This book concerns what Isaac Deutscher called "the queer and undeniable fact" of Joseph Stalin's "absence or inactivity at the [Bolshevik] headquarters during the rising" of October 1917, known to history as the October Revolution. I cannot claim to have solved the problem definitively—I am not sure a definitive solution is possible at present—but I have tried to put it in its historical context.

My thanks go to R. Carter Elwood, who first encouraged me to undertake the study. For basic data on the Russian Revolution I have relied primarily on the work of Alexander Rabinowitch. For an understanding of Stalin's complex psychology, one of the principal elements in the case, I have followed Robert C. Tucker's pioneering analysis of the tension between Stalin's grandiose self-image and the often harsh reality that threatened to undermine that image.

A third scholar whose work has guided me is the late Charles Duval, Jr. Duval's still unpublished biography of Sverdlov is required reading for an understanding of the formative years of Soviet power. Holland Hunter and John N. Westwood provided useful data on the train that brought Stalin to Petrograd in March 1917. Robert Himmer
generously shared with me his wide-ranging work in progress on Stalin.

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