In memory of Vadim Z. Rogovin

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The International Committee of the Fourth International held meetings in Berlin, on December 5, and London, on December 12, to commemorate the life of Vadim Z. Rogovin, the distinguished Russian Marxist historian and sociologist. Rogovin, who died on September 18 in Moscow at the age of 61, was the author of a six-volume history of the socialist opposition to Stalinism in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist International. David North, the chairman of the editorial board of the World Socialist Web Site, addressed the memorial meetings in Berlin and London. The following is the text of his remarks.

Nearly three months have passed since Vadim Zakharovich Rogovin died during the early morning hours of September 18, 1998. The reaction of those who knew him well was a sense of deep personal loss. Though we had known for more than four years that he was suffering from terminal cancer, it had never been possible to reconcile oneself to the inevitable outcome of this disease. Vadim's physical and intellectual vitality had nurtured our hopes that he would prevail against all the odds. Again and again, with the completion of yet another book or the delivery of a lecture, we had witnessed Vadim refute the pessimistic prognoses of his doctors. He seemed able, through sheer force of intellectual willpower, to hold the cancer at bay.

At the beginning of this year, Vadim had traveled to Australia to participate in an international symposium, organized by the International Committee of the Fourth International, on the subject of *Fundamental Problems of Marxism in the Twentieth Century.* When he arrived after a trip of more than 24 hours, we were all frightened by his appearance. The results of the latest medical tests made for the most depressing reading. Indeed, according to the test reports, Vadim had not the slightest right to be standing before us. Had it been wise, we asked ourselves, to request of him that he undertake such a demanding assignment? Vadim seemed to take no notice of our anxiety. He was anxious to begin discussions on the theme of his lecture, *Where Is Russia Going? A Sociological Analysis and Historical Prognosis.* As we had seen so often during the previous four years, the ensuing discussion had upon Vadim an extraordinary therapeutic effect. Within 48 hours of his arrival Vadim's appearance was transformed. It seemed as if the cancer had retreated beneath the pressure of the energy field created by his intellectual concentration. On the sixth of January, at 10 in the morning, he mounted the podium. For the next two hours, with hardly a glance at the notes he had prepared, Vadim elaborated upon the ideas which formed the basis of his lecture. He then fielded questions for another hour. In the afternoon, following the lunch break, he returned to find numerous written questions from an audience whose interest had been so aroused by his lecture. For more than two hours Vadim replied to these queries. It was not until late in the afternoon that he had completed his work. The audience responded with a prolonged and emotional ovation, a tribute not only to the intellectual virtuosity that it had just witnessed but also to the integrity and strength of character embodied in the life work of the lecturer.

At that moment, it seemed not unreasonable to hope that Vadim would continue to defy medical science and continue his work for at least several years more. But that lecture was his last major public statement. He still succeeded in completing and overseeing the publication of the sixth volume of his cycle on the history of Stalinism and the struggle against it. But by the late spring, following a trip by Vadim and his wife, Galya, to Israel, the disease entered its final stages. He lost the effective use of his left arm, and then his ability to walk. But the functioning of his remarkable mind remained completely unimpaired, and he continued to work, until the very last hours of his life, on the seventh volume of his history.

One does not meet a man like Vadim more than once in one's life. Indeed, to have known such a human being, let alone to have counted him among one's friends, was an immense privilege. Vadim Rogovin will never be forgotten. Those of us who knew Vadim personally and those who will learn about him through the study of his writings will for decades reflect on the significance of his life. What is being said this afternoon can only be a preliminary appreciation of Vadim's contribution to the scientific understanding of the fate of the socialist movement in the twentieth century.

In May 1997, on the occasion of Vadim's sixtieth birthday, I described him as a prophet of historical truth. At that time, I had in mind the place of Vadim in the intellectual life of post-Soviet Russia--specifically the challenge posed by his writings to the foul political, intellectual and moral environment in post-Soviet Russia produced by decades of lying about the past.

But that definition of Vadim as a prophet of historical truth is no less apt in defining his role beyond the borders of the former USSR. It is difficult to think of another historian whose work stands in such irreconcilable opposition to the smug and reactionary subjectivism and relativism of post-modernism as that of Vadim Rogovin. Nothing was more repugnant to Vadim than the cynical view, so fashionable in the universities of Western Europe and the United States, that there is no place in the study and writing of history for any concept of objective truth. Vadim saw nothing that was original in this outlook, which has long been favored by reactionary thinkers. After all, more than a century has passed since Nietzsche asserted, "The falseness of an opinion is not for us any objection to it," that the validity of an opinion is merely a function of its operational utility for any given purpose. Vadim insisted that the contrast between opinion and truth is of a fundamental character. Opinion, he wrote, "is a category of social psychology, a characteristic trait of ordinary consciousness. Truth is a category of science and scientific world outlook, constituting a view of the future based on an honest and objective analysis of the past and present."

Vadim's pursuit of objective historical truth constituted the essential foundation and purpose of his intellectual life. The problem of objective truth was, for Vadim, not that of an abstract theoretical standard that was arbitrarily imposed upon the subject of historical research. It was, rather, intrinsic to the subject itself. For Vadim, that subject was the history of the political struggles within the Soviet Communist Party and the Communist International between 1922, one year before the founding of the Left Opposition, and 1940, the year of the assassination of Leon Trotsky by an agent of Stalin's NKVD. His overriding intellectual task and moral responsibility was to extract the objective truth of this critical historical period from beneath the vast edifice of lies that had been erected by Stalin

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and his successors, who were--even before the term was invented--the foremost practitioners of post-modernist historiography. If, as post-modernist theoreticians insist, there exists no necessary relationship between history and a scientifically-verifiable objective truth--and, to continue, if historical narratives are merely imagined and invented--then the accounts of Soviet history given by Andrei Vyshinsky at the three Moscow trials are as legitimate as any other. The various versions of Soviet history presented in different editions of officially authorized encyclopedias are, within this intellectually-debased framework, not to be rejected as lies; rather, they are to be rationalized and justified as alternative "imaginings" of the past. The apologists of post-modernism might argue that this is not their intention; but ideas have a logic of their own.

Vadim Rogovin understood that the Soviet tragedy was embedded in the disorientation and deadening of historical consciousness. The political immaturity and bewilderment that characterized the response of the Soviet people to the events of the 1980s and 1990s, their inability to find a progressive response to the crisis in their society, was, above all, the outcome of decades of historical falsifications. It was impossible to understand the present without real knowledge of the past. To the extent that the Russian working class believed that Stalinism was the inevitable product of socialism, and that the tragic course of Soviet history flowed inexorably from the revolution of October 1917, it was politically disarmed and could see no alternative to the dismantling of the Soviet Union and the restoration of capitalism. The great question posed by Vadim Rogovin--Was there an alternative to Stalinism?--is, certainly, fundamental to an understanding of the history of the Soviet Union. But the ramifications of this question extend far beyond the borders of the former USSR, and they are of critical relevance not only to our understanding of the past but to our vision of the future. Within the context of his examination of the Soviet past Vadim Rogovin grappled with the essential experiences and lessons of the twentieth century. That is why the works of Vadim Zakharovich Rogovin are of world importance.

