



## Stalin's Martyrs: The Tragic Romance of the Russian Revolution

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## Stalin's Martyrs: The Tragic Romance of the Russian Revolution

MICHAEL G. SMITH

Ludwig: My question is this. You have been repeatedly exposed to risks and dangers. You have been persecuted. You have participated in battles. Several of your closest friends have been killed. Yet you remain alive. How do you explain this? Do you believe in fate?

Stalin: No, I do not. Bolsheviks, Marxists, do not believe in 'fate'. The whole concept of 'fate', of Schicksal, is a prejudice, nonsense, a vestige of mythology, like the mythology of the ancient Greeks, whose heavenly gods steered human fates.

Ludwig: So the fact that you were not killed is coincidence?

Stalin: There are both external and internal reasons, the totality of which has resulted in my not being killed. But regardless of this, someone else might have taken my place, for someone surely *had to* sit here. 'Fate' is something strange, something mystical. I do not believe in mysticism. There were of course reasons that danger passed me by. But there could have been a whole series of other coincidences that could have led to an altogether opposite result. These had nothing to do with so-called fate.<sup>1</sup>

I offer this brief passage from Emil Ludwig's 1931 interview with I.V. Stalin (Dzhugashvili) more for the significance of the question than the answer. Dzhugashvili, whose given name I am using in an effort to demythologise and historicise the person, was circumspect. His life

was something less than fate (*sud'ba*); but something more than mere coincidence (*sluchainost*). He only cited a modest 'totality' of reasons for his survival. It is not a very revealing answer given the kinds of hubris we find in his biographies and writings. He could have easily referred to the certainty of the Marxian dialectic, or to the beneficence of the Party will, or to the strength of his own character. But as for the question, it was as provocative and 'startling' as Ludwig had promised. And if Dzhughashvili did not answer it so completely, then we need to explore other possible answers in his world: namely in the cult of martyrdom and redemption, founded upon Karl Marx's tragic reading of history, that governed Bolshevik ideology and Dzhughashvili's place within it.

Marxist socialism was a political movement haunted by several kinds of tragedies: in the bourgeoisie, the class that had given so much to history but was imperilled by the fatal flaw of its own inner contradictions; or in the proletariat, which was fated to suffer through humiliating but redemptive traumas of violence like the Paris Commune of 1871. Marx raised a benevolent mortality for these tragic villains and heroes of revolutionary struggle. Some revolutionaries were more valuable to the cause dead than alive. His was a 'Tragic account of history', one both 'heroic and militant in tone'.<sup>2</sup> 'Tragedy' carries a variety of meanings. It can express the whole structure of a plot, spiralling downward from possibility and nobility into dejection and defeat. Or it can represent one moment in the upward, salvation trajectory of a romance. I will examine Soviet representations of 'tragedy' in this second sense.<sup>3</sup>

Tragedy was a crucial element in the tortured ethic of Socialist Realism that wound its way through literature, history-writing, the popular media and daily life. In formal terms, Socialist Realism was a 'revolutionary romanticism'.<sup>4</sup> It displayed Marxism's faith in the future 'realm of freedom', a soundly romantic myth about the progressive course of history. Its stories verged on the melodramatic in their stylised, often flat portrayals of villains and heroes, protagonists struggling through actual experience toward ideal utopia. The plot always led to ultimate victory. But these stories also required eternal vigilance against enemies within and without, even within the deepest recesses of the best communist. There was always some anguish or pathos, that moment of death or disaster urging the hero on to victory.<sup>5</sup> The romance of Marxist communism demanded the existential contemplation of this tragic moment. It gave the

stories of Socialist Realism their traction and depth, their bounce.<sup>6</sup> It even made these stories, in literature and through history, more tragic than melodramatic, more tragic than romantic.<sup>7</sup>

The Russian Bolsheviks enshrined Marx's general philosophy of violence, class struggle, into their own particular culture of violence: as both the objects of Tsarist oppression and the subjects of their own kinds of class terror in turn. Looking ahead to the gathering dangers of the twentieth century, Semen Frank recognised this dynamic at work in the false 'asceticism' of Russian populists and terrorists, 'the strength of self-sacrifice and the resolve to sacrifice others'.<sup>8</sup> Looking backward upon its remains, Katerina Clark recognised that 'the increasing emphasis on revolutionary sacrifice in Stalinist hagiography more or less coincides with the increasing "sacrifice" in Soviet political practice, i.e., with the intensification of the purges'.<sup>9</sup> There was a raw honesty in this practical law of the revolutionary. The Bolsheviks were only willing to dispense that which they were also willing to suffer. The pain that the Bolsheviks received from their enemies became the pain they returned, acts of revolutionary violence to redeem them and the world.<sup>10</sup>

For some historians, this compulsion to violence has been endemic to Russian history at large. For others, it has been one aspect of Russia's experiences in modern war and revolution.<sup>11</sup> I will explore this culture of violence as a context within which Dzhughashvili worked and ruled. So many of his critical biographies get too personal. We see the vengeful Georgian, rooted in the literary personage of 'Koba the Avenger', acting out the age-old blood vendetta against personal slights and professional disagreements. Or we see the scheming Orthodox seminarian, five years of religious schooling leaving him with a 'liturgical' style: catechistic, declamatory, dogmatic and literal.<sup>12</sup> But the Bolshevik discourse of suffering and redemption played its part in his professional conduct, too. There was a narrative fold in Dzhughashvili's life, bound to the larger history of Leninism and the longer history of Bolshevism, stitched together by the threads of tragic memory.<sup>13</sup> At significant moments in his life and once in his own death, he appealed to the deaths of fellow comrades to promote his professional career and his own historical legacy. With compatriots in the party, he contributed to the revolutionary martyrologies of these victims, calling forth religious sensibilities to heighten the public awareness of immediate loss and to validate class struggle.<sup>14</sup> For them, tragedy expressed

enduring values about the certainty of human mortality and the promises of social immortality; about the falsehoods of personal identity and the truths of ideological representation; about the vulnerability of the individual and the power of the collective. Tragedy represented a moment of renovation, a point of genesis.

These terms offer us entries into the proto-religious and totalitarian pretensions of the Soviet regime. Bolshevism as a 'political religion' has been one of the most enduring of investigative methods in the scholarship.<sup>15</sup> The study of 'totalitarian subjectivity' is more recent, as scholars of varying approaches have investigated the writings of Stalinism's speaking 'subjects' for their surface and deep meanings, for values imparted and to some degree believed.<sup>16</sup> Dzhugashvili has been placed under a similar microscope, Alfred Reiber's 'politics of personal identity'.<sup>17</sup> This makes perfect sense. If the ordinary subjects of Stalinism are valid objects of study, then its leading subject is, too. He must have believed some if not all of the propaganda written about him. There must be traces of his self-perceptions in the words he and others left to posterity.

There is nothing especially unique in these patterns. State dynasties, national movements and political parties pretended to a totalising religious legitimacy long before the Bolsheviks ever did. The nation, not so much the church, was their model of inspiration. When the Bolsheviks constructed a cult of violent sacrifice and veneration of martyrs, they were adapting to a European model. They were also, I would argue, transforming their class values into national values. Their rituals of mourning and commemoration delineated a circle of beliefs and behaviours that was already becoming national, already creating the 'horizontal comradeship' of the nation.<sup>18</sup> The Bolshevik cause, like any good king or flag or nation before it, was worth dying for.

### **The Revolutionary Underground: Martyrs and Ritual**

For the Bolsheviks, from the seemingly losing side of history, from the depths of the underground, class struggle was a fact of life. Russian revolutionaries transformed their plight into a crystalline culture of violence. In their political trials after 1870, they perfected a theatricality and performance ethic, inverting the procedure and setting of the legal stage to highlight the drama of class struggle. They developed a 'secularised religious sensibility' in the working class and

intelligentsia, an ethic of asceticism and moralism highlighting their self-sacrifices and collective immortality, their pursuit of the common good and conceit of purpose.<sup>19</sup> Like Marx, but perhaps with more devotion than sarcasm, they borrowed the words and images of Christianity, the sacrificial person of Jesus Christ and the redemptive symbol of the 'cross', to give vent to their suffering.<sup>20</sup> In each of these cases, the 'language' of Bolshevism was beholden to the wealth of meanings from modern standard Russian and from Old Church Slavonic. It was not a language at all, but an idiom, often a sacred vocabulary turned profane, infused with new political meanings and purposes, but consistently applying older verbal forms. Depending on the source and the moment, it could be either a mark of sincere religious fervour or a simple act of subversive translation. This is an insight worth remembering. The Bolsheviks, no matter how hard they tried to make things anew, consistently inhabited a world of older forms: in their physical spaces, in their values and customs, in their very persons and in their language.

'Red funerals', as Thomas Trice has canvassed the phenomenon after 1870, fused the best of revolutionary theatricality and proto-religiosity. These were public commemorations for the 'victims of capital', those killed from industrial accidents or political murders. They offered a release for the earnest and zealous members of the revolutionary movement; served as reservoirs of their intense emotion. The red funeral was the perfect ritual; a 'revolution in ritual form', in Trice's words. It joined vertical and horizontal space in a web of sensations and impressions: the raised banners and wreaths; the dead body and catafalque; the marchers, police escort and onlookers; the choirs and their hymns; the fiery speeches at the grave. These funerals were reverent. They plumbed a universal emotional depth: certain death. Everyone, regardless of political sympathy, identified. They were, like similar rituals throughout Europe, a delicate balance of the 'sacred and secular'.<sup>21</sup> But they also turned the dead body into a prop: flaunting revolutionary resistance along the boulevards of power and wealth, affirming revolutionary ideals through the subversion and 'desacralisation' of the values of the Orthodox state.<sup>22</sup>

How did Dzhughashvili fit within this culture? The historical record, and his own revisions and falsifications of it, reveals that he mastered the art of performance, the idiom of proto-religiosity, and the cult of violence and martyrdom. The official biographies of the

personality cult recounted his exploits in Tiflis, Batum and Baku, junctions along the young man's path to consciousness and leadership, where as 'pupil' and 'apprentice' (not yet a 'master') he was 'baptised in revolutionary combat'.<sup>23</sup> This baptism included organising the first May Day and similar demonstrations in Tiflis after 1901, which Dzhugashvili claimed created a kind of sacrificial 'democracy' of the knout. The violent 'street demonstration', he argued, strategically joined political rebels and 'curious onlookers', people attracted to the scandal and spectacle, to 'the lash of the Cossack's whips'. As they drew closer to the scene of savagery, they came to share blows with the rebels, joining them. 'Every militant who falls in the struggle, or who is torn out of our ranks, rouses hundreds of new fighters'.<sup>24</sup> The ultimate victory of the proletariat was ensured by such temporary defeats. The life of the Party was born in this violent clash, this moment of possible death.

