

Stalin Wades to Power Through Sea of Opposition's Blood

Purge Banded Vishinsky

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party's 1934 Central Committee, only 21 remained by the time the purge ended. All the Old Bolsheviks except Stalin, Molotov and Voroshilov were gone from the Politburo. A new police chief reigned—Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria, Georgian and worshiper of Stalin.

The Communist party, which had three million members in 1923, was reduced to two millions. But when the smoke cleared, on the brink of World War II, Stalin was complete and unquestioned dictator. The last whisper of opposition was silenced when Trotsky was assassinated in August, 1940, in Mexico.

MOCKERY

Stalin reigned supreme under his 1936 "Stalin Constitution," a mockery of representative government. But there were other dangers. The Comintern was placed on the altar, to join with other parties to stop the march of Nazism. This was a thoroughly un-Marxist, un-Leninist approach, but it was one of expediency. Attacks on capitalism were toned down. Antimilitarism and "peace" were the theme. The Red Army, hurt badly by the purge, was being reorganized as war clouds gathered.

Stalin dismissed Maxim Litvinov, a Jew, as foreign minister, as not to offend the Jew-hating Nazis. He walked carefully so as not to offend the British and Americans. But suddenly he made his decision. He had to bargain desperately for time.

With Molotov as foreign minister, he brought about the infamous Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact which permitted Hitler to unleash World War II. When the Hitler hordes ravaged Poland, Stalin's troops marched in and gobbled up the Soviet half under the agreement with Hitler.

FEAR

Stalin was afraid. He wanted protection from the Germans. He demanded bases in Finland to protect Leningrad, and Finland refused. So he declared war on the country he personally set free two decades before.

Wasted by the purge, badly off, the Soviet command showed up poorly in the Finnish war. Cheered by the democratic world, Finland fought on against the giant until March, 1940, while Russia lost face.

Then Stalin turned on more weak people. His troops marched and Lithuania — and gobbled them up.

The quick collapse of France in 1940 was a shock. He had wanted the Western war to last a long time. Now time was running out. German troops massed on Soviet frontiers even as Stalin signed a neutrality pact with Germany's partner, Japan, to fend off a two-

front war. He thus freed Japan for Pacific adventures.

On May 6, 1941, Stalin for the first time stepped out of the Communist Secretariat to take government office. He took the premiership from Molotov. He struggled to placate Hitler.

NAZI BLOW

But on June 22, 1941, Hitler struck. Stalin presided over the defense committee, with Molotov, Beria, Voroshilov and an up-and-coming young man, the boss private secretary, Georgi M. Malenkov. Stalin announced a scorched earth policy as the Germans advanced.

By October, the Germans were beginning the battle for Moscow. The Ukraine was gone. Old Bolsheviks Budyenny and Voroshilov were relieved of their commands. In their place went Georgi Zhukov, Konstantin Rokossovsky, Alexander Vassilevsky. In November, the Germans were 20 miles from Moscow. The government fled to Kuibyshev on the Volga, but Stalin stayed at the Kremlin, even as German troops penetrated Moscow's suburbs.

In the South the Germans drove forward at breakneck speed. They were in sight of Moscow's proudest boast, the mighty Dnieper Dam. Budyenny telephoned Stalin in a panic. Were most of the Russian troops out of the area? Stalin demanded. Yes, Budyenny replied, they were fleeing the German repellers on the great dam.

"Good," said Stalin. "Blow up the dam."

Then Russian winter set in. "Hitler miscalculated," said Stalin, and he was right. Expecting quick victory, Hitler had not equipped his troops for winter fighting. In December, 1941, Stalin ordered a counteroffensive. The Germans retreated from Moscow.

UPLIFT

Now the United States was in the war. Russian confidence rose. A stream of lend-lease trucks and arms flowed into the Soviet Union. The Russians were able to brace themselves for the Battle of Stalingrad. Zhukov, Vassilevsky and Malenkov were sent to Stalingrad with orders to hold at all costs. Finally Nazi Gen. von Paulus was cut off. Nazi Field Marshal von Manstein rushed from the west with reinforcements. The Russian attacked him. The main Nazi force was thrown back. On Feb. 1, 1943, Von Paulus surrendered. Stalin's stock

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rose throughout the world. Stalin brought generals back from exile to fight. There was a rising spirit of nationalism, dwelling on Russia's imperial glories. The Army reintroduced czarist regiments, salutes, epaulettes and even an officer caste system.

Russian nationalism reached its height in March, 1943, when Stalin assumed the rank of marshal and generalissimo. The Orthodox church, oppressed since the revolution, was permitted to reconstitute itself. It had a strong hold on the peasants and Stalin needed it as an instrument of state policy. Moscow announced dissolution of the Communist International to placate the West, which feared export of the Russian Revolution.