Throughout his professional career Vadim displayed an amazing fluency as a writer. As a sociologist, he listed more than 250 scholarly papers on his *curriculum vitae.* But even this impressive output pales before what he accomplished during the last seven years of his life, during which he completed six volumes (each of which consisted of no less than 350 printed pages) and was close to three-quarters through the seventh. Beneath a haze of cigarette smoke, words seemed to flow effortlessly from Vadim's pen. Writer's block was one affliction he never knew. But even the most fluent of writers could not have produced works on the scale of his six completed historical volumes--so extensively researched and profoundly reasoned--unless they were the outcome of years of intellectual preparation. Indeed, long before he had committed his work to paper, vast sections of it had already taken shape within his brain. Vadim's historical cycle was the product of a lifetime of research and thought.

Moreover, a critical element of Vadim's intellectual fecundity was rooted in the depth of his personal identification with the ideals and spirit of the revolutionary movement whose tragic destiny was the subject of his historical work. Herein lay a crucial distinction between Vadim and the vast majority of Western European and American academics active in the field of Russian and Soviet studies. The latter are, with very few exceptions, unable to understand, let alone sympathize with, the aims and motivations of the revolutionaries. Such historians, projecting upon the past their own cynicism and apathy, exhibit an almost painful inability to comprehend an historical period whose greatest representatives were motivated by revolutionary ideals for which they were prepared to sacrifice their lives. Vadim was different: he not only empathized with the heroic leaders of the Left Opposition, he shared their aims and ideals. This was not a matter of external affectation. Rather, Vadim--in the force of his personality and the intensity of his thought--recalled a social type which had once played so important a role in Russian and world history, but which had been all but destroyed by Stalinism--the Russian revolutionary intelligentsia. When I think about Vadim, I cannot help but recall the very fine portrait of the ethos of this unusual social phenomenon given by Isaiah Berlin: "Every Russian writer was made conscious that he was on a public stage, testifying; so that the smallest lapse on his part, a lie, a deception, an act of self-indulgence, lack of zeal for the truth, was a heinous crime.... [I]f you spoke in public at all, be it as a poet or novelist or historian or in whatever public capacity, then you accepted full responsibility for guiding and leading the people. If this was your calling then you were bound by a Hippocratic oath to tell the truth and never betray it, and to dedicate yourself selflessly to your goal." [1]

Vadim was born in 1937, the year that witnessed the annihilation of the finest representatives of the revolutionary tradition, program and culture upon which the achievements of the Soviet Union during the first two decades of its existence had been based. Anyone who had played a leading role in the victory of the October Revolution and the formation of the Soviet Union, or who had demonstrated, in any sphere of Soviet life, the capacity for independent and critical thought, was a candidate for the executioner's bullet. Stalin's purges were the means through which the bureaucracy consolidated its usurpation of political power. But that definition of the terror, however politically precise, does not by itself adequately express the social and cultural implications of the nightmarish events of 1937. All that was reactionary and backward in Russian society enjoyed, in the orgy of mass murder instigated by Stalin, its revenge against the revolution.

Among the hundreds of thousands of Stalin's victims was Vadim's maternal grandfather, Aleksandr Semenovich Tager. He was not a revolutionary, but rather a liberal representative of the most progressive sections of the old Russian democratic intelligentsia. A distinguished jurist, Tager served as a defense attorney at the 1922 trial of the Social-Revolutionary leaders who stood accused of organizing terrorist actions against the Bolshevik regime. There were several outstanding contrasts between the trial of the Social Revolutionaries and those organized a decade and a half later by Stalin. First, the Social Revolutionary defendants, unrepentant opponents of the Soviet government, were not compelled to renounce their political convictions nor to heap obloquy upon themselves. Second, they were able to mount, in the presence of international observers (including the leader of the Second International, Vandervelde), a genuine political and legal defense on their own behalf. Aleksandr Tager conducted himself as a representative of the legal interests of his clients, not as a secondary instrument of the state prosecution.

In fact, an event that occurred during the trial demonstrated Tager's courage. A workers demonstration had been organized by the government in support of the trial. A group of demonstrators burst into the courtroom to disrupt the proceedings and demand the death of the defendants. Yuri Piatakov, one of the most important Bolshevik leaders, was presiding over the trial. He told the demonstrators that the court would take their wishes into consideration. Tager and several other defense attorneys vehemently protested against this violation of proper legal procedures and walked out of the courtroom. At the end of the trial, the sentence of death was pronounced against several of the defendants. But it was suspended on the condition that the Social Revolutionary Party halt its terrorist campaign against the government. In the aftermath of the trial, Tager was punished for his defiance by being sent into exile. But within a few months he was recalled to Moscow and there were no further actions taken against him. Indeed, Tager was permitted to travel abroad quite regularly with his wife, who needed special medical treatment that could not be obtained in Russia. This was not all that unusual prior to the onset of the terror. Vadim's grandfather enjoyed the respect and friendship of such well-known political figures as Anatoly Lunacharsky. In the early 1930s Tager

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published an authoritative study of the infamous case of Mendel Beilis, a Jew who had been the victim of a frame-up organized by the pre-revolutionary tsarist regime, involving preposterous allegations of ritual murder. The preface to this volume was written by Lunacharsky, who urged that it be published in as many European languages as possible to counter the growing menace of anti-Semitism. In 1938, though he had never been associated with any anti-Stalinist political tendency, Tager was arrested along with other prominent jurists. In an example of one of the bitter ironies of that dreadful period, Tager had been invited only six months before his arrest by none other than Andrei Vizhinsky, the chief procurator of the Soviet Union, to join his legal institute. Thus, when the secret police came to arrest Vadim's grandfather, he reassured his wife that it was all a mistake and that she should immediately contact Vizhinsky, who would certainly secure his prompt release. Vadim's grandmother never saw her husband again; and more than a decade passed before she learned definitively of his execution.

