

Stalin - a balanced assessment

by Ray Nunes, Chairman of the WPNZ

There is still a never-ending flood of denunciations of Joseph Stalin. It comes from journalists in the monopoly-owned press, from politicians, from academics, from historians, from many quarters indeed. Mostly these sources are in the world of imperialism* but they also include Soviet, or more correctly Russian sources. A notable thing about all these denunciations is that Stalin is credited with absolutely no positive achievements. He is credited with the death of variously 15 million, 20 million, 50 million Soviet citizens in a dictatorship which the professional anti-communists assert was worse than Hitler's. Much of this has entered into imperialist folklore. A more accurate picture is needed - but we do not expect one from the current imperialist sources, nor from many 'authorities' in Russia whose aim is to curry favour with imperialism.

Someone who knew a great deal more about the Soviet Union than all the professional anti-communists put together, that is, Mao Tse-tung, made a considered assessment of Stalin's life and work not too long after his death. Stalin died in 1953 after having led the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet state since 1924, the year of Lenin's death. One of the first things an objective observer has to do in assessing Stalin is to assess him from the standpoint of his being a representative of a world movement against capitalism, particularly in its imperialist stage, the stage of monopoly capitalism. It hardly needs to be said that such a view is never taken by any of Stalin's critics.

In assessing Stalin's life, Mao held Stalin should be allotted 70 per cent for achievement and 30 per cent for mistakes. That is a vastly different estimate from the flood of condemnations from the imperialist world and from the renegades from communist in the Soviet Union and China. Of course we cannot give in a short article a proper account of the achievements of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in accomplishing the socialist revolution in Russia in November 1917. But this was possibly the greatest event in world history and to understand subsequent events means to understand properly the tremendous achievements of the Russian workers and peasants under the leadership of Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Stalin was a Bolshevik. He joined the party at an early age and was an active revolutionary up to the days of the socialist revolution, despite having been jailed and exiled for much of life by the Tsarist authorities. At the time of the revolution of February 1917 – a democratic revolution – Stalin was in exile. He was freed and returned to Moscow immediately to assume the editorship of the main party newspaper *Pravda*. It was under Stalin's direction that the national policy of the Soviet Union was framed. Of course Lenin, a great Marxist who understood the theory of Marxism thoroughly, was the principle architect of the socialist revolution, but Stalin was certainly one of his right-hand men, if not his particular right-hand man.

Lenin in his lifetime outlined a plan for building socialism in one country, the USSR. This covered both economics and politics and he threw himself into the work of building a socialist society until the day of his death. Stalin took up that work. He carried out in his lifetime the

principal programme points elaborated by Lenin who died before he could lead that work. Thus Stalin had the task of building socialism in a backward peasant country, surrounded by world imperialism and isolated. Because of its backwardness the concrete task of bringing Russia into the modern world and developing its economy while facing a hostile capitalist encirclement was enormous. Stalin tackled this task with vigor and far-sightedness. Because of his deep theoretical understanding of Marxism and his practical abilities Stalin very soon became the acknowledged leader of the Soviet working class and the masses who recognised that he was carrying out, concretely, the programme mapped out by Lenin for the building of socialism. This included the industrialisation of the Soviet Union and the collectivisation of agriculture.

What was the aim of socialism? It was to build a society free from exploitation of the mass of the people by capital, to build a new society free from poverty, war and oppression to create a new life for the oppressed masses beginning with the socialist country and spreading through the world. This indeed was Stalin's guiding outlook. It contrasted totally with the outlook of world imperialism which had a long-standing hatred of socialist ideology and of the socialist aims of the great founders of socialism Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, followed by Vladimir Illich Lenin. Imperialism sought to destroy socialism but the socialist state defended itself vigorously, and despite the armies of fourteen imperialist countries trying to crush the newborn Socialist Republic of the Soviet Union they failed because the Russian masses rallied to the banner of Lenin and his followers.

When Lenin died there was a dispute over the question of who should succeed in the leadership of the party and the state. There were two principal contenders, Stalin and Trotsky. Trotsky had been a long-standing opponent of Lenin and Leninism, both theoretically and practically. Only just before the revolution did he apply to join the Bolsheviks with a small group of his followers. In actual fact Stalin had a far wider following than Trotsky within the Communist Party because he was a known Bolshevik from his earliest days. In a series of trenchant theoretical articles Stalin defeated Trotsky ideologically in the period 1925-27 and became the undisputed leader of the Soviet people. He mobilised them under the leadership of the working class to carry out the vast task of industrialising the backward peasant country that still existed after the economy had been partially restored by about 1924. This was an immense undertaking. It meant building a new economic basis of large-scale industry in which the lack of training of the masses in technology had to be overcome by organisation of education and training classes. This was all taken into account by Stalin and in 1929 the first five-year plan for the reconstruction and socialisation of the Soviet Union was undertaken.

