rise to and exercise of power and the ways that Stalin acted on those forces. Finally, mention should be made of McNeal's extreme cautiousness with respect to his sources and the care he takes in weighing evidence.

None of this should be construed as a case for empiricism or a spurious impartiality. In considering such disparate phenomena as the collectivization drive, the suicide of Stalin's wife, the annihilation of the Party elite, Stalin's behavior immediately before and after the Nazi invasion, the Big Three negotiations, Stalin's alcoholism and the "affairs" and "plots" of Stalin's last years, McNeal lays out different versions and indicates which he finds most plausible. His judgments, for instance, that "[t]he best evidence that Stalin was behind the assassination of Kirov is circumstantial," or that "[i]t was reasonable to suspect that the British had planted disinformation . . . even on Richard Sorge . . . who warned of a German attack," undoubtedly place him in the minority among Western, or these days, Soviet historians, but they are well worth consideration, as is his final judgment that "[t]he class war in Russia was . . . authentic and essential to Stalin's ascent," and that "his success cannot be understood apart from the context of class hatred to which he . . . frequently referred," and, one might add, contributed.

In a sense, though, McNeal's strengths are also his weakness. Apparently anxious to examine the evidence afresh, he never once refers to earlier biographies or the important study of war-time and post-war political machinations by William McCagg, Jr. Occasionally, as in the discussion of Stalin's quarrel with Tukhachevskii during the civil war, he raises a possibility—that it had something to do with the latter's demise in 1937—without indicating what he thinks. And sometimes, as in his characterization of experts' advice against setting excessive production targets as "possibly evil-intentioned," his equivocation cannot remove the suspicion that he is being excessively fair to Stalin.

"Even-handed, thoughtful, unpolemical" are the bookjacket's terms for describing this biography, and, for once, they are accurate. At a time when Soviet newspapers and journals are filled with personal testimony of Stalin's crimes, and some German historians have gone so far as to blame him for the Final Solution, it is good to have such an account. All the more is the pity that its author did not live to see it in print.

Lewis H. Siegelbaum
Michigan State University


Though evidently addressed, like the first edition, to a Soviet audience, this new one, too, has appeared in tamizdat. Comparisons will inevitably be made with Dmitrii Volkogonov's semi-official Triumph i tragediia: Politicheskii portret I. V. Stalina (Moscow: Novosti, 1989), based on research in the central archives of the Party, state and army, which went to press just as Medvedev's new edition was released. It might be suspected that the present publication was motivated to some extent by
Medvedev's interest in ensuring that Volkogonov's response to the official invitation to fill in the "blank spots" in Soviet history would not go unchallenged as the latest word, and by his hope that Let History Judge might at last receive full publication in the Soviet Union.

After two decades the book has become half again as large, with the author's accumulation of new unpublished memoirs, interviews and affidavit-style material as well as a number of interpretive additions and changes. It remains largely the same in form and interpretive thrust, sympathetic to Lenin's revolution, the Old Bolsheviks and the Soviet intelligentsia. Events in the Soviet Union have moved so swiftly that readers are perhaps likely to wonder how well this revision reflects the position of the author now that he has gained entrée into the circle of his country's academic historians and embarked on a career in active politics.

In the new edition the narrative center of gravity has been displaced backward in time somewhat as a result of a considerably expanded investigation of the Stalin-Lenin relationship and the period of the succession struggle, as Medvedev reviews the Communist resistances and alternatives to Stalin and Stalinism before 1929. Trotsky, Zinov'ev, Kamenev, and Bukharin are given much more extensive treatment, each being dismissed in turn for defects in policy, shortcomings as politicians, or both. Bukharin and NEP receive, as might be anticipated, a much more sympathetic hearing than formerly—Medvedev's views are now largely in accord with those advanced by Stephen Cohen and are the political accompaniment to the "new thinking" on Soviet economic policy. Forced collectivization is no longer characterized as "the major revolution...that determined the victory of socialism," and Stalin's "serious mistakes" in this connection have become "mistakes and crimes."

Criticism of the economic revolution from above is not significantly revised or extended, however, and the central focus of the work remains Stalin's assault on the technical and managerial specialists, on the Party, and on the intelligentsia as a whole. Witnesses from these groups have, since the publication of the first edition, continued to add to Medvedev's considerable collection of unpublished material, so that the present edition brings to light additional detail and substantiating evidence, though this generally supports Medvedev's earlier information and views. Sources which had been anonymous now have names. For example, Olga Shatunovskaja, a former member of the Party Control Commission, is cited as the source of yet further information on the findings of investigative commissions established in 1956 and 1957 to look into the Central Committee elections at the Seventeenth Party Congress and the Kirov murder.

In addition, a number of competing interpretations of Stalinism recently produced by scholars in the West are given cursory criticism, in which Medvedev's more immediate political concerns seem often to gain the upper hand. Anything inconvenient to his moderate reformist position is rejected rather abruptly. Mikhail Agursky's thesis on National Bolshevism is dismissed with arguments more useful in denying political ammunition to Pamiat'-style Great Russian nationalists than in investigating the tributaries that flowed into Stalinism. Gabor Rittersporn's argument that the Party effectively resisted Stalin in 1937-38, forcing the