The intimate recollections of

From her forthcoming book ‘Twenty Letters to a Friend’  
by Svetlana Alliluyeva

The history of modern Russia may never be told dispassionately; all that is written has to be weighed against the author’s personal view. The men who could really tell us the facts are not the kind who will. Or they are dead, or murdered, and we are left to select and reject and, in the end, try to assemble, like a gigantic jigsaw puzzle, the events of 30 years. Now a new provocative piece of the puzzle lies on the table.

When Stalin’s daughter, Svetlana Alliluyeva, came to this country this year she brought with her a manuscript called ‘Twenty Letters to a Friend’ which will be published next month by Harper & Row. Here LFP begins the first of two instalments from her book.

Mrs. Alliluyeva’s work should be read more for personal experience and the intimate feeling of things than for political history. Born at the center of power she writes of a private world ringed with horror. And out of her recollections comes a picture of herself as she struggles to find within her faced family the essence of human dignity. She wrote her book in 1963 as letters to someone she prefers not to identify, other than to say that he is a scientist who belongs to “the world of literature.”

Mrs. Alliluyeva says herself that her book is not political history but adds, “This does not mean that the political history of the country was unknown to me.” She prefers to call what she has written “lyrical reporting about events which I knew myself, about people whom I knew myself.” That her writing should be compared to that of Tolstoy and Turgenev she finds “very funny,” but her description of the Soviet scene invites the comparison. Running through the book is a brooding love for the vast and enigmatic land of Russia, a fatalistic horror of the things which Russians did because—as Tolstoy once argued—their very Russianness willed the doing. The picture that she gives of her father—a gruff, suspicious, autocratic man who was unexpectedly prudish in small matters, Byzantine in the extreme, loving to his daughter in an absent-minded way—is one that only a daughter could know. And Mrs. Alliluyeva’s account of her mother’s death turns new light on an incident about which historians have been uncertain for a generation. Her recollections echo the tragic Slavic folk tale—one by one, mother, brothers, uncles and aunts come to violent ends or go mad.
I

I

in the village of Zhukovka, evening sun lights the grass and the woods with gold. These woods are a small oasis (outside Moscow), an oasis where roads and ditches aren't built any more. The grass is moved in the clearings and the underbrush cut away. People come here to relax. The visitor from Moscow has only to spend three or four hours roaming the forest and breathing its air to feel cured, strengthened, reborn, rested from all cares. He puts a faded bouquet of wildflowers on the rack of the electric rain and goes back to the teeming streets of Moscow. For a long time after that he will advise everyone he knows to spend Sunday hiking in the woods. Sooner or later they will all go by on the path, past the knee and the house I live in. I have lived in these woods and this part of the world all my 57 years [written in 1961]. What difference does it make that my life and these houses have changed? The woods are still the same. The villagers still draw their water from wells and do their cooking on kerosene stoves. Cows still low and hens cluck inside the village barn. Yet television antennas stick up from the grass, tumbledownoods and the girls wear nylon blouses and sandals from Hungary. But the grass and the birch forest have a sweet smell, the golden pines are Mist the same and the same country roads go off to Petrovskoye and Znamenskoye.

This is where I belong—not in the Kremlin, where I lived for 15 years. There is a feeling of space here, the fields and sky. There's a nice old church on the hill. True, it's not used any more and the trees have grown up rank in the enclosure around it, but it stands splendid in the dense greenery and goes on serving the cause of everlasting good on earth. I don't want to be in the city for anything. I would suffocate there. Please don't think I look any different than I was. Most of my generation have had much fuller lives than I. The ones who are five or six years older are the best of all. They're the ones who went fearlessly and eagerly straight from their classrooms to the war. Few of them survived. Those who did are the flower of our time. I have no great deeds to my credit: I've never been an actor or a writer. All my life was spent behind the scenes.

But what an interesting place it is! It's where the make-up men, the prompters and costume people have their being. Everyone knows better than they that life is an enormous theater where by no means everyone is cast in the role he was meant for. The play goes on, passions boil, the heroes brandish their swords, poets recite, critics are crowned, cartwheels and stage tumbling and spring up again in the twinkling of an eye, the fairies and the evil spirits fly, the ghost of the king appears. Hamlet broods—and as in Pushkin's final stage instruction the People are silent. I shall tell you about the very end, the days in early March 1933, when I was in

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my father's house watching as he lay dying. They were terrible days. The feeling that the steady, firm and familiar ground was swaying beneath my feet began on March 1, when I was called out of French class at the Academy and told that "Malgakov [Georgi Malenkikh, who succeeded Stalin as premier] wants you to come to Bliznev." Bliznev, the Russian word for "near," was the name of my father's dacha at Kuntsevo, just outside Moscow. It was unprecedented for anyone but my father to ask me to come to the dacha. I went with a feeling of disquiet.

We were through the gate when Khroushchev and Bulganin waved my car to a stop in the driveway outside the house. I thought it must be all over. They took me by the arms. They were both in tears. "Let's go in," they said. "Boris and Malenkov will tell you everything."

Instead of the usual silence everyone was fussing and running around. When someone finally told me that my father had had a stroke in the night and was unconscious, I felt a hole relined: I had thought he was dead already. They found him at 3:00 a.m. in this room, right here, lying on a rug. They decided to carry him to the next room, to the sofa he usually slept on. That's where he was now. The doctors were there too. "You can go in," somebody told me.

There was a whole crowd of people jammed into the big room. Doctors I didn't know—Academics V. N. Vinogradov, who had looked after my father for many years, was now in jail—were making a tremendous fuss, applying leeches to his neck and the back of his head, making cardiograms and taking X-rays of his lungs. A nurse kept giving him injections and a doctor perched it all down in a notebook. A special session of the Academy of Medical Sciences was being held somewhere. Another group of doctors was conferring in the next room. An artificial respiratory machine had been brought from one of the medical research institutes. Some young doctors had come with it since no one else had the faintest idea how to work it. The awful thing was just standing there idle and the young doctors were staring distractedly around, utterly overcome. Everyone was talking. All felt that something portentous, something almost of majesty, was going on in this room.