The bourgeois experts in the West laughed at this plan, as if anybody could plan an economy. Certainly capitalism couldn't, its history was one of stop-go development punctuated regularly by economic crises. No wonder they couldn't see any point in trying to plan. But their economy was based on private ownership of the means of production which carried within it the seeds of capitalist economic crisis. In contrast, the socialist system being built in the Soviet Union was based upon social ownership of the means of production by the working class in the leadership of the masses. That was a decisive difference which made a five-year plan a possibility. It was, for its time, an amazing achievement to be able to develop a planned economy in the face of blockade and threats of armed intervention.

Armed intervention was no new thing in the Soviet Union. Immediately after the revolution the imperialist world began to organise armed intervention by as many powers as it could gather in order to crush the newborn Soviet Republic. The armies of 14 imperialist states failed to achieve this and by 1921 the interventionists were defeated and Soviet society firmly established.

The first five-year plan was an enormous success. It began the transformation of the old Russia into a new modern Russia. It was no easy task but it was accomplished with tremendous enthusiasm by the masses of the Soviet people. This was an amazing achievement by any standards. Who knows why it had happened in the modern world? The imperialist bloc of nations which sought to destroy the Soviet Union and thereby also destroy the socialist movement in their own countries were responsible through their attacks and blockades by the navies of Britain, France and the United States, for a major famine which killed over five million people. Has anyone ever heard of this in the West? There is never any mention of this happening. The only things that happened were the killings by Stalin. Of course all these are authenticated, as one must understand. Authenticated by those who claim the massive killings to be correct. How do they know? Believe it or not all of these experts, so-called, must have carried out their own body counts. In a moment we shall consider this question in relation to the collectivisation of agriculture which was the next major step in the transformation of the Soviet Union. Was this industrialisation an achievement? Of course, it was a major achievement – but not for the imperialists – for the masses of the world. They began to rally to the flag of Soviet socialism, frightening the life out of the imperialist ruling classes in the West. From the point of view of ordinary people this was a social order that they could identify with and support unlike that of capitalism and imperialism.

Such was the enthusiasm of the people for building socialism, the first five-year plan was completed in four years. But the task remained of bringing agriculture up to the level of a new industrial state when it consisted of small-scale peasant agriculture handed down from Tsarist times. The main opponents of any change in this situation were the rural capitalists, those of the rural bourgeoisie who employed wage labour in the countryside and exploited the poor peasants - namely, the kulaks. The kulak through small peasant farming could not solve the food problem in the Soviet Union, and the opinion gradually grew that it was necessary to transform agriculture in the direction pointed out by Lenin, of large-scale collectivised agriculture. Thus the task was begun under Stalin. Of course, the kulaks were violent in their opposition because they could see riches disappearing with the exploitation of wage labour in the countryside ending. They carried out a virtual uprising against Soviet power. But the masses of the poor peasants rallied. They hated the kulaks, having had long experience of them. In a matter of about two to three years collectivisation was firmly established and collective farms began outperforming the small-scale peasant agriculture it was replacing.

All the professional anti-communists in the West, and there were many, proclaimed that millions of Soviet citizens were being slaughtered or killed or starved to death by Stalin. Was there wasn't any truth in this allegation? Not according to the British Fabian writers Sydney and Beatrice Webb. They had visited the Soviet Union previously and they visited during the period of collectivisation. They interviewed all sorts of people from Soviet officials to foreign correspondents of which there were many. According to their reports in their large two-volume survey of the Soviet Union called *Soviet Communism* the great majority of foreign

correspondents agreed there was no great starvation. On the contrary the kulaks themselves were housed and given jobs once they had been moved from the place where they had committed their counterrevolutionary activities. As for the massive number of deaths, according to the Webbs, it was all pure invention. Nobody had any evidence. But that didn't stop the monopoly-owned imperialist newspapers of the capitalist world from making totally unfounded assertions about the millions being killed by starvation and by bullets, all attributed to Stalin.

