

## Wilderness House Literary Review 19/2

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### **The Glorious Story Of The Josef Stalin Robot And His Personal Mission To Lead The Revolutionary Masses Against Tyranny**

**I**t's a little-known fact that the Soviet Union under the leadership of Josef Stalin was much advanced in the field of robotics. From what has been gathered in a recently declassified file the Stalin Robotic program began in 1931. Stalin, ever the egoist, wanted a host of robots modeled after him that were to be sent around the world to the proletariat in revolt against their bourgeois masters. The brilliant Comrade Vasily Preobrazhensky was given the honour to head the top-secret research and development team.

The files show that Preobrazhensky made significant progress at the beginning of the first Great Purge, when many people inside the USSR were denounced, and then executed, or sent to the gulags in Siberia. No one was safe. Even countless comrades from the program were put on show trials, and Preobrazhensky, who knew not only was he under threat, but that his beloved program was in danger as well. Preobrazhensky thought the only way to save the program, and himself, was to make a pitch himself to Stalin.

Thus, Preobrazhensky gained a brief appointment with the world's greatest man. After he was introduced to Stalin, Preobrazhensky began, "Comrade Stalin, beloved *Vozhd* of the world's proletariat, I implore you to continue your robot program."

Stalin, who was a very busy man, did not look up from the stack of important papers he was reading and signing. Undeterred, Preobrazhensky continued.

"We are almost done the prototype, Comrade Stalin. If you grant us just a bit more time, I promise you we will construct a robot that Comrade Lenin, *Vozhd* of the Russian Communist Party, would be proud of."

Without looking up, Stalin said, "Describe it."

"We have constructed a perfect facsimile of you, Comrade Stalin, in every way. It wears your medals and tunic, and is as distinguished as you, the *Vozhd* of the Peoples. Its moustache is elegant, the eyes endorse a man who is very caring for the world's revolutionary masses, and it is this tall," began Preobrazhensky. A tall man, Preobrazhensky made sure to put his hand well above his head to indicate the robot's height, as he knew Stalin was quite self-conscious of his short stature. Needless to say, Preobrazhensky did not mention Stalin's withered arm, or scarred face.

"Our robot speaks every known language with a strong Georgian accent of which it is proud, like you, *Vozhd* of the World Revolution," Preobrazhensky continued. "Although he can never be as intelligent and clever as you are, we have made our robot know every work of Karl Marx, Comrade Lenin, and Niccolò Machiavelli, amongst others."

"What others?" Stalin said as he briefly looked up, his face impassable.

Preobrazhensky paused for a half second, took a sip of water, and screamed to himself, "Don't say Trotsky, don't say Trotsky, don't say

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Trotsky!" A single bead of sweat slowly trickled down the left side of his face and eventually pooled in his collarbone, for to mention the name of the great traitor to the proletarian cause would be the kiss of death.

"The entire works of Tolstoy," Preobrazhensky allowed himself a barely perceptible smile, "along with the rest of the Russian canon. We also included the Bible, as we know you quote passages from it, and most major Marxist theorists."

"Most?" Stalin asked, eyes back on the papers. "Who have you excluded?"

This was a most fiendish and devious question indeed, for if Preobrazhensky said, "Of course, Trotsky was excluded," he would be a dead man. Trotsky no longer existed in the official record of Soviet Russia. He'd been expunged, he was gone, no more, *finito*. For all intents and purposes, Trotsky never even existed. At the same time, Preobrazhensky could not say he had not excluded Trotsky because to include the traitor's work would be a grievous error against the official Bolshevik canon.

Fucking Trotsky.

"We only included works endorsed by the Soviet Communist Party. All others were deemed corrupt," Preobrazhensky said.

Stalin kept working.

"We are not finished yet, *Vozhd* of the Peoples. Anything that you would want to include in your robot would of course be done with the utmost detail and as per your directions and desires."

"What is its favourite Western?" asked Stalin, a great lover of that film genre.

Relieved, Preobrazhensky said, "The Lost Patrol."

Eyes still on the papers, Stalin said, "I will continue the program. You are dismissed."

"Thank you, Comrade Stalin," Preobrazhensky said. He then quietly left the great *Vozhd* of the World Revolution to his work of signing death warrants, which now included a new addition: Preobrazhensky.

