About the Author

Vadim Zakharovich Rogovin (10 May 1937–18 September 1998) was a Doctor of Philosophical Sciences and leading researcher at the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow. He is the author of 250 scholarly works, including eight monographs on problems of social policy, the history of social thought and the history of political movements in the former USSR. From 1991 to 1998, Rogovin wrote a seven-volume study, Was There an Alternative?, which examines the struggle of the Left Opposition, led by Leon Trotsky, against the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet regime. This book is the first volume in the series.

Before his untimely death in September 1998, Rogovin presented lectures all over the world about the socialist-based opposition to the Stalinist regime.
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Foreword

This book was published by Vadim Rogovin in Moscow in the fall of 1992, slightly less than one year after the Soviet Union had been dissolved. It is the first volume of what would become a seven-volume study of the struggle of the Left Opposition, both inside the Soviet Union and abroad, as it fought the Stalinist degeneration of the workers' state established after the October Revolution in 1917.

This first volume raises the question: "Was There an Alternative to Stalinism?" It studies the rise of the Left Opposition led by Leon Trotsky in 1923, and ends with the expulsion of Trotsky and his supporters at the Fifteenth Party Congress in 1927. The succeeding volumes examine the history of the resistance to Stalinism up through Trotsky's assassination in August 1940 and the outbreak of World War II.

Rogovin began collecting material about the inner-party struggle as a teenager, soon after Stalin's death in 1953. During the "Thaw" in 1956, signaled by Khrushchev's famous secret speech at the Twentieth Party Congress in February, Rogovin's hopes were raised that a true history of this period could be written. But Khrushchev's de-Stalinization was partial; many of the most odious falsifications of history remained.

After Khrushchev's fall in 1964, relatively bleak years dominated on the historical front. Trotsky's name was taboo. None of his works were readily available in the Soviet Union, and Rogovin could not assume that he would ever be able to publish the history he yearned to write.