One person was behaving in a way that was very nearly obscene. That was Beria [Lavrenti Beria, head of the secret police, who was executed nine months later]. He was extremely agitated. His face, repulsive enough at the best of times, now was twisted by ambition, enmity, cursing and a lust for power. He was trying so hard at this moment to strike exactly the right balance, to be cunning yet not too cunning. He went up to the bed and spent a long time gazing into the dying man's face. From time to time my father opened his eyes. Beria stared fixedly at those clouded eyes, anxious even now to convince my father that he was the most loyal and devoted of all. Unfortunately, he had succeeded for too long.

During the final minutes, as the end was approaching, Beria suddenly caught sight of me and ordered: "Take Sverdlov away!" The people who were standing around stared, but no one moved. The second it was over he darted into the hallway ahead of anybody else. The silence around the deathbed was shamed by his loud voice, the ring of triumph unaccompanied, as he shouted: "Khrustalyov! My car!" (Khrustalyov was the head of Stalin's personal bodyguard.)

He [Beria] was a magnificent modern specimen of the artful counter, the embodiment of Oriental perfidy, flattery and hypocrisy who had succeeded in confounding even my father, a man whom it was ordinarily difficult to deceive. A good deal of this monster did is now a hole on my father's name and in a good many things they were guilty together. But I have not the slightest doubt that Beria used his cunning to trick my father into other things and
I too one in the mom. It was a terrible glance, choked to death as on watched. At what His face alterate— and became dark. Hs lips treated. His breathing became shorter and shorter. Fnrly spread to the rest of the then insane. It was black and the seemed the very last moment he ing (=tea bit by lair and caused suffocation. the last re home the lack of oxygen was acute.

I couldn’t cry and I didn’t eat. —mote good than bad, in fact. All those days I ther, a father who had done his best to love me. But all were ter—. The members of the government rushed for the door. They had to go to Moscow, to the Central Committee Building where everyone was sitting and waiting for the news everyone was secretly expecting. To be fair, they were born by the same contradictory emotions as I —sorrow and relief.

All except the degenerate Beila spent those days in great agitation, trying to help, yet at the same time fearful of the future. I saw Voe- mohilov, Kaganovich, Malenkov, Bulganin and Khrushchev in tears. Besides being bound to my father in a common cause, they were under the spell of his extraordinary personality.

According to custom, the body was to lie on the deadbed for several hours more. Bulganin and Molotov stayed behind. I sat on a sofa by the opposite wall. The doctors were hot and half the lights were put out. An old nurse whom I had seen around the Kremlin hospital for years was quietly tidying up the large dining table in the center of the room. Affairs of state had been discussed and settled at this table over dinner.

This was the room where everyone ate and where the tiny circle of the Politburo used to hold its meetings. Affairs of state had been discussed and settled at this table over dinner. “Coming to dinner,” at my father’s always munificence coming to decide some question. Along the walls there were sofas and chairs. In the corner there was a fireplace; my father always liked a fire in winter. In one corner was a root ed player. My father had a good collection of Russian, Georgian and Ukrainian folk songs and didn’t recognize the existence of any other kind of music.

Cooks, chauffeurs and watchmen, and the women who had waited on the table— all went up to the bad silently and wept. They wiped their tears away as children do, with their hands and sleeves and louches. The nurse, who was also in tears, gave them drops of valerian.

Valentina Leonorina, or “Valechka,” as she was called, who had been my father’s housekeeper for 18 years, came to say goodbye. She dropped heavily to her knees, put her head on my father’s chest and wailed at the top of her voice as the village women do. She went on for a long time and nobody tried to stop her. All those servants of my father loved him. In little things he was not hard to please. He was courteous, unassuming and direct with those who waited on him. He never scolded anyone except the big shots—the generals and commandants of his guard. The servants had neither bullying nor harshness to complain of. They often asked him for help, and no one was ever refused. During his last years, Valechka and all the rest had seen more of him than I. She will be convulsed to her dying day that no better man ever walked the earth. Late that night—rather, when it was near daybreak—they came to take the body for the autopsy. I started shaking all over with a nero voice trembling. The body was laid on a stretch-er. It was the first time I had seen my father naked. It was a beautiful body. It didn’t look old or as if he had been sick at all. With a pang like the throb of a violin I felt that it meant to be “flesh of the flesh.” I realized that the body that had given me life no longer had life in it. Yet I would go on living. You can never understand what this means until you have witnessed the death of a parent with your own eyes. You have to watch as “the spirit departs the flesh.” It wasn’t so much that I understood this at the time, but I sensed it.

The body was taken away. A white car was driven up to the doorway and everyone were outside. Those who were standing on the porch...
or in the driveway took off their hats. It was still trelling, and someone put a coat over my shoulders. Bulgarin put his arms around me. The doors slammed shut and the car started up. I buried my face in Bulgarin's chest and finally started to cry. I cried, too, and stroked my hair. The others lingered in the doorway and then started to drift away. Connected to the haute by a long passageway that led to the kitchen. On the way I heard someone sobbing loudly. The nurse who had been developing a shww of loyalty or grief. All of them had happened and weeping with me. 'You to going ro have a long day,' they told me. 'You haven't had any sleep and you're going to need your strength up.' I had something to eat and a chair for a while in an armchair. It was 6 o'clock in the morning. I went into the kitchen. On the way I heard someone sobbing loudly. The nurse who had been developing a shww of loyalty or grief. All of them had happened and weeping with me. 'You to going ro have a long day,' they told me. 'You haven't had any sleep and you're going to need your strength up.' I had something to eat and a chair for a while in an armchair. It was 6 o'clock in the morning. I went into the kitchen. On the way I heard someone sobbing loudly. The nurse who had been developing a shww of loyalty or grief. All of them had happened and weeping with me. 'You to going ro have a long day,' they told me. 'You haven't had any sleep and you're going to need your strength up.' I had something to eat and a chair for a while in an armchair. It was 6 o'clock in the morning. I went into the kitchen. On the way I heard someone sobbing loudly. The nurse who had been developing a shww of loyalty or grief. All of them had happened and weeping with me. 'You to going ro have a long day,' they told me. 'You haven't had any sleep and you're going to need your strength up.' I had something to eat and a chair for a while in an armchair.
before the funeral—Boria had the whole household, servants and bodyguards, called together and said that my father’s belongings were to be removed—no one had any idea where—and that they were all to quit the premises.