One of the things they claimed, and was also claimed subsequently by the Khrushchev clique in Russia was that the population had substantially dropped during the collectivisation period. This was well known as a fact in the Soviet Union but it had a totally different explanation from that given by Khrushchev and the imperialist world. The great demands for labour during the programme of industrialisation saw masses of peasants move to the cities to take up work in industry. According to a historian Andrew Rothstein(1) 'the number of workers in industry had been doubled from over eleven millions in 1928 to nearly 23 millions in 1932'. This corresponded roughly with the claims of the professional anti-communists as a drop in population. But where is the truth? The truth is that there was a vast expansion of Soviet industry in those years and a necessity for a great increase in the availability of labour for industry, which was provided by the movement of peasants from the countryside to the cities. What else was notable about this period was that the seven-hour day was in general operation, unemployment had completely disappeared, and real wages had gone up by 50 per cent. Compulsory education, introduced after a long period of preparation in August, 1930, had doubled the numbers in elementary schools and trebled those in secondary schools, during the period of the plan - 'a decisive step in the cultural revolution', Stalin called it. In accounting for the hatred of the imperialists for the Soviet Union, it must be borne in mind that the years of the five-year plans and a great building up of the Soviet Union in industry, agriculture, education and culture were also years of acute economic crisis in the capitalist world. While most Western economists sneered at the five-year plans there were some more sober heads amongst them. One of these was the British bourgeois magazine *The Round Table*. In 1932 it wrote:

'The development achieved under the Five-Year Plan is astounding. The tractor plants of Kharkov and Stalingrad, the Amo automobile factory in Moscow, the Ford plant at Nizhni-Norgorod, the Dnieprostroi hydro-electric project, the mammoth steel plants at Magnitogorsk and Kuznetsk in Siberia, the network of machine shops and chemical plants in the Urals - which bid fair to become Russia's Ruhr - these and other industrial achievements all over the country show that, whatever the shortcomings and difficulties, Russian industry, like a well-watered plant keeps on gaining colour, size and strength ... She has laid the foundation for future development ... and has strengthened prodigiously her fighting capacity.'(2)

In the West the capitalists and imperialists saw the dangers of revolution arising on the one hand from the starvation of masses of people in their own countries and on the other from the example of the Soviet Union which was developing its economy and standard of living in leaps and bounds.

It must be noted that in the early thirties the rise of Hitlerism threatened a new war against the Soviet Union, and indeed a European-wide war. This situation hardly passed unnoticed in the USSR. One of the consequences was that people under suspicion of having connection with the

Nazis and the Gestapo were arrested and placed on trial. This included a number of people who had been very prominent previously, Trotskyists and Zinovievites. One of them, Sokolnikov, a former ambassador to Great Britain, said 'we considered that fascism was the most organised form of capitalism, that it would triumph and seize Europe and stifle us. It was better, therefore, to come to terms with it'. These terms would have meant the destruction of the Soviet Union and the establishment of a Trotskyist government after a German victory. United States ambassador Davies reported to Secretary Howell on February 17, 1937 that nearly all the foreign diplomats in Moscow who had attended the trial were convinced with him that the defendants were guilty. It was possible that the repression in this period was wider than it should have been. But to put the matter in perspective it must be remembered that all through the post-Hitler period the Nazis had made use of a fifth column of supporters inside countries they were preparing to attack. This is what happened in Spain, it also happened later in Norway and in various other countries. The fifth column was recognised as a major weapon of Nazism. The Soviet Union was certainly aware of this and undoubtedly the trials were a part of the Soviet state's aim at prevention of a fifth column movement of sabotage within the Soviet Union. Further on we shall see what Mao had to say about such things.

With the threat of fascism hanging over Europe, the Soviet Union conducted a diplomatic offensive aimed at establishing, if possible, a collective security agreement to restrain Nazi Germany from any military adventurism. Negotiations took place over an extended period between the Soviet Union, France and Britain, with the Soviet Union taking the lead in this move. What happened? They met with continued obstruction by the diplomats of France and Britain. In fact it reached such a stage that in order to satisfy public opinion the British sent a military mission to Moscow for discussions, the only trouble being that it was headed by a sixth rate civil servant named Strang who had absolutely no authority to conclude an agreement of any kind. Recognising from these sterling tactics that Britain and France had not the slightest intention of holding up Germany but to the contrary were carrying out the old policy to support Germany in its *drang nach osten*, its push to the East, which they had sought to encourage as the cornerstone of their foreign policy towards the Soviet Union. All this was well known to Stalin and the Soviet leadership. At the same time there was a not inconsiderable part of the ruling cliques of both Britain and France who were not averse to joining with Germany in a war against the Soviet Union. The net result of these tricky manoeuvres was to find its expression in Chamberlain's so-called appeasement policy. This was to allow Germany to acquire what territory it wanted eastward provided it didn't move west. This culminated in the Munich Pact just before the war.