Dzhugashvili and his biographers cultivated his standing as a comrade of martyrs, especially Vladimir Z. Ketskhoveli and Aleksandr G. Tsulukidze, who together were said to have forged Georgian Bolshevism. He appeared as faithful friend to them while they were alive, their humble successor after their deaths.<sup>25</sup> Among his earliest achievements were several funeral speeches, including those for his lost friends, framed within the rhetoric of class violence and comradely pathos, two of his hallmark themes as a young agitator and propagandist.<sup>26</sup> He came to see the red funeral as a potent kind of street demonstration. During a 9 March 1902 workers' protest in Batum, at which some 15 were killed and over 50 wounded, Dzhugashvili was said to have stoically 'stood in the midst of the turbulent sea of workers' orchestrating the action, even nursing one of the casualties with his own hands. He also apparently helped to organise the funerals, which 'turned into a grand political demonstration against Tsarism', a common refrain of the literature. In words later assigned to him, he called the victims sanctified, regal 'martyrs' for the cause, ghosts whose 'pale and faltering lips' cried for justice. He repeated these images in coming years, tapping into the street politics of 'fallen victims' and class 'vengeance'.<sup>27</sup> A painting of the protest from the 1930s shows him baring his chest and clenching his fists before the bullets. In retrospect, but perhaps also at the moment, he fancied himself a living martyr, a martyr survivor.<sup>28</sup> As he intimated in his interview with Ludwig, he could have been killed at any time.

Dzhughashvili never spoke over Ketskhoveri's grave.<sup>29</sup> But he did participate in the 1905 funeral for Tsulukidze. With other Bolsheviks, he marched in the procession and spoke over the body. A later painting of the scene showed him raising a solemn oath in Tsulukidze's memory. His 'big speech' promised that the crowds would someday return to the grave proclaiming, 'We have won!'<sup>30</sup> One of his Menshevik rivals, R. Arsenidze, remembered the events with a twist. He described how Dzhughashvili, after supposedly losing a debate with a Menshevik opponent after the funeral, tried to hide the loss by having his comrades carry him out of the debate as if he were the champion. Aghast at the indiscretion, Arsenidze recounted the 'triumphal procession of eight men bearing upon their arms one man, the ninth', implying that Dzhughashvili presumed to inherit the very authority of the just-buried corpse. What a stunning example of his appreciation for the authority of the dead. Having just proceeded along the path of the funeral with the corpse, he now traversed it, as if he were returning from the dead, like a modern-day Lazarus, or perhaps simply as the 'new' Tsulukidze.<sup>31</sup>

In Dzhughashvili's recorded memory, as in the ledger of historical facts, his days in oil-rich Baku were perhaps the most formative: where he became 'Stalin', where 'the oil workers had served to steel me as a practical fighter', where the 'acute and stormy conflicts' had 'taught me for the first time to know what leading large masses of workers meant'.<sup>32</sup> He proudly claimed that 'he literally won Baku for Bolshevism', this in the context of the widening Stolypin reaction and a waning Bolshevik Party elsewhere in Russia. As he once wrote nostalgically, 'If you ain't seen the forest of oil drills', referring to the inspiring industrial wasteland, 'you ain't seen nothin' yet'.<sup>33</sup>

The city had witnessed its share of red funerals. One of the most memorable was the commemoration for the worker activist, Petr Montin, murdered in December 1905 in suspicious circumstances. Demonstrators and onlookers filled the streets of Baku to bid farewell. 'All life in the city of Baku was frozen still on that day', wrote one memoirist. Most moving was the sermon of an Orthodox priest who compared Montin to Jesus Christ: he was the 'dead comrade who also brought truth to the people and was also killed'.<sup>34</sup> A Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) pamphlet of the time, dedicated to several other worker-victims, recalled Dzhughashvili's own rhetoric: these men 'had not fallen in vain', for their sacrifice had revealed the utter decay of Tsarism and had called



forth new workers to the cause 'by the tenfold'.<sup>35</sup> Orchestrating red funerals like Montin's, so one of Dzhugashvili's biographers claimed, proved his charisma and leadership. The pathos of the red funeral was the ground upon which his voice resounded for class struggle, to 'incite hatred in the masses' for their oppressors, and for the arming of the proletariat into fighting squads for their self-defence.<sup>36</sup>

Among Baku's red funerals, Khanlar Säfäräliyev's was unique. He had been a member of the RSDLP and a leader of its Muslim faction, shot on 19 September 1907 during a labour protest. It was a typical affair: a 'mass army of thousands' was said to 'bear its chest' in his belated defence.<sup>37</sup> But as a Muslim, Khanlar was buried according to the rites of Shi'a Islam, reflecting the yearly Müharräm rituals, commemorations of the martyrdom of the Imam Huseyn, filled with graphic public renderings of the sad story and colourful processions of flagellants and mourners. With Bolshevik collusion, so I have argued elsewhere, Khanlar's funeral and gravesite, like other funerals and cemeteries in the Shi'ite tradition, exploited even these sacred rituals to help join the Muslim masses to the class struggle.<sup>38</sup> Like his other non-Muslim comrades, Dzhugashvili was a bit uncomfortable with these developments. In a newspaper article published on the day of Khanlar's funeral, he noted that the Muslim 'oil workers' were 'appearing on the scene' in 'clumsy' and 'comical' ways.<sup>39</sup> But in later years, Dzhugashvili and his official biographies remembered Khanlar's funeral with care and pride: how he directed the choirs and factory whistles to mourn for Khanlar; how he celebrated him as Azerbaijan's 'first victim' for the Russian Revolution; how he gently told Khanlar's elderly father, 'Do not cry, old man, we will have our own holidays someday, and you for your most noble son'.<sup>40</sup>

Dzhugashvili paid his own personal sacrifices to the Bolshevik cause. His biographies elevated him as a living martyr, one who endured privation, persecution and the gauntlet, but who survived to mourn the dead and govern the living.<sup>41</sup> Wrote one biographer, 'Between 1902 and 1913, Stalin was arrested seven times, exiled six times, and escaped from exile five times'. Wrote another, 'First he is here, then he is there, then arrest, exile, escape, and once again he is among us'.<sup>42</sup> What mystery! He bore the terrors of the Tsarist police to live another day. He was the great invisible man, the disappearing and reappearing man, but always at just the right moment and for the true cause.

Nor did Dzhugashvili fail to honour violent clashes and martyrdoms beyond those of his personal experiences. Through his

exile, on his way to St Petersburg and becoming a 'master of the revolution', he consistently reminded the proletariat to take heed of its terrifying sacrifices during Bloody Sunday (1905) and the Lena Massacre (1912). Death was a ground for rebirth. The 'bloody drama' of the Lena fields was a mark of 'real life in all its inexorable contradictions'. It had helped the proletariat 'be born again'.<sup>43</sup> He reduced the lessons to a quote from Walt Whitman (the consummate poet of equality and camaraderie, of martyrdom and death). It was, he later claimed, the 'perfect' summary of the philosophy of Bolshevism: 'We are the living, our scarlet blood seethes by the fire of boundless energies'.<sup>44</sup> This sentiment was not simply a matter of personality. As for other young Bolsheviks like him, so for Dzhughashvili, it was a matter of common conviction.

### **The Russian Civil War: Villainy and Terror**

The proto-religious casts of underground Bolshevism only fortified as the revolutionary movement transformed into a state. 'The Russian Revolution, if it becomes isolated', proclaimed one editorial in early 1918, 'threatens to be crucified upon the cross of world imperialism'.<sup>45</sup> But the Bolsheviks now acquired the means to defend their gains and defeat their enemies in the context of the Civil War and its 'Red Terror'. Scholars have recently explained their recourse to violence as part of a pattern of European state policies during the First World War, or as a more peculiar element of the regime's fixation on ideological purity.<sup>46</sup> The Bolshevik culture of violence and martyrdom offers another perspective. Perhaps the romance of the Russian revolution, in the mentality of Party members, was simply following its proper course; the tragedy of martyrdom transforming into the release of 'revenge-terror', the 'furies', the 'righting of the balance'.<sup>47</sup> The Bolsheviks entertained this righteousness. They also faced increasingly diverse and violent threats from their opponents. Righteousness and threat married in the content of the terror, which accelerated in 1918 with the assassinations of M. Volodarskii (June) and M.N. Uritskii (August), the attempt on V.I. Lenin's life (August), and other atrocities of the 'White Terror'.<sup>48</sup> The victims were properly honoured as 'martyrs' for the revolution: as 'sacred victims' who would live on in the 'memory of undying humanity' where they would 'meet with the heroes of the Paris Commune, with Comrades Uritskii and Volodarskii, and with the great ghosts of Marx and

Engels'. But the call to vengeance was also deliberate, a fight 'to the death', to the very last 'drop of blood'.<sup>49</sup>

Among the fallen comrades were the famous Twenty-six Commissars, Bolshevik leaders of the 'Baku Commune', including the Armenian S.K. Shaumyan and the Georgian Alesha Dzhaparidze. Their short-lived Commune had risen and fallen under troubling circumstances in 1918: the anti-Muslim violence of March and the anti-Armenian violence of September. The commissars were murdered in the deserts of Turkmenistan by anti-Bolshevik forces on 20 September, after their retreat from the city and their surprise capture. The myth of the Commune and the Twenty-six was one of the most prolific and enduring in Soviet political culture. It predated the Lenin death cult. It helped reinvent the red funeral of underground days with newly innocent, noble victims, now honoured in a formal, stylised literature of state commemoration. It reinforced the consciousness of the USSR as global commune, represented in the ideological precept of 'capitalist encirclement'. It echoed the pathos of the Paris Commune of old – surrounded by French reactionaries and German imperialists and betrayed by internal class enemies – one of the most venerated of historical moments during the Civil War (and beyond).<sup>50</sup>

The myth of the Twenty-six also contained all the mysteries of a good crime scandal, with conniving Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs) within, secret British agents and vicious White terrorists without, escapes by boat, arrests and evacuation by railroad, cold-blooded executions and anonymous burials in the desert sands. But perhaps best of all, it had the earmarks of a tragic romance. The condemned were said to have welcomed the bullets with stirring words. 'We are dying for Communism. Long Live Communism', as if they were about to enter the gates of a promised heavenly paradise. These themes of scandal and vindication carried over in the cult of the Twenty-six, which first peaked during the fifth anniversary of the murders in 1923. In the logic of suffering and redemption, the Commissars had to die so that the USSR might live. 'The Baku Commune fell only so as to rise again'.<sup>51</sup> Avel Enukidze offered an especially poignant remembrance of the Twenty-six, namely Dzhaparidze and Shaumyan (the 'Caucasus Lenin'). They were the 'most' any Bolshevik could hope for, the most 'knowledgeable', the most 'beloved', the most 'energetic'. 'Torn from the ranks of our party',

he wrote, their deaths had been an 'irreplaceable loss' for the party.<sup>52</sup>

The history of the Baku Commune did have a muted, alternate reading. Several official commentators implicitly admitted that the Commune was so unstable and short-lived because of its own complicity in the sectarian violence surrounding it, especially the anti-Muslim pogroms of March 1918. Its 'very tragedy was its failure to win over the native masses'.<sup>53</sup> But the most interesting of all the alternate readings was Dzhugashvili's. He effectively launched the official interpretation, representing the Commune as that cautionary tale about enemies without (British imperialism) and within (Mensheviks and SRs). But in his view the Twenty-six were also their own worst enemies, a rather uncharacteristic disrespect for the recent and honourable dead. They had become false martyrs out of their own failures to defend the Commune properly from its enemies. True martyrdom would have meant shedding their blood in Baku, dying at the gates. Instead, they 'cleared out' and 'slipped away' from the 'field of battle', allowing the city to fall without a fight.<sup>54</sup>

