

The volume reviewed seems to demonstrate that in so short a space this job cannot be done even by a highly qualified scholar. Professor Warth is obviously competent to write about the subject. His knowledge of the relevant information seems impressive, and the bibliography he has added is ample. His views are balanced; Lenin emerges as neither a saint nor a villain, but a complex person with phenomenal strengths and talents. The author's style is lively; the presentation neatly mixes Lenin's personal and political lives. On the whole, the book successfully avoids disseminating worn-out stereotypes, though the stupid remark that female revolutionaries are rarely noted for charm or physical beauty (p. 75) would better have been omitted. In general, the author seeks to dispel the most persistent myths about Lenin and the Russian Revolution. But in order to keep within the allotted space, he has made the narrative excessively sketchy. The specialist, who will learn nothing new from this book, will appreciate that the author has briefly touched most important points, if only in a sentence or a paragraph. But the beginner, to whom this book doubtless is addressed, will frequently be at sea—for example, how could he possibly make sense out of the one brief paragraph on page 99 devoted to the Kornilov affair? Nor is he likely to be less bewildered in numerous other places.

At most, therefore, the book will serve as a handy supplementary assignment in undergraduate courses dealing with the Russian Revolution.

ALFRED G. MEYER
University of Michigan

STALIN AS REVOLUTIONARY, 1879–1929: A STUDY IN HISTORY AND PERSONALITY. By *Robert C. Tucker*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1973. xxi, 519 pp. \$12.95.

Professor Tucker subtitles his book "A Study in History and Personality." Certainly no single personality—other than Lenin—has had a greater impact on the history of twentieth-century Russia, and not even Lenin's legacy (except to the considerable degree that it is misunderstood as Stalin's) has occasioned so much debate. Most of that debate concerns actions occurring after the concluding date (1929) of the present volume, the year when Stalin was fifty and was just entering the period of his greatest power and influence. But though it is seldom acknowledged, Stalin's impact was enormous—in some cases dominant—in the formation of key Soviet institutions and policies, even in the first dozen years of the new state.

The presentation of Stalin's Georgian and Russian background is, on the whole, highly successful. For this reader, the "Russian Prologue" seemed to understate the extent and significance of the governmental and constitutional changes in 1905–6, and to overstate the unique "Russianness" of Leninist revolutionary doctrines. But the picture is well drawn, and the subsequent chapter on Lenin presents very skillfully the personality and the movement that were to be the vital influences of Stalin's revolutionary career.

The succeeding chapters treat Stalin's childhood and youth, his seminary education, and his early revolutionary career. Many of the details are familiar, though they are given an interesting interpretive slant by the application of Freudian conceptions to Stalin's parental relationships, to which the author traces his rejection of authority (from the irrational cruelty of his father's beatings) and his exaggerated self-estimate and "feeling of conqueror" (from his close relationship with his adoring mother). The chapter also reviews the impact of the school

in Gori and the years in the Orthodox seminary in Tiflis, an institution which produced a large proportion of the Georgian revolutionary intelligentsia of the 1880s and 1890s.

The book is notable in several ways. One is the sensitive presentation of Stalin's developing national identification. His early revolutionary *nom de plume*, Koba, came from the name of the hero of a bitterly anti-Russian Georgian nationalist novel. But Stalin played a forceful ideological and political role in reassembling the shattered Russian Empire under the Bolshevik banner after the Revolution, and proved a relentless foe of even Communist-led efforts to establish a modest autonomy for non-Russian republics during the 1920s. The author adds a great deal to our understanding of the political and psychological motives and symptoms of this radical change of view.

Tucker maintains an impressive detachment in his presentation of Stalin as man and political leader. The result is a useful corrective to many of the distortions to which Trotsky's biography of his archrival has given wide currency—Stalin's insignificance as a theorist (an impressive case to the contrary is made), the charge that he served the tsarist secret police, and the suggestion that he hastened Lenin's death, among others. Equally important is the evidence marshaled to repudiate the notion that Stalin singlehandedly introduced major perversions or prejudices into the life of party and government. The Lenin cult and the hostility toward NEP, for example, clearly originated and developed independently of Stalin. Indeed, a strong case is made that Stalin was very much a "mainstream" party leader, systematizing Leninist doctrine in language comprehensible to the masses and personally embodying many of the prejudices of the party rank and file.

If there is any important weakness in this fine book it is probably in the presentation and assessment of Stalin's positive impact on the course of party and state affairs through 1929. His failures are made clear enough—especially his weaknesses as a political and military leader in the Revolution and Civil War. But his role in building the structure of the multinational Soviet Union, and his ultimately decisive part in the decisions on economic policy, are less effectively presented. The former is limited almost exclusively to discussion of ideology, and the latter—the famous "socialism in one country"—is presented in a skillful mix of ideological and psychological analysis, though one lacking an adequate foundation in economics and politics. But this weakness is substantially offset by an extraordinarily effective presentation of the crucial Stalin personality: "Here, then, was an historic instance . . . in which a leader's personality acquired critical importance. A basic element of the ominous situation taking shape in the Soviet Communist party at the end of 1929 was the discrepancy between Stalin's way of perceiving himself and the way a great many in the party perceived him. He was under stringent inner pressure to keep the idealized Stalin-figure steadily and clearly in focus and shut out everything . . . that marred it" (p. 493).

There were, perhaps, two vital elements in the ominous Soviet situation in 1929: the collision course between party and peasant, and a leader with unprecedented power, grave deficiencies of character, and morbid obsession with his mission, greatness, and infallibility. Tucker's careful research and skillful writing have contributed much to our understanding of that leader.

HERBERT J. ELLISON
University of Washington