The Soviet Union turned its attention to its own defense in the light of Hitler's expansionist policies. At the same time Hitler engaged in a diplomatic move to avoid a war on two fronts. This was to try for a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union. Such a pact was indeed signed in August 1939. Immediately a vast outcry took place in the West claiming that Russia had signed an alliance with Germany. It had done nothing of the sort. What it had done was to sign a non-aggression pact at Hitler's representations – not the Soviet's – similar to those the Soviet Union had already had with China, Poland and other countries on its borders, which simply consisted of an undertaking not to invade other countries and to not support other invaders of the other pact partners. The non-aggression pact was totally misrepresented as a direct blow against Britain and France and a betrayal – though why it should be so considered in view of their

duplicity is hard to see – of Western efforts to contain Hitler. There were no such efforts. It became evident that the Chamberlain appeasement policy was a total failure. At the time of the Munich Pact Chamberlain carried his umbrella off the aircraft returning him from a visit to Hitler declaring ‘peace in our time’ .He should have said ‘war is coming’ . Instead of Germany turning East as plotted by Western imperialism, it turned West. The sword turned in the imperialists’ hands. In 1935 Stalin had already made the Soviet foreign policy perfectly clear in a speech made to a party congress. He said: ‘Our foreign policy is clear. It is a policy of preserving peace and strengthening commercial relations of all countries. The USSR does not think of threatening anybody let alone attacking anybody. We stand for peace, champion of the cause of peace. But we are not afraid of threats, and are prepared to answer the instigators of war blow for blow. Those who want peace and seek business relations with us will always have our support. But those who try to attack our country will receive a crushing repulse ...’ The enormous labours of the Soviet people in the first five-year plan were clearly transforming the face of Russia. It was a necessary strengthening of the economic underpinnings of Soviet society and a preparation for its defence. At that time in 1931, Stalin spoke to a meeting of industrial managers in Russia saying: ‘Those who fall behind get beaten. But we do not want to be beaten. No, we refuse to be beaten! One feature of the history of old Russia was the continual beatings she suffered for falling behind, for her backwardness. She was beaten by the Mongol Khans. She was beaten by the Turkish Beys. She was beaten by the Swedish feudal lords. She was beaten by the Polish and Lithuanian gentry. She was beaten by the British and French capitalists. She was beaten by the Japanese barons. All beat her - for her backwardness: for military backwardness, for cultural backwardness, for political backwardness, for industrial backwardness, for agricultural backwardness ...

‘We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it, or they crush us.’ He was a true prophet. Ten years later the Soviet Union was invaded by German imperialism in the character of Nazi, Hitler dictatorship.

‘On June 22nd, 1941, the Red Army was attacked on the front of 1,900 miles by 170 picked divisions, which not only had enormous bases of munitions and other supplies, but also had battle experience and victorious campaigns against many other European armies. Moreover, the armies of Finland, Hungary, Rumania and Italy were under German command at the Soviet front. The slave labour and industrial resources of 250 million inhabitants of occupied Europe were still at the disposal of the invader’. Whether detailed knowledge of German invasion plans would have made much difference it is hard to say. The fact was that Stalin tried to avoid giving Germany a pretext for denouncing the Pact and attacking. However, the preparations made for defence did bear fruit. While the Germans made big advances initially they came to a halt at the environs of Moscow and Leningrad, two of Hitler’s principal targets. The masses rallied to Stalin’s call for all-out defence of their territory. The Wehrmacht was rolled back. Of course, as later became clear, millions who were under the rule of the Nazis were murdered - an estimated 20 million. In all probability these are part of the 50 million supposedly killed by Stalin. They were, as it happened, killed by Nazis.