My father’s possessions, his books and furniture and chins, were packed up and tearfully loaded on trucks. They were all carried off somewhere, to the store of warehouse the secret police had plenty of. Servants were simply thrown out. A good many officers of the bodyguard were transferred to other cities. Two of them shot themselves.

Later, in 1957, after Boria himself had “fallen,” they started restoring the dacha. My father’s things were brought back. The former servants and commandants were invited back. They were preparing to open the house as a museum, like Lenin’s house at Lениnskie Gorki. But then came the 26th Party Congress (in 1956, when Khrushchev denounced Stalin in a now famous speech). After that, of course, any thought of a museum was dropped. The service buildings in which my father’s bodyguards used to live are now a hospital or sanatorium.

The house itself is gloomy, closed up, dead. Sometimes I have nightmares about it and wake up cold with fright.

But once we had quite a different house—a house that was sunny and gay. Less than 20 miles from the center of Moscow, the house once belonged to the younger Zubalov, an oil magnate from Baku. Mihan and his family, Voroshilov, Stakoshin, and several other Old Bolshevik families lived in Zubalov’s house, as it was called, while my father and mother took over the smaller Zubalov’s Four nearby. The Nikitsky house to this day is as the Zubalovs left it. On the porch is a marble statue of a dog. The walls are hung with Gedelins and downstairs the windows are of stained glass.

Our place underwent endless transformations. At the outset my father had the surrounding woods cleared and half the trees cut down. He was unable merely to contemplate nature; he had to transform it. He had fruit trees planted over large tracts and strawberry, raspberry and currant bushes. We children grew up on what was actually a small estate with a country routine—haying, picking mushrooms and berries, our own fruit trees. Every year, our own pickles and preserves, our own poultry.

My mother was interested in something else—our education and upbringing. Although I was only 5 when the cold, I could already read and write both Russian and German. My brother Vašly, who was already a difficult child, had a wonderful tutor, Aleksandr Muravyov, who was forever thinking up fascinating expeditions to the river and woods: camping out all night by the river in a lean-to and cooking fish, meat-picking and mushroom-gathering expeditions. Winter and summer a teacher named Natalia Konstantinovna—no one called them governesses any more—spent alternate days teaching us clay modeling, showing us how to make our own toys out of wood, how to color and draw.

All this educational machinery was set in motion by my mother, yet she herself was practically never home. My mother worked first on the staff of a magazine and then enrolled in the Industrial Academy. She was forever attending meetings somewhere, and she spent all her free time with her father. She was afraid of spoiling me because my father perked and spoiled me enough.

What splendid children’s parties we had! I remember my last birthday party while my mother was still alive. It was February 1915, and I was 6 years old. The Kremlin apartment was filled with children. We recited verses in Russian and German, and sang various songs. Budenny and Voroshilov had especially good voices. My father would sing too. He had a fine ear and a clear, high-pitched voice. (His speaking voice, on the other hand, was low and not very loud.) I have no idea whether my mother could sing, but it is said that once in a while she would dance a Georgian fergalite.

Our apartment in the Kremlin was run by a housekeeper, a German from Riga, Latvia,
The Soviet leaders were Svetlana's friends

To young Svetlana, the feared and famous men who surrounded her father were friends and neighbors, frequent dinner guests and summer visitors. The Voroshilovs and Mikoyans had nearby dachas at Zobalovo. Nikolai Bukharin, the old Bolshevik, used to come for the summer with his wife and child and had a pet fox which hung around for years. At parties, unflappable Marshal Semyon Budyonny played the accordion and Voroshilov and Stalin would join in the singing. Abel Abakumov, a high official, was Nadia Stalin's godfather and Svetlana called him "Uncle Abel." Grigory and Zina Ordzhonikidze—her Minister of Heavy Industry—were close family friends. Although Svetlana still has small she and her mother disliked Berta (sister of the secret police), as a child she felt comforted because her knees on a country outing.

named Carolina Till. She was a charming old woman, neat and immaculate and very kind, who wore her hair piled high on her head in the old-fashioned way, in combs and with a chiffon on the crown. My mother entrusted the whole of our rather modest budget to her, and with it she ran the household. By 1935 our household was run by my mother or by a housekeeper, without any Chekist or bodyguards. The only guard was a man who rode in the car with my father and had nothing to do with the house. He wasn't allowed near it.

No one cared about luxury or possessions, though all the Soviet leaders did try to give a good education to their children. They hired good governesses of the old prerevolutionary school to teach German to their children. During those years my parents always went south with [our] friends, with Abel Yuniakidze [purged in 1937], my mother's godfather, with Mikoyans, Voroshilov or Molotov and all their wives and children. Sometimes my father went hawk shooting with a double-barreled rifle. Or he might go hunting hares at night from an automobile. Bowling, billiards—anything that took a sharp eye, he was good at. He never swam, he didn't know how. He didn't like sitting in the sun. He did like to go walking in the shade of the woods. But even this quickly bored him and he preferred stretching out on a deck chair with a book and his official papers or newspapers. And he could sit at the table with guests for hours. My mother was used to it; in this sense she was a perfect wife. In Moscow once while I was a baby and she still was nursing me, my father felt slightly ill at Sochi. She left me without the least hesitation to my nurse and went to my father.

In summer our life centered on the terrace downstairs and on my father's balcony on the second floor. My nurse was forever sending me there. "Go rake these currants to Papa," or "Bring Papa some violets," or "Take him some lilies of the valley." I would go running off and be rewarded no matter by a warm, tobacco-scented kiss from my father.

