Text of a Speech Delivered By

J. V. STALIN

at an Election Rally in
Stalin Electoral Area, Moscow
February 9, 1946
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EIGHT years have elapsed since the last election to the Supreme Soviet. This was a period abounding in events of decisive moment. The first four years passed in intensive effort on the part of Soviet men and women to fulfill the Third Five-Year Plan. The second four years embrace the events of the war against the German and Japanese aggressors, the events of the Second World War. Undoubtedly, the war was the principal event in the past period.

It would be wrong to think that the Second World War was a casual occurrence or the result of mistakes of any particular statesmen, though mistakes undoubtedly were made. Actually, the war was the inevitable result of the development of world economic and political forces on the basis of modern monopoly capitalism. Marxists have declared more than once that the capitalist system of world economy harbors elements of general crises and armed conflicts and that, hence, the development of world capitalism in our time proceeds not in the form of smooth and even progress but through crises and military catastrophes.

The fact is, that the unevenness of development of the capitalist countries usually leads in time to violent disturbance of equilibrium in the world system of capitalism, that group of capitalist countries which considers itself worse provided than others with raw materials and markets usually making attempts to alter the situation and reparation the "spheres of influence" in its favor by armed force. The result is a splitting of the capitalist world into two hostile camps and war between them.

Perhaps military catastrophes might be avoided if it were possible for raw materials and markets to be periodically redistributed among the various countries in accordance with their economic importance, by agreement and peaceable settlement. But that is impossible to do under present capitalist conditions of the development of world economy.
Thus the First World War was the result of the first crisis of the capitalist system of world economy, and the Second World War was the result of a second crisis.

**Nature of War**

That does not mean of course that the Second World War is a copy of the first. On the contrary, the Second World War differs materially from the first in nature. It must be borne in mind that before attacking the Allied countries the principal fascist states—Germany, Japan and Italy—destroyed the last vestiges of bourgeois democratic liberties at home, established a brutal terrorist regime in their own countries, rode roughshod over the principles of sovereignty and free development of small countries, proclaimed a policy of seizure of alien territories as their own policy and declared for all to hear that they were out for world domination and the establishment of a fascist regime throughout the world.

Moreover, by the seizure of Czechoslovakia and of the central areas of China, the Axis states showed that they were prepared to carry out their threat of enslaving all freedom-loving nations. In view of this, unlike the First World War, the Second World War against the Axis states from the very outset assumed the character of an anti-fascist war, a war of liberation, one the aim of which was also the restoration of democratic liberties. The entry of the Soviet Union into the war against the Axis states could only enhance, and indeed did enhance, the anti-fascist and liberation character of the Second World War.

It was on this basis that the anti-fascist coalition of the Soviet Union, the United States of America, Great Britain and other freedom-loving states came into being—a coalition which subsequently played a decisive part in defeating the armed forces of the Axis states.

That is how matters stand as regards the origin and character of the Second World War.

By now I should think everyone admits that the war really was not and could not have been an accident in the life of nations, that actually this war became the war of nations for their existence, and that for this reason it could not be a quick lightning affair.

As regards our country, for it this war was the most bitter and arduous of all wars in the history of our Motherland.
But the war was not only a curse. It was at the same time a great school in which all the forces of the people were tried and tested. The war laid bare all facts and events in the rear and at the front, it tore off relentlessly all veils and coverings which had concealed the true faces of the states, governments and parties and exposed them to view without a mask or embellishment, with all their shortcomings and merits.

The war was something like an examination for our Soviet system, for our State, for our Government, for our Communist Party, and it summed up the results of their work, saying to us as it were: "Here they are, your people and organizations, their deeds and their lives. Look at them well and reward them according to their deeds."

This was one of the positive aspects of war.

For us, for the voters, this circumstance is of great importance, for it helps us to make a speedy and objective appraisal of the work of the Party and its members and to draw correct conclusions. At another time we would need to study the speeches and reports of representatives of the Party, analyze them, compare their words with their deeds, sum up, and so forth. This involves complex and difficult work and there is no guarantee that mistakes will not be made. It is a different matter today when the war is over and when the war itself has tested the work of our organizations and leaders and summarized its results. Today, it is much easier for us to see how things stand and to arrive at correct conclusions.

Results of War

And so, what are the results of the war?

There is one chief result in which all other results have their source. This result is that in the upshot of the war our enemies were defeated and we, together with our Allies, emerged the victors. We concluded the war with complete victory over the enemies. That is the chief result of war. But that result is too general and we cannot stop at that. Of course, to crush an enemy in a war like the Second World War, for which the history of mankind knew no parallel, meant to achieve a world historic victory. All that is true. But still, it is only a general result and we cannot rest content with that. In order to grasp the great historic importance of our victory we must examine the thing more concretely.