The cult of the Twenty-six diminished as Dzhugashvili consolidated power. He was powerless to defeat it completely, so he emphasised his own role as precursor and successor.<sup>55</sup> A 1931 editorial in *Izvestiya* repeated the cult's main values. But now Dzhugashvili was positioned standing 'upon their bones', like them in many ways except that he was the living twenty-seventh who would ensure their visions came true.<sup>56</sup> E.N. Burdzhakov's historical study of the Twenty-six followed this approach, offering a detailed account of the mysterious encounters and events, painting their noble and romantic values, but in the end holding Dzhugashvili as the one who survived, the one who compensated for failure.<sup>57</sup> The Paris Commune 'took the first blow' in the history of the world revolution for communism. The Baku Commune took a second. Dzhugashvili was to return them with a last, fatal blow to capitalism.<sup>58</sup> This was all part of the new personality cult that stressed his courage and tenacity during the Civil War, not without some exaggerated truth. He was the one sent away to the 'most decisive and dangerous fronts', where 'confusion and panic' reigned and where the regime was in its 'death throes'.<sup>59</sup> He showed only calm resolve, the martyr who survived, defended 'the USSR on all its fronts with his own breast'.<sup>60</sup> He was 'that man who is always standing between what has been done and what is to be done'.<sup>61</sup> He

was that man who, as before the Civil War and so afterward, occupied a strange middle ground between death and life.

### The Lenin Cult: Leader and Succession

The Lenin cult was at the centre of Soviet life, broadcast over space and time. It raised at least three generations of children on its half-real, half-mythic founder. But Lenin's death was unique. Yes, he had suffered as a living martyr to the cause after the assassination attempt in 1918. He was one who, like Jesus 'had sacrificed themselves for the masses'.<sup>62</sup> In the tradition of class struggle, he cradled a 'sacred hatred, a hatred of slavery and oppression unto death'; he enjoyed that 'revolutionary passion that moves mountains, that boundless faith in the creative forces of the masses'.<sup>63</sup> But he died a natural death in 1924, a death brought on by several illnesses and a gradual eclipse from the affairs of state. He had become the old man of the revolution. His passing lacked a certain tension. The best it could summon was a mournful respect and sad nostalgia. 'Lenin has died' (*umer Lenin*), was the refrain. His heart simply 'stopped beating'. He 'passed away'. Like some cataclysmic act of nature, so one commemorative poem had it, his death stirred up melancholy and longing in the vast tracts of the USSR, from the snowy tundra of the north to the sandy deserts of Central Asia.<sup>64</sup> All this was very touching, but it was hardly the perfect martyrdom. The pattern in Bolshevik political culture was to venerate the broken and corrupted body of the martyr. The assassins of 1881, the victims of Lena, Uritskii and Volodarskii, all were memorialised within the 'marble columns' and evergreen wreaths of mourning.<sup>65</sup> Dead martyrs were the rule. Lenin's corpse was the odd exception. His was more like the holy and uncorrupted body of the saint.<sup>66</sup> In iconic terms, Maxim Gorky hailed him as the 'mother of mankind', a man who was 'a flame of almost feminine tenderness towards humanity'.<sup>67</sup>

Lenin's mummified corpse came to lie in a conflicted pose. What did he represent? Death or life? Mortality or immortality? Or what degrees of both? Victoria Bonnell's discussion of 'Lenin's two bodies' offers an insight: the mortal body as corpse presupposed the immortal body politic of the USSR.<sup>68</sup> Lenin represented death. But his death represented life for others. He died so that the USSR might live. Official annual remembrances followed this logic. The country marked his death on 20 January in the middle of winter with the

utmost seriousness and devotion. But his birthday soon followed on 22 April, just as spring was upon Russia, and which the country celebrated in more joyful tones. As one of Lenin's more fawning of commentators wrote, 'it seems as though the man who lies in the tomb, in the centre of that nocturnal, deserted square, is the only person in the world who is not asleep, and who watches over everything around him'. But it only seemed so. 'The dead do not survive except on earth. Wherever there are revolutionaries, there is Lenin'.<sup>69</sup> This was certainly true for the succession struggles that followed so quickly upon his illness and death, turning his corpse into a political weapon and emblem of legitimacy. Before 1924 was out, as the first 'mourning' busts went on sale, Party leaders united together under Dzhugashvili's lead against the 'oppositions', now increasingly subject to vilification. Lenin took on the persona of posthumous martyr victim, despoiled by a series of villains who threatened to undermine the truth and rightness of his legacy.<sup>70</sup> The full martyrdom denied him in life was granted to him in death, a fitting *post mortem*.

Dzhugashvili venerated the dead Lenin in his saintly and martyred poses. But he also gradually teased at the limits of proper subservience. During the anniversary celebrations of his 50th birthday in December 1929, the slogan 'Stalin is the Lenin of today' highlighted a modest equality. He was Lenin's successor. But he was also very much alive. He was the model of a true Bolshevik, 'to the credit of the great Party of the working class which bore me and reared me in its own image and likeness'. He began to embody the Party will: his policies always came from its core and its core always agreed with his policies. To attenuate the conceit, he vowed that he was ready to give 'all my blood, drop by drop', to defend the revolution. He was alive, but was ready to die, to assume martyrdom for the cause.<sup>71</sup>

In coming years, Dzhugashvili took on a variety of titles. He was the 'best pupil', or 'father of peoples', or 'warrior knight'. In Socialist Realist paintings he was sometimes the new Messiah, enveloped in halos of light and taking on a Christ-like pose.<sup>72</sup> But one mantle we tend to forget, perhaps because it is so obvious, is that of martyr survivor. He was the one who succeeded, who held the party standard as its central dynamic figure. He was also the one who mourned, who suffered with the sadness of loss. In all humility and respect for the dead, he was the one who literally carried the remains

of his fallen comrades to their premature graves. It was an image expressed in elegant prose. 'He stands in for the Lenin wounded by the gangsterous shot fired by the SR Kaplan', wrote Emilian Yaroslavskii. 'He stands in for the Lenin felled by sickness'.<sup>73</sup> It was an image expressed in Dzhughashvili's own funeral lament, the 'Oath to Lenin' (1924); and in later Stalinist folklore, the poetic lamentations of the dead Lenin that presupposed the praises for the living Dzhughashvili.<sup>74</sup> It was an image reflected in the brief biographical account of his life (during the hours between 9am on 23 January and 4pm on 27 January), as he accompanied Lenin's body from place to place, stood as honour guard over it, and helped to deliver it to the crypt.<sup>75</sup> It was an image captured in the photographs of Dzhughashvili as honour guard and pallbearer. There is a haunting, almost surreal photograph of him watching over Lenin's body, his face bathed in muted light and dark shadows.<sup>76</sup> Then we see Dzhughashvili, his head bowed and his eyes drawn, carrying Lenin's body to the mausoleum. This became a familiar image in the public sphere as he helped to bury M. Frunze and F.E. Dzerzhinskii. Here he was an honour guard at S.M. Kirov's coffin (1934). There he was a pallbearer for Maxim Gorky's ashes (1936). In time, the image was captured in formal painting as well, as in P. Kotov's, 'At Lenin's Death-Bed' (c.1944); or in N.Kh. Rutovskii's 'Stalin at the Bier of S.M. Kirov' (c.1935); or in Aleksandr Gerasimov's, 'I.V. Stalin by A.A. Zhdanov's Coffin' (1948).

All of these words and scenes spotlighted Dzhughashvili as guardian of that middle ground between life and death. Not as some ghastly, sinister figure stalking the corridors of politics. On the contrary, he had both a light and a hard touch in his public demeanour, often entertaining and stirring. He certainly knew how to connect with his audiences. He could regale them with wit and sarcasm, as he did in a 1930 speech lambasting the recent opposition groups.<sup>77</sup> Or he could inspire with fear and pathos, as he did in a 1933 speech filled with warnings about the real dangers of capitalism, even its 'dying' elements in the USSR, and about the looming tragedies of strife and war. The success of collectivisation and industrialisation was in peril, depending on the 'enthusiasm' and 'passion' (*paŋos*), the 'courage' and 'faith', of all Party members. They were to draw from a wellspring of passion – part hatred and vengeance, part sympathy and compassion – to drive them to right purpose and action.<sup>78</sup> A short list of 'exemplary' and 'outstanding'

dead Bolsheviks, in Dzhugashvili's view, had this emotion, what he termed (reminiscent of his favorite Whitman quote) the 'burning passion' of an 'ebullient life'. Ya.M. Sverdlov had it. So did the old Bolshevik I.F. Dubrovinskii (who perished in Turakhansk exile). The military men, Kotovskii and Frunze had it. F.E. Dzerzhinskii had it most of all. The trouble was, with so many good old Bolsheviks going to their graves in 1925 and 1926, how to replace them with younger comrades made of the same spirit?<sup>79</sup>

Dzhugashvili was on trusted ground here. His words connected with a Russian cultural attraction to the tragic and pathetic. The new holidays of Soviet culture, wrote one editorialist in 1928, demanded one overriding emotion: 'the pathos of class struggle, the poignant desire for the self-defence and the self-affirmation of class'. This was not some 'theatrical pathos' but the living pathos of proletarian will and action.<sup>80</sup> Yet theatrical pathos still enjoyed prominence in other venues. Sergei Eisenstein's montage style adapted it in the wrenching scene of the Odessa steps massacre (*Battleship Potemkin*); or in scenes of slaughtered cattle and workers (*Strike*). Aleksandr Dovzhenko's lyrical romanticism represented it through the immortal proletarian, baring his chest against bullets, impervious to their force (*Arsenal*); or in the burial of the murdered collective farm activist, set amid wonderful images of birth and rebirth (*Earth*).<sup>81</sup> Isaak Brodskii, one of the founders of the 'historical-revolutionary style' in painting, memorialised suffering and sacrifice in his 'Red Funeral' (1905), a moving study of popular melancholy and resolve;<sup>82</sup> and his 'Execution of the Twenty-six Baku Commissars' (1925), a stirring portrait reminiscent of Francisco Goya's 'The Shootings of May Third 1808' and the many drawings of the Paris Commune executions.<sup>83</sup>

The whole ethic of Socialist Realism was founded upon *pafo*s. It was that 'great passion', the product of 'profound and serious life experiences, thoughts, and feelings', the heartbeat of a 'great people, living the mighty pathos of socialism'.<sup>84</sup> The classic text, Nikolai Ostrovskii's *How the Steel was Tempered*, exemplified this truth. In a pivotal scene, while experiencing an 'immense sadness' at 'the little cemetery where his comrades lay in their communal graves', Pavel Korchagin comes to the crucial insight: 'Man's most precious possession is life itself ... And one should make haste to use every moment of life' so as to live well and die well. He was both the tragic figure and the dutiful Bolshevik par excellence.<sup>85</sup> Fyodor Gladkov's



