

Mother Russia by Luba George

Step-up in Stalin's rehabilitation

Will his portrait be back at the side of Lenin's by next year's celebrations of the victory in World War II?

On the eve of the 67th anniversary celebrations of the Bolshevik Revolution in Moscow, an article in a leading Russian publication rehabilitated Josef Stalin to the pantheon of the Soviet Union's "great revolutionary heroes."

On Nov. 6, the newspaper of the Russian Republic of the U.S.S.R., *Sovietskaya Rossiya*, gave credit to Stalin for the support he gave to Lenin in the days of the Bolshevik takeover. "They [Stalin and Lenin] were united by an all-embracing devotion to the cause of the Revolution, and they embodied the vital qualities of the professional revolutionary." Stalin was named as a colleague of Lenin's whose "revolutionary fervor daily nourished Lenin's ideas and acts."

The campaign to rehabilitate Stalin has unsettled some heretofore complacent imperial circles in the West. Martin Walker, the London *Guardian's* Moscow correspondent, calls the campaign of "considerable internal significance." It is the first time in two decades that Stalin has been given direct credit for the revolution.

Stalin's rehabilitation is accompanied by that of his daughter, Svetlana Alliluyeva, who has been given back her Soviet citizenship 17 years after she defected and was denounced as a traitor. The Soviet press also prominently announced the extension of citizenship to her American-born daughter, Olga Peters, who by every indication was whisked off to the U.S.S.R. against her will.

Then there was the release of a new movie about Marshal Zhukov, "which focuses at length on Stalin as

the great war leader." Finally, the famous Russian opera singer Chaliapine's ashes were returned to Moscow from Paris and reinterred in the Novodevichy Monastery cemetery in front of Soviet culture officials and large crowds. "All our history is coming home in time for the 40th anniversary of the 1945 victory. . . . It is inconceivable that the victory could be celebrated without honoring Stalin's memory, too, no matter what other things he did," said a source quoted by Walker.

Indeed, on July 3, Vsyacheslav Molotov, Stalin's right-hand hatchet man from 1939 to 1949 reemerged "out of the blue" at the age of 94, and was reinstated with full honor in the party. Molotov negotiated the 1939 Hitler-Stalin Pact and the Yalta and Potsdam agreements of 1945. He was rehabilitated during the largest Soviet military maneuvers since the end of World War II, accompanied by violent Soviet attacks on West Germany charging "violations of the 1945 Potsdam and Yalta agreements."

In mid-September, the Soviet Union internationally distributed a wire written by TASS Deputy Director Krasikov. Simultaneously, a major article appeared in *Sovietskaya Rossiya*. Both praised the August 23, 1939 signing of the Hitler-Stalin Pact. Stalin and Molotov were "compelled to sign" a non-aggression pact to "gain time," said TASS, a "lesson applicable today."

Given Soviet characterizations of Ronald Reagan as a new Hitler, the Soviets are saying that any talks with the U.S. administration now are mere

pre-war actions to "gain time," like the pact with Hitler by the Stalin they are now rehabilitating.

It is of singular importance that this approach was initiated by former chief-of-staff Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, who now heads the Western Theater of War, and was responsible for the intensification of war preparations as outlined in his 1983 reorganization of the Soviet Order of Battle. The May 9, 1983 *Izvestiya* ran an article by Ogarkov saying that "especially fruitful during the war years was the role played by the 'Stavka' of the Supreme General Council headed by J. V. Stalin." This praise of Stalin was repeated by Ogarkov in May of this year in *Izvestiya*.

While Ogarkov was still chief of staff, the armed forces' Radio Volga broadcast a recording of Stalin's voice for the first time in decades. The speech, delivered Nov. 7, 1941, included: "The war in which you are fighting is a war of liberation, a just war. . . . May you be inspired . . . by the gallantry of our great ancestors." His list began with Alexander Nevsky, who defeated the Teutons in the 13th century.

According to the Munich-based Radio Liberty, Marshal Ogarkov has just written another major article entitled "The Unfading Glory of Soviet Arms," for the latest issue of *Kommunist* (No. 21), the armed forces journal, in which he once again stresses the "key role" of Stalin in the victory over Germany.

While there were no portraits of Stalin at last week's 67th anniversary commemoration of the revolution, some Western observers fear that by next year, in time for the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany, Stalin's picture will be prominently displayed side by side with Lenin's in Red Square.