Speech Delivered by Joseph Stalin at the Second Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R., January 26, 1924, five days after Lenin’s death

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We Communists are people of a special mould. We are made of special material. We are those who comprise the army of the great proletarian strategist, the army of Comrade Lenin. There is nothing higher than the honour of belonging to this army. There is nothing higher than the title of member of the Party founded and led by Comrade Lenin. It is not given to all to be members of such a Party. It is not given to all to withstand the stress and storm that accompanies membership in such a Party. Sons of the working class, sons of poverty and struggle, sons of incredible deprivation and heroic effort—these are the ones who must first of all be members of such a Party. That is why the Leninist Party, the Communist Party, at the same time calls itself the Party of the working class.
In departing from us, Comrade Lenin bequeathed to us the duty of holding aloft and guarding the purity of the great title of member of the Party. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that we will fulfil your bequest with honour.

For twenty-five years Comrade Lenin reared our Party and finally reared it into the strongest and most steeled workers’ party in the world.

The blows of tsarism and its agents, the fury of the bourgeoisie and the landlords, the armed attacks of Kolchak and Denkin, the armed intervention of England and France, the lies and slander of the hundred-mouthed bourgeois press—all these scorpions persistently hurled themselves at our Party during the course of a quarter of a century. But our Party stood firm as a rock, repelled the
innumerable blows of its enemies and led the working class forward to victory. In the midst of fierce battles our Party forged the unity and compactness of its ranks. And by its unity and compactness it achieved victory over the enemies of the working class.

In departing from us, Comrade Lenin bequeathed to us the duty of guarding the unity of our Party like the apple of our eye. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that we will also fulfil this bequest of yours with honour.

**HEAVY** and unbearable is the lot of the working class. Painful and burdensome are the sufferings of the toilers. Slaves and slave-owners, serfs and feudal lords, peasants and landlords, workers and capitalists, oppressed and oppressors—such has been the structure of the world for
ages, and such it remains today in the overwhelming majority of countries.

Scores and hundreds of times in the course of centuries have the toilers tried to throw their oppressors off their backs and become masters of their own conditions. But every time, defeated and disgraced, they were compelled to retreat, their hearts burning with shame and degradation, anger and despair, and they turned their eyes to the unknown, to the heavens, where they hoped to find salvation. The chains of slavery remained intact, or else the old chains were exchanged for new ones equally burdensome and degrading. Only in our country have the oppressed and suppressed masses of toilers succeeded in throwing off the rule of the landlords and capitalists and in putting in its place the rule of the workers and peasants.

You know, comrades, and now the whole world admits this, that this gigantic struggle was led by Comrade Lenin and his Party. The greatness of Lenin lies first of all in the fact that he, by creating the republic of Soviets, showed by deeds, to the oppressed masses of the whole
world, that hope of salvation is not lost, that the rule of the landlords and capitalists will not last long, that the kingdom of labor can be created by the efforts of the toilers themselves, that the kingdom of labor must be created on earth and not in heaven. By that he inflamed the hearts of the workers and peasants of the whole world with the hope of liberation. This explains the fact that the name of Lenin has become a name most beloved to the toilers and the exploited masses.

In departing from us, Comrade Lenin bequeathed to us the duty of guarding and strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that we will spare no effort to fulfil also this bequest of yours with honour.
The dictatorship of the proletariat was created in our country on the basis of the alliance between the workers and the peasants. This is the first and fundamental basis of the republic of Soviets. The workers and peasants could not have vanquished the capitalists and the landlords without such an alliance.

In departing from us, Comrade Lenin bequeathed to us the duty of strengthening with all our might the alliance
between the workers and the peasants. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that we will fulfil also this bequest of yours with honour.

The second foundation of the republic of Soviets is the alliance of the toiling nationalities of our country. Russians and Ukrainians, Bashkirs and White Russians, Georgians and Azerbaijanians, Armenians and Dagestans, Tartars and Kirghiz, Uzbeks and Turkomans—all are equally interested in strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat. Not only does the dictatorship of the proletariat release these peoples from their chains and oppressors, but these peoples, by their unbounded loyalty to the republic of Soviets and their readiness to make sacrifices for it, release our republic of Soviets from the designs and attacks of the enemies of the working class. That is why Comrade Lenin untiringly urged upon us the necessity for establishing a voluntary alliance of the nations of our country, the necessity for fraternal cooperation within the framework of a Union of Republics.
In departing from us, Comrade Lenin bequeathed to us the duty of consolidating and expanding the Union of Republics. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that we will also carry out this bequest of yours with honour.

The third foundation of the dictatorship of the proletariat is our Red Army and our Red Navy. Lenin told us more than once that the respite we have gained from the capitalist states may be a short one. More than once Lenin pointed out to us that the strengthening of the Red Army and the improvement of its condition is one of the most important tasks of our Party. The events connected with Curzon's ultimatum and the crisis in Germany once again confirmed the fact that Lenin, as always, was right. Let us vow then, comrades, that we will spare no effort to strengthen our Red Army and our Red Navy.
OUR country stands like a huge rock surrounded by the ocean of bourgeois states. Wave after wave hurls itself against it, threatening to submerge it and sweep it away. But the rock stands unshakable. Wherein lies its strength? Not only in the fact that our country is based on the alliance between the workers and peasants, that it is the personification of the alliance of free nationalities, that it is protected by the strong arm of the Red Army and the Red Navy. The strength of our country, its firmness, its durability lies in the fact that it finds profound
sympathy and support in the hearts of the workers of the world.

The workers and peasants of the whole world want to preserve the republic of Soviets as an arrow shot by the sure hand of Comrade Lenin into the camp of the enemy, as a bulwark of their hope for emancipation from oppression and exploitation, as a faithful lighthouse lighting up their path to liberation. They want to preserve it and they will not permit the landlords and the capitalists to destroy it. This is where our strength lies. Herein lies the strength of the toilers of all countries. And herein lies the weakness of the bourgeoisie of the whole world.

**Lenin** never regarded the republic of Soviets as an end in itself. He always regarded it as a necessary link for strengthening the revolutionary movements in the lands of the West and the East, as a necessary link for facilitating the victory of the toilers of the whole world over capital. Lenin knew that only such an interpretation is the correct one, not only from the international point of view, but also from the point of view of preserving the republic of Soviets itself. Lenin knew that only in this way is it possible to inflame the hearts of the toilers of all countries for the decisive battles for emancipation. That is why this genius among the great leaders of the proletariat, on the very morrow of the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship, laid the foundation of the workers' International. That is why he never tired of expanding and consolidating the union of the toilers of the whole world, the Communist International.

You have seen during the past few days the pilgrimage of tens and hundreds of thousands of toilers to the coffin of Comrade Lenin. Very soon you will see the pilgrimage
of representatives of millions of toilers to Comrade Lenin's tomb. You need have no doubt that later these representatives of millions will be followed by representatives of tens and hundreds of millions from all corners of the earth, in order to testify that Comrade Lenin was the leader not only of the Russian proletariat, not only of the European workers, not only of the colonial East, but of all the toilers of the globe.

In departing from us, Comrade Lenin bequeathed to us the duty of remaining loyal to the principles of the Communist International. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that we will not spare our lives to strengthen and expand the union of the toilers of the whole world—the Communist International.
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