*Cement* exemplified this truth, too, perhaps even more to Dzhugashvili's liking. Mitka, the accordion player, has just died in a needless industrial accident. Mourned by his co-workers, as 'silently and gravely, their faces filled with suffering and pain, the workmen stood shoulder to shoulder, gazing down at the dead comrade lying at their feet'. But Gleb breaks the mood. 'Comrades, this man is a sacrifice to conflict and toil! But we should not mourn or weep for him. No – instead we should be filled with the joy of new triumphs'.<sup>86</sup>

### The Great Terror: Politics and History

'Terror is the blood relative of socialism', wrote Barrington Moore for his generation, a product of the mentality to force immediate change and the central means to enforce command socialism. Soviet terror was external force, an 'instrument of control', of fear and obedience.<sup>87</sup> But terror also had its persuasive functions, its mythic role in a culture of violence that predated the Bolshevik assumption of state power and Dzhugashvili's eventual dictatorship. The 'Great Terror' (peaking in 1937–38) had a long history. It told a compelling story about the nasty villains and tragic victims of class struggle.<sup>88</sup> By no means was it a singular, uniform event. Recent studies have successfully argued that it was governed by all kinds of starts and stops, lulls and spikes. But the narrative of violence that ran through the Terror offers us one possible thread of continuity. For the Party and those literate in its idioms of class struggle, this narrative took shape in the 'omnipresent conspiracy' and web of 'fear and belief'. The Party line dictated that the dawn of socialism triumphant was the most dangerous moment yet. Communists were told to believe that enemies were everywhere, that they should question their very selves. This was the perfect tragic moment. Enemies had to be destroyed; zealots had to examine their consciences. People probably believed in these plots and conspiracies as either a rational way to make sense of the political administration or as an article of political faith. Dzhugashvili most likely believed them too, although he enjoyed the privilege of manipulating the police state and political culture to promote his own preferred versions.<sup>89</sup> Others manipulated the labels and categories ('enemies of the people', for example) in their own interests.<sup>90</sup>

The murder of Kirov in December 1934 was the focal point of a new round of conspiracies and a revived cult of violence. Its mysteries continue to fascinate us. Robert Conquest's and Amy Knight's studies

remain compelling indictments of Dzhugashvili as criminal. New studies out of Russia and the US question these accounts with equally compelling evidence and argument.<sup>91</sup> Several have even offered that 'it does not matter whether Stalin was behind the killing or not', such were the contradictory material facts and Dzhugashvili's obvious complicity in so many other crimes.<sup>92</sup> There has always been contextual evidence exculpating Dzhugashvili of the crime. After all, the 'Stalin' personality cult was already in place since 1929, reaching a new peak just before Kirov's death with all the heroes of Stakhanovites, pilots, polar explorers and Party-State leaders. In the last months of his life, Kirov himself participated in the personality cult and in the writing of new, statist histories.<sup>93</sup> As Sarah Davies has written, his 'unexpected death was a severe interruption' to the regime's cult of the leader. Adam Ulam's argument, which has gained more currency of late, also makes perfect sense: Dzhugashvili did not necessarily need a new and risky venture into assassination in late 1934. Or as Robert McNeal has persuasively argued, the 'murder' of close comrades was not his standard *modus operandi*.<sup>94</sup>

The Party's first reactions to the assassination seem heartfelt and true. Kirov was termed the 'perfect image of the Bolshevik' and martyr victim: calm and fearless in adversity, kind and good-hearted in victory.<sup>95</sup> Dzhugashvili was genuinely moved and disturbed by the death.<sup>96</sup> We already know that the sentimental commemoration of the dead, the weaving of dramatic stories about them, was part of his revolutionary portfolio. We can see this in the photographs of Dzhugashvili at Kirov's coffin; in the way he accompanied the body at nearly every step toward interment; and in the cult of martyrdom accorded to his dead friend. Or consider the scene of the last viewing of Kirov's body. Amid an air of absolute 'silence' and 'sorrow', Dzhugashvili stoically approached the body, bowed to it, gently kissing the forehead, at which point the coffin was dramatically closed. And then, as if out of a Walt Whitman poem or Socialist Realist novel, 'a sense of eternal, invincible life replaced the very face of death'.<sup>97</sup> The bow was significant, recalling Dzhugashvili's 'oaths' to Tsulukidze and Lenin; the kiss on the forehead, a mark not only of a beloved friend but also of a successor, of a martyr survivor.<sup>98</sup> This role was made all the more dramatic since Kirov had been one of the original patrons of the cult to the martyred Twenty-six, and now Dzhugashvili was crafting a cult of martyrdom for him.<sup>99</sup> The torch had been passed.

Perhaps we have been distracted all these years by the fascination of the murder and the urge to spotlight Dzhugashvili as the villain. The real story was the way in which Kirov was remembered, in what the Party leaders did with the murder once it was committed, and in the cult of the dead Kirov that now partially eclipsed even the Lenin and Stalin cults. The real meaning of the murder was not to be found in the forensics of the crime, but in the discourse of martyrdom and tragedy applied to its victim. The pattern of tragic remembrance manifest in Bolshevik culture and in Dzhugashvili's political life proves neither his guilt nor innocence in the murder of Kirov. It only proves complicity after the fact. For the Kirov murder was the great tragic myth that informed all future Stalinist patterns of vilification, confession and leadership. This is the truth of the Kirov murder on which all must agree.<sup>100</sup>

The dominant storyline held that Kirov was but the 'first victim' in a planned wave of assassinations. Menzhinskii, Peshkov, Kuibyshev and Gorky were targeted and killed. Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov and Dzhugashvili were targeted but survived. It was a vicious act, a moment of agony and pathos that set 'a wave of wrath and deep sorrow through the country'. Over the next four years, the murder encompassed a conspiracy of astonishing breadth and scope: from the Leningrad Centre to the Moscow Centre, from the Zinoviev-Kamenev to the Trotskii-Bukharin oppositions, indeed eventually to 'all Party members'.<sup>101</sup> The rhetoric of Bolshevik martyrology now became the apologetics for the terror. The pathos of the first act of violence, the tragic beauty of the first martyr, became the pathology of many acts of violence. The death of one (Lenin) had once meant the immortality of all (the USSR). The death of another (Kirov) now meant the possible death of all (the Great Terror's victims). Not 'all' perished in the terrors of the 1930s. But everyone was suspect, everyone was susceptible, everyone was culpable. No one was safe from the dragnet. Not even Dzhugashvili himself, whose political body was so often portrayed as the target of assassins and so occupied a central place in the overlapping circles of opposition and vilification.<sup>102</sup>

The coincidence in the famous *Short Course* between these murderous conspiracies and the imperative to rewrite history is remarkable. Kirov's dead body became the incubus for a new regime and a new history, the essential subtext for the cult of personality. Dzhugashvili was now portrayed ever more graphically as the living

sacrifice, the avenging angel, whose renewed message was that death gave purpose to the living; the victim gave meaning to those who survived.<sup>103</sup> The regime now just as easily wrote the old Bolsheviks out of the historical record as it wrote Dzhughashvili and his coterie in. The Bolshevik ideal of collective immortality, the immortality of memory, was reduced to nonsense. History became a blank slate. The living could either remember or forget the dead, just as the regime wished. It thereby joined what Philippe Aries has called the nineteenth century's 'beautiful death' of public display and commemoration; and the twentieth century's 'invisible death' of anonymity and denial.<sup>104</sup> One death was highlighted as origin. But millions of deaths flowing from it were hidden in night-time arrests, transport trucks, unmarked prisons, the 'Gulag archipelago'. All this proceeded against a backdrop of film comedies and élite consumerism, a whole system of entitlements to mask the violence and reward loyalty.<sup>105</sup> For those who had survived Russia's recent wars and famines, the contrasts must have been stark. No victims of the Great Terror lay in the streets as before. Instead, the regime universalised and institutionalised death in the complexity and anonymity of bureaucratic procedure and consumerist culture. These patterns of state policy finally confirm, at least in a provisional and broadly interpretive way, a quote widely attributed to Dzhughashvili: 'one death is a tragedy, a million are a statistic'. He may have never actually said it, but his policies embodied its truths as to the powerful dramatic license of violence set against, in Hannah Arendt's words, the twentieth century's 'banality of evil'.

Dzhughashvili's regime did not enjoy a monopoly hold on the cult of violence and discourse on martyrdom. Tragic heroism was a role that nearly anyone could play. M.N. Ryutin appealed to it in his opposition 'platform' of 1932. In expressive revolutionary terms, reminiscent of the nihilists and terrorists of old, he called for a 'struggle to destroy' the regime; 'a struggle gives birth to leaders and heroes'. An act of violence, of tragic 'sacrifice', was necessary to renew the country. Here were echoes of Mikhail Bakunin's anarchism: the urge to destroy as a creative urge. Popular rumours of the day entertained the urge, too. One 'story' made Kirov's assassin out to be a brave and 'noble terrorist' who killed for a true cause, sanctifying death like the Russian populists of old.<sup>106</sup> Leading members of the Central Committee took on tragic roles in the ritual of 'self-confession' (*samokritika*) that J. Arch Getty has studied with

special attention. The ritual confession, like the 'show trial', was a scripting of tragic flaws among Party members. It was recognition of personal failings in the context of grand struggles and mass solidarity.<sup>107</sup> N. Bukharin assumed the most conventional tragic role of all, scripting himself as 'the representative of a martyred Bolshevik movement'.<sup>108</sup>

Conflicting patterns of tragic remembrance appeared within the regime itself. Literary and cinematic 'tragedies' survived the 1930s, although not without criticism and dispute. Stalinist censors had a mild tolerance for the Shakespearean style, one that explored the shadows of evil and the good in our conflicted human natures. Such classically tragic novels were published; similarly tragic films, like Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible*, were made. But in the end party élites preferred not the ironic 'tragedies' but the purer 'romances'.<sup>109</sup> The one painted only a canvas of stark foreboding, of pity and fear; the other delivered the real tension of history, of zeal and passion (*pafos*). Ironic tragedy was the true art of creative contradiction and revelation; tragic romance the more potent political art of false resolution. By 1939, the regime no longer needed to make tragic heroes. It was already ascending to the sure romance of communism, no longer descending to agony or suffering. The terror had climaxed. So Dzhugashvili proclaimed, 'we shall have no further need of resorting to the method of mass purges'.<sup>110</sup>

#### 'The phases of tragedy move from the heroic to the ironic'<sup>111</sup>

Dzhugashvili's death in 1953 both completed the cycle of tragic remembrance and ruptured it. His death completed it in the technique of commemoration. After Lenin, he was given a magnificent funeral, embalming and volumes of praise. His successors found themselves in familiar poses: mourning at the bier, quietly carrying the remains, bidding their last farewells. For a few years, the country recognised his death (5 March), along with his birth (21 December), following its earlier remembrances of Lenin. The two mummified remains now occupied a single place in the mausoleum at Red Square. Plans were even made for a grander 'Revolutionary Pantheon' for both bodies, along with other martyrs and heroes of the Bolshevik cause.<sup>112</sup> The discourse was complete. Dzhugashvili was not like Kirov because he had lived to avenge the murder. But Dzhugashvili was like Lenin because he had died to be

remembered. He reached from beyond the grave just as Tsulukidze, or the Twenty-six, or Kirov had before him. With one exception. Dzhugashvili knew he would be memorialised and mummified. He was, unlike any of the others, the architect of his own entombment and glorification.