In the 1930s a Western campaign was begun about forced labour in labour camps. Molotov rebutted all the fantastic claims in a speech in 1931. Sure, he said, we used forced labour to rehabilitate criminals, giving them training and material support. But he punctured the stories of

‘slave millions’ with precise figures. He noted: ‘In all the camps [housing a total of over 60,000] the working day has been set at 8 hours for the convicts. While receiving ample rations, and also monthly wages of from 20 to 30 roubles in cash, the amount of work required from the convicts does not exceed that of the free labourer’. There was a good deal more of such openness. But no-one would believe it today in the light of the so-called ‘gulags’ of Solzhenitsyn - a long-time anti-communist who wanted Nazi Germany to win the war.

No doubt life was harder for the prisoners during the war – but it was harder for everyone during that time.

As the war progressed German armies had to go on the defensive and were defeated as at Stalingrad, where they were encircled and forced to surrender. Stalingrad since has been regarded by all military experts on both sides as the turning point of World War II. But who knows about that achievement today? That sort of news is suppressed. Still if you add up the 27 million dead and add on to that another 20 million supposedly killed in the collectivisation of agriculture one can perhaps see where the figure of 50 million killed by Stalin came from. Of course, it matters not to professional anti-communists that 27 million of those lost their lives in repulsing and eventually conquering Nazi Germany.

Not so long ago the fiftieth anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany was celebrated. The British claimed that they had won the war. The Americans claimed that they had won the war. Those claims were very far from the facts. By far the great bulk of the German army was destroyed by the Soviet forces. Churchill himself declared that ‘The Red Army tore the guts out of the Wehrmacht’. However, it seems that the British and French imperialists would have preferred Russia to have been beaten by Germany in order to crush socialism. It didn’t happen. It became clear well before the end of the war that whether or not there was a second front, the Russians were quite capable of defeating the German forces on their own. Understanding this, the other allies decided that they had better create a second front so that they could claim a share in the victory.

As for the attitude of the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union, had they been so opposed to Stalin and to the leadership of the communists they would never have rallied as they did to the defence of the major cities in Russia. As it was the great mass of the working people of Leningrad fortified their suburbs and areas under German bombardment, withstood the siege of Leningrad – lasting for three years and despite the loss of a million out of their 3 million population, never dreamt of giving in. A similar tale could be told of Moscow, although it did not suffer the same sort of siege. Eventually the other allies of the Soviet Union opened a second front in June 1944, but after making initial advances they got bogged down against some armoured columns under von Rundstedt. They began to be thrown back in disorder. At that time Churchill cabled Stalin asking for an early resumption of Soviet advances on the Eastern front to relieve the pressure on British and American forces. Stalin cabled back immediately informing him that this would be ordered and done. Churchill referred in a cable to Stalin to his ‘thrilling message’, and indeed the Soviet advance resumed and saved the British and American armies from utter rout.

1945 saw the conclusion of the Potsdam agreement between the big three, Britain, the US and the USSR. This was to determine the control of Germany and indeed of most of Europe after the war's end. In the interim period Roosevelt had died and Truman, then Vice-President, became President. What was his attitude? In an interview with the *New York Times* immediately after the German surprise invasion of the Soviet Union he had declared that the United States now ought to help 'whatever side seemed to be loosing. If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia, if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany, in that way let them kill as many as possible' .Such was the hatred of imperialism for the Land of Socialism.

The Potsdam conference saw the reversal of Roosevelt's policy of reasonable friendship with the USSR to a policy of outright hostility bolstered by the sole possession by the US of the newly-developed atomic bomb. This gave them confidence that they were too powerful now for the Soviet Union to oppose. Stalin made no attempt at a militaristic reply. On the other hand in response to US threats of 'preventive war' he answered 'the Soviet people have strong nerves'. A great deal of tension ensued over Germany and over Eastern Europe where people had risen against the pro-fascist regimes they laboured under and established a system of people's democratic rule – not socialism.

Under Stalin's leadership the Soviet Union began the enormous task of rebuilding the destruction by the Nazis of their great industrial base in the west which had been occupied by the Wehrmacht. By 1953 this enormous task of reconstruction had been more or less completed. It was at that time that Stalin died. Soon after Khrushchev manoeuvred his way into power and began a violent attack on Stalin and the regime that existed earlier.