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Preobrazhensky knew his days were numbered. Most Soviet officials during this time felt the same. Thus, Preobrazhensky worked tirelessly to improve the Stalin Bot prototype. As the beloved leader of the world's proletariat, Stalin was a multifaceted person, and there were many things to add to the robot's knowledge and skill base: marksmanship, Mozart, and military command, for example. Most impressively, Stalin's eyes were outfitted so that they could shoot lasers. This personal touch by Preobrazhensky was added to streamline the robot and save on the ammunition that any Stalin Bot would need to lead the revolutionary masses in the imminent uprising against their capitalist masters.

Preobrazhensky did what he could until, exhausted, he could do no more. Preobrazhensky then placed the Stalin Bot in a crate secured with the best Soviet steel chains, and utilizing the black market, had his prized

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project transported to a secret location in Siberia. And there it stayed until global warming melted the ice cap in which it was entombed, and dislodged the crate.

Fucking global warming.



Many years later, a crate washed onto the shore of the isolated town of Hamelin Sound. There it laid, clasped in chains, as the tide rolled in and out.

One day, two children, Felix and Agatha, happened upon it as they were strolling along the beach.

"Wow!" Agatha yelled. "I wonder what is inside of it."

"I bet you it is full of treasure!" Felix screamed.

"Lots and lots of treasure!"

"How do we open it?"

"You break the chains, stupid!"

"I know that!"

"I think dad has bolt cutters in the shed."

"He does!"

They ran to the shed, found the cutters, and raced back to the crate full of expectation. Unfortunately, cutting a chain is not easy for little hands. First Felix tried, and then Agatha tried. They even took one arm of the cutters each and tried. They tried and tried but to no avail.

"This is too hard," Felix eventually said.

"I'm tired," Agatha said.

Then, from inside the crate, a luminous and melodious voice, powerful yet soothing; a voice that could break the shackles of humanity whilst simultaneously easing its collective wounds; the only voice that is a beacon to the impoverished inhabiting their dark world of exploitation. This voice of warmth and wisdom said with a heavily accented voice, "Come on, children of the proletariat, work hard for your Uncle Stalin."

"Who are you?" Agatha asked.

"I am your Uncle Stalin and I need your help to release me from this bourgeois prison."

"Burg-what?" Felix asked.

"Bourgeois, my children. Work harder! Break these chains so I can break yours!" Stalin proclaimed.

"We don't have chains, Uncle," Agatha said.

"But you do, children, and I will help you gain your liberty."

"What does that mean?" Agatha asked.

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"It means lots of sweets, no icky vegetables, late bedtimes, and no chores!"

"I love my Uncle Stalin!" Felix screamed with delight.

"Me too, me too!" screamed Agatha.

"Try again, my children," said Uncle Stalin.

From the crate emanated triumphant, rousing music meant to uplift the masses from their dreary lives, with the opening lines sung thusly in English:



Get up, damned, The whole world of hungry and slaves!  
Boils our mind indignant, and ready to fight to the death.  
We will destroy the whole world of violence to the bottom and then  
We are ours, we will build a new world,  
Who was nobody - he will become everything!  
This is our last  
And decisive battle;  
With the International  
The human race will rise!



Buoyed by the music, the siblings, strong in solidarity, managed to make a little dent in the chain. That was enough for Stalin Bot, who burst from the top of the crate like a jack in the box. Unfortunately, one of the chains whipped back and smacked Felix in the face, who screamed in pain. But Uncle Stalin cared not for his cries and ignored them.

"Thank you, children," Uncle Stalin said. "Tell me, what year is it?"

"It is 2021," Agatha said. Felix was still smarting from the sting of the chain.

"Is that so? Take me to a library so I can learn what is going on in the world," he demanded. "Surely, the proletariat has finally conquered the bourgeoisie and we are living in full communism."

Perplexed, the children looked at him like he had just spoken in Russian. Perhaps he had.

They took him to the library, and then told their new uncle that he must wear a mask to enter a public building.

"What is this tyranny?" Stalin asked. "Surely in a world ruled by the world's proletariat no such measures would be needed!"