Vadim cherished the memory of his grandfather, and was pleased when a new edition of Tager's study of the Beilis case was reissued in Russia. One can imagine the impact of the trauma of Aleksandr Tager's arrest, disappearance and death upon his family. It was from his grandmother that Vadim first learned of the horrors of the purges, and it is reasonable to assume that the tragic experience of his family profoundly influenced his intellectual development. Vadim told me that his first conscious misgivings about the nature of the Stalinist regime occurred when he was nearly 13 years old. Amidst the frenzied celebrations of Stalin's seventieth birthday, Vadim found himself wondering why virtually all the other Old Bolshevik leaders had come to an untimely end long before reaching that milestone. Vadim asked his father why most of Lenin's colleagues had been shot in the 1930s. How was it possible that so many leaders of the revolution turned out to be "Enemies of the People"? His father's attempts to fob his son off with hollow and unconvincing references to "anti-Party" activities were unsuccessful. Disturbed and probably frightened by the inquiries, Vadim's father offered what was, at that time, considered to be the ultimate answer from which there could be no further appeal: "Don't you think Stalin understands this better than you?" Vadim remained unconvinced. He continued to wonder why so many revolutionary leaders, and even his own grandfather, had been shot. Then, quite suddenly, he was seized by a terrible thought that he knew, instinctively, provided the answer to his questions: "Stalin must be a criminal!" Vadim continued to argue with his family. As he matured he realized that the Soviet Union was not a just society. He saw poverty and noted the presence of sharp contrasts in the social conditions of different strata of the Moscow population. Vadim also knew that there were prison camps: people who lived in his apartment building were arrested during the anti-Cosmopolitan campaign that was unleashed by Stalin in 1952-53. Thus, upon hearing of Stalin's death in March 1953, Vadim's reaction, as he later recalled, was that this event was cause for joy and celebration.

The change in the political and social climate of the Soviet Union in the aftermath of Stalin's death was, undoubtedly, the most important factor in the intellectual development of the young Vadim Rogovin. He was nearly 19 at the time of the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU. When the content of Nikita Khrushchev's "secret speech" became known--in which Stalin's crimes were denounced for the first time--Vadim was not particularly surprised by the revelations. There were important new facts made available, but, for the most part, Vadim felt that the revelations vindicated his hatred of Stalin. However, Vadim was not satisfied with Khrushchev's attempt to explain Stalin's crimes as mere excesses produced by the "cult of personality," let alone by Khrushchev's insistence that Stalin's political line--above all, in the fight against the Trotskyist opposition of the 1920s--was fundamentally correct.

When Vadim became a student at Moscow University, where he majored in aesthetics, it required little effort on his part to complete his course assignments and receive high grades. Rather than attend lectures, he spent as much time as possible at the historical library of the university where he studied old issues of *Pravda* and other journals that cast light upon the political struggles of the 1920s. As Vadim took detailed notes on the old inner-party debates, he became convinced of the correctness of Trotsky's position and was drawn inexorably to the conclusion that Trotsky was the greatest figure in Soviet history. In a discussion I had with Vadim during the weekend we celebrated his sixtieth birthday he confided that all the basic conceptions that were to appear in his historical cycle were initially formed in the course of the readings he pursued when he was in his twenties. From then on, Vadim told me, he dreamed of a time when it would become possible to tell the Soviet people the truth about their history.

But the political conditions that prevailed in the USSR--even during the celebrated "thaw" of the late 1950s and early 1960s--were not conducive to the production of serious works of history. During the initial stages of his academic career Vadim's principal area of research was aesthetics. He pursued his historical research in private. Vadim was able to discuss the merits of the policies advanced by Trotsky and the Left Opposition only with his most trusted colleagues and friends, and even then only with extreme caution. Even though criticism of the regime had become increasingly common, any mention of Trotsky's name still aroused suspicion and fear. The father of a friend of Vadim was a well-known journalist who had casually remarked, among a small group of dissidents, that Trotsky had been a great orator. The journalist expressed no further opinion on Trotsky's political positions. But that casual remark came to the attention of the KGB: the journalist was promptly fired from his position and his family was reduced to poverty. On one occasion Vadim took into his confidence a well-known theater director whom he respected. Vadim expressed to him his admiration for Trotsky's views on art. The director was shaken. "Why are you speaking to me so openly?" the director asked. Vadim explained that he did not believe that the director, who was both a personal friend and a man of integrity, would inform on him. The director assured him that he would not, but explained that he might himself face unpleasant consequences if his young friend's opinions were to come to the attention of the authorities.

There was another factor, aside from fear, that contributed to Vadim's sense of isolation. The dissident movement that emerged in the mid-1960s exhibited little interest in a socialist critique of the bureaucratic regime. It criticized Stalinism not from the left (i.e., on the basis of a socialist program), but from the right (i.e., appealing for political support from the American bourgeoisie). Within this milieu the revolutionary program of Trotsky was anathema.

Despite his love of literature and art, Vadim was anxious to find a field of research that related more directly to his historical and political interests. Fortunately, the regime began to relax its previous strictures on the development of sociological research, if only because the needs of bureaucratic policy-making required more profound insights into the structure and problems of so complex a society as the Soviet Union. So Vadim began his official studies anew and became a sociologist. Without openly acknowledging this fact, he derived from the program of the Left Opposition the central theme of his academic research: the problem of social inequality in the Soviet Union. Vadim used his sociological research to expose the gap between socialist ideals and the Soviet reality, and to advocate the development of egalitarian policies. In a listing of Vadim's writings one finds such titles as "Youth and Social Progress," "Social Policy in Developed Socialist Society: Directions, Tendencies, Problems," "Social Guarantees and Problems of Perfecting Relations of Distribution," "Economic Effectiveness and Social Justice," "Social Justice and the Paths of Its Realization in Social Policy," "Social Aspects of Distribution Policy," "Social Aspects of Accelerating the Resolution of the Housing Problem" and "The Dialectic of Social Equality and

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Inequality at the Contemporary Stage of the Development of Soviet Society."

The crisis of the USSR became apparent during the years of Brezhnev's rule--known as the "Era of Stagnation." For Vadim this was a period of deep frustration. His earlier hopes that socialist principles would be revived within the USSR seemed less and less realistic. The earlier "thaw" had once again given way to a new "freeze." State pressure was applied to suppress critical examinations of Stalin's historical role. Everything Vadim wrote was subjected by the censors to the literary equivalent of a strip search. Some articles never saw the light of day; many were published only after sections were deleted or substantially edited. However, during the last period of the "Era of Stagnation," Vadim enjoyed an unexpected stroke of luck. Normally, the censors discussed the articles they reviewed only with the publishers and editors of the journals and newspapers to which the works had been submitted. As a matter of course the authors were neither contacted nor consulted. They were expected to submit to whatever decision was made. However, a senior official in the censorship department found himself intrigued by Vadim's work. He decided to contact the author directly. Never had he read articles that tackled the problem of social inequality with such insight, clarity and audacity. Why, he wondered, did Vadim occupy himself so persistently with this theme? Why did he believe that social equality was attainable? Was it consistent with human nature? Like a character in an existential drama, Vadim found himself engaged in a lengthy philosophical discourse with the very official who had the power to consign his writings to the flames. His fate hung in the balance. But the censor--whose conscience had not been entirely extinguished by years of bureaucratic routine--was moved by the force of Vadim's arguments. He promised to do whatever he could to ensure the publication of his articles.