And so, how is our victory over our enemies to be understood?
What is the significance of this victory as regards the State and the development of the internal forces of our country?

**Soviet System Passed Test**

Our victory means, first of all, that our Soviet social order has triumphed, that the Soviet social order has successfully passed the ordeal in the fire of war and has proved its unquestionable vitality.

As you know, it was claimed more than once in the foreign press that the Soviet social order was a "risky experiment" doomed to failure, that the Soviet order was a "house of cards" which had no roots in real life and had been imposed upon the people by the Cheka, and that a slight push from without was enough for this "house of cards" to collapse.

Now we can say that the war refuted all these claims of the foreign press as groundless. The war showed that the Soviet social order is a truly popular order springing from the depths of the people and enjoying their mighty support, that the Soviet social order is a form of organization of society which is perfectly stable and capable of enduring.

More than that, there is no longer any question today whether the Soviet social order is or is not capable of enduring, for after the object lessons of war none of the skeptics ventures any longer to voice doubts as to the vitality of the Soviet social order. The point now is that the Soviet social order has shown itself more stable and capable of enduring than a non-Soviet social order, that the Soviet social order is a form of organization, a society superior to any non-Soviet social order.

**Multinational Model State**

Second, our victory means that our Soviet state system has triumphed, that our multinational Soviet State has stood all the trials of war and has proved its vitality.

As you know, prominent foreign press men have more than once gone on record to the effect that the Soviet multinational State was an "artificial, non-viable structure," that in event of any complications, the disintegration of the Soviet Union would be inevitable, that the fate of Austria-Hungary awaited the Soviet Union.

Today we can say that the war refuted these claims of the foreign press as totally unfounded. The war showed that the Soviet multinational state system passed the test successfully, that it grew even
stronger during the war and proved the state system perfectly capable of enduring.

These gentlemen did not understand that the parallel with Austria-Hungary did not apply, for our multinational State has not grown up on a bourgeois foundation which stimulates sentiments of national distrust and national animosity, but on the Soviet foundation which on the contrary cultivates the sentiments of friendship and fraternal collaboration among the peoples of our State.

As a matter of fact, after the lessons of the war, these gentlemen no longer venture to deny that the Soviet state system is capable of enduring. Today it is no longer a question of the vitality of the Soviet state system, for that vitality can no longer be doubted; the point now is that the Soviet state system has proved itself a model for a multinational state, has proved that the Soviet state system is a system of state organization in which the national question and the problem of collaboration among nations has been settled better than in any other multinational state.

**Triumph of Arms**

Third, our victory means that the Soviet armed forces have triumphed, that our Red Army has triumphed, that the Red Army bore up heroically under all the trials of war, utterly routed the armies of our enemies and came out of the war as a victor.

*(Voice from floor: "Under the leadership of Comrade Stalin!"
All rise—stormy, prolonged applause, rising to an ovation.)*

Now everyone, friend as well as foe, admits that the Red Army proved equal to its great tasks. But this was not the case some six years ago during the prewar period. As you know, prominent men from the foreign press and many recognized military authorities abroad declared more than once that the condition of the Red Army gave rise to grave doubts, that the Red Army was poorly armed and had no proper commanding personnel, that its morale was beneath all criticism, that while it might be of some use in defense, it was useless for an offensive, and that if the German forces should strike, the Red Army was bound to crumble like a "colossus with feet of clay." Statements like these were made not only in Germany, but in France, Great Britain and the United States as well.

Today we can say that the war has refuted all such statements as unfounded and absurd. The war showed that the Red Army is not a "colossus with feet of clay," but a first-class contemporary army with
fully modern armaments, highly experienced commanding personnel and high moral and fighting qualities. It must not be forgotten that the Red Army is the army that utterly routed the German army which but yesterday was striking terror into the armies of the European states.

Critics are Fewer

It should be noted that the “critics” of the Red Army are growing fewer and fewer. What is more, the foreign press now more and more frequently contains items which note the fine qualities of the Red Army, the skill of its fighting men and commanders and the flawlessness of its strategy and tactics. That is but natural. After the brilliant Red Army victories at Moscow and Stalingrad, at Kursk and at Belgorod, at Kiev and Kirovograd, at Minsk and Bobruisk, at Leningrad and Tallinn, at Jassy and Lvov, on the Vistula and the Niemen, on the Danube and the Oder, at Vienna and Berlin, it cannot but be admitted that the Red Army is a first-class army from which much could be learned. (Storms of applause.)

