

Nothing Personal

by Phillip W. Weiss

A psychiatrist, Doctor Yevgeny Skovolovsky, psychoanalyzes a certain dictator who is a proponent of a certain ideology that preaches class struggle. During the session the dictator recalls past events, revealing his most intimate thoughts which shaped his perception of reality. The champion of the working class is revealed to be averse to work, contemptuous of those who labor, and terrified of people in general. His entire career is a reaction to a deeply ingrained sense of inferiority and low self-esteem which he conceals by becoming a revolutionary. His bravado is a sham, and when confronted by those who see his phoniness, his response is to lash out at them by any means to protect himself. The dictator recalls how he marries, has children, tries to "play the game" but nothing he does eases his sense that he is no good. Intellectuals make him bristle with hate for they remind him of his own intellectual inadequacy. He responds by saying little and waiting for an opportunity to strike when least expected. He surrounds himself with other like-minded people and soon he forms an organization under his control. He includes in his organization a personal bodyguard who doubles as his chief of security. The rules of the organization are simple: he is the boss and his word is law. Anyone who opposes him deals with the chief of security. His followers gladly accept those rules, believing that in this

dictator lays the key to power and all the perks that go with it. For they all are opportunists, led by the biggest opportunist of them all. After the session, the dictator orders Dr. Skovolovsky's arrest. He is accused of being an enemy of the state and is sentenced to death. Minutes before he is scheduled to be shot, the dictator visits the doctor in his cell. The dictator thanks the doctor for his service to the state and wishes him all the best. Shocked by these kind words coming from the man who is both his patient and executioner, the doctor asks why he must die. The dictator smiles, puts his hand on the doctor's shoulder, looks the doctor straight into his eyes and says, "because I can't afford to pay your bill and any further sessions will bankrupt me. So, you must go. You understand. I can't afford to look bad. It's a question of my image. It's all politics. Don't worry about me. I'll find another doctor to help me just as long as he doesn't send me a bill. After all, I am the savior of the nation, its beacon of light, its guiding star, and the chosen prophet to lead the people to new heights of splendor that will dazzle the universe. So, take care. Be well. What will happen to you in the next few minutes is my way of saying thank you for a job well done. It is time for us to part. And remember, It's nothing personal."

