



THE people of the Soviet Union, the progressive forces and the Peace Movement throughout the world have suffered an irreparable loss through the death of our great and well-beloved Comrade Joseph Stalin.

In the first decade of this century we read often in the columns of *Justice* and in our monthly magazines of the activities of the Russian Social Democrats, particularly so during the 1905 revolution and the London Congress in 1907. But although considerable interest was aroused by these events and by the intense participation of the Russian representatives in international congresses, it must be admitted that the names of the leaders of the Russian revolutionaries didn't register in our minds, not mine, at any rate. It wasn't till 1917 that the name of Lenin shone out like a bright red star in the working-class firmament. The great genius of Marxian strategy had by then fashioned the powerful working-class weapon, a party of a new kind, that was to lay the bourgeois low.

In 1920 I was in Moscow attending the Second Congress of the Communist International. There I formed a warm friendship with Comrade Sergieff Artyom, a miners' leader who had been abroad and who spoke good English. He was a member of the Political Bureau of the Bolshevik Party and from this comrade I first heard the name of Stalin. He never tired of talking about this great comrade. Always, he told me, when some weighty problem was before them, 'all eyes turned to Comrade Stalin'. Stalin, he said, was the man beyond all others that Lenin and the Political Bureau depended upon. I didn't see Stalin during that visit. He was at the front with the Red Army. At Tsaritsin, with Comrade Voroshilov, he worked out the strategy that destroyed forever the hopes of the counter-revolutionaries and their imperialist backers. In doing so he had to discard the plan prepared by Trotsky and the old generals, which would have led the Red soldiers into a swamp of kulakism, into a trap. Trotsky was brusquely pushed aside, old generals were replaced by younger and thoroughly reliable comrades. From this the legend was started that he was 'rude' and 'ruthless'. A judge of men and of situations, his great knowledge of Marxism-Leninism and his understanding of the class struggle enabled him to take the course that saved the revolution and routed its enemies. If he had been a petty-bourgeois 'intellectual' he would have lost the revolution and earned the praise of the workers' enemies. But to save the revolution—that was 'rude', 'ruthless'.

In 1923, I met him for the first time. Lenin's illness had provided the enemies of the party with the opportunity of switching the party away from the path of Leninism—or so they thought. But they came up against the rock-like strength of Lenin's greatest disciple, Joseph Stalin. Let anyone who cares read the story of that period. The wild fulminations of the wreckers in the party and in the Press; the quiet crushing replies of Stalin that won for him increasingly the admiration and love of the party and the people of the Soviet Union. 'We will build Socialism in Russia', Lenin said. 'It can't be done', said the Mensheviks, 'You must wait till the capitalists develop heavy industry'. 'It can't be done', said the waverers, 'You must wait till the workers in advanced capitalist

countries take power.’ ‘It can and will be done’, said Stalin, and through the years his wise guidance has led the Soviet people along the Lenin road to a happy, joyful life.

In 1927, at the Tenth Anniversary of the Revolution I made a short speech to the Red Army in the Red Square. There had been rumours of a gang of traitors using the occasion to disrupt the demonstration and start street-fighting. My speech was devoted to unity against the enemy without and within. ‘These agents of the capitalist enemy who seek to disrupt our forces, turn them out of your midst’, I exclaimed. When my speech was translated, Comrade Stalin reached across the others and shook me warmly by the hand. Then a short time later I was asked to go over to the Mochovaya to speak against one of the gang who had appeared at an hotel window and was shouting at the demonstration. But when I got to the Mochovaya there was no need for my services. The workers had dealt very effectively with the situation. A group of them rushed into the hotel and had not several Red Army men been there, it would have fared ill with the egomaniac who attempted to disrupt the anniversary demonstration. When I got back to the Red Square and reported what had happened, I saw the lines crinkling round Stalin’s eyes and the quiet smile on his lips as he listened to and nodded appreciation of the translation. But I will never forget him as I saw him that day. He knew, as we all knew, that the enemies of the party, the enemies of the Revolution, were going to make a desperate attempt to break up the 10th Anniversary demonstration, but he stood there calm and steady with an abiding faith in the working class, a faith justified then as it was so often after in the years that lay ahead. Calm and steady. Yes, there on the Lenin mausoleum in 1927, and there again in the much more exacting day 14 years later, with the Nazi hordes hammering at the gates of Moscow. See him there, strong and resolute, undaunted, inspiring his people to new courage and new great effort.

‘We’ll drive the enemy out of our Soviet land and out of every occupied country in Europe’. To the outside observers it was impossible. But this our comrade, with his knowledge of and faith in the people, could face and accomplish the impossible. The Great Patriotic War over, socialist reconstruction was taken in hand. What amazing progress has been made, what mighty undertakings have been carried through. In no capitalist country has the like ever been seen. But then the road they travel is the Lenin road that leads to the new and happy life only Communism can give.

Along that road they were confronted with many problems. The transformation of the age-long peasant economy to collective farming. Impossible! It can’t be done. But it was done. Then the First Five Year Plan, designed to create heavy industry and make the Soviet Union independent of the imperialist countries. How the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois press sneered at this majestic conception. ‘The craziest scheme that was ever promulgated’. ‘It will break down before it is started’. But it didn’t break down. In four years the great Five Year Plan was completed and the Soviet Union was well on the way

to becoming the greatest industrial country in the world. From a ruined economy in a backward peasant country they made that amazing journey in a few short years, while here in Britain with statesmen like Baldwin, MacDonald, Attlee and Churchill we travel in the opposite direction. From being the wealthiest country in the world we are steadily drifting to ruin. A second Five Year Plan and then a third, and had it not been for the war and its fearful toll in life and the terrible devastation, the new society would by now have neared completion.

The final problems have been discussed and under Stalin's guidance the answers have been found. Mourn as we do his passing we take pride in the knowledge that three months before his death he published *The Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.* Here as anyone can read is the guide to the last stage on the road to the completed Communist society where, as was the dream of the pioneers, 'Each will give according to his ability and each will get according to his need'. So his life ended with his work completed, for the Party and the Soviet people still under his wise guidance will go forward, resolute as he was resolute—to the new truly free society of Marx and Engels, of Lenin and of Stalin.