Such is our concrete understanding of our country’s victory over its foes.

Such in the main are the results of the war.

It would be a mistake to think that such a historic victory could have been won if the whole country had not prepared beforehand for active defense. It would be no less mistaken to imagine that such preparations could be carried through in a short time—in the space of some three or four years. It would be a still greater mistake to say that we won only owing to the gallantry of our troops.

Of course, victory cannot be achieved without gallantry. But gallantry alone is not enough to vanquish an enemy who has a large army, first-class armaments, well-trained officer cadres, and a fairly good organization of supplies. To meet the blow of such an enemy, to repulse him and then to inflict utter defeat upon him required, in addition to the matchless gallantry of our troops, fully up-to-date armaments and adequate quantities of them as well as well-organized supplies in sufficient quantities.

But that, in turn, necessitated having—and in adequate amounts—such elementary things as metal for the manufacture of armaments, equipment and machinery for factories, fuel to keep the factories and transport going, cotton for the manufacture of uniforms, and grain for supplying the Army.
Can it be claimed that before entering the Second World War our
country already commanded the necessary minimum material poten-
tialities for satisfying all these requirements in the main? I think
it can. In order to prepare for this tremendous job we had to carry
out three Five-Year Plans of national economic development. It was
precisely these three Five-Year Plans that helped us to create these
material potentialities. At any rate, our country's position in this
respect before the Second World War, in 1940, was several times
better than it was before the First World War, in 1913.

Preparation for Defense

What material potentialities did our country command before
the Second World War?

To help you examine this point, I shall have to report briefly on
the work of the Communist Party in preparing our country for
active defense.

If we take the figures for 1940, the eve of the Second World War,
and compare them with the figures for 1913—the eve of the First
World War—we get the following picture.

In 1913 our country produced 4,220,000 tons of pig iron, 4,230,-
000 tons of steel, 29 million tons of coal, nine million tons of oil,
21,600,000 tons of marketable grain and 740 thousand tons of raw
cotton.

Those were the material potentialities with which our country
entered the First World War.

Such was the economic base of old Russia which could be drawn
upon for prosecution of the war.

Now as regards 1940. In the course of that year our country pro-
duced 15 million tons of pig iron, or nearly four times as much as
in 1913; 18,300,000 tons of steel, or nearly four and one-half times
as much as in 1913; 166 million tons of coal, or more than five and
one-half times as much as in 1913; 31 million tons of oil, or nearly
three and one-half times as much as in 1913; 38,500,000 tons of
marketable grain, or nearly 17 million tons more than in 1913;
2,700,000 tons of raw cotton, or more than three and one-half times
as much as in 1913.

Those were the material potentialities with which our country
entered the Second World War.

Such was the economic base of the Soviet Union which could
be drawn upon for prosecution of the war.

The difference as you see is tremendous.
Such an unprecedented increase in production cannot be regarded as the simple and usual development of a country from backwardness to progress. It was a leap by which our Motherland was transformed from a backward into an advanced country, from an agrarian into an industrial country.

**Five-Year Plans**

This historic transformation was accomplished in the course of three Five-Year Plan periods, beginning with 1928, the first year of the First Five-Year Plan. Up to that time we had to concern ourselves with rehabilitating our ravaged industry and healing the wounds received in the First World War and the Civil War. Moreover, if we bear in mind that the First Five-Year Plan was fulfilled in four years, and that the fulfillment of the Third Five-Year Plan was interrupted by war in its fourth year, we find that it took only about 13 years to transform our country from an agrarian into an industrial one.

It cannot but be admitted that 13 years is an incredibly short period for the accomplishment of such an immense task.

This it is that explains the storm of conflicting comment which the publication of these figures produced at the time in the foreign press. Our friends decided that a “miracle” had taken place, while our ill-wishers declared that the Five-Year Plans were “Bolshevik propaganda” and the “tricks of the Cheka.” But since miracles do not happen, and the Cheka is not so powerful as to abolish the laws of social development, “public opinion” abroad had to accept facts.

**Methods of Industrialization**

By what policy did the Communist Party succeed in providing these material potentialities in the country in such a short time?

First of all, by the Soviet policy of industrializing the country.

The Soviet method of industrializing the country differs radically from the capitalist method of industrialization. In capitalist countries industrialization usually begins with light industry. Since in light industry smaller investments are required and there is more rapid turnover of capital and since, furthermore, it is easier to make a profit there than in heavy industry, light industry serves as the first object of industrialization in these countries.