Yet his death also ruptured the historical cycle. For most of Stalinism, as Jorg Baberowski has argued, died with him.<sup>113</sup> If the early Bolshevik martyrs and the dead Lenin graced history for the first time as 'tragedy', then the Kirov murder and Stalin cult repeated history a second time as 'farce'.<sup>114</sup> This was the view, at least, of the Khrushchev reformers who set out to investigate the murder as a sordid conspiracy and soon displaced Dzhugashvili from his vaunted state. Khrushchev eventually buried him. But he and his successors could not bury the 'tragic'. They tried to reinvent Kirov as a tragic hero, only now a victim of Dzhugashvili himself. They succeeded in rehabilitating scores of tragic old Bolsheviks unjustly executed in the Stalinist purges.<sup>115</sup> The Brezhnev regime muted these reform tendencies. But it, too, could not dispense with tragic heroes and martyr victims all its own. These years saw state patronage of the tragic arts, as in Tatyana Nazarenko's 'historical-revolutionary' painting, 'Execution of the People's Will Activists' (1969), and the continued publication of novels in the Socialist Realist style.<sup>116</sup> They saw state-sponsored revivals of the imagery of the red funeral (namely for the victims of the 1917 Revolution), of the Lenin personality cult, and of the cult of the Twenty-six Baku Commissars.<sup>117</sup> The paradigm of tragic remembrance was highly adaptive.

The historiography is implicated in this paradigm, too, the result in part of how we have come to understand modern revolutions. By their very nature, so we have been led to believe by those who have survived them and by those who have studied them most, revolutions are ironic, conflicted events. They are cycles bounded by peaks of excess and slopes of reaction, by high hopes and contradictory results.<sup>118</sup> They are essentially tragic. This perspective translated into Leon Trotsky's 'revolution betrayed', his Stalinist 'Thermidor'. It informs the scholarship of the 'revisionist' school too, in its appreciations for the worthy social achievements of the Russian Revolution under Lenin, always betrayed and undone by Stalin, the maker of a national tragedy of epic scale.<sup>119</sup> Such tragic irony is more sophisticated, more penetrating than tragic romance. It breaks

through the culture of violence, the bind of victim and vengeance. It places evil not in the dangerous present or expectant future but in the distant past, in an ill-fated Tsarism or corrupt Stalinism. Still, these evils only draw the truth and justice of the Russian Revolution into sharper, romantic relief.<sup>120</sup>

No one seems immune from the pull of tragic memory. The violence so pervasive through the long Russian Revolution haunts the historiography. 'Tragedy' has become one of its most universal themes and enduring clichés. It has been the voice of Dzhughashvili's youth, at the very origins of the Soviet experience. It has been the judgement delivered upon the USSR just before its demise.<sup>121</sup> It has been the lament of all varieties of critics and commentators upon the Russian Revolution.<sup>122</sup> The history of the Soviet experiment in Marxist communism has become a battleground of competing tragedies. They unite the present to the past, drawing lines of political sympathy between the actual participants of the Revolution and its later chroniclers. As once for A.S. Izgoev the Russian Revolution marked a tragic descent into unrivalled violence and destruction, so also for Richard Pipes the revolution created mostly 'agony', 'catastrophe' and 'sorrow'.<sup>123</sup> As once the SRs and Mensheviks decried the Bolshevik defilement of its leftist rivals as a 'great tragedy', so also has Ettore Cinella represented the 'promise and default' of the Left SRs as one of the very 'tragedies' of the Russian Revolution.<sup>124</sup>

Judging Dzhughashvili as a tragic figure seems unavoidable too. Shakespearean imagery comes easy with a tyrant like him.<sup>125</sup> But we should guard against colouring our narratives too dramatically with the spectacles of violence that raise tyrants and count victims. Because in doing so, we participate in the culture of violence too.<sup>126</sup> It is just as dangerous, as some writers are inclined, to remember and honour only Stalin's victims as truly righteous.<sup>127</sup> This turns the Bolshevik martyrologies into Stalinist victimologies. It is selective justice, really no justice at all, as if only those victims mattered. Aleksander Solzhenitsyn's condemnation of the Soviet regime, from Lenin to Brezhnev and nearly everything in between, has its fault lines. *The Gulag Archipelago* is not academic history, keen to distinctions and complications and contradictions. But at least it does not commit the blunder of honouring select victims of the Russian Revolution. It maintains the higher code of honouring them all.<sup>128</sup> It repudiates the central tenet of the Bolshevik narrative of violence and

martyrdom: that some deaths, like some lives, were more valuable and meaningful than others.

This narrative endured over the course of the twentieth century with a plural and reciprocal force. It influenced the life and thought of the young Dzhughashvili as a typical conspirator and propagandist. It governed the ideologies and policies of the fully formed dictator. It defined the official values and public practices into the 1930s. Beginning with Khrushchev's denunciations and continuing with our own, we can mark the narrative's mutations. We can begin to recognise it as morbid or imperious. Yet the narrative was also quite compelling and persuasive. It made sense of individual suffering and legitimised the dispensing of corporal justice in turn. It elevated a regime of state power as fearsome as any in the twentieth century. It provided that regime and its subjects with a system of values and beliefs couched in the idiom of religion, presuming to a totalitarian reach into their lives, centred on the certainty and mystery of death. These, perhaps, were the signal achievements and contradictions of the Soviet experiment: that it confused the sacred with the profane, life with politics, what was still living from what was already dead.

#### NOTES

1. 'Beseda s nemetskim pisatelem Emilem Lyudvigom', 30 April 1932, in I.V. Stalin, *Sochineniya* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury OGIz, 1946–51), tom 13, pp.119–20.
2. The essential texts are 'The Communist Manifesto', 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', and 'The Civil War in France'. Cited from Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, MD and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), pp.27, 310–13.
3. See Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp.158–220, on how the genres of 'romance, tragedy, irony and comedy are all episodes in a total quest-myth'. They consistently blend and mix.
4. A.A. Zhdanov advanced this definition at the First Congress of Soviet Writers (1934). Igor Golomstock, 'Problems in the Study of Stalinist Culture', in Hans Günther (ed.), *The Culture of the Stalin Period* (New York: St Martins Press, 1990), p.116, calls Socialist Realism a 'creative method', a 'worldview', a 'secular religion'. Jeffrey Brooks, 'Socialist Realism in *Pravda*: Read All About It!', *Slavic Review* 53/4 (Winter 1994), pp.973–91, offers an innovative approach grounded in complexities and contradictions.
5. Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p.258, defines the climax of the Socialist Realist novel as 'an actual, symbolic or near death'.
6. See Vladislav Todorov, *Red Square, Black Square: Organon for Revolutionary Imagination* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), p.122.
7. On the appeal of literary tragedy in early Soviet Russia, see Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1968), pp.240–5;



- Katerina Clark, *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), p.110; and Julie A. Cassiday, *The Enemy on Trial: Early Soviet Courts on Stage and Screen* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000), pp.84–6.
8. Semen Frank, 'The Ethic of Nihilism: A Characterization of the Russian Intelligentsia's Moral Outlook', in Boris Schragin and Albert Todd (eds.), *Landmarks: A Collection of Essays on the Russian Intelligentsia, 1909*, trans. Marian Schwartz (New York: Karz Howard, 1977), p.80. For similar conclusions, see Sergei Bulgakov, 'Heroism and Asceticism: Reflections on the Religious Nature of the Russian Intelligentsia', in *ibid.*, p.35; and Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Origins of Russian Communism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), p.86. For context, see James H. Billington, *Fire in the Minds of Men: Origins of the Revolutionary Faith* (New York: Basic Books, 1980); and Arthur P. Mendel, *Vision and Violence* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1992), p.181.
  9. Clark (note 5), p.177. See also Rene Fuelop-Miller, *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p.277.
  10. On this 'dual aspect of ritual sacrifice – the legitimate and the illegitimate', or 'sacrifice' as 'sacred obligation' and sacrifice as 'criminal activity', as 'murder', see Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore, MD and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972).
  11. For two rather sweeping surveys, see Daniel Rancour-Laferriere, *The Slave Soul of Russia: Masochism and the Cult of Suffering* (New York: New York University Press, 1995); and Helene Carrerre d'Encausse, *The Russian Syndrome: One Thousand Years of Political Murder*, trans. Caroline Higgitt (New York and London: Holmes and Meier, 1992). On the 'tragic' contradictions in Russian culture and identity, see Tim McDaniel, *The Agony of the Russian Idea* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996). For more focused studies on revolution and war, note Nina Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); and Catherine Merridale, *Night of Stone: Death and Memory in Twentieth-Century Russia* (New York: Viking, 2001).
  12. Three classic studies along these lines are Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879–1929: A Study in History and Personality* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1973), pp.80–1; Edward Ellis Smith, *The Young Stalin: The Early Years of an Elusive Revolutionary* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1967), p.97; and Alan Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1992), p.13.
  13. Stalin's personal life was not without its own moments of intense grief, especially the premature deaths of both his first and second wives. But he seems to have compartmentalised these sad turns of event, and it would be purely speculative to find reflections in his professional life or ideological system. This did not stop Leon Trotsky from trying. He cited Dzhughashvili's 'theatrically pathetic and unnatural' words upon the death of his first wife as a reflection of 'his first heartfelt sorrow' and a lifelong 'penchant for strained pathos'. Leon Trotsky, *Stalin: An Appraisal of the Man and His Influence*, trans. and ed. Charles Malamuth (New York: Stein and Day, 1967), p.87.
  14. Tucker (note 12), p.284, notes that Dzhughashvili's 'religious cast' and love for 'ceremony and ritual' were typical among Bolsheviks.
  15. I need only refer to the work of Nicolas Berdyaev (note 8), Hans Günther (note 4), Rene Fuelop-Miller (note 9), Nina Tumarkin (note 11), Stephen Kotkin (note 89), among others. Igal Halfin, *From Darkness to Light: Class Consciousness and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000), pp.2–3, is the most recent and comprehensive study of Marxism and Bolshevism as types of 'eschatological messianism'. See also Richard L. Hernandez, 'The Confessions of Semen Kanatchikov: A Bolshevik Memoir as Spiritual Autobiography', *Russian Review* 60 (January 2001), pp.13–35.
  16. Cited from Jochen Hellbeck, 'Self-Realization in the Stalinist System: Two Soviet Diaries of the 1930s', in David L. Hoffman and Yanni Kotsonis (eds.), *Russian*

- Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000), p.235. See also Igal Halfin, 'Looking into the Oppositionists' Souls: Inquisition Communist Style', *Russian Review* 60 (July 2001), pp.316–39; and Veronique Garros, Natalia Kornevskaya and Thomas Lahusen (eds.), *Intimacy and Terror: Soviet Diaries of the 1930s* (New York: New Press, 1995).
17. Alfred Rieber, 'Stalin, Man of the Borderlands', *American Historical Review* (December 2001), p.1653; I am indebted to this essay for influencing my approaches toward Dzhughashvili. See also Ronald Grigor Suny, 'Beyond Psychohistory: The Young Stalin in Georgia', *Slavic Review* 50/1 (Spring 1991).
  18. I have borrowed this insight on the transformative power of the nation from the influential philosopher of the 1920s, G.G. Shpet, who argued in his *Vvedenie v etnicheskuyu psikhologiyu* (1927) that class collectives were essentially new nations in formation. See Gustav Shpet, *Sochineniya*, ed. E.V. Pasternak (Moscow: Pravda, 1989), p.574. The quote is from Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), p.7. Studies of Bolshevism's 'national' forms in later years include Robert C. Williams, 'The Nationalization of Early Soviet Culture', *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 9/2–3 (1982), pp.157–172 (who also mentions its related 'culture of self-sacrifice and martyrdom'); and David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931–1956* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002). For a relevant European comparison, see Jay W. Baird, *To Die For Germany: Heroes in the Nazi Pantheon* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990).
  19. Cassiday (note 7). The quote is from Laurie Manchester, 'Harbingers of Modernity, Bearers of Tradition: *Popovichi* as a Model Intelligentsia Self in Revolutionary Russia', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 50/3 (2002), pp.323–43. See also Robert C. Williams, 'Collective Immortality: The Syndicalist Origins of Proletarian Culture, 1905–1910', *Slavic Review* 3 (September 1980), pp.391–3; and idem, *The Other Bolsheviks: Lenin and His Critics, 1904–1914* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp.3–4, 120.
  20. Jay Bergman, 'The Image of Jesus in the Russian Revolutionary Movement: The Case of Russian Marxism', *International Review of Social History* XXXV (1990), pp.220–3; and Mark D. Steinberg, 'Workers on the Cross: Religious Imagination in the Writings of Russian Workers, 1910–1924', *Russian Review* 53 (April 1994), pp.213–39. See also Hernandez (note 15), pp.32–3; and Dave Pretty, 'The Saints of the Revolution: Political Activists in 1890s Ivanovo-Voznesensk and the Path of Most Resistance', *Slavic Review* 54/2 (Summer 1995), p.303. On the proletariat as 'class messiah' destined to suffer as part of its 'sacred mission', see Halfin (note 15), pp.96–103.
  21. Thomas Reed Trice, *The 'Body Politic': Russian Funerals and the Politics of Representation, 1814–1921*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Illinois, 1998, pp.262, 273–5, 285. Merridale (note 11), pp.83–5, 93, discusses red funerals too, along with the 'languages of martyrdom' and 'the search for meaning, for pathos'. Also see Orlando Figes and Boris Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution: The Language and Symbols of 1917* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999).
  22. Trice (note 21), pp.134, 186, 264.
  23. 'Otvet na privetstviya rabochikh zh.-d. masterskikh v Tiflise', 10 June 1926, in Stalin (note 1), tom 8, pp.174–5. Also cited in Ronald G. Suny, 'A Journeyman for the Revolution: Stalin and the Labour Movement in Baku, June 1907–May 1908', *Soviet Studies* 23/3 (January 1972), p.373.
  24. 'Rossiiskaya sotsial-demokraticeskaya partiya i ee blizhaishie zadachi', November–December 1901, in Stalin (note 1), tom 1, p.27.
  25. E. Yaroslavsky, *Landmarks in the Life of Stalin* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1940), pp.86–90. 'Biograficheskaya khronika', in Stalin (note 1), tom 1, pp.416–17. The discussion (with accompanying images) in D. Rodionovich,

- 'Stalin v proizvodenyakh khudozhnikov Gruzii', *Molodaya gvardiya* 1 (1937), pp.210–11.
26. See Tucker (note 12), p.119, on the 'class war' theme. My reading of Dzhugashvili's published writings confirms Tucker's conclusion. They are filled with battlefield and graveyard imagery: 'wartime readiness', 'army of proletarians', 'our bloody duty', 'death attack', 'grave of the popular revolution' – all summarised in the popular slogan of 1905, 'Death or Revolution', and in Dzhugashvili's consistent attraction to armed uprisings. Stalin (note 1), tom 1, pp.137, 67, 79, 178, 185–95, 266.
  27. The quotes are from Yaroslavsky (note 25) pp.23, 27; Smith (note 12), p.97; and A.M. Pankratova (ed.), *Istoriya SSSR: Uchebnik dlya X klassa srednei shkoly* (Moscow: Gosuchpedizd, 1946), pp.12–13. Similar descriptions are offered in *Stalin i Khashim (1901–1902 gody): Nekotorye epizody iz batumskogo podpolya* (Sukhum: Abkhazskoe Partiinoe Izdatel'stvo, 1934), pp.22–3; and V. Golubovich, 'Molodoi Stalin', *Istoriik marksist* 1/77 (1940), p.125.
  28. Note the description and painting in Henri Barbusse, *Stalin: A New World Seen Through One Man*, trans. Vyvyan Holland (New York: Macmillan, 1935). Trotsky (note 13), p.32, also took note of this imagery. This ideal of living martyr, martyr survivor, has some folkloric references in the literature of the personality cult. Georgii Leonidze, 'Arsen (Iz poemy 'Detstvo vozhdya')', *Molodaya gvardiya* 12 (1939), pp.102–5, fancied Dzhugashvili in the guise of the immortal Georgian rebel, Arsen Odzelashvili, the 'hope of the hopeless', the man who comes back from the dead to right wrongs and seek justice. Adam B. Ulam, *Stalin: The Man and His Era* (New York: Viking Press, 1973), p.389, also referred to Dzhugashvili's 'aura of martyrdom' after S.M. Kirov's murder.
  29. After Ketskhoveli was shot by prison guards on 17 August 1903, his body was hastily buried without ceremony. But Dzhugashvili did take credit for a memorial on the first anniversary of his death, and Ketskhoveli's brother made the poignant testimony (seemingly on Dzhugashvili's behalf and in a defiance worthy of him) that some of his last words (referring to Tsarist authorities) were, 'They will pay dearly for my death'. G. Lelashvili, 'Besstrashnyi revolyutsioner Lado Ketskhoveli', pp.87–90; and V. Ketskhoveli, 'Druzi'ya i soratniki tovarishcha Stalina', pp.75–86, both in *Rasskazy o velikom Staline*, 2nd edn. (Tbilisi: Zarya Vostoka, 1941).
  30. Yaroslavsky (note 25), pp.65, 72–4; Rodionovich (note 25), p.210 (with accompanying painting). N. Aladzhalova, 'Vstrechi c Aleksandrom Tsulukidze', pp.72–4; and 'Rasskazy o proshlom', p.65, both in *Rasskazy o velikom Staline* (note 29). Smith (note 12), p.140, said perceptively of this funeral: 'Koba had attempted for the first time to utilize the death or funeral of a revolutionary comrade to advance his personal political position'.
  31. R. Arsenidze, 'Iz vospominanii o Staline', *Novyi zhurnal* (New York) 72 (1963), pp.229–30. Ulam (note 28), p.36, offers another reading of this event.
  32. Cited from Yaroslavsky (note 25), p.52. Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin: A Political Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp.99–101, framed Dzhugashvili's transformation into 'Stalin' within the Baku context. Dzhugashvili once claimed that his comrades gave him the title sometime in 1910–11, perhaps during his last free days in Baku, or during his stay in its Bailov prison (March–September 1910). 'Imya eto ko mne podkhodit. I.V. Stalin o svoem psevdonime', *Istochnik* 5 (1999), p.79.
  33. The quote is from 'Pis'mo t. Dem'yanu Bednomu', 15 July 1924, in Stalin (note 1), tom 6, p.273.
  34. K. Norinskii, 'O Petre Montin', *Proletarskaya revolyutsiya* 6 (1922), pp.28–31.
  35. Cited from Institut Istorii Partii, TsKKP Azerbaidzhana, *Ocherki istorii kommunisticheskoi partii Azerbaidzhana* (Baku: Azerbaidzhanskoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1963), pp.98–9.
  36. I. Vatssek, 'Stalinskaya shkola revolyutsionnoi bor'by', in *Rasskazy o velikom Staline* (note 29), pp.24–5.
  37. Cited from a protest pamphlet in Institut Istorii Partii (note 35), pp.132–3.
  38. Michael G. Smith, 'The Russian Revolution as a National Revolution: Tragic Deaths

- and Rituals of Remembrance in Muslim Azerbaijan (1907–1920)', *Jahrbücher für geschichte Osteuropas* 49/3 (2001), pp.363–88. For context, see Yurii Larin, *Rabochie neftyanogo dela (Iz byta i dvizheniya 1903–1908 gg)* (Moscow: n.p., 1909), pp.18–26.
39. 'Nado boikotirovat' soveshchanie!', 29 September 1907, in Stalin (note 1), tom 2, pp.81–6.
  40. The quotes are from Pankratova (note 27), p.85; and M. Moskaev, 'I.V. Stalin vo glave Bakinskikh Bol'shevikov i rabochikh v 1907–1908 godakh', *Istoriya marksist 1/77* (1940), pp.84–5, 94. Also see Barbusse (note 28), p.27; Golubovich (note 27), p.127; and A.N. Guliev, *I.P. Vatsek v revolyutsionnom dvizhenii v Baku* (Baku: Azebaidzhanskoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1965), pp.96–8.
  41. See G.F. Aleksandrov *et al.*, *Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin: Kratkaya biografiya*, 2nd edn. (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1947), p.11; and Yaroslavsky (note 25), pp.167, 81, 66.
  42. Aleksandrov *et al.* (note 41), p.44. Vatsek (note 36), p.25.
  43. 'Zhizn' pobezhdaet!', 15 April 1912, and 'Novaya polosa', 15 April 1912, both in Stalin (note 1), tom 2, pp.232–3 and 225 respectively. He repeated these points in a series of articles: Stalin (note 1), tom 2, pp.223–4, 238, 244, 266–7, 373–6.
  44. I have not been able to locate the original line in Whitman; the translation is mine. The Russian reads: *My zhivuy, kipit nasha alaya krov' ognem neistrannykh sil*. 'Novaya polosa', 15 April 1912, in *ibid.*, tom 2, p.225. For the later use of the quote, see 'Pis'mo t. Dem'yanu Bednomu', 15 July 1924, in *ibid.*, tom 6, p.273.
  45. 'Mirovaya revolyutsiya stala faktom', *Izvestiya* 15, 20 January 1918.
  46. Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis, 1914–1921* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Amir Weiner, 'Nature, Nurture, and Memory in a Socialist Utopia: Delineating the Soviet Socio-Ethnic Body in the Age of Socialism', *American Historical Review* (October 1999), pp.1114–55; and Eric Naiman, *Sex in Public: The Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).
  47. The terms are from Frye (note 3), p.209. See also Arno J. Mayer, *The Furies: Violence and Terror in the French and Russian Revolutions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), p.xvi.
  48. For the imagery of the 'Red Terror' as an answer to the 'White Terror', see Vladimir Bonch-Bruевич, 'Pokushenie na V.I. Lenina', *Molodaya gvardiya* 9–10 (1923), pp.95–105; Roman Neiman, 'Cherty bortsy (k desyatoi godovshchine smerti M.S. Uritskogo)', *Krasnaya panorama* 38, 21 September 1928, p.5. On the assassination attempt, see Nina Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), pp.80–5.
  49. The quotes are from 'Pamyati pogibshikh', *Pravda* 216, 28 September 1919, referring to victims of a Moscow bomb blast; and 'K ubiistvu tov. Uritskago', *Izvestiya* 189, 3 September 1918, p.5.
  50. For context, see Ronald G. Suny, *The Baku Commune, 1917–1918: Class and Nationality in the Russian Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972). On the Paris Commune in Bolshevik ideology, see G.I. Il'ina, 'Obraz evropeiskikh revolyutsii i russkaya kul'tura (mart 1917 g. – noyabr' 1918 g.)', in V.Yu. Chernyaev (ed.), *Anatomiya revolyutsii. 1917 god v Rossii. Massy, partii, vlast'* (St Petersburg: Glagol, 1994), pp.383–93.
  51. Cited from G. Chernomora, 'Tragediya dvadtsati shesti', *Krasnaya panorama* 40 (1929), pp.2–3; and 'Bakinskaya kommuna', *Izvestiya* 212, 20 September 1923, p.1. On the 'romantic pathos' of the cult in poetry, see V. Devitt, *Dvadtsat' shest' bakinskikh komissarov v sovetskoi poezii (russkoi i azebaidzhanskoi)* (Baku: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk ASSR, 1965), p.9.
  52. A. Enukidze, 'Pyataya godovshchina', *Izvestiya* 212, 20 September 1923, p.1.
  53. 'Natsional'nyi vopros', *Izvestiya* 267, 22 November 1923, p.5, counted the losses during the events of March 1918 as 'up to thirty thousand Muslim' dead, far higher than the usual Soviet estimate of only 3,000 dead on all sides. Cited from Ya. Ratgauzer, *Revolutsiya i grazhdanskaya voyna v Baku (1917–1918)* (Baku: Ispart, 1927), p.177.

