

F. Foreign Policy.

I. Goals. (nb. Was Stalin motivated by a desire for power, by ideology, or by necessity and the dictates of security?)

1. Security for Russia and communism.

2. "Socialism in one country", an idea first advanced by Stalin in 1924 after the failure of the 1923 communist risings in Germany. This meant the relegation of the previous goal of "exporting" revolution as a prerequisite of the establishment and survival of communism in Russia.

3. The expansion of communism and "World Revolution": for ideological reasons; to increase Soviet power; as a means of defence. (cf. Stalin at the 16th Party Congress 1930: "We do not want a single foot of foreign territory.")

II. Factors.

1. Stalin tended to continue the Leninist path.

2. Stalin dominated his Commissars for Foreign Affairs:

Georgy Chicherin 1918-30: pro-German, sick from 1927.

Maxim Litvinov 1930-May 1939: Deputy Commissar from 1921, in favour of collective security and co-operation with Britain.

Viacheslav Molotov 1939-49, and 1953-56: "a modern robot" (Churchill).

Andrei Vyshinski, 1949-53: a loyal Stalin henchman.

3. The Marxist conviction until 1956 that permanent conflict between capitalism and communism was inevitable, and that, equally inevitably, the Marxist system would spread throughout the world. History was "on their side".

4. Stalin was pragmatic and aware of Soviet weakness. Thus he followed a non-ideological policy, even making a pact with Nazism and trying to appease Hitler by supplying Germany right up to the invasion. Changes, such as turning to the West in the 1930s, and then to the Nazis later, were easier in a totalitarian society.

5. Stalin was ignorant about foreign countries and increasingly suspicious.

6. He distrusted the League of Nations (despite Soviet membership after 1934) as it was dominated by Western capitalism, which he might thus be forced to fight to defend.

7. In general, there were close relations with Germany.

8. Support for national liberation movements (as under Lenin): revolution (not necessarily communist) in Asia and elsewhere would weaken Western capitalism.

9. Stalin was convinced that China was a target for Western imperialism, with Japan, the US and Britain especially competing, even to the point of war, for control of China. Stalin therefore worked to bolster Chinese defences, for example, by promoting Nationalist-Communist co-operation in China, in order to prevent capitalists from taking over on his Eastern border.

10. He was preoccupied by internal affairs, especially in the early days.

11. According to George Kennan, the key to Stalin's foreign policy was the attempt to divide and embroil his enemies.

12. There was an armed force 600,000 strong, with 2 year conscription.

III. 1924-32.

1. Being aware of the danger of diplomatic isolation, recognition was arranged with many states: for example, in 1924 with Britain, Italy and China; and in 1925 with Japan.

2. Security agreements were made with neighbouring countries.

i. Stalin inherited Treaties of Friendship signed 1921 with Turkey and Iran and Afghanistan, and the 1922 Treaty of Rapallo with Germany.

ii. In 1925 a Russo-Turkish Treaty of Neutrality was signed. The Turks were alarmed by British interest in Mosul, and Stalin was alarmed by Locarno. (The 1925 Locarno Treaties guaranteed the inviolability of the Franco-

German and Belgo-German borders. At the same time, the Germans made arbitration treaties with Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, and Poland. Germany was thus restored to the European community, from which it had been isolated since 1918.)

iii. By 1932, the USSR had signed non-aggression pacts with all nations along its western border (for example, in November 1932 with Poland), except Romania (problem over Bessarabia, acquired by Romania 1919).

iv. In February 1929, the Eastern Protocol or Litvinov Pact was arranged. This modelled on the Briand-Kellogg Pact (see iii.d. below) and involving Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Romania, and later Danzig, Persia and Turkey.

3. International affairs generally.

i. Stalin was alarmed at not being invited to the Locarno conference, the terms of which he concluded were intended by Britain and France to divert German expansionism to the east.

ii. From 1927, when talks began, the USSR took part in the League of Nations world disarmament talks, which culminated in the unsuccessful 1932-34 60-nation conference.

iii. Participation in the 1927 World Economic Conference.

iv. The USSR was a signatory (although with reservations, especially that the Pact was ineffectual without disarmament) of the 1928 Briand-Kellogg Pact, renouncing war as an instrument of national policy.

4. Relations with Germany.

i. Stalin inherited the 1922 Treaty of Rapallo, by which the two ostracized nations had come together, renouncing all claims to debts and reparations, and resuming trading and diplomatic relations. Stalin also inherited the secret arrangement made about the same time, whereby the Germans agreed to help train and equip the Russian armed forces, in return for Russian help in German evasion of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles; for example, the Germans could test new equipment in Russia, train soldiers there, and manufacture equipment.

The failure of the spontaneous communist risings in Germany in 1923, especially in the Ruhr, made Stalin conclude that a communist takeover in Germany was unlikely.

ii. Stalin was alarmed by the agreement made in 1925 in Locarno, whereby Britain, France, Germany and Italy guaranteed the western German borders, but arranged no comparable guarantee of Germany's eastern borders. Stalin, especially in the light of the general German rapprochement with the West from 1924, saw the Locarno Agreement as a