Only after a lapse of much time, in the course of which light industry accumulates profits and concentrates them in banks, does the turn of heavy industry arrive and accumulated capital begin to be-
transferred gradually to heavy industry in order to create conditions for its development.

But that is a lengthy process requiring an extensive period of several decades, in the course of which these countries have to wait until light industry has developed and must make shift without heavy industry. Naturally, the Communist Party could not take this course. The Party knew that a war was looming, that the country could not be defended without heavy industry, that the development of heavy industry must be undertaken as soon as possible, that to be behind with this would mean to lose out. The Party remembered Lenin’s words to the effect that without heavy industry it would be impossible to uphold the country’s independence, that without it the Soviet order might perish.

Accordingly, the Communist Party of our country rejected the “usual” course of industrialization and began the work of industrializing the country by developing heavy industry. It was very difficult, but not impossible. A valuable aid in this work was the nationalization of industry, and banking, which made possible the rapid accumulation and transfer of funds to heavy industry.

There can be no doubt that without this it would have been impossible to secure our country’s transformation into an industrial country in such a short time.

Agricultural Policy

Second, by a policy of collectivization of agriculture.

In order to do away with our backwardness in agriculture and to provide the country with greater quantities of marketable grain, cotton, and so forth, it was essential to pass from small-scale peasant farming to large-scale farming, for only large-scale farming can make use of new machinery, apply all the achievements of agronomical science and yield greater quantities of marketable produce.

There are, however, two kinds of large farms—capitalist and collective. The Communist Party could not adopt the capitalist path of development of agriculture, and not as a matter of principle alone but also because it implies too prolonged a development and involves preliminary ruination of the peasants and their transformation into farm hands. Therefore, the Communist Party took the path of the collectivization of agriculture, the path of creating large-scale farming by uniting peasant farms into collective farms.

The method of collectivization proved a highly progressive method
not only because it did not involve the ruination of the peasants but especially because it permitted, within a few years, the covering of the entire country with large collective farms which are able to use new machinery, take advantage of all the achievements of agronomic science and give the country greater quantities of marketable produce.

There is no doubt that without a collectivization policy we could not in such a short time have done away with the age-old backwardness of our agriculture.

Resistance Met

It cannot be said that the Party's policy encountered no resistance. Not only backward people, such as always decry everything new, but many prominent members of the Party as well, systematically dragged the Party backward and tried by hook or by crook to divert it to the "usual" capitalist path of development. All the anti-Party machinations of the Trotskyites and the Rightists, all their "activities" in sabotaging the measures of our Government, pursued the single aim of frustrating the Party's policy and obstructing the work of industrialization and collectivization. But the Party did not yield either to the threats from one side or the wails from the other and advanced confidently regardless of everything.

It is to the Party's credit that it did not pander to the backward, was not afraid to go against the tide and always retained its position as the leading force. There can be no doubt that without such firmness and tenacity the Communist Party could not have upheld the policy of industrializing the country and collectivizing agriculture.

Was the Communist Party able to make proper use of the material potentialities thus created in order to develop war production and provide the Red Army with the weapons it needed?

I think that it was able to do so and with maximum success.

Industrial Record

If we leave out of account the first year of war, when the evacuation of industry to the East held up the development of war production, we see that in the remaining three years of the war the Party scored such successes as allowed it not only to furnish the front with sufficient quantities of artillery, machine guns, rifles, aircraft, tanks and ammunition, but to accumulate reserves. Moreover, it is known that in quality our weapons were not only nothing in-
ferior to the German but, taken, on the whole, were actually superior to them.

It is known that during the last three years of war our tank industry produced an annual average of more than 30 thousand tanks, self-propelled guns and armored cars.

(Storm of applause.)

Further, it is known that our aircraft industry produced during the same period up to 40 thousand planes per year.

(Storm of applause.)

It is also known that our ordnance industry, during this period, produced annually up to 120 thousand guns of all calibers (applause), up to 450 thousand light and heavy machine guns (applause), over 3 million rifles (applause), about two million tommy guns (applause).

Lastly, it is known that our mortar industry produced between 1942 and 1944 an annual average up to 100 thousand mortars. (Stormy applause.)

At the same time, naturally, there were manufactured commensurate quantities of artillery ammunition, various kinds of mortar shells, aircraft bombs and rifle and machine gun ammunition.