With the accession of Gorbachev to power and the introduction of glasnost, the audience for Vadim's writings grew immensely. Taking advantage of the new opportunities, Vadim wrote a series of articles for *Komsomolskaya Pravda* in 1985 that attacked the prevalence of social privilege in both its open and concealed forms, demanded sharp limitations on income inequality, and called for a substantial improvement in the living standards of the broad masses. Vadim's censor expressed apprehension, but permitted the articles to be published as written. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* had a circulation of 20 million, and the articles provoked an impassioned response. They were widely interpreted as an attack on the social position of the ruling bureaucracy. Over the next few months thousands of letters were addressed to *Komsomolskaya Pravda* praising and denouncing the articles.

At first Vadim was encouraged by the political change ushered in by Gorbachev's rise to power. Not only had it become possible to address social problems more boldly and before a much larger audience, Vadim was now able to speak openly, for the first time, about Leon Trotsky and the political struggle that had been waged by the Left Opposition against the rise of Stalinism. Another critical development was the sudden availability of volumes of Trotsky's writings, especially from the 1930s, that Vadim had never seen before. He obtained for the first time a set of the *Bulletin of the Opposition*, the most important Russian-language publication of the international Trotskyist movement. Vadim absorbed and assimilated these writings, which reaffirmed and deepened his Trotskyist convictions. For Vadim, these writings possessed not only an historical but also an exceptional contemporary significance; for it soon became apparent that no segment of either the political or intellectual elite had any serious understanding of the nature of the crisis confronting the Soviet Union. With each announcement of a new "historically-necessary" change of policy, the frenzied improvisations of Gorbachev assumed an increasingly absurd character. Beyond touring the world in search of adulation, the General Secretary had not the slightest idea about what he should do. The confusion of Gorbachev was mirrored in the disorientation of the entire Soviet intelligentsia. It seemed as if nothing in their previous work had prepared them for the breakdown of the USSR in the late 1980s.

Vadim was convinced that the problems of the Soviet Union could neither be understood nor solved without an exhaustive review of its history. The essential requirement of such a review was the cleansing of the historical record of all the accumulated lies about Leon Trotsky. The possibility of a renewal of Soviet society along socialist lines depended upon an honest examination of the Trotskyist critique of Stalinism and the alternative program advanced by the Left Opposition. As the political and economic situation deteriorated in the USSR, the case for a review of Trotsky's work seemed, to Vadim, irresistible. But Vadim now encountered a political and social phenomenon that left him, once again, isolated: the stampede of virtually the entire intelligentsia to the right. Vadim had long been aware of the development of right-wing tendencies among the intelligentsia. The dissident movement had never appealed to him because of its orientation to international bourgeois public opinion and hostility to Marxism. However, at least in the academic and intellectual circles within which he moved, criticism of official Soviet policy had been couched in socialist terms. But as the 1980s drew to a close, his friends and professional associates--with very few exceptions--were professing unbounded admiration for, and faith in, the capitalist system. They were indifferent to arguments based on facts and reason. One by one, Vadim found himself compelled to sever relations with friends and colleagues. Among them was Stanislav Shatalin. He had been one of Vadim's closest associates with whom he had once co-authored an article. But Shatalin became one of Gorbachev's economic advisers and achieved international renown as the author of the "500 Day Plan," which advocated the use of "shock therapy" methods to reorganize the Soviet economy on the basis of the capitalist market.

A byproduct of this swing to the right was the development of a new campaign in the media aimed at discrediting the idea that Trotskyism represented an alternative to Stalinism. The media shamelessly combined the worst Stalinist-era slanders against Trotsky with the reactionary arguments of Western Sovietologists. This campaign against Trotsky--which, in essence, was directed against the entire heritage of Marxian socialism--found a wide response among the decomposing ex-Soviet and Russian intelligentsia. The most important--or perhaps it would be more appropriate to say best known--product of this campaign was the series of books written by General Dmitri Volkogonov.

It was within this reactionary environment that Vadim embarked upon the intellectual project to which he devoted the rest of his life: the writing of a Marxist history of the political conflicts within the Communist Party and Communist International. This was a task of which no other historian in the former Soviet Union, let alone beyond its borders, was capable. Why was this so? "Great history is written," E.H. Carr once said, "precisely when the historian's vision of the past is illuminated by insights into the problems of the present." [2] This observation provides us with the key to understanding Vadim's achievement as an historian. Certainly, Vadim brought to his work certain exceptional faculties: an encyclopedic knowledge of Soviet history, an astonishing grasp of a vast complex of facts, an unerring ability to situate events within a broader political and social context, and a lucid and unaffected style of writing. But beyond these strengths he possessed yet another inestimable advantage: a profound awareness that the present crisis of not only Russia, but also the entire world, is the legacy of the defeats suffered by the international socialist movement in the 1920s and 1930s as a consequence of the betrayals and crimes of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Yet there is not a trace of pessimism in Vadim's cycle. The events that he narrates and analyzes, especially in those volumes that deal directly with the preparation and execution of the Stalinist terror of 1936-39, are certainly dreadful. They make for reading that cannot be described as anything other than harrowing. But amidst all the horror, Rogovin

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presents the Soviet tragedy as a drama whose final act is still to be written. As he writes in the preface to his third volume: "The historical process opened up by the October Revolution has not been completed, but merely stopped." What imparts to Vadim's work its moral intensity is not only the author's indignation, but above all his conviction that Stalinism represented only a temporary derailment of the cause of world socialism. Notwithstanding the defeat it suffered in the 1930s, the Trotskyist movement embodied the possibility that the Soviet Union might have developed along a very different and far more progressive path. And that very possibility refutes all claims that Stalinism was the necessary and inevitable outcome of Bolshevism. The indisputable fact that there was an alternative to Stalinism means that the historical potential of socialism has not been exhausted.