54. Iosif Stalin, 'K rasstrely 26-ti bakinskikh tovarishchei agentami angliiskogo imperializma', *Izvestiya* 85, 23 April 1919, p.2. Ulam (note 28), p.56, cites this article as 'singularly unsentimental'.
55. See Iv. Tovstukha (ed.), *Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin: Kratkaya biografiya* (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1927), p.9; *The Life of Stalin: A Symposium* (New York: Workers' Library, 1930), p.6; and Aleksandrov *et al.* (note 41), p.46.
56. 'Na ikh kostyakh', *Izvestiya* 90, 1 April 1931, p.1.
57. E.N. Burdzhilov, *Dvadsat' shest' bakinskikh komissarov* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1938), pp.79–81, 108–12.
58. Em. Yaroslavskii, 'Stalin – eto Lenin segodnya', *Istorik marksist* 1/77 (1940), p.12.
59. Aleksandrov *et al.* (note 41), p.81; Yaroslavsky (note 25), pp.107, 121, 167.
60. Yaroslavskii (note 58), p.10.
61. Barbusse (note 28), p.275.
62. Bergman (note 20), pp.226, 244–6.
63. Tsentral'nyi komitet RKP, 'Umer Lenin', *Molodaya gvardiya* 2–3 (1924), p.5.
64. The memorial in *Izvestiya* 21, 21 January 1931, p.1; Aleksandr Flit, 'Pyat' minut', *Krasnaya panorama* 3 (1924), p.4.
65. I share this appreciation for the imagery of 'marble columns' with Cassidy (note 7), p.110. The popular photo-magazine, *Krasnaya panorama*, was especially adept at marketing images and sentiments about these varied 'tragedies' in the history of class struggle; and about the victims whose names were inscribed 'in the golden book of socialist heroes, in the martyrology of socialist martyrs'. From 'Vpered za kommunu!', *Krasnaya panorama* 6 (1924), p.5.
66. On the 'contrast between the abused body of the martyr and the glorified body of the saint', see John R. Knott, *Discourses on Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563–1694* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.9–10.
67. Cited in A. Garin, 'Lenin-Chelovek', *Krasnaya panorama* 3, 18 January 1929, p.2.
68. Victoria E. Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters Under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), p.149. Boris Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond*, trans. Charles Rougle (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p.67, notes that the corpse is both 'simultaneously buried and displayed', dressed as if still alive, as if Lenin had just come back from the office.
69. Barbusse (note 28), pp.275, 282. Similar sentiments were expressed in the poem by V. Bugaevskii, 'V mavzolee', *Krasnaya panorama* 3, 18 January 1929, p.2.
70. For context, see Tumarkin (note 48), p.110, on the two ideological pillars of 'hagiography' and 'demonology'. Matthew E. Leno, 'Reader Response to the Soviet Press Campaign Against the Trotskii-Zinoviev Opposition, 1926–1928', *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 24/1–2 (Spring–Summer 1997), pp.93–5, 114–5.
71. 'Vsem organizatsiyam i tovarishcham, prislavshim privetstviya v svyazi s 50-letiem t. Stalina', 22 December 1929, Stalin (note 1), tom 12, p.140; also cited in Yaroslavsky (note 25), p.169. B. Legran, 'Put' vozhdya', *Krasnaya panorama* 2 (1930), p.3. For context and insight, see also D. Furman, 'Stalin i my s religiovedcheskoi tochki zreniya', in Kh. Kobo (ed.), *Osmyslit' kul't Stalina* (Moscow: Progress, 1989), pp.416–17.
72. Bonnell (note 68), p.168; Golomstock (note 4), p.117.
73. Yaroslavskii (note 58), p.10.
74. See Frank J. Miller, *Folklore for Stalin: Russian Folklore and Psuedofolklore of the Stalin Era* (Armonk and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1990), pp.62–70, 156–65.
75. 'Biograficheskaya khronika', Stalin (note 1), tom 6, pp.418–19. This was one of the few times, besides the night of 9 November 1932, when Dzhughashvili's second wife died, that the 'Biographical Chronicles' recounted (by the hour or minute) the course of his days.
76. Reproduced in Barbusse (note 28), p.147.
77. See 'Zaklyuchitel'noe slovo po politicheskomu otchetu TsK XVI S'yezdu VKP(b) (2 iyulya 1930g)', Stalin (note 1), tom 13, pp.1–16. For a discussion of Dzhughashvili's

- formidable dramatic acting talents, ranging from the 'comic' to the 'tragic', see A. Antonov-Ovseenko, 'Teatr Iosifa Stalina', in Kobo (note 71), p.103.
78. 'Itogi pervoi pyatiletki (Doklad 7 Yanvarya 1933g)', Stalin (note 1), tom 13, pp.178, 186. I have translated *pasfos* as 'passion' to stress the double meaning of both agony and enthusiasm. '*Pathos* or catastrophe, whether in triumph or in defeat, is the archetypal theme of tragedy', Frye (note 3), p.192.
  79. Obituaries and reminiscences in Stalin (note 1), tom 6, pp.278–9; tom 7, pp.250–1; tom 8, pp.99, 192–3.
  80. A. Kurella, 'Kakimi dolzhny byt' nashi proletarskie prazdniki!', *Revolyutsiya i kultura* 17 (1928), pp.47–9.
  81. 'Passion' (*Pafos*) was a recurrent theme in the films of the 1920s and 1930s. For context, see Robert C. Williams, *Artists in Revolution: Portraits of the Russian Avant-garde, 1905–1925* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1977).
  82. I.I. Brodskii and S.M. Ivanitskii, *Brodskii* (Moscow: Izobrazitel'noe iskusstvo, 1986), pp.1–2, defined this style as the 'pathos of historical optimism and humanist life-affirmation'; and described 'Red Funeral' as a 'portrayal of the people as the driving force of history'. Trice (note 21), pp.275–9, discusses the painting as well.
  83. Both paintings are reproduced in I. Brodskii, *Moi tvorcheskii put'* (Leningrad and Moscow: Gosizdat Iskusstvo, 1940), pp.23 and 94–5.
  84. G. Brovman, 'Pafos i tema', *Molodaya gvardiya* 7 (1936), pp.187–91.
  85. See the 'Introduction', and Nikolai Ostrovsky, 'How the Steel was Tempered', in Nicholas Luker (ed.), *From Furmanov to Sholokhov: An Anthology of the Classics of Socialist Realism* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1988), pp.29, 432–3. On Korchagin as 'ascetic "heroic vanquisher" (*podvizhnik*)', a prototype for the 'steeliness' in Stalin, see Hans Günther, 'Education and Conversion: The Road to the New Man in the Totalitarian *Bildungsroman*', in Günther (note 4), pp.202–5. For one testimony on the influence of Ostrovskii's novel, see Mariya Demchenko, 'Ego kniga dala mne uverenost' v pobede', *Molodaya gvardiya* 1 (1937), pp.196–7.
  86. Fyodor Gladkov, 'Cement', in Luker (note 85), pp.276–7.
  87. Barrington Moore, *Terror and Progress – USSR* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp.170–3.
  88. For the rhetoric of evil enemies and class struggle as a kind of preface to the terror, see A. Vyshinskii, 'Zavershim delo, nachatoe parizhskim kommunaram', *Izvestiya* 76, 13 March 1931, p.5; and 'A Conversation Between Stalin and Wells', *New Statesman and Nation*, 27 October 1934, p.604 of the 'Supplement'.
  89. The quotes are from Gabor Tamas Rittersporn, 'The Omnipresent Conspiracy: On Soviet Imagery of Politics and Social Relations in the 1930s', in J. Arch Getty and Roberta T. Manning (eds.), *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.99–115; and Robert W. Thurston, *Life and Terror in Stalin's Russia, 1934–1941* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), pp.81–3, 138, 151–5, 229. On these modes of belief, see also the essential new source, J. Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov (eds.), *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932–1939*, trans. Benjamin Sher (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp.259, 455, 488; Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp.110–19; Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilisation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), pp.280–344; and Moshe Lewin, 'Stalin in the Mirror of the Other', in Ian Kershaw and Moshe Lewin (eds.), *Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.132.
  90. See Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda and Dissent, 1934–1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.1–7, 124–62, 179–84; Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Readers' Letters to *Krestyanskaya Gazeta*, 1938', *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 24/1–2 (Spring–Summer 1997), p.161; and Golfo Alexopoulos, 'Victim Talk: Defense Testimony and Denunciation under Stalin', in Hoffman and Kotsonis (note 16), pp.205, 213.