It is known, for example, that over 240 million shells, bombs and mortar shells, and 7,400,000,000 rounds of small arms ammunition were manufactured in 1944 alone. (Thunderous applause.)

Such, in general, is the picture of the supply of arms and ammunition to the Red Army.

As you see, it does not resemble the picture which our army supplies presented during the First World War when the front experienced a chronic shortage of artillery and shells, when the army was fighting without tanks and aircraft, and only one rifle was issued to every three men.

As regards the supply of the Red Army with provisions and uniforms, it is known to all that far from experiencing any shortage in this respect, the front actually had the reserves it required.

That is how matters stand with regard to the work of the Communist Party of our country in the period up to the outbreak of war and during the war itself.

Plans for Future

Now a few words about the Communist Party’s plans of work for the immediate future. As is known these plans are set forth in
the new Five-Year Plan which is shortly to be endorsed. The principal aims of the new Five-Year Plan are to rehabilitate the ravaged areas of the country, to restore the prewar level in industry and agriculture, and then to surpass this level in more or less substantial measure. To say nothing of the fact that the rationing system will shortly be abolished (*stormy, prolonged applause*), special attention will be devoted to extending the production of consumer goods, to raising the living standard of the working people by steadily lowering the prices of all goods (*stormy, prolonged applause*), and to the widespread construction of all manner of scientific research institutions (*applause*) that can give science the opportunity to develop its potentialities. (*Stormy applause.*)

I have no doubt that if we give our scientists proper assistance they will be able in the near future not only to overtake but to surpass the achievements of science beyond the boundaries of our country. (*Prolonged applause.*)

As regards the plans for a longer period ahead, the Party means to organize a new mighty upsurge in the national economy, which would allow us to increase our industrial production, for example, three times over as compared with the prewar period. We must achieve a situation where our industry can produce annually up to 50 million tons of pig iron (*prolonged applause*), up to 60 million tons of steel (*prolonged applause*), up to 500 million tons of coal (*prolonged applause*) and up to 60 million tons of oil (*prolonged applause*). Only under such conditions can we consider that our homeland will be guaranteed against all possible accidents. (*Stormy applause.*) That will take three more Five-Year Plans, I should think, if not more. But it can be done and we must do it. (*Stormy applause.*)

Such is my brief report on the Communist Party's work in the recent past and its plans of work for the future.

It is for you to judge how correctly the Party has been working and whether it could not have worked better.

**Judgment by Voters**

There is a saying that victors are not judged (*laughter, applause*), that they should not be criticized, should not be checked on. That is not so. Victors can and should be judged (*laughter, applause*), they can and should be criticized and checked upon. That is good not only for work, but for the victors themselves (*laughter, ap-
plause); there will be less conceitedness and more modesty. (Laughter, applause.) I consider that in an election campaign the electors are sitting in judgment on the Communist Party as the ruling party. And the election returns will constitute the electors' verdict. (Laughter, applause.) The Communist Party of our country would not be worth much if it feared to be criticized and checked upon. The Communist Party is prepared to accept the electors' verdict. (Stormy applause.)

In the election struggle the Communist Party is not alone. It goes to the polls in a bloc with non-Party people. In by-gone days the Communists treated non-Party people and non-Party status with some mistrust. This was due to the fact that the non-Party flag was not infrequently used as a camouflage by various bourgeois groups for whom it was not advantageous to face the electorate without a mask.

Political Unity

That was the case in the past. But now we have different times. Our non-Party people are now divided from the bourgeoisie by a barrier known as the Soviet social order. This same barrier unites non-Party people with the Communists in a single community of Soviet men and women. Living in this single community they struggled together to build up the might of our country, fought and shed their blood together on the battle fronts for the sake of our country, and in greatness worked together to forge a victory over the enemies of our country and did forge that victory. The only difference between them is that some belong to the Party, others do not. But that is a formal difference. The important thing is that both are furthering the same common cause. Therefore, the bloc of Communists and non-Party people is a natural and vital thing. (Stormy, prolonged applause.)

In conclusion, allow me to thank you for the confidence you have shown me (prolonged, unabating applause. Shout from the audience: "Hurrah for the great captain of all victories, Comrade Stalin!") in nominating me to the Supreme Soviet. You need not doubt that I shall do my best to justify your trust.

(All rise. Prolonged, unabating applause turning into an ovation. From all parts of the hall come cheers: "Long live our great Stalin! Hurrah!" "Hurrah for the great leader of the peoples!" "Glory to
the great Stalin! "Long live Comrade Stalin, the candidate of the entire nation!" "Glory to Comrade Stalin, the creator of all our victories!"