Rogovin's conception of history is essentially dynamic. Underlying his insistence on the undiminished significance of the events of the 1930s is Vadim's conception of historical time as a unified and interacting continuum of past, present and future. Grappling with the great problems of his own age, Vadim looked into the past not only to foresee the future but also to shape it. Perhaps the truest expression of the role to which Vadim aspired is to be found in the verse of Pasternak, with which he opened the fourth volume of his cycle: *Once Upon a time, unintentionally, / And probably hazarding a guess, / Hegel called the historian a prophet / Predicting in reverse.*

Another critical element of Vadim's historical cycle is its interpretation of the conflict between the Stalinist regime and the Left Opposition as a clash of two irreconcilable social principles--those of equality and inequality. The social essence of the political program of the Trotskyist opposition, giving voice to the interests of the working class, was the struggle for equality. The objective that found expression in the policies of the Stalinist regime--drawing support from the bureaucracy and various intermediate social strata--was inequality. The striving for social privilege--the achievement of material benefits for the few at the expense of the many--found its necessarily brutal forms of political expression in the bestialities of the Stalinist regime. The murdering dictator epitomized the essential social outlook of the bureaucracy: "Stalin's greed for material things, his craving for limitless luxury in his everyday life were passed on to his descendants up to and including Gorbachev, all of whom, unlike the Bolshevik Old Guard, were unwilling to share physical difficulties and privations with the people."[3]

Vadim's analysis of the social foundation of Stalinism informed his analysis of the eventual breakdown of the USSR. He would often argue that the process of capitalist restoration was rooted in reactionary, anti-egalitarian policies pursued by Stalin from the 1930s until his death. Vadim noted that the hostility of the professional and intellectual elite to the Soviet regime began as a reaction to the limited efforts of Stalin's successors to lower the degree of social inequality that the late dictator had encouraged. The nomenclatura resented the social concessions to the working class that the Soviet bureaucracy felt compelled to make after Stalin's death. The dissident movement, Vadim insisted, developed out of these resentments and, in this sense, was actually a product of Stalinism rather than an opposition to it.

His defense of Marxist principles condemned Vadim to almost complete isolation in the aftermath of the collapse of the USSR in December 1991. The spectacle of political reaction, social regression and moral depravity filled Vadim with revulsion. That which he considered essential for creative intellectual work--the consistent exchange of ideas with trusted colleagues and friends--had become all but impossible by 1992. There had been virtually no one with whom he was able to discuss the content of the first volume of his historical cycle, and he had managed to secure its publication only with the greatest difficulty.

It was precisely at this point that Vadim Rogovin established contact with the International Committee of the Fourth International. The relationship that developed over the next six years affected us no less profoundly than it did him. In the late 1980s, before he met with the ICFI, Vadim had held discussions with left-wing tendencies from outside the Soviet Union who described themselves as Trotskyists. He was anxious to learn more about the perspective and program of the Fourth International. Vadim met with the leader of the Pabloite movement, Ernest Mandel. But his discussions with Mandel left Vadim with a keen sense of disappointment. When Vadim asked Mandel to analyze the situation in the Soviet Union, he expected to hear an incisive critique of the policies of the Kremlin bureaucracy. Instead, Mandel was effusive in his praise of Gorbachev and expressed high hopes for the development of perestroika. He seemed genuinely surprised to discover that Vadim did not share his admiration for the first secretary of the CPSU. The impression left by Mandel upon Vadim was that of a sedate "*bourgeoisnii professor.*"

A fortunate turn of events brought Vadim into contact with the ICFI. In 1992-93, Fred Choate, my good friend and a supporter of the International Committee, was in Moscow researching the life of Aleksandr Voronsky, one of the major figures in the Left Opposition. Fred came across a journal that included a short article about Trotsky's views on literature. Fred was impressed by the article's objective tone and the honesty with which it summarized the positions of Trotsky. It was unusual to read an article about Trotsky in a Soviet journal that was not marred by heavy-handed irony and/or misrepresentations. The author was Vadim Rogovin. Fred decided to contact Rogovin. He found his telephone number, called him and made an appointment. Their meeting went very well. Vadim was delighted to conduct a serious discussion on the subject of the Left Opposition. However Fred did not immediately tell Vadim that he was personally associated with the Trotskyist movement.

Then fate intervened. Sometime earlier, Vadim had come across a copy of the Russian-language publication produced by the International Committee, the *Bulletin of the Fourth International*. He and his wife, Galya, had studied the contents carefully and decided that the *Bulletin* was an authentic Trotskyist publication. It was Galya who, with her usual perspicacity, told Vadim that he should find some way to contact ... David North! But how was this to be done? Vadim raised the question with Fred. Had he, Vadim asked, ever heard of North, and did Fred have any idea how he might contact this person? Fred indicated to Vadim that he thought he could be of some assistance.

While Vadim had been looking for us, the International Committee had been looking for him. Between 1989 and 1991 I traveled on several occasions to the Soviet Union and met with numerous academicians. It had been my hope that somewhere, in the vast academic community, one would find a scholar who appreciated the need, amidst the collapse of the Soviet Union, to expose the crimes committed by Stalinism against the socialist movement, and, moreover, to write about the struggle waged by Trotsky and the Left Opposition against the bureaucracy's growth and consolidation of power in the 1920s and 1930s. The search had not been successful. One after another, the historians and sociologists with whom I spoke revealed themselves to be small-minded cynics, neither interested in, nor capable of, serious work. The climate of political reaction had overwhelmed whatever principles and ideals they might once have believed in. They seemed to hold Marxism responsible for every problem they encountered, both in society and their own lives. They saw in the reorganization of Russia on the basis of capitalism a veritable panacea.

I recall a discussion in the autumn of 1991 with a well-known Soviet scholar who held a high position at the Historical-Archival Institute in Moscow. Two years earlier this same man had placed at my disposal the main auditorium of the institute, where I gave a lecture on the struggle of Trotsky against Stalin. But since that time he had surrendered to the pressure of reaction and absolutely nothing was left of his earlier socialistic leanings. He was firmly of the opinion that the establishment of a market economy would quickly solve all of Russia's problems. I argued

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with him, explaining that the unfettered subordination of Russia to the world capitalist economy would set it back by 100 years. "That," he replied laconically, "would represent a vast improvement over what we have today." From people with views such as these one could not expect any positive response to proposals for an objective study of the Trotskyist opposition to the Stalinist regime. The social and political outlook that they had adopted did not permit them to admit that Stalinism represented a grotesque perversion of the principles of the October Revolution, and that a genuine and viable socialist alternative to the policies pursued by the Soviet bureaucracy had been advanced by the Left Opposition.