In spite of being so young my mother, who was 30 in 1931, was respected by the entire household. She was very much loved by everyone. She was extraordinary gentle and considerate. At the same time she could be firm, stubborn and unyielding.

My mother was tender with my oldest brother Yakov, my father's son by his first wife Yekaterina Svanidze. Yakov, who was only seven years younger than my mother, loved and revered her greatly. My mother was on the friendliest terms with the Svanidzes, with Aleksandr and Maria, the sisters of my father's first wife, who had died young, with her brother Aleksandr Svanidze and his wife Maria. My mother's parents and her brothers, my uncles Fyodor and Pavel, her sister Anna and Anna's husband, Senator Rodzian, were at our house constantly. There were no quarrels, no petty squabbles.

They were extraordinary personalities, gifted and fascinating. The life of almost ev-
Svetlana

After the Revolution my grandfather built the Shatura Hydroelectric Station. As an Old Bolshevik he was close to the Old Guard of the Revolution. He was a gentle, courteous man who to the end of his days—he died in 1945 at the age of 79—retained his spirit as a revolutionary idealist of homecomers, his astuteness and his extraordinary honesty.

He lived with us in Zhabovo and was adored by his grandchildren. He had a carpenter's bench and was always soldering things, sharpening and planing, fixing the electric wiring.

My mother's death in 1915 broke my grandfather's spirit. He grew silent and withdrawn. He stayed in his room for days at a time, making things on a lathe. Then he fell ill. I suspect it was his spirit that began to fail first, because he had always had an iron constitution. In 1938 he suffered a new blow, the death of his son Pavel. Meanwhile, his son-in-law, Stanislav Redon, had been arrested. After the war, in 1946, his daughter Anna was sent to prison. Thank God Grandfather didn't live to see it.

I went to see him in the hospital not long before he died. He was no longer able to speak. He just closed his eyes and silently wept. for the humble rank and file, which I didn't fully understand then but now understand very well. He began: "We, the older generation of idealistic Marxists . . .

My grandmother, Olga Fedorenko, wasn't even 14 when she tied her clothes in a bundle, slipped out the window and ran off with my grandfather in Tiflis. Born in Georgia, she herself was a strange mixture. Although her father, Yevgeny Fedorenko, had a Ukrainian name, his mother was Georgian. But he married Magdalena Eichholz, who was from a family of German settlers. Magdalena Eichholz was the perfect German housewife, she baked fine cakes and bore nine children, of whom our grandmother, Olga, was the youngest. She brought up all nine in the Protestant church. Whenever we children started making fun of her and asking "Where is God?" or, "If man has a soul, where is it?" she would get angry and tell us: "Wait till you grow up and you'll see where. Stop it!" She was quite capable of bursting into screams of abuse at what she called our "slapdash managers"—all the state-employed cooks and servants and commandants who looked on her as a "fussy old freak."

All four of the children, Anna, Fyodor, Pavel and Nadezhda ("Nadya," my mother), were born in the Caucasus. They were exceptionally good-looking, all but Fyodor, who was always complaining that they and our grandmother, Olga, was the youngest. She brought up all nine in the Protestant church. Whenever we children started making fun of her and asking "Where is God?" or, "If man has a soul, where is it?" she would get angry and tell us: "Wait till you grow up and you'll see where. Stop it!" She was quite capable of bursting into screams of abuse at what she called our "slapdash managers"—all the state-employed cooks and servants and commandants who looked on her as a "fussy old freak."

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Iosif Stalin's ill-fated in-laws

Stalin's in-laws—the Alliluyevs and the Stepanovs (the family of his first wife)—suffered enormously during the years of his rule. Stepanov Stepanov, the husband of Nadia Alliluyev's sister Anna, was executed at Stalin's order, as was Alexander Stepanov, brother of Stalin's first wife and husband of Maria Korona Stepanova. Anna Alliluyeva Rodion, Maria Korona Stepanova and Yevgenia Alliluyeva, wife of Nadia's brother Pavel, were all arrested and spent years in prison. Fyodor Alliluyev (who had met Anna at an early age—according to Soviet sources, she ran away with him in her mother's family) himself an old-guard revolutionary, even before 1900. On several occasions before the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 Stalin had hidden out in the Alliluyev apartment in St. Petersburg, and it was there that he met Nadia, Sergei Alliluyev died a natural death at the age of 79.

A few years before he came again. He never once asked my father what had happened to his son-in-law, Rodion, though the fate of his daughter Anna, her shattered life and the lives of her sons worried him deeply. He had too much pride to beg. Grandmother was more natural. She always had a pile of complaints, and in the old days she used to go to Lenin. So Grandmother frequently turned directly to my father: "Ah, Iosif, imagine, I can't get vinegar anywhere!"

My father would burst out laughing and my mother would fume. My father would have the whole thing settled in a second.

Once my mother died my grandmother no longer felt at home in our house. She lived either at Zabudovo or in an immaculate little apartment of her own in the Kremlin. I liked going there, for it was quiet and cozy and warm. But it was also infinitely sad. What did she have to talk of but sorrow? She was wonderful-looking even at 79. She had no wrinkles. She never could understand why her daughter Anna should be in prison. She would give me letters for my father and later take them back. She knew it wouldn't do any good. In the early spring of 1931 she died of a heart attack at the age of 76.

My mother's favorite brother was Pavel, who became a professional soldier. At the end of the 1920s he was sent as our military representative to what was then pre-Nazi Germany. He and his family lived there until 1933. Sometimes he sent my mother a dress or some good perfume, but my father took a puritanical view of "foreign luxury" and refused even to

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Scotiana continued

tolerate the scent of perfume. My mother had to enjoy these perfumes unpretentiously, although she did wear the perfume. Sometimes she came to my room to stroke my head as I was falling asleep, I could smell the exotic perfume on my pillow for hours afterward.

To the end of his days my father would ask me with a look of displeasure, “Is that something foreign you’ve got there?” He beamed whenever I told him no, it had been made in the Soviet Union.

