in the German concentration camps. The prisoners did have an opportunity to survive in <u>reasonable</u> conditions.

GV ... That was not the point. I was referring not to the Germans; I was referring to the Soviets who after the war came back to Russia.

GV Yes, there were a lot of Soviet POWs; the Germans had a lot of prisoners, especially in 1941. Stalin was very suspicious of anyone who had been a prisoner of war and as they were freed, those who managed to break out of encirclement, special camps were set up to check out those who had been prisoners. These checks, as it were, were carried out by the NKVD. I don't know the numbers who went straight from these checks straight into the camps. I do know that quite a lot were returned to the front, but I really can't give you any figures; I don't know them. Beria reported in 1944 that they had released from imprisonment a General of the gendarmerie from Yugoslavia: General Stephanovich. And he said that for three months he had been in the same camp as Stalin's son Jacob (14); and he said that Stalin's son had behaved with honour; for instance, he would refuse to rise whenever a German officer would walk in. He was frequently thrown into punishment cell for this but he maintained that stand. Stalin's main fear was that his son would be broken; not so much, perhaps, because it was <u>his</u> son but because he feared that he would start working against the country. Dolores Ibarruri (15), in her book has recounted that a special group was formed from the Blue Division which was supposed to penetrate that camp and rescue Stalin's son from it. But the group was killed. The Stalin archive contains a document by Count Bernadotte who suggested that he use his influence with the Red Cross to try to have Stalin's son released from the camp; and when Molotov presented this document - this offer - to Stalin, he read it; he was silent for a very long time; and then he just turned it face down

and never mentioned it again. This was noted by Basgroviskbon who was there at the time and Stalin never ever referred to the question of his son again. So that, you could say, was typical of Stalin's attitude towards prisoners. His son was not an exception and anyone who had been imprisoned, so far as Stalin was concerned, warranted suspicion.

As for the so-called 'secret' protocol, the '39 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, I think there is not a single person alive who has actually seen this original document (16). But I think it's not the document *per se*; but the fact that there was agreement. It's a different matter when you start asking in which <u>form</u> they existed. I think the copy now being circulated is probably the copy which Ribbentrop brought back with him, which Stalin may not have signed but on which they reached, well, a gentleman's agreement. So about this Pact, I would say that historically Stalin needed it; when the English and French missions came to Moscow with their suggestions, Voroshilov presented a list of those who had accompanied the heads of these delegations. Stalin looked at the list and he said that there were captains among the British team, people of lower ranks, and he looked bleak when he saw that these lower-ranking officers - he said the whole undertaking is ridiculous, it doesn't warrant serious attention.

Really Stalin had three choices in 1939: either to go into alliance with the Western democracies - that would have been the best solution; or a sort of a devil's pact with Hitler; or, to remain alone. His main feeling was that they would all - the West, Japan, Germany - that they would all unite against him. With hindsight, one can say certainly that Stalin was impatient and also that certainly means of negotiating with the Western Allies could have been found.

But Stalin felt that he was politically in an emergency situation, and he looked for the quickest and easiest way out. So I think that historically, and politically, Stalin had no choice but to take this, but to agree to this pact even though, morally and in all other respects, it was wrong. And I personally am convinced that the secret agreements existed in verbal, not in documentary, form, because General Kesselring (then the German Military Attaché in Moscow), when there came the clash of Soviet and German forces in Poland, 'phoned the General Staff with the demand that the forces withdraw - presumably to some points previously agreed: a certain number of kilometres in each direction. So I think this was political pragmatism which, unfortunately, history has dictated throughout the ages. So this is my somewhat ambivalent attitude towards it; the pact, to a degree, I must endorse; the protocols, even though I have never seen the protocols, I would condemn outright.

LT Mr Longhi was an interpreter at both Yalta and Potsdam and I think he has a question based on his experience to put to you.

HL Like several people in this country I lived as a foreigner in the Soviet Union during some of the periods that you were talking about and, in fact, I interpreted for various people with Stalin, over a period of six years altogether. And I did have the opportunity during that time to sort of sit back occasionally and wonder what the people round him thought of Stalin. And going beyond that, I wondered why, or whether, any of them doubted him. The professor has pointed to the paradox that there were, in the people of the Soviet Union, many whose love Stalin had won. But what about the people who <u>knew</u>; who knew what it was all about?

