

Document Packet – The Early Stalin Years

Document 1



SOURCE: "Meet the Five-Year Target Figures for the Production of Coal in Three Years", 1931, Adolf Strakhov.

Document 2

It is sometimes asked whether it is not possible to slow down the tempo somewhat, to put a check on the movement. No, comrades, it is not possible! The tempo must not be reduced! On the contrary, we must increase it as much as is within our powers and possibilities. This is dictated to us by our obligations to the workers and peasants of the USSR. This is dictated to us by our obligations to the working class of the whole world.

To slacken the tempo would mean falling behind. And 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 because of 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 because of her backwardness, military backwardness, cultural backwardness, political backwardness, industrial backwardness, agricultural backwardness. They beat her because to do so was profitable and could be done with impunity. Do you remember the words of the pre-revolutionary poet: "You are poor and abundant, mighty and impotent, Mother Russia." Those gentlemen were quite familiar with the verses of the old poet. They beat her, saying: "You are abundant; so one can enrich oneself at your expense. They beat her, saying: "You are poor and impotent" so you can be beaten and plundered with impunity. Such is the law of the exploiters-to

beat the backward and the weak. It is the jungle law of capitalism. You are backward, you are weak- therefore you are wrong; hence, you can be beaten and enslaved. You are mighty- therefore you are right; hence, we must be wary of you.

That is why we must no longer lag behind.

In the past we had no fatherland, nor could we have one. But now that we have overthrown capitalism and power is in our hands, in the hands of the people, we have a fatherland, and we will defend its independence. Do you want our socialist fatherland to be beaten and to lose its independence? If you do not want this you must put an end to its backwardness in the shortest possible time and develop genuine Bolshevik tempo in building up its socialist system of economy. There is no other way. That is why Lenin said on the eve of the October Revolution: "Either perish, or overtake and outstrip the advanced capitalist countries."

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 we shall be crushed.

SOURCE: Speech by Stalin to industrial managers, February, 1931.

Document 3

THE GROWTH OF HEAVY INDUSTRY IN THE USSR

<u>INDUSTRY</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>1932</u>	<u>1938</u>
Coal	millions of tons	64	132
Oil	millions of tons	22	32
Pig Iron	millions of tons	6	14
Steel	millions of tons	6	18
Automobiles	thousands	23	211
Tractors	thousands	50	176
Machinery	billions of rubles	18	33
Chemicals	billions of rubles	2	6

Document 4

Thank you, Stalin. Thank you because I am joyful. Thank you because I am well. No matter how old I become, I shall never forget how we received Stalin two days ago. Centuries will pass, and the generations still to come will regard us as the happiest of mortals, as the most fortunate of men, because we lived in the century of centuries, because we were privileged to see Stalin, our inspired leader. Yes, and we regard ourselves as the happiest of mortals because we are the contemporaries of a man who never had an equal in world history.

The men of all ages will call on thy name, which is strong, beautiful, wise and marvelous. Thy name is engraven on every factory, every machine, every place on the earth, and in the hearts of all men.

Every time I have found myself in his presence I have been subjugated by his strength, his charm, his grandeur. I have experienced a great desire to sing, to cry out, to shout with joy and happiness. And now see me--me!--on the same platform where the Great Stalin stood a year ago. In what country, in what part of the world could such a thing happen.

I write books. I am an author. All thanks to thee, O great educator, Stalin. I love a young woman with a renewed love and shall perpetuate myself in my children--all thanks to thee, great educator, Stalin. I shall be eternally happy and joyous, all thanks to thee, great educator, Stalin. Everything belongs to thee, chief of our great country. And when the woman I love presents me with a child the first word it shall utter will be : Stalin.

O great Stalin, O leader of the peoples,
Thou who broughtest man to birth.
Thou who fructifies the earth,
Thou who restorest to centuries,
Thou who makest bloom the spring,
Thou who makest vibrate the musical chords...
Thou, splendour of my spring, O thou,
Sun reflected by millions of hearts.

SOURCE: "A Hymn to Stalin" by A. O. Avidenko, 1930s(?)..

Document 5

A society that is intense in its struggle for change has a flip side to its idealism: intolerance. People saw enemies everywhere, enemies who wanted to destroy the revolution and diminish the results of their hard work and accomplishments, enemies who wanted to restore capitalism for selfish reasons against the collective interests of the nation. If those at the top of the Communist Party and an old revolutionary like Trotsky could join the enemy, what about lesser people? In factories and offices, mass meetings were held in which people were urged to be vigilant against sabotage. It was up to common folks to make the distinction between incompetence and intentional wrecking [i.e., sabotage], and any mishap might be blamed on wrecking. Denunciations became common. Neighbors denounced neighbors. Denunciations were a good way of striking against people one did not like, including one's parents, a way of eliminating people blocking one's promotion, and ... a means of proving one's patriotism. Many realized that some innocent people were being victimized, and the saying went around that "when you chop wood the chips fly." As with Lenin, it was believed that some who were innocent

would have to be victimized if all of the guilty were to be apprehended.

SECONDARY SOURCE: Professor Frank Smitha in a lecture on genocide.

Document 6

Arrests, 1937-1938 - about 7 million

Executed - about 1 million

Died in camps - about 2 million

In prison, late 1938 - about 1 million

In camps, late 1938 - about 8 million

SOURCE: Estimated results of the *Great Purges* in 1937-38.