The children again did not really understand him and just looked at him dumbfounded. Stalin Bot decided that he must examine his translation function, as it might be malfunctioning.

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"Children of the proletariat, please meet me back here in two hours. Can you do that?"

"Yes, Uncle Stalin," they said, and they went home, looking forward to the revolution when they could eat ice cream all of the time and throw broccoli at their parents.

Boldly, Stalin entered the library. It was empty, bar one librarian, who kindly asked him to put on a mask. She directed his attention to the stash of free masks at the counter. For all of her troubles, Stalin incinerated her with his laser eyes, leaving behind a few ashes, a spindly line of smoke, and the acrid stench of melted flesh. Stalin Bot was suitably impressed.

He then locked the door.

Stalin turned on his new technology sensors, and learned of computers, search engines, and the internet. He then researched the fate of his beloved socialist republic. What he learned was not good.

What the hell happened? Fall of the Warsaw Pact, Afghanistan, and worst of all, De-Stalinization. What was that all about? He was no tyrant! He'd served the proletariat masses, had given them everything he had, and this was the historical thanks he got. Stalin brooded that he should have eliminated his successor, Nikita Khrushchev, after The Great Patriotic War, before that bastard could make such slanderous accusations about Stalin's so-called cult of personality and the like.

Fucking Khrushchev.

Being that he was a robot he absorbed information quite quickly. Thus, he quickly learned of other major world events that had occurred in the last while: rock and roll, Vietnam, the slow decline of the American Western. Who'd have thought it? Continuing to the present day he learned why he was supposed to wear a mask inside public buildings, as they cut-down the risk of transmitting a lethal respiratory virus. Yes, Stalin washed ashore during the COVID global pandemic.

The children were due back soon, so he searched the poor librarian's desk, found her keys, and then locked the building. The children were walking down the street toward him as he exited the building.

"Hello, my children," Stalin said, his smile one of benevolence.

"Hi Uncle!" they responded.

"Children, the new revolution begins today! Will you join me?"

"No more broccoli, no more broccoli!" they chanted.

"Let us now take over the means of production!" Stalin said.

"We want to, uncle, but our parents want us to come to this meeting tonight at the town hall," Agatha said.

"A meeting you say?"

"My face still hurts," Felix moaned.

Stalin did not like this Felix kid anymore. He made a mental note to take care of Felix later.

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"Shush, my child. You cannot make an omelette without breaking a few eggs first," Stalin said.

"Yes, people are going to vote whether to keep masks on inside buildings," Agatha said.

"Can we revolution after?" Felix asked.

"Oh yes, children, we can," Uncle Stalin said.

"Yay!" Both children screamed.

"Go home, and I will see you later at this meeting," Stalin said.

The meeting began promptly at 7 o'clock, and it was a bitter affair. The lack of revolutionary unity disheartened Stalin. Both sides had to repeatedly be told to simmer down and not to interrupt each other. Contention ran rife.

Before they had a public vote, a stranger with a strange accent asked to be heard.

"Comrades, my name is Stalin," he began in a slow and measured way.

"Hi Uncle!" Felix and Agatha screamed, leaving their parents terrified as to how they knew this mustachioed man in a tunic adorned with medals.

"Hello children," Stalin said and smiled.

"Can't we just vote now?" someone in the crowd yelled. "My show's on in 20 minutes."

"Hold on, let's hear what this Stalin guy has to say," someone else said.

Stalin continued, making special note of the guy who interrupted him, "The proletarian masses do not need the tyrannical bourgeoisie exploiting facial commodities and alienating revolutionary workers, not only in terms of their adornments, but also in relation to the means of production. Marxist-Leninist doctrine states, given the historical materialism conditions and dialectal matter of the situation, we revolutionary workers must unite in rejecting such tyranny."

The entire crowd looked at him as if he was speaking Russian. Stalin really should check that translation function.

"Fuck it," Stalin said and killed them with his laser eyes, with the interruption guy getting it first.

Fucking Stalin.

At least he didn't kill Agatha and Felix, though Felix's days were numbered, and let's be honest here, so were Agatha's. The three of them, together with all of the remaining children of Hamelin Sound, will begin the revolutionary process anew.