91. Compare Robert Conquest, *Stalin and the Kirov Murder* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); and Amy Knight, *Who Killed Kirov? The Kremlin's Greatest Mystery* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999); with Lesley Ann Rimmel, *The Kirov Murder and Soviet Society: Propaganda and Popular Opinion in Leningrad, 1934–1935*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1995; Alla A. Kirilina, *Rikoshet, ili, skol'ko chelovek bylo ubito vystrelom v Smol'nom* (St Petersburg: Znanie, 1993); and Yu.N. Zhukov, 'Sledstvie i sudebnye protsessy po delu ob ubiistve Kirova', *Voprosy istorii* 2 (2000), pp.41–7.
92. Quoted from Thurston (note 89), p.22. This suggestion has received comprehensive treatment in Matt Lenoe, 'Did Stalin Kill Kirov and Does it Matter?', *Journal of Modern History* 74 (June 2002), pp.352–80.
93. Tumarkin (note 48), p.250, notes that the Lenin cult was at its 'low ebb' by 1933, while Dzhughashvili's was 'blossoming'. Kirilina (note 91), discusses Kirov's work in detail.
94. Davies (note 90), p.154. The argument in Ulam (note 28), p.385, is one confirmed in Reiber (note 17), Lenoe (note 92), and Kirilina (note 91). Robert H. McNeal, *Stalin: Man and Ruler* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), pp.169–74.
95. Kirov's obituary in *Istoriik marksist* 1/41 (1935), p.3.
96. Rieber (note 17), pp.1662–3, makes a strong case that the combined grievous effect of his second wife's death (likely by suicide) and Kirov's murder made Dzhughashvili see 'himself as the victim', prompting a 'form of vengeance in the code of blood revenge'. He has Dzhughashvili singing laments and mourning songs for his dead friend. Kirilina (note 91) also discusses the strong bonds between the two men in detail.
97. L. Nikulin, 'Kirov', *Molodaya gvardiya* 6 (1939), p.133.
98. Party loyalists followed suit by raising similar 'oaths' at the coffin and grave, as discussed in 'Sergei Mironovich Kirov', *Nauka i zhizn'* 1 (1935), p.6. The poem by Mikola Bazhan, 'Iz "Povesti o Kirove"', *Molodaya gvardiya* 12 (1937), p.158, had Kirov himself making such a kiss to the forehead of a dead comrade (during the 1905 Revolution) as he took the party standard from his arms.
99. S.M. Kirov, 'Vrag proshchalsya: Iz rechi na zasedanii bakinskogo soveta (20 sentyabrya 1922 g.)', *Bakinskii rabochii*, 20 September 1922, had proclaimed that the spilled blood of the Twenty-six was the 'supreme meaning of the Baku tragedy'. But Kirov's tragic murder now overshadowed the Twenty-six. Semen Kirsanov's poem, 'Dvadtsat' shest' (1938), had the dead Kirov laying a memorial wreath at their monument as an oath of sorts, as a taking up of their sacrifice. Dzhambul's poem, 'Pesnya o Baku', *Molodaya gvardiya* 4 (1938), pp.28–9, did not even mention the Twenty-six but only Kirov and Dzhughashvili as Baku's premier Bolsheviks and dispensers of justice.
100. Every major and relevant study I have read supports this point, most of them emphatically.
101. Central Committee of the CPSU (b), *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): Short Course* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), pp.326–7. On the naming of 'enemies', see Conquest (note 89), p.375; and Rimmel (note 91), p.128. Also see Conquest (note 91), on Dzhughashvili's 'four stories'; and L. Trotskii, 'Stalinskaya byurokratiya i ubiistvo Kirova', *Byulleten' oppositsii* 41, January 1935, p.1, on his 'grandiose amalgamation'. On the 'fiction of popular wrath', see Roman Redlikh, *Stalinschchina kak dukhovnyi fenomen* (Frankfurt/Main: Posev, 1971), pp.98–9.
102. Davies (note 90), pp.117, 177, recounts the rumours that Dzhughashvili would soon be assassinated, too. In the world of intentions before Kirov's murder, Dzhughashvili may very well have never even conceived the possibility of an artificial assassination, as Ulam suggested. But he clearly did not fear the model of assassination after the fact. He fortified his authority on it. Once the deed had been committed, the image of the positive martyr victim was only meaningful when weighed against the negative image of the assassin. They became inseparable. The original and most meaningful 'terror'

- of the 1930s, in this sense, was the terror aimed against the Stalin regime. For the rhetoric, see Vyshinskii's 'Speech for the Prosecution', 22 August 1936, in *The Case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre: Heard Before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR (Moscow, August 19–24, 1936)* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1967), pp.117–64.
103. Central Committee of the CPSU (b) (note 101), pp.327–8. Yaroslavsky (note 25), pp.160–1. George Enteen, 'The Stalinist Conception of Communist Party History', *Studies in Soviet Thought* 37/4 (May 1989), pp.267–73, discusses the Stalinist paradigms.
  104. Philippe Aries, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).
  105. For the contexts, see Merridale (note 11), pp.197–9; and James van Geldern, 'The Centre and the Periphery: Cultural and Social Geography in the Mass Culture of the 1930s', in Stephen White (ed.), *New Directions in Soviet History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp.62–77. In the later 1930s, *Molodaya gvardiya* depicted all of this in simple form: positioning propaganda photos of a smiling Kirov (recently dead) in its pages with new advertisements for ladies perfume and toilet soap.
  106. Cited from the 'The Ryutin Platform', in Getty and Naumov (note 89), p.58. Cited from Davies (note 90), pp.114–16.
  107. J. Arch Getty, 'Samokritika Rituals in the Stalinist Central Committee, 1933–1938', *The Russian Review* 58 (January 1999), pp.49–70. Cassidy (note 7), pp.6, 108–9, 114–15, offers the historical context of the 'show trial's totalizing legal discourse' and 'totalizing script', based on 'overlapping models of confession, repentance, and reintegration'.
  108. Stephen F. Cohen, 'The Afterlife of Nikolai Bukharin', in Anna Larina, *This I Cannot Forget: The Memoirs of Nikolai Bukharin's Widow*, trans. Gary Kern (New York: Norton, 1993), pp.12–22. It is no wonder, then, that Stephen Cohen, Bukharin's able biographer, saw Dzhughashvili's hand in Kirov's death. This completed the role of Bukharin as positive martyr, along with such references to Dzhughashvili's terror as Bolshevism's 'death agony', Bukharin's 'letter-testament' a 'prayer', his death a 'tragedy'.
  109. Kevin M.F. Platt and David Brandenberger, 'Terribly Romantic, Terribly Progressive, or Terribly Tragic: Rehabilitating Ivan IV under I.V. Stalin', *Russian Review* 58/4 (January–October 1999), pp.635–54; Bernd Uhlenbruch, 'The Annexation of History: Eisenstein and the Ivan Grozny Cult of the 1940s', in Günther (note 4), pp.274–7. On appreciation for Shakespeare's 'tragic' characters, crushed by the weight of 'tragic' class contradictions and world-historical conflicts, see G. Boyadzhiev, 'Vil'yam Shekspir', *Molodaya gvardiya* 7 (1936), pp.152–6.
  110. Cited in Conquest (note 89), p.440 (from Dzhughashvili's *Problems of Leninism*).
  111. Frye (note 3), pp.219–21.
  112. The circumstances of Stalin's death and funeral are vividly described, based on new materials, in Merridale (note 11), pp.257–63. See also Ulam (note 28), pp.5–6.
  113. Jorg Baberowski, 'Wandel und Terror: die Sowetunionen unter Stalin, 1928–1941: Ein Literaturbericht', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 43/1 (1995), pp.96–129.
  114. Or, in Andrei Sinyavskii's phrase, they were a study in Dzhughashvili's own 'black humour'. A. Sinyavskii, 'Stalin – geroi i khudozhnik stalinskoi epokhi', in Kobo (note 71), p.121.
  115. For Khrushchev's references to tragedy, see the drafts of his Secret Speech at the 20th Congress of the Party (1956), 'O kul'te lichnost i ego posledstviyakh', in *Istochnik* 6 (2000), pp.98, 101.
  116. Luker, 'Introduction' (note 85), pp.29–35.
  117. E.N. Burdzhhalov, who had written the classic work on the Twenty-six as a Stalinist history, now applied his literary and ideological skills to the mythic memory of the February revolution: *Vtoraya russkaya revolyutsiya: Vosstanie v Petrograde* (Moscow: Nauka, 1967); *Russia's Second Revolution: The February 1917 Uprising in Petrograd*,



- ed. and trans. Donald J. Raleigh. (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp.337–40; Tumarkin (note 48), p.259; Suny (note 50), pp.363–95, offers citations to a variety of works dedicated to the Twenty-six, many published after 1953.
118. Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1965); and Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution, 1917–1932* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), based partly on his model.
  119. See the categories in Stephen Cohen, *Rethinking the Soviet Experience: Politics and History Since 1917* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp.27–70.
  120. The Soviet style of tragic romance and the revisionist style of ironic tragedy joined in the English-language edition of Burdzhhalov's *Russia's Second Revolution* (note 117), celebrated as an 'exceptional book' by an 'exceptional man', largely for its innovative and quality scholarship. Donald T. Raleigh, 'Translator's Introduction', pp.ix–x, found the author's Stalinist passion for the Twenty-six and his revisionist passion for the victims of February 1917 fully irreconcilable. Yet one could argue that Burdzhhalov showed a remarkable consistency in the two studies: an abiding loyalty to the power of the Soviet style of tragic commemoration and romance.
  121. Joseph Iremaschwili, *Stalin und die Tragedie Georgiens* (Berlin: Verfasser, 1984 [1932]). Dmitrii Volkogonov, *Triumph and Tragedy*, ed. and trans. Harold Shukman (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991).
  122. Compare Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917–1991* (New York: Free Press, 1994); with Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy: A History of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Viking, 1997).
  123. Compare A.S. Izgoev, 'Tragedii i vina', *Nash vek*, 23 March/5 April 1918; and Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1990), pp.xxi–xxii.
  124. Compare the discussion in Trice (note 21), pp.302–4; and Ettore Cinella, 'The Tragedy of the Russian Revolution: Promise and Default of the Left Socialist Revolutionaries in 1918', *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 38/1–2 (January–June 1997), pp.45–82.
  125. Ian Grey, *Stalin, Man of History* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1979), paints him as a Julius Caesar. More often, we see him as tragic perpetrator of a 'Witches Sabbath', as in Ulam (note 28), p.741; or dark 'Walpurgis Night', as in Moshe Lewin, *The Making of the Soviet System: Essays in the Social History of Interwar Russia* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), pp.207–10. L. Batkin, 'Son razuma. O sotsio-kul'turnykh masshtabakh lichnosti Stalina', in Kobo (note 71), pp.27–42, argues convincingly that Dzhugashvili and his cohort are not fit for Shakespearian imagery.
  126. 'In tragedies of tyrants, the theatrical power of evil and the appeal of violence are as much exploited as they are condemned', Rebecca W. Bushnell, *Tragedies of Tyrants: Political Thought and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), p.187.
  127. Kathleen E. Smith, *Remembering Stalin's Victims: Popular Memory and the End of the USSR* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); Merridale (note 11), p.vi, for example, is dedicated to 'Stalin's victims', as is Kobo (note 71), p.4.
  128. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago, 1918–1956* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974). For similar approaches, see Stephane Courtois (ed.), *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); and Alexander N. Yakovlev, *A Century of Violence in Soviet Russia*, trans. Anthony Austin (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002).