In March 1992, despite the apathy and opposition it had encountered among the demoralized remnants of the Soviet intelligentsia, the International Committee embarked upon a campaign in defense of historical truth: to expose the falsifications, betrayals and crimes of Stalinism; and to establish, on the basis of the historical record, the irreconcilable opposition of Marxism, embodied in the heroic struggle of Trotsky and the Left Opposition, to Stalinism. On March 11, 1992, in the opening report to the Twelfth Plenum of the ICFI, it was stated: "To answer the lie that Stalinism is Marxism requires that we expose the deeds of Stalinism. To know what Stalinism is one has to show whom Stalinism murdered. We have to answer the question: against what enemy did Stalinism strike its most terrible blows? The greatest political task of our movement must be to restore historical truth by exposing the far-reaching political significance of the crimes which Stalinism carried out. At the very center of this exposure must be the opening of the record of the Moscow Trials, the purges and the assassination of Trotsky.... When we speak of a campaign to uncover the historical truth, we see this as a task that benefits not only the working class in the narrow sense, but all of progressive humanity. What happened in the Lubianka is the concern of all of struggling mankind. Exposing the crimes of Stalinism is an essential part of overcoming the damage they caused to the development of social and political thought." [4]

For most of Vadim's life it had not been possible for him to discuss openly his Trotskyist convictions, let alone participate in the work of the Fourth International. Similarly, our movement had for decades upheld the legacy of Trotsky's struggle, without the possibility of establishing contact with genuine Marxists within the Soviet Union. Yet, despite the formidable obstacles that were the product of unfavorable historical conditions, the trajectories of Vadim Rogovin and the Fourth International had finally, after separate voyages of more than a half-century, merged into the same orbital path.

Discussions between Vadim and the International Committee began in the late spring of 1992. Initially, most of our exchanges took place through the new medium of e-mail. With Fred serving as our interlocutor, we exchanged, though in a somewhat restricted manner, ideas and proposals for the development of literary and political work. In October 1992, Vadim met briefly with Comrade Peter Schwarz during a short visit to Berlin. In February 1993, during a seminar in Kiev on the history of the International Committee, Vadim and I met for the first time. The discussions that we held over that weekend established a pattern that persisted during the years to come: We talked, debated, argued, disagreed, agreed, laughed, and made plans. In the course of further meetings held in Moscow in 1993 and early 1994, we discussed in detail the development of Vadim's historical cycle. As I have already said, the basic outline of the work had been developed by Vadim over many years of study and thought. And yet, as a consequence of his discussions with the International Committee, the intellectual and political scope of this work broadened immensely. Even after the initial discussions, Vadim decided that it was necessary for him to recast and rewrite his first volume. I do not mean to suggest that Vadim owed his ideas to the International Committee. The dialectical movement of his thought cannot be understood in such terms. Rather, Vadim's creativity was stimulated by discussion, which activated his imagination and aroused within his consciousness new ideas. At first, Vadim had believed that his project would require four volumes. The impact of his collaboration with the International Committee found its most direct expression in the fact that the scale of the project grew to seven volumes.

Vadim's work will, for decades to come, dominate historical literature on the subject of the Stalinist terror. A work of such monumental dimensions defies any attempt at cursory summation. But this must be emphasized: what sets Vadim's work apart from virtually all others is his insistence that the principal purpose and function of the terror was the elimination of the Trotskyist opposition to the Stalinist regime. Given the fact that the Stalinist regime continually insisted that the purpose of the terror was the elimination of Trotskyism, the ordinary reader--unacquainted with the standard works on the terror produced by Western historians--might wonder why I consider precisely this aspect of Vadim's thesis to be essential and exceptional. The answer is that much of Western historiography on the subject of the purges has been devoted to minimizing, if not denying, the centrality of the struggle against Trotsky and his ideas. As Vadim noted, the work by Robert Conquest--which, for more than 30 years, has been the best known in the field--devotes only a few pages to the subject of Trotskyism. Though not, perhaps, in so crude a form, many historians--even those who pursue their work honestly and conscientiously (and there are such people)--maintain that the terror was about almost anything in the world except the struggle against the influence of Trotsky. After all, they argue, Trotsky had been exiled from the Soviet Union in 1929. The most well-known members of the old Left Opposition had recanted their earlier Trotskyist views. Systematic repression had made impossible the development of political work among whatever remnants of Trotskyist groups may have still existed by the mid-1930s.

Vadim rejected these views which, he argued, underestimated the potency of the Marxist tradition within the Soviet Union and the depth of revolutionary sentiments among broad segments of the people. Moreover, despite their recantations, the Old Bolsheviks had never reconciled themselves to the Stalinist regime and remained potential focal points of pent-up mass dissatisfaction. Even within the bureaucracy, there remained elements who had not broken completely with their own revolutionary past and upon whose loyalty Stalin could not entirely depend. Trotsky's writings were followed and still exerted influence. After his assassination in December 1934, several volumes of Trotsky's writings were found in Kirov's apartment. Vadim analyzed the links between oppositionist currents within the USSR and Trotsky. The purges were not the product of a madman's paranoia. Stalin, Vadim insisted, had real reason to fear the influence of Trotsky, not only within the Soviet Union but beyond its borders. What then, was the ultimate purpose of the terror? "The Great Purge of 1937-1938," wrote Vadim, "was needed by Stalin precisely because only in this way was it possible to rob of vitality the strengthening revolutionary movement of the Fourth International, to prevent it from turning into the leading revolutionary force of the epoch, to disorient and demoralize world public opinion, capable otherwise of becoming receptive to the adoption of 'Trotskyist' ideas."

Early in 1994 the second volume of Vadim's cycle was published. A press run of 10,000 copies had been ordered, and--as there was no other place where they could be stored--all the books were delivered to Vadim's apartment. Bundles of books, wrapped in brown paper, were everywhere--on shelves, table tops, in closets, beneath beds and chairs, and on top of the refrigerator. Vadim was delighted with the arrival of his "newborn," and was already hard at work on the third volume. In addition to the support of the International Committee, the release of previously closed documents from state archives gave a powerful impulse to his research and writing. Never in Vadim's life, as he freely admitted, had he been so happy. At long last, he was able to accomplish all that of which in

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the past he had only been able to dream. Then came the unexpected. In May 1994, after Vadim had complained of pain in his lower abdomen, his physicians ordered a computer tomogram, which detected a growth in Vadim?s large intestines. An operation was undertaken, and a large tumor was removed from his colon. The surgeon also discovered two metastases in Vadim's liver, which he attempted to deal with by performing a resection. The prognosis was devastating: a rapid physical decline was to be expected. It was unlikely that Vadim would survive more than one year.