Now I come really to the core of my question which you touched on; during the period that I was there, Stalin was shown as a true heir of Lenin; that he was an exponent of every facet of Leninism. Now that was not only in the Soviet Union but outside; and I'm talking of the period even - or the period particularly - after the war. In this country even; the rest of Europe; and certainly in Eastern Europe, in the East European countries, Stalin was the true apostle of Lenin. Now clearly there were people in the Soviet Union who knew this was not true. And you, Professor, have told us in your answer to Dr. Urban that certain people did raise objections; but of course they were squashed. And we know why. We know why they couldn't speak out and why people since have not spoken out. It was because of the system that Stalin had created and I don't only mean, as you said before, that Stalin had a quotation from Lenin to beat down his opponents; but the system that he created - or enlarged upon, should I now say - was a system that had been set up by Lenin. The check-up pre-dated Stalin. Now, there are many people - not only in this country but doubtless in the Soviet Union - who, I understand even today say to what extent was Lenin responsible; if not for Stalin himself, but for the system which enabled Stalin to stay in power and beat down his opponents. That's the question.

GV Lenin didn't live long after the revolution. In fact you could say he was active for some five years. You must realise that such an enormous agriculturally-based country - I think that H. G. Wells put it quite well; *Russia in Twilight*; an enormous flat country where hundreds upon thousands of villages were plunged into darkness whenever the sun went down; an absence of democratic traditions; a very strong tendency in favour of Tsarism; lack of social and

economic development. And, side by side that, the radical nature of a small Party. There were quite a number of intellectuals in Lenin's entourage but I think that, even if Lenin were three times the genius he was, to bring in and implement in fact all the ideas and all the plans that he wanted, would have been absolutely impossible. Lenin sketched in the general outlines; the basics, perhaps, of this system; and the main idea that runs through his last letters is the necessity to preserve the power of the people and struggle against bureaucracy. It's not just by chance that, after Lenin died, Stalin had these documents salted away in caves. It was in fact tantamount to declaring a moratorium on the basic ideas of Lenin. So, no; I don't accept the thesis that Lenin was responsible for what Stalin did. It's also said nowadays that the original fault traces back to Marxism. Theory, after all, is not a political programme. After all, Marx and Engels who a hundred years ago worked in Germany and even here in London, were not outlining a political programme for the Bolsheviks. Can Marx be accused of what has been done by Pol Pot or Mao Tse-tung? I think the interpretation of any theory is the prerogative of politicians; of a political party; a political force. And so in this context, you know, it's frequently said the responsibility for these deformations can be traced back to Lenin. I don't accept this. I think that the tragedy lies in the fact that Lenin was not able to realise his idea of real power to the people. But as for who's responsible, well we've already talked about that.

LT I think we've got time for three questions; I apologise for those who won't have time to ask a question; there will probably be an opportunity of seeing General Volkogonov another time. First of all, Nora Beloff.

NB I have two rather painful questions

LT Nora Beloff spent many years as the foreign editor of the *Observer* and has written notable books about Yugoslavia in particular.

NB Although I was very impressed with the scale and the stamina of the General's work, would he not think it desirable - even helpful - to allow aspects of the war and that post-war period, to be examined by <u>international</u> authors? I was interested that he says that he read in that very remarkable novel of the battle of Stalingrad, Vassily Grossman's book [*Life and Fate*] a very obvious analogy between Nazism and Stalinism; and the General says himself that Stalin was probably wrong in 1939 and it was possibly true of Hitler that both hurt not just people of their own nationality but international groups; would it not be a help to have international bodies, international commissions, looking at this history? Second - a small question; our own historians, West historians, are asking whether the terror in the 1930s was really against the Kulaks [i.e., large farmers], the peasants, or whether it was directed against Ukrainians? Has the General done enough work yet to feel he can pronounce on that distinction?

GV There was a great deal of talk in the country at one stage - there is less talk about it now - about the feasibility of holding a sort of an international tribunal to judge Stalin. One hears voices that his body should be removed from the Red Square, and so on. My own viewpoint is as follows. I think that really it's senseless to bring to bring the dead to trial. History should not be used as a method either of revenge or derision. Human judgements are

ephemeral; the judgements of history are eternal. As for any kind of international tribunal, I think it's even less feasible. He was the national leader of our country and it's for the people to express their opinion. As for the suggestions that his body should be removed from the Red Square, I feel that we ought not to disturb the graves of the dead. We are not heathen.

NB I'm sorry, I think you must have misunderstood my question; I quite agree it would be absurd to have a judgement or a tribunal; all I meant was that historians from other countries that were concerned should also be allowed to look in!