Before Uncle Pavel’s death in 1919 he used to come to our apartment in the Kremlin and sit by the hour in Vassily’s room or mine and wait for my father to come Grandfather and my Uncle Aleksandr Stanisav did. When Aleksandr Stanisav and his wife and my Aunt Anna’s husband Stanislav Redens had all been arrested, Uncle Pavel came to my father and again to plead for colleagues of his in the army. It never did any good. In the summer of 1919 Pavel went to Sochi on vacation. When he got back he found that every one of his colleagues had disappeared. Pavel dropped dead of a heart attack in his office.

Berta made up various stories about Pavel’s death and kept trying to put them over to my father. The most far-fetched was that Pavel had been poisoned by his wife. A full decade later, in 1928, he had Pavel’s widow accused of spying and poisoning her husband and she was thrown into jail. She and Anna Redens—Re den’s husband had been shot 10 years before—wore this to 1934. None was set free until 1944.

Anna Redens was goodness itself, the embodiment of the Christian spirit. Her attitude never failed to impress my father, who called her “an unprincipled fool” and remarked that “this sort of goodness is worse than any wickedness.” She had once been very beautiful, slender as a reed, with features that were then coarse and regular, warm brown eyes and magnificent teeth. She married young, got fat and stopped looking after her appearance. She worshiped her husband, a Polish Bolshevik. To her he was the best man who had ever lived. People say Redens was tough, that he put on airs and wouldn’t stand being contradicted. But I won’t presume to judge what I don’t remember and didn’t see.

After the Civil War he was a leading Chekist in the Ukraine. Later he was transferred to the Georgian Cheka. This is where he came into conflict with Berta, who had ambitions to become head of the Cheka in Georgia. They took an instant dislike to one another. I shall come back to Berta, who seems to have had a diabolical link with our family and who wiped out a good half of its members.

Berta’s appointment as head of the N.K.V.D. (formerly the Cheka) in Moscow meant trouble for Redens, and he knew it. He had been assigned to the N.K.V.D. in Karakhan and he and his family had left for Alma-Ata. They had not been there long when he was called back to Moscow. He went with a heavy heart and was not seen again.

Toward the end he, like Uncle Pavel, tried to see my father to intercede for people. But once my father saw someone he had known a long time out of his heart, once he had negotiated with someone to the ranks of his enemies, it was impossible to talk to him about that person any more. Any effort to persuade him made him furious. No one, neither Redens nor Uncle Pavel nor Aleksandr Stanisav, could get anywhere. When he saw each one of them for the last time, it was as if he were parting with someone who might no longer be a friend, with someone who was in fact an enemy already.

My Aunt Anna and her children came to Moscow after Redens was arrested. Unlike the wives of others who had vanished, she was allowed to keep her apartment. But she was no longer permitted to come to our house. Being only 11 at the time, I couldn’t make out what had happened. Where had everybody gone? Aunt Anna refused to accept the fact that her husband had been shot, though my father was heartless enough to inform her of it in 1938 or 1939. To her friends’ credit—they were old Party intellectuals, like her husband—every one of them stood by her. Often she would say, “I’ll go call on Voroshilov (or Kaganovich, or the Molotovs) . . .” And she would go, though nobody else in her shoes would have dreamed of such a thing.

During the final years of the war someone suggested that she write her own memoirs. She lacked the literary ability, but she told it all to an editor named Nina Barn. She wrote up our aparunent in the Kremlin and our room to stroke my head as I was falling asleep. I could smell the exotic perfume on my pillow for hours afterward.

Her two children scarcely saw their grandfather

At a grandfather, leftist Stalin was strangely aloof. He never came both to my face of his right grandchildren, and the time Stalin spent with Scotiana’s children, Vassily and Karya, could be measured in hours.

Vassily in a garden

Scotiana with Vassily in early 1930

With Karya in 1954

With Karya in her tens

Scotiana tells how “served” she was the first time that she took leaf, which was three, to meet her father. Stalin played with the boy for half an hour and Scotiana remembers that she was “in seventh heaven.” Scotiana, her father and her two children were all together on one occasion, and that was on Nov. 1, 1952, the 20th anniversary of Narya Stalin’s death and only a few months before Stalin himself was dead. Scotiana had arranged a meeting at Stalin’s dacha at Novofer. Stalin took me to a 3-year-old Karya, who was “funny as a button, with pink cheeks and dark eyes that were big as cherries,” and burst out laughing.
The story of my mother's brothers won't be complete until I say something about Frydor. Life destroyed him a bit sooner than the others. He was so gifted that he was accepted for the aristocratic Marine Guards. Then came the Revolution and the Civil War. Of course he was sorry for him. But he avoided him and had known the family in Tiflis. But not every mind, He Wan a semi-invalid the KS( of his life, a kind man who lived on a pension and died of the commiseration, his heart torn out.

Once he staged a mock raid in which it went into the army. He was assigned to intelligence and nodded and he went right out of his life. He had the brisk step entered in a section of the Kremlin hospital ward. The nest morning she was found dead.

The story of my mother's brother won't be complete until I say something about Mr. Mark, who was a kind of Bolshovk I wrote to Stalin. BUT he didn't have an answer. The man in black came, passed a room and talked with the son of my first husband. The son of my first husband, a Jew, my father refused to meet even once. I still never forget how scared I was the first time my father saw lofis. He was about 3 and very cute with huge shiny Jewish eyes and long lashes. My father admired.

It was in 1949, one of the very few visits he made after the war to Tbilisi, which was deserted by now. There were only three people living in the place—lofis, his nurse and my old nurse, who was ill by this time. I was in my last year at the university and living in Moscow. My father played with lofis half an hour, wandered (or rather, ran) outside the house—he had the brisk step of a young man until his dying day—and went away. I stayed behind, re-living that half hour and going over everything in my mind. I was in seventh heaven.

My father saw lofis twice more. The last time was four months before he died. Lofis was 7 and had just started the first grade. "What thoughtful eyes," my father said, "He's a smart boy!" Again I was overjoyed.

Lofis, too, remembers this last meeting with his grandfather and how well they hit it off. Unpolitical though he is—he's like the rest of his generation—he put his grandfather's picture on his desk a long time ago.