RECOUP

A summer offensive recaptured two-thirds of the territory the Nazis had overrun. Then, in December, 1943, Stalin met President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill at Tehran. He rejected Churchill's proposal of invasion through the Balkans, a Soviet sphere of influence. He agreed to the West's proposals for Poland's eastern boundaries. But he was later to ignore his commitments on Poland and to people its government with his own men. He let the heroic Warsaw garrison be all but wiped out before permitting Russian troops to advance across the Vistula.

In February, 1945, the generalissimo met Roosevelt and Churchill at Yalta. Here Stalin won out on his insistence upon a big power veto in the United Nations Security Council in the forthcoming U. N. organization. He won other concessions, particularly on a Far Eastern settlement, as the price for his entry into the war on Japan. He entered the war only a few days before the Japanese, fearful of a third atomic bomb, surrendered to the Americans.

The war in Europe was not yet

over when the Stalin forces began their maneuvers in the Balkans which one day were to end independence for Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania. Sovietization of East Germany under Russian occupation began at once. The way was being paved to kidnap Poland for the Communists. In Manchuria, captured Japanese arms were going to the Chinese Communists to be used to spread the revolution.

BIG LOSSES

Stalin had lost millions in dead, millions in crippled, dozens of cities devastated, a fantastic amount of industry wrecked, a vast number of homes reduced to rubble. His entire population was war-weary. He set Malenkov to the task of reconstruction.

But propaganda for the world revolution was revived, Stalin style. Once again all foreigners became devils.

Only a year after the war's end, the cold war was under way.

Stalin took the cold war with a vengeance. He obliterated all opposition in the Balkan countries he had "liberated," and expelled Communist Yugoslavia from the family because it wouldn't bow to his orders. The Marshall Plan in Europe was a signal to Moscow for a ferocious attack on the West that often neared the brink of hostilities, as at the time of the Berlin blockade. Stalin seized Czechoslovakia and communized it.

The climax of the cold war came with the attack by Communist, Soviet-occupied North Korea upon the republic of South Korea, which was recognized by the United Nations. The United States ordered its troops from Japan, and after a bitter fight, the North Koreans were chased back to their borders. But then Communist China, flushed with the victory of their revolution in 1949, sent "volunteers" in great masses into the Korean War. Stalin sent them supplies. The war

raged back to the 38th Parallel, its starting point, and bogged down there, while the Communists latched the world by talk of a "truce" which never seemed to be within its grasp.

Back in the Kremlin, international headquarters of a worldwide attack on freedom, the "great leader and teacher and genius of all mankind" retired more and more behind Kremlin walls. When he traveled, it was in an armored car at breakneck speed, with the road cleared for miles ahead. Never was anyone let within shooting distance. He became more and more a legend to be worshipped by the six million Communists who ruled 200 million Soviet people.

On his 70th birthday, the world was treated to an incredible performance. The worship of Stalin was unrestrained. He was compared to the Deity. Gifts rolled into Moscow by the trainload. Great, gleaming statues of him went up all over the Communist world.

PURGE

Now Stalin's merest word became law. With one sweep he destroyed a whole school of language philosophy, revered for years by Communists, and substituted another. At the 19th All-Union Communist Party Congress last October, the first in 12 years, it was plain he was shifting more and more the responsibilities of leadership.

Georgi Malenkov, his faithful



lieutenant, was selected to make the keynote oration, a report of the Central Committee. But Stalin headed the list of the new Central Committee of 125 members and the 25-member Presidium chosen to replace the old Politburo. In the closing address, Stalin pledged support to Communist parties all over the world in a fight for "liberation and preservation of peace."

Stalin also gave the party a 25,000-word treatise titled "Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR." Laying down a blue-inked molish several "false ideas print for the future, he sought to which had cluttered the thinking of Soviet economists. He declared war was inevitable among the capitalist countries. He said Communist countries were getting stronger and the alliance headed by the United States was sure to break up. That was his last real message to the Communist party.

CONSPIRACY

Intrigue still weighed heavily on the Kremlin. Nine doctors, it was announced, had conspired in an effort to kill several Russian leaders, and indeed through maltreatment had killed Stalin's right-hand man Zhdanov in 1948. Held responsible: Western espionage and Zionist elements. Within two months after the disclosure of this alleged plotting, Joseph Stalin himself came to his death bed. He was stricken with a brain hemorrhage, the Kremlin announced; his 73-year-old heart faltered, and death came March 5, 1953. The Communist hierarchy prepared the biggest funeral since Lenin's.

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