GV This is a personal opinion. Certainly it wasn't just our people who suffered because of Stalin. For example, the conflict with Yugoslavia can be laid directly at his door. He could have saved Ernst Thaelmann, but he didn't (17). He didn't want to approach Hitler. He refused to approach Hitler personally, although he was given to understand that if he did apply on Thaelmann's behalf, he would save him. However, as one dictator to another, he found this unacceptable. And I think it's a good maxim for historians: that dead leaders should be judged by history. I think there's a principle involved here and I hope that you agree with this principle?

NB Yes, I agree

LT Mr Laurence Kelly, the biographer of Lermontov.

LK If I could refer back to the General's remarks about *glasnost* ... and the huge controversy about Stalin and the

Gulag as an economic activity as well as a penitentiary; we had in the West the extraordinary two volumes of Solzhenitsyn describing a world which is unbelievable. Is there a Soviet account to match this eyewitness history of the Gulag? And if not, who will undertake this enormous task?

GV Well I can only give my own personal opinion of Solzhenitsyn. I think he is a great artist; a great writer. But his political viewpoints, the basis from which he proceeds is that of a monarchist, and his other political viewpoints I personally find unacceptable. A number of his works were published in the country after the 20th Party Conference. I think the day will come when he will be published. But what does make things difficult is his continuing hostility even to *perestroika* and *glasnost* at the moment. He continues to oppose on a very acutely hostile level and I think time perhaps is needed here as well. Time is the best biographer. Time is the best editor. And time is the best healer. We, for example, today are not arguing about the Punic Wars; or about Henry VII; about Cromwell. One <u>can</u> argue certainly; but all these personalities, their rôle in history has already been defined and determined - whereas the life of Stalin still has a vital link with the many processes that are going on in our country right now and this really is the nub of the matter.

LT Professor Julius Gould. Professor Gould was for many years a professor of sociology at the university of Nottingham.

JG We have had a very moving account about how Stalin was influenced by receiving reports of what was written by, among others, Trotsky. Did he have access to all comments

made by Western sources, like Bernard Shaw? Was he cheered up by such?

GV Stalin had a great predilection for people who, shall we say, had a measure of blue blood in their veins. To the higher élite, to higher-born people he was obsequious: I'll give you a couple of examples and then comment if I may. In May 1945 he received a telegram that in some village or other the Soviet troops had encountered the wife of Kaiser Wilhelm II. Stalin annotated this immediately that she was to be extended every courtesy, to be treated with consideration. In other words, he felt that here was a person of some importance and, therefore, it behoved him to show consideration. In one Polish camp, they encountered the former republican president of Spain - Largo Caballero (18); he was on the brink of death; in a very bad state. The order was, via Switzerland, to telegraph to Spain that he is alive and do everything possible to help him. In '45, as you know, the Chinese Emperor Pu Yi was interned in Manchuria with his family; he was sent to Changchun and from there to Khabarovsk. In fact he spent some five or six years in the Soviet Union. They must have worked on him quite well but, in the end, the Emperor Pu Yi wrote a letter to Stalin. It was all done in large characters and accompanied by a Russian translation in which Pu Yi wrote the following: "I have just read your work on the fundamentals of Leninism and have come to realise what a great man you are and what a democratic country the Soviet Union is. I ask you that you let me remain in the Soviet Union as a simple worker". Stalin annotated a resolution: "Give him to the Chinese". I mention this just to show that Stalin had a particular attitude of reverence towards people who had a name, who were famous in some way. But this was for names from abroad.

Names within the country itself had a much less significance for him. At the end of the '40s Beria reported to Stalin (again quoting from memory), the great grandson of Pestel, one of the leading Decembrists under Alexander I - the name means a great deal - that this grandson of Pestel had been in a camp for ten years now; that he had lost his arm and that his relatives had been petitioning for his release from the camp; that he'd had this arm amputated, that he was very ill. Stalin's answer to that was, how does he behave himself? And Beria, who knew what the question would be, had a readymade answer that, as in the past, he is conducting anti-Soviet agitation in the camps. And Stalin simply turned that sheet of paper over and no action followed.