My son is now [in 1956]. Of all the professions he might have chosen, he has picked the most humanitarian, that of doctor. I'm glad.

As for my daughter Yekaterina ("Kar-tsa"), my father was fond of her father, who was my second husband, and liked the entire Zhidanov family. Sterliana's second husband was the son of Andrei Zhidanov, whose death in 1941 was followed by the purge known as "the Leonidgrad affair." Yet he wasn't especially fond of our daughter. He saw her once, when she was 2. She was funny as a button, with pink checks and dark eyes that were big as cherries. He took one look at her and burst out laughing. The rest of the evening he never stopped laughing.

It was Nov. 8, 1921, the 25th anniversary of my mother's death. I took the children and the three of us went into the darkness. It wasn't easy to bring off, as I had trouble getting to see my father during his final years.

It was the next to last time I saw him, four months before he died. The table was piled high with good things to eat—fresh fruit and vegetables and wine. There was good Georgian wine, straight from the countryside and served in tiny glasses. He always insisted on having an enormous selection, practically a battery of bottles on the table, even though he himself might not touch it. He didn't eat much either and only picked at things here and there, but he insisted on having an abundant choice on the table. That was his rule. On this occasion the children feasted on fruit and he was pleased. He liked to sit at the table and watch other people eat.

It was the first and only time I and my father and the two children were all together. It was the time he had wine served to the children in the food-b the son of the Caucasian.

We are sitting out on the porch. My son is busying up on physics; my daughter is deep in a science-fiction novel. Mishka the cat is purring. It's hot and still. The sun has set and the flames on the table are buzzing with wasps and bees. The linen is in bloom. It's a quiet, sizzling heat. Nature is peaceful, beautiful, perfect.

Oh Lord, how loudly is this earth of yours and how perfect, every blade of grass, every flower and leaf! What a terrible thing that there are in many modern in the turnd! What a terrible thing, and how singular, that they even aim for themselves and for the sake of three airs consider the destruction of life leaf! to be justified.

To the poorest peasant man it is plain that such a thing cannot be allowed to happen. For man and woman who claim to be civilized fail to see it. The Chinese Communists who claim to be Marxist believe that it is not merely possible, but necessary, for human beings to destroy one another.

Evil and insanity are on one side of the scale; intelligence, progress, brotherhood and humaneness on the other. World peace hangs in this delicate balance. It serves to me that in our time faith in God is the same thing as faith in the ultimate triumph of good over evil. By the time I was 35 and had seen something of life, I, who had been taught from earliest childhood by society and my family to be an atheist and a materialist, was already one of those who cannot live without God. I am glad that it is so.
Svetlana continued

How could such a thing happen? How could my father do it? The only thing I know is that it could not have been his idea. But if a skilful flatterer, such as Beria, whispered in his ear that "these people are against you," that there were "dangerous connections" such as trips abroad, my father was capable of believing it.

His opinion could be manipulated. It became possible to institute that even though So-and-so had been well thought of for years, he only seemed to be all right. Actually, he's an enemy. He's been saying bad things about you; he opposes you. X, Y and Z have given evidence against him. What my father didn't want to realize was that in the cellars of the secret police, X, Y and Z could be made to testify. And when the "facts" convinced my father that someone he knew well had turned out "badly," a psychological metamorphosis came over him. This was where his cruel, implacable nature showed itself. The past ceased to exist. Years of friendship might as well never have been. He could wipe it all out at a stroke — and X would be doomed. "So, you've betrayed me," some inner demon would whisper. He couldn't go back. He couldn't even remember.

In his cold-blooded way, he cared about only one thing: How is X succeeding himself now? Does he realize his mistakes? All Beria had to do was bring him the record of the interrogation in which X "confessed," others "confessed" for him — worse yet — X refused to confess.

Uncle Aleksandr refused to "confess" or "ask forgiveness." He refused to write letters appealing to my father. He was shot in February 1943, at the age of 60.

That was during the war. In 1941 a great many people in prison camps were shot. I have no idea why this happened, whether it was because of the way the war was going — it was still going badly — or whether Beria had simply made up his mind to get rid of those who knew about his crimes and had no trouble talking my father into it.

When the sentence that had been carried out against Uncle Aleksandr was read to my Aunt Maria (who was in another prison camp), she dropped dead of a heart attack.

The time has come when I'll have to tell you about my mother. There are a lot of legends about her, some of them false, romantic or absurd, others downright hostile. Some say my mother was a saint, others that she was mentally unbalanced. Neither of those things is true, any more than the story that she was murdered is true.

My mother was born in Baku and her childhood was spent in the Caucasus. People didn't know Georgia sometimes took her for a Georgian. Actually she had the looks of a southern Slav — the oval face, dark eyebrows, slightly turned-up nose, dark skin, soft brown eyes and straight black lashes that one sees in the women from Greece or Bulgaria or the Ukraine.

Her sisters and two brothers loved her and spoiled her. It is a happy, well-behaved, affectionate girl we see in her early letters.

May 1, 1916

"Dear Alya Ivanovna,

"Forgive me for taking so long to answer your letter but I haven't had time. I was such a lazybones last summer that I had to spend 10 full days studying. ... I think I paced everything but Russian composition...."

Here is a letter of Feb. 27, 1917, the eve of the Revolution. "... I've been terribly busy all this time. But now school's closed for the fourth straight day because Petrograd is so unsettled, so I have some free time. It's very, very tense here...."

The same day, Feb. 27, she sent a postcard: "... a great day has come: the 17th of February! ... Papa's very excited and stays by the telephone the whole time. Abel Yenukidze [from Siberia]. To his surprise, he was in time for all the celebrations.

What they were celebrating was the February Revolution. My father was in exile at this time.

On Oct. 10, 1917 my mother wrote another letter:

"We've no plans for leaving the city. It's still possible to get food. Milk, bread, meat and eggs are all available, though costly. ... There are rumors going around that the Bolsheviks are going to do something on Oct. 26 but probably there's nothing to it...."