Vadim received the news with extraordinary calm. "I see nothing," he said, "that is particularly tragic in my personal fate." One could not but admire Vadim's stoic response, but we all felt that there was, in this unexpected and terrible development, something profoundly tragic, in an almost classical sense. At the very moment when objective conditions finally permitted Vadim to fulfill his life's ambition, he was struck with a relentless and incurable disease. In the fall of 1994, when Vadim had recovered sufficiently from his operation, I visited him in Moscow. He had resumed work on the third volume, which he hoped to complete within a few months. As always, the first order of business was the drawing up of an agenda for our discussions. The most important item was "Plans for the Future." We talked about the impact of the new campaign of falsifications that had been unleashed by the publication of books by Professor Richard Pipes and General Dmitri Volkogonov. Was it not time, I suggested to Vadim, for the International Committee to launch an "International Counter-Offensive Against the Post-Soviet School of Historical Falsification"? Vadim immediately repeated the title in Russian, which made it sound even more grandiose and imposing. It appealed to him immensely. I asked Vadim if he would be prepared to undertake a lecture tour to the United States during the early spring of 1995. Vadim greeted the proposal with enthusiasm. At that moment I had no idea whether Vadim would be alive in the spring. But the prospect of lecturing abroad had a therapeutic effect upon Vadim greater than any treatment known to medical science. As his spirit soared, Vadim's capacity for work seemed fully restored. He rapidly completed the third volume and threw himself into the preparation of his American lectures.

The first lecture was to take place at Michigan State University in Lansing; the second at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Further talks were scheduled in Palo Alto and Boston. Our party organized a campaign to build the lectures the likes of which had not been seen on a college campus in the United States for at least the last 20 years. We advertised the lectures as "a major intellectual event"--something that struck the students as so strange, unusual and welcome that it quickly generated a great deal of interest and excitement among them. It was with trepidation that we awaited the arrival of Vadim and Galya. Several months had passed since my visit to Moscow. I wondered whether his health was up to the rigors of travel and a demanding series of lectures. But my concerns were soon set to rest. Vadim's mood was nothing less than euphoric and his physical condition seemed robust. His interest in every facet of American life was inexhaustible. As we were soon to discover, we had on our hands one of the most formidable sightseers since Marco Polo. Between discussions on his upcoming lectures, Vadim insisted on seeing as much of Detroit and its environs as possible. His interest in sociology was not merely that of a theoretician. Vadim possessed acute powers of observation, and was fascinated by the variety, anomalies and contradictions of the United States. Vadim wanted to sample and savor as much as possible of American life--and I mean that literally. On a trip to a mall, Vadim noticed an ice cream parlor. He strode in and was amazed by the variety of flavors. He ordered a sundae with three scoops of ice cream. The attendant behind the counter pointed to the vast array of toppings, and asked Vadim which he would like on his ice cream? "All of them," he replied.

The lectures were a triumph. At Michigan State University, nearly 150 students, faculty and administrators were in attendance. At the University of Michigan, the attendance was close to 250. Vadim had the gift of presenting complex ideas in a manner which made them accessible and interesting to a diverse audience. Vadim placed great value on his interaction with the audience. He enjoyed questions more than anything else, because they allowed him to gauge the audience's response, to clarify elements of his presentation and develop new ideas that had not previously occurred to him.

At the conclusion of the tour of the United States we agreed that a further series of lectures would be organized in other parts of the world. In February 1996 Vadim lectured in England and Scotland. In May-June 1996, Vadim delivered lectures in Australia before standing room only audiences whose size shocked--and, it often seemed, dismayed--the history faculties of the universities at which the meetings were held. The four lectures given by Vadim--two in Sydney and two in Melbourne--attracted a turnout of nearly 2,000 people. In December 1996 Vadim traveled to Germany to deliver a lecture in Berlin, at the Humboldt University, and in Bochum.

Vadim was pleased with the success of his lectures. But he derived his greatest satisfaction from meeting the comrades of the International Committee. The depth of his isolation in Russia made him all the more grateful to be with friends and genuine comrades. Vadim found among them a sense of idealism and solidarity that was impossible within the bureaucratized organizations that he had known in the USSR. Meeting and working with Trotskyists from all over the world was, for Vadim and Galya, not only a political and intellectual experience, but a deeply emotional one. Invariably, as the day of their return to Moscow drew closer, the mood of Vadim and Galya would grow darker. They would seek to retain their composure by showering gifts upon their hosts. Then, when they arrived at the airport and time came to say their last goodbyes, there were always embraces and tears.

Life in Moscow was not easy for Vadim. While the trips abroad seemed to work wonders upon his health and morale, the returns to Moscow often were followed by a physical and emotional relapse. Given the nature of Vadim's illness, long and exhausting sessions of chemotherapy were unavoidable. But they were made still more difficult by the isolation that Vadim felt within Russia. Little remained of his old circle of friends and colleagues. Many of them had simply adapted to the new environment by shedding their past beliefs and principles. With such people Vadim refused to maintain any personal contact. Then there were other friends, less adaptable, who felt that their lives had lost all purpose in the utterly debased conditions of post-Soviet life. Vadim and Galya did what they could to support and encourage such friends. Once Vadim invited an old friend to dinner. He wanted me to meet her and discuss the work and perspective of our movement. She listened in silence, barely uttering a word. What few observations she made expressed the deepest pessimism and demoralization. When the woman left Vadim explained: "She was once perhaps the most honest and respected journalist in the Soviet Union. Her articles on social problems and conditions of everyday life were read by millions of people. She received thousands of letters every week. Then her newspaper closed down and she could not find another job. Her audience no longer exists, and she sees no reason to live. I know many people like her."

In order to maintain his own emotional equilibrium, Vadim attempted--to the extent that this was possible--to maintain a certain detachment from daily political developments. As Avner Zis, the brilliant Soviet aestheticist who remained one of Vadim's few close friends, once noted: "We watch the news on television and see only two types of people--idiots and gangsters." Vadim tried as best he could to concentrate on his historical work. But the depth of the intellectual, social and moral degradation profoundly affected him. Though he understood the counterrevolutionary nature of Stalinism, Vadim found it difficult to

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accept--emotionally, if not intellectually--that there had not emerged from the Communist Party, an organization with 40 million members, at least several dozen, if not a few thousand, genuine Marxists.

On the weekend of Vadim's sixtieth birthday, the Communist Party called an anti-Yeltsin demonstration that coincided with the forty-second anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany. Though he despised Zyuganov, Vadim hoped that the date of the demonstration would somehow evoke residual socialist sentiments among the Moscow population. "At least we shall see some red flags," Vadim said, urging me to accompany him to observe the demonstration. I was glad to walk with Vadim, but warned him not to get his hopes up. The demonstration sickened Vadim: there were a few red flags, but even more posters bearing the image of Stalin. There were also swastikas and anti-Semitic leaflets being widely circulated. The demonstration came to a halt before the Lubianka, and Zyuganov addressed the demonstrators from the steps of the old secret police headquarters within which--60 years before--thousands of Old Bolsheviks had been tortured and shot. As Vadim left the scene, he gave voice to all his grief and frustration. "Now you have seen for yourself what has become of our society," he said again and again. As we walked through the streets of Moscow I attempted to counteract Vadim's depression. The demonstration did not represent the entire Russian reality, I argued. Other influences were at work, including his own writings. Vadim was not willing to be consoled. "Nothing I write will make any difference in this country," he insisted. We came across a small kiosk with a few tables and chairs set up beside it. We purchased some sodas and sat down to drink them. The argument continued. Suddenly we noticed a man observing us. As we wondered who he was, he came up to Vadim and said quietly: "I know who you are. Please accept my gratitude for what you have written. You have many friends." As we completed our journey home, Vadim's mood was euphoric.

