

Now when Lenin was getting the country organized there was one task that was needed that nobody wanted. That was the task of being Gen. Sec. of the communist party. All of his men wanted to be out there planning how to direct the country, planning how to improve economic conditions, planning how to do that was necessary to get things in decent condition. There was one man who had been a writer for the communists, a man whom Lenin did not like at all, but he had been an active worker and active fighter, and he said I will be glad to take the position of Gen. Sec. of the party.

He was one whose name was Josef Vissarionovich but he had adopted the pen name of Stalin, and Lenin agreed to let him take this position and Stalin very cleverly organized the party in such a way that its leadership was responsible personally to him. When Lenin died he left a testament in which he urged that Stalin be carefully watched and not allowed to gain too much control. But it was too late. Stalin soon gained control of the country. Then he proceeded to carry Marx's principles into more thorough operation. He decided to get rid of every farmer who owned as much as a cow. He called them kulaks--rich farmers. And according to the best estimates ten million of them were crowded into box cars and carried across to Siberia to die at hard labor.

He organized things in such a way that he had most everything under his control, and then he became suspicious of the old communist leaders that Lenin had left. Trotsky was the man whom everybody thought of as Lenin's closet associate. They all in those days spoke of Lenin and Trotsky. But Stalin drove Trotsky into exile and eventually had him assassinated. Then he went through the list purging out the party, purging out anyone who would not be completely subject to himself, and during the 1930's time after time we read of someone who had been an active leader associated with Lenin in the development of the communist revolution who had now been put on trial for anti-government activities and views or for conspiring with a foreign nation. One after another. These men would appear before the court and declare how they had conspired, and tell in detail about their conspiracy ~~and~~ against the government and man after man did this. Our papers and magazines said How on earth can they get all these men to make these confessions? These men who were leaders among them for so many years? How did they get them to make these confessions with a straight face?

I wondered about it as I read it I never knew until within the last few months how it was that they succeeded in doing this. Stalin had five of the chief generals taken and executed. He purged the whole leadership so when the war with Hitler began the country was in a weakened condition for lack of leadership, and that accounts in large part for the great success Hitler had at the first part of the war.

The war ended, but Stalin had enforced and increased his control all through the war. A young major in the army had had a correspondence with a friend in which they criticized Stalin in a rather mild way using a pseudonym that the friend should be able to recognize. The letters were read by the sensors and one day this major whose name was Solzenitzen was suddenly seized right after a big battle, he was seized by the secret police and carried off and spent many many years in exile under hard labor. He eventually, of course, became one of the greatest of Russian writers, and is today living in the United States. Solzenitzen. If you want to get a good idea of how Stalin's tyranny worked, Solzenitzen's books give it in a very interesting way. They show the clever devices Lenin had worked out to maintain control.

When the war ended Stalin's forces were ready to take advantage of the situation.

Immediately set to work to gain complete control of all the machinery of the government and during the next two and a half years there was a time when Christians had a most glorious opportunity. The government did not interfere with them and Popov ~~and~~ travelled all over the country preaching the gospel, and winning many souls to the Lord. The Protestants were in quite a minority in the