The Bolsheviks did "do something," as it turned out. On Dec. 11, 1917 my mother wrote:

"... I'm having a great fight with the school. They were collecting money for the civil servants and everybody was giving two or three rubles. When they got to me, I said, 'I won't.' ... Now they all say I'm a Bolshevik...."

Here is my mother's last letter from Petrograd. It was written in February 1918.

"Greetings, my dear. I'm glad you finally got the cigarettes I sent you. ... There's real hunger in Petrograd. They hand out only an eighth of a pound of bread every day and one day they gave us none at all. I've even cursed the Bolsheviks. ... I've lost 20 pounds and had to alter all my skirts and underclothes.

They were all falling off me. I've lost so much weight I'm even suspecting me of being in love...."

My mother was married to Stalin shortly the years by stories told by nurses and friends, and old pictures. At left is young Nadya as she looked at 13 in posing in matching muff and cap—five years before she married Stalin. Nadya was a revolutionary herself, and worked for Lenin for years. In the years just before her death at age of 37, Nadya (at right, center picture) appeared for older then she was. At right, she chats with Svetlana at a birthday party.
after this. She and her husband went to Moscow and she went to work in Lenin's secretariat. A new life had begun, not for her alone but for the whole of Russia.

I always think of my mother as extremely beautiful and I don't suppose I'm the only one who thinks so. I can't remember her face, but I have the impression that she was graceful and light of step, and that she always smelled of rose perfume. She seldom kissed me. My father, on the other hand, was always carrying me in his arms, holding me, kissing me and calling me pet names like "little sparrow" and "little fly." Once I ruined a new tablecloth with a pair of scissors. My mother spanked me across the hands until it hurt. I never gave in to her and scolded him for it. I had two letters that I think were from Vasily, saying " Countdown..." . I was a big, sensible girl then and calling me pet names like "little sparrow" and "little fly" is not done. I never thought of him as he was. He was a lazy, bored child who refused to have anything to do with me. He became a full-time Party worker in Donbas. He became a full-time Party worker after he graduated from the Academy. He was only seven years older than my mother. She saw him through that time. She and her husband wanted to Moscow. A new life had begun, not for her alone but for the whole of Russia.

I have the impression that she was graceful and light of step, and she always smelled of rose perfume. She seldom kissed me. My father told me later that once she got cramps in her arms. My father put her to sleep. She refused to go to the Academy, saying that my little girl was carrying on and being terribly naughty. I hate getting letters like that about my little girl. I thought it was a big, sensible girl. I was leaving behind, and now it turns out she's only a little girl after all and doesn't know how to behave like a grownup... Please write and let me know whether you've decided to be good or not. Please write and let me know whether you've decided to be good or not. Your Aunt Mama."

My father's letters were very different. I have two letters that I think I must have received from him about that same time, between 1930 and 1931, because they are printed in big block letters. His letters always ended "I kiss you." Until I was about 10, he used to call me "Sarazha." (That was what I called myself when I was a little girl.) He also called me "Housekeeper." Whenever I asked him for anything, he liked to answer: "Why are you only asking? Give an order, and I'll do it right away." That's how we started the game of "ordered," which we played until I was about 16. He also invented a perfect little girl named Lyulka as an example for me to follow. Lyulka always did just what she was supposed to, and of course I hated her for it.

My father was demanding and strict with Vasily, but lenient toward me. My mother was more lenient with Vasily, since he had enough discipline from my father already, but was strict with me to offset my father's affection. Yet she was the one I loved more.

I remember asking my nurse one day: "Why is it I love Grandma better than Grandpa, yet I love Mama better than Papa?" My nurse was horrified. My mother saw to it that the time was filled up. We had our lessons. We made herbariums, needed rabbits—anything to keep us from being idle. In one of her letters as a schoolgirl my mother had stated the rule that "the more time you have, the lazier you are." Even as a tiny child my mother had me enrolled in a music class for about 20 children of preschool age. She was only 10 in 1931. She was in the Industrial Academy analyzing synthetic fibers. My mother would have made a fine specialist. Her notebooks are neat and clean. The secretary of the Party Committee at the Academy was a young man named Nikita Khru- shchev, who had come there straight from the Donbas. He became a full-time Party worker after he graduated from the Academy. My mother was only seven years older than my oldest brother Yakov. She saw him through the death of a baby daughter and was a comfort to him throughout his unhappy first marriage.

My mother was terribly upset when Yakov tried to commit suicide in 1918, or it may have been 1919, in despair over the attitude of my father, who refused to have anything to do with him. Yakov went to the kitchen of our Kremlin apartment and shot himself. Luckily he was only wounded. The bullet went right through. My father made fun of him and liked to tease: "Ha! He couldn't even shoot straight!" After his attempt at suicide, Yakov went to Lenin- grad and lived in my grandfather's apartment.

My mother's sister Anna told me that my mother used to think more and more in her last years about leaving my father. After a quarrel between them in 1946, when I was six months old, my mother took me and my brother and nurse and went up to Grandfather's in Lenin- grad to stay. The quarrel was caused by some rudeness of my father's, something small in itself. My nurse told me that my father telephoned from Moscow, wanting to come and make up and take us all home. My mother, not without a certain malicious humor, replied: "I'll come back myself. I'll use the same too much for you to come here." So we all went home.

My mother never had an eye to the main chance. The things her position gave her meant nothing to her. She refused to go to the Academy in a car or even let on to the other students who she was. Many of them did not know for a long time who Nadya Alliaiev was married to.

My nurse told me that before she died my mother was unusually irritable and sad. One day an old friend from Leningrad came to see her. They sat and talked in my nursery. My nurse heard my mother say that "everything bored her," that she was "lack of everything" and "nothing made her happy." She wasn't supposed to touch alcohol. It had had a bad effect on her. She didn't like it and was frightened when other people had anything to drink. My father told me later that once she came home very sick after a party at the Academy where she had had something to drink. She got cramps in her arms. My father put her to bed and comforted her. "So you love me a little after all," she said to him.