Stalin was a mountebank, I would say; he was an actor. He knew how to create an impression. He was very adept at conveying the image he wanted to convey. So it's not surprising that Truman and Churchill and Roosevelt were all impressed by him. He knew how to act out a part; the part of the leader; the part of the Father of the Nation; the part of the military leader; and this ought not to be forgotten. But then, as far as political leaders were concerned, he knew who was who and what was what; but certainly he had his own opinions about them; even though he was unfailingly civil. For example, he always considered that De Gaulle was too big for his boots. Churchill, despite their many and lengthy meetings over a bottle, he could nevertheless never forgive him for the fact that he was one of the people who had wanted to stifle the creation of the Soviet Union in its very infancy. But in August ... admittedly in August 1942, when Stalin and Churchill were having a late supper together, the day before Churchill was due to fly out, he said to Churchill: "Let's not turn over the past, the past belongs to God". His seminary education

frequently manifested himself in his vocabulary, in everything he said. For example, he would say "Thank God" - that sort of thing. In fact his last words at the Potsdam Conference were: "Thank God we're finished".

LT With the greatest regret, and apologies to those who caught my eye to put questions to General Volkogonov and who are very distinguished people, I must draw this extremely interesting discussion to an end. The General will be talking tomorrow at a seminar in Oxford, will be giving a lecture in the London School of Economics on Wednesday and will be giving a press conference in the House of Lords on Thursday morning. If perhaps some of those questions you wished to put to the General were not answered, perhaps you could come along on one of those occasions. I myself would like to thank the General for giving us an exceptionally interesting morning. The Centre for Policy Studies is primarily concerned with domestic issues; ensuring that the parish pump pumps better water - is that a good definition? But we all know that parish pumps are sometimes shadowed by events and personalities from a long way away. And the shadow of Stalin was an important one for many years; as important as the future of the Soviet Union is for the human race. It was most interesting to have this wonderful talk which, in casting light on the past, also throws a particularly encouraging gleam into the future.

References

1. In the room at that time there were Mr. Hugh Longhi, interpreter at Yalta and Potsdam; and Sir Frank Roberts, the veteran diplomat.

2. Lenin died in 1924, Stalin in 1953.

3. All these "old Bolsheviks" were killed by Stalin in one way or another. Although this phrase seems obvious in the West, the mere mention of Trotsky in the Soviet Union was unthinkable a year ago - much less a favourable mention of him.

4. Robert Tucker is a US historian who has completed one volume (*Stalin as Revolutionary 1879-1929*, New York 1973) of a projected major study of Stalin. Deutscher's *Stalin* (London 1949) held the field for a long time in the West. Souvarine's brilliant life of Stalin (*Staline*, Paris 1937) was published in France in the 1930s and re-issued there in 1977. Written from personal knowledge, it is the most informed and most hostile of the books concerned. The fate of the English edition (London 1939) is discussed by Souvarine in the introduction to the Paris edition of 1977.

5. This is a favourite phrase of General Volkogonov which derives from the Russian philosopher Berdyaev.

6. Medvedev's work on Stalin, *Let History Judge* (London 1972), was never published in the Soviet Union.

7. Sergei Kirov, the Party leader in Leningrad, was murdered by a certain Nikolaev in December 1934. His death was the pretext for the major purges of the old Bolsheviks, including many of Stalin's closest collaborators. Nadezhda Alliluyeva, Stalin's second wife, died in 1932, either by her own hand or murdered by Stalin himself. The question of guilt is likely to remain open.

8. Yezhov was head of the NKVD 1936-1938. He was executed on Beria's orders in December of the latter year.

9. I do not think that a figure as high as this has ever been put before.

10. Mayakovsky, the theatrical director, died early in the 1930s, Mikhoels in 1949, Molotov's wife Polina had been a minister in 1946 but was in prison from 1949.

11. Zhdanov, Stalin's second-in-command in the post-war years and "cultural Tsar", died suddenly, possibly from natural causes, in 1948.

12. George Vassilchikov, editor of *Berlin Diaries* (London 1987) by his sister "Missi", comes from an ancient noble Russian family.

13. Falin played a large part in Soviet propaganda in the late days of Brezhnev. He was ambassador to Bonn.

14. Stalin's son Jacob was the child of Stalin's first wife, Ekaterina, who died young in 1908.

15. Dolores Ibarruri is 'La Pasionaria', the Spanish Communist. Her allusion to the Blue Division is mysterious.

16. These protocols apparently deal with Hitler's approval of Stalin's absorption of the Baltic States and gave the Soviet Union Germany's approval of a drive into the Middle East.

17. Ernst Thaelmann was the German Communist leader from Hamburg imprisoned by the Nazis in a concentration camp in 1933. He died there in 1944.

18. Francisco Largo Caballero, Socialist prime minister of Spain in the civil war 1936-37, was found by the Nazis in France and imprisoned in Germany throughout the war. He emerged broken in 1945 and died a year later.

SOVIET UNION: visit of Gorbachev '73