Such shifts in mood were not unusual for Vadim. He was a complex and multifaceted man--as much an artist as a scientist. The richness of his thought flowed from a rare blend of logic and emotion. Vadim possessed an awesome capacity to absorb, analyze and assimilate information. Part of the secret of the speed with which he wrote was that he retained much of what he read--archival documents, books, and articles from journals--and did not need to spend a great deal of time making, studying and reorganizing notes. But however great a claim historical facts and sociological statistics made upon his memory, there was still plenty of room for poetry. He recited with ease the verses of Pushkin, Mayakovsky, Pasternak and other Russian-Soviet masters. The beauty and passion of his recitations were not merely the work of memory. Vadim both understood and felt the images to which he gave voice with such sensitivity.

When Vadim left Australia this past January, he was full of hope. At the conclusion of his lecture, I had presented Vadim with the newly-published English-language translation of *1937*. In accepting the book, Vadim acknowledged before the audience that the last six years had been the happiest of his life. He wished, moreover, to share a secret with the audience. The seventh and last volume of his historical cycle would be dedicated to the International Committee of the Fourth International, without whose support and encouragement his work would not have been possible. For the next few months Vadim seemed to be holding his own physically. In May, he and Galya traveled to Israel to visit a daughter. Upon his return, Vadim suddenly found it difficult to move his left arm. His doctors assured him that he had suffered only a small stroke, and that there was no reason to be alarmed. In August, however, the weakness extended to his legs. Vadim entered the Institute of Oncological Sciences for tests and treatment.

Though Vadim assured me over the telephone that his condition was stable and that doctors expected an improvement, I feared the worst and decided to visit him in September. I arrived in Moscow on September 11, amidst the growing chaos of the financial crisis that had, during the previous week, produced the collapse of the ruble. I went immediately to the hospital. Twenty years before it had been, no doubt, a showcase of Soviet scientific achievements. Now it seemed a symbol of the social catastrophe that had overtaken Russia. The vast structure was cold and dark. On that Friday evening, medical personnel were nowhere to be found. Vadim's room was on the eighteenth floor. All the medical stations were deserted. Only an elderly cleaning woman, bent over a mop, was to be seen. Searching through the darkened halls, I found Vadim's room and entered. He was sitting at a small desk, writing. His appearance had greatly changed. Galya was living with Vadim in the hospital room, taking upon herself all the essential functions that the hospital--devastated by the social crisis--was unable to provide. She prepared Vadim's food, changed the sheets on his bed, checked his blood pressure and sugar levels, administered medications, and washed him.

As it was already late and Vadim was very tired, we agreed to begin our discussion the next day. But when I arrived on Saturday morning, Vadim's condition had suddenly deteriorated drastically. He was gasping for air, and seemed to be only semiconscious. I left the room in search of a physician. I was able to find his oncologist, Professor Litchnitzer, who had supervised Vadim?s treatment since the operation. He now told me that the cancer had progressed to Vadim's brain. At the present moment, Vadim was passing through a serious crisis. There was little he could do except administer oxygen to help Vadim's breathing. But Professor Litchnitzer then suggested that I should try to speak to Vadim. I went back to the room, sat down beside Vadim's bed and did as Litchnitzer suggested. Vadim opened his eyes. His breathing became less labored. Within an hour the crisis seemed to have passed. Vadim sat up in his bed. He asked how long I would be in Moscow. I told him my schedule. " *Nu, tak*," Vadim replied. "Let us prepare an agenda for our discussions." First, he wanted to review with me the material that he was including in his seventh volume, especially that relating to the assassination of Trotsky. Then, Vadim said, he intended to dictate a letter to Professor Herman Weber in Germany, who had edited a collection of essays on the Stalinist terror, one of which had included a dismissive reference to Rogovin's work. According to Weber's book, Rogovin's analysis of the terror placed too much emphasis on Trotsky's influence. Finally, Vadim wanted to discuss how the sections of the International Committee intended to incorporate, in programmatic form, the concept of social equality. Little more than an hour before, it had appeared possible that Vadim might die that very day. Now he had proposed an agenda that would require several days to complete.

We spent the rest of Saturday reviewing, as he had suggested, material for the seventh volume. On Sunday, Vadim dictated a brilliantly argued letter to Professor Weber, refuting the criticism that had been leveled against his own work. On Monday, we spoke and, as was usual for us, argued about the meaning of the demand for social equality within contemporary society. By early evening, Vadim had tired and we decided to bring our discussion to a conclusion. He was immensely satisfied with the results of our work. Would it be possible, he asked, for me to return to Moscow in November? I promised that I would. On the next day, Tuesday, I left Russia. After stopping for one day in Western Europe, I flew back to the United States on Thursday. By the time I arrived in Detroit it was already past midnight, Friday morning, in Moscow. Fifteen minutes after I entered my home I received the message from Moscow. Vadim had just died.

Vadim's funeral was held on the outskirts of Moscow on September 21. The Russian media had taken no notice of his death. It was a relatively small group of people that was on hand to pay tribute to this extraordinary man. But those who were there represented all that was great and principled in the history of the Soviet Union: Yuri Primakov, the son of General Vitali Primakov, murdered by Stalin in 1937; Yuri Smirnov, the son of the Left Oppositionist Vladimir Smirnov, murdered by Stalin in

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1936; Zoya Serebriakova, the daughter of the Left Oppositionist Leonid Serebriakov, murdered by Stalin in 1937; and Valeri Bronstein, the grandnephew of Lev Davidovich Bronstein, known better as Trotsky. These survivors and witnesses of events that are among the most terrible of the twentieth century were able to appreciate the significance of the life of Vadim Zakharovich Rogovin. In the future many more, in Russia and throughout the world, will read Vadim's books and honor his memory. For the great historian has himself passed into history.

Notes

1. *Russian Thinkers* (London: Penguin Books, 1979), p. 129.
2. *What Is History?* (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 37.
3. *Stalin's Neo-NEP* (Unpublished translation)
4. *Fourth International*, Volume 19, Number 1, Fall-Winter 1992, pp. 77-78.

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