The last time I saw her was on the eve of her death—not more than a day or two before. She called me to her room and had me sit on her favorite chair, or Georgian sofa. "Don't touch alcohol!" she said. "Never drink wine!" There were echoes of her quarrel with my father, who was forever giving his children wine. She looked older than she was because she never let herself go. Her tremendous discipline.
He didn't

The flower-banked body of Nadya Alisbarova Stalin lay in state for ten days after her untimely death in November 1932. Then her funeral procession marched through the city.

Svetlana continues

Her irritation and discontent built up more and more, pressure within until finally she was like a coiled spring.

The immediate occasion was trivial. It was a minor falling out as a banquet in honor of the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution. My father merely said to her, "Hey, you! Have a drink!" She screamed, "Don't you dare talk to me that way!" And in front of everyone she got up and ran from the table.

My nurse started telling me how it all happened shortly before she died. Our housekeeper, Carolina T. always woke my mother in the morning. My mother slept in a room by herself, and my father slept either in his office or in a little room with a telephone near the dining room. That's where he was sleeping that night, after getting home late from the banquet. My mother had come in earlier and had gone to her own room.

Carolina T. got up early that day as usual. She got breakfast ready and went to wake my mother. She came running to the nursery shaking with fright and motioned to my nurse, unable to say a word. They went back together. My mother was lying beside her bed in a pool of blood. She had in her hand a little pistol that Pavel had brought her from Berlin. The body was cold. Faint with fear, mainly fear that my father might appear at any second, the two women laid the body on the bed. They called the people who had precedence in their eyes: the Chief of the Kremlin Guard, Abel Yenzikleie, and my mother's close friend Polina Molotov (wife of the diplomat). Everyone came running. Meanwhile my father slept on. Molotov and Voroshilov came. They were all in a state of shock.

Finally my father woke up and came into the dining room. "What?" they said, "Nadya is no longer with us."

That is the story my nurse told me. Polina Molotov told me something very much like it. She had been at the banquet with my mother and all the others. All of them witnessed the quarrel and my mother's departure, but no one gave it much importance. Polina Molotov left the banquet with my mother so she wouldn't be alone. They went out and walked around the Kremlin Palace several times.

"She quieted down and talked about the Academy and her chances of staying to work, a prospect which occupied her mind and pleased her a great deal. Your father was rough with her and she had a hard life with him. Everyone knew that. But they had spent a good many years together. They had a family, children, a home, and everyone loved Nadya. Who could have thought she'd ever do such a thing? It wasn't a perfect marriage, of course, but then what marriage is?"

"When she seemed completely calm," Polina Molotov went on, "we were at separate ways for the night. I was perfectly sure everything was all right, that it had all subsided. And then in the morning they called to tell us the terrible news."

I remember how we children were sent out at an unusual hour that morning to play. I remember how Natalia Konstantinovna kept wiping her eyes with a handkerchief at breakfast. Suddenly we were taken to the dacha at Sokolovka, where we had started going that fall instead of to our beloved Zubalovo. It was al-
even go to the funeral. He never visited her grave.

...
no" house, had vanished. The only things left were traces of sand in the woods.

Our governess Natalia Konstantinovna was right away. Whether she left voluntarily or was dismissed I don't know. My brother Vasily's nurse, Aleksandr Marevyan, lasted another two years. Then Vasily got annoyed with him. So he too disappeared.

My father moved to a different apartment because he couldn't bear to stay in the one where my mother died. It was most uncomfortable to live in. It was on the first floor of the Senate building. It had walls nearly five feet thick and high vaulted ceilings. These rooms, which had been offices, were converted into an apartment for my father because his office was in the same building one floor above.

His time for seeing me and Vasily was during direct at the apartment. He would invite me to his rooms, look at the books my marks were entered in and sometimes ask me to show him my exercise books. He used to sign the book containing my marks, as parents were supposed to do, right up to the war. He also continued talking to me.

But inwardly things had changed dramatically. By 1937 or 1938, except for my nurse, there was no one left of the people my mother had brought along. One year I came back from school in September and found my old cook, Yelizaveta, was gone. Later they got rid of Tanya, my mother's nurse, there was no one left of the people my mother had put in our nursery. And she had replaced it all by furniture which was, in fact, more modish, but cold and utterly lacking in character. She did the same with my brother Vasily.

We came to realize that under the new system everything in the house was considered state property and anything old and dilapidated would be "inventoried" each year and carted off. God knows where. Literally. I saw some of these things in the apartment of Aleksandra Nakashidze. Once in a while my father gave our unofficial guardian Vlaski over-all directives. It was in line with some decrees of this kind that a governess named Lidia Georgiyevna appeared on the scene unexpectedly. She and my nurse got into a fight the very first day. I heard Lidia Georgiyevna cry out: "Remember your place, Conrade Bilyakover! You've no right to talk to me like that!"

I told her: "Forc! Don't you dare insult my nurse!"

She had hysterics. She laughed and sobbed at the same time and called both of us names. I was "an ill-mannered girl" and my nurse was "uncivilized."

The quarrel died down, but she and I were now enemies. After five years I implored my father to get rid of her. My father had no special sympathy for a housekeeper who flirted with every man in sight, and I was set free.

S

She set about purging our house in order—not any father's rooms, of course, since no one was allowed in there. One year when I got back from the South I didn't know my own room any more. Where was the old carved sideboard given me by my mother? And the countess presents from Aunt Anna? I had kept the bright clay figures Natalia Konstantinovna taught us to make on the top shelves and old albums of drawings and exercises in German and Russian on the bottom. Aleksandra Nakashidze thought it was all a lot of nonsense. She got rid of a round table and some chairs my mother had put in my nursery. And she had replaced it all by furniture which was, in fact, more modish, but cold and utterly lacking in character. She did the same with my brother Vasily.

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The quarrel died down, but she and I were now enemies. After five years I implored my father to get rid of her. My father had no special sympathy for a housekeeper who flirted with every man in sight, and I was set free.

**NEXT WEEK PART II**

Her first stirrings of doubt about her father—the romance he shattercd and their unhappy marriages