At the time of the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Khrushchev delivered a secret report in which he attacked Stalin and totally negated any achievements by Stalin in his lifetime. This was wonderful grist to the mill of imperialist propaganda – in fact, they could not have asked for anything better. It became evident to Mao Tse-tung and the leadership of the Communist Party of China that Russia had entered a period which would lead to the restoration of capitalism, and in fact, Mao Tse-tung said as much soon after the twentieth congress. This congress totally denied all the major policies of Leninism, which Stalin had endeavoured, even though sometimes he was in error, to carry out. What was Mao's view? In the 1960s a great ideological struggle broke out between the Marxist-Leninist party of China and the revisionist** leadership of the Soviet party and state headed by Khrushchev. Mao accused Khrushchev – rightly – of attempting to destroy Stalin at one blow. He recognised that Stalin had made errors, some of them serious, and he pointed out what these errors were, but he also gave an accurate judgement on Stalin. In the pamphlet *On the Question of Stalin* Mao wrote of Stalin's achievements in completing the industrialisation of the Soviet Union and collectivisation of agriculture. He also said: 'Stalin led the CPSU, the Soviet people and the Soviet army in an arduous and bitter struggle to the great victory of the antifascist war ...

'Stalin made an indelible contribution to the international communist movement in a number of theoretical writings which are immortal Marxist-Leninist works ...

'Stalin stood in the forefront of the tide of history guiding the struggle, and was an irreconcilable enemy of the imperialists and all reactionaries'. Recognising Stalin's shortcomings Mao pointed

out: 'that Stalin had made certain mistakes. Some were errors of principle and some were errors made in the course of practical work; some could have been avoided and some were scarcely avoidable at a time when the dictatorship of the proletariat had no precedent to go by'.

Mao also noted that 'Stalin at times had departed from dialectical materialism and was sometimes divorced from reality and from the masses. Also at times he had confused two different types of contradiction within the party – the contradiction between the people and the enemy, and the contradiction among the people themselves, and the different methods needed in handling them. In the work led by Stalin of suppressing the counterrevolution, many counterrevolutionaries deserving punishment were duly punished, but at the same time there were innocent people who were wrongly convicted; and in 1937 and in 1938 there occurred the error of enlarging the scope of suppression of counterrevolutionaries.

'Stalin's merits and mistakes are matters of historical, objective reality. A comparison of the two showed that his merits outweighed his faults. He was primarily correct and his faults were secondary'.

In this day and age many former supporters of Soviet socialism have been shifted off their old basis of beliefs and have virtually accepted the gigantic tissue of lies woven about Stalin by world imperialism. It seems that they do not stop to think what the alternative to imperialism is. If a new system is not going to replace imperialism that is support for the idea of imperialism and exploitation, hunger, poverty, war, being eternal. There is nothing Marxist or Leninist about such ideas, not in the slightest. But yet that is the objective position of many former supporters today. To understand what went wrong in the Soviet Union and why socialism was lost there one needs to study Mao who analysed the situation thoroughly. He discovered that a new bourgeoisie developed even in Stalin's time. The new bourgeoisie consisted of highly-paid bureaucrats, managers of state enterprises, profession people divorced from the masses, and a labour aristocracy based on excessive incentive payments. This privileged stratum constituted the social basis of Khrushchev and his revisionist clique.

Our party recognises that Stalin did make errors but it also recognises that these have been blown up totally out of proportion by world imperialism as a matter of propaganda to support the world domination of American imperialism over all other countries.

We do not share any belief in the eternal nature of imperialism. We hold with Marx, Engels and Lenin that capitalism is doomed, that it will be replaced by a socialist order. If one does not hold such a view one might as well throw up one's hands in horror and say 'oh well, imperialism is wonderful, I support it'. And that, objectively, is what many do and have done. But that is a peculiarity of history, it is part of the ups and downs of historical development which does not proceed in an exact straight line. At the present time there is an enormous wave of reactionary politics and economics which has engulfed the imperialist states and influenced masses of people. But that will pass because the internal contradictions of imperialism will undoubtedly lead to new economic crises in which people will turn to socialism as the only system that can possibly replace imperialism on a world scale. That this will be achieved we have no doubt. END

NOTES

*Imperialism: capitalism at the stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance.

**Revisionist/Revisionism: a particular form of opportunism in the working class socialist and communist movement. It is capitalist ideology which revises basic revolutionary Marxist principles out of existence adopting the phraseology and appearance of Marxism in order to do so.

(1) *A History of the USSR* (Pelican Books)

(2) Quoted in Stalin's *Report on the Results of the First Five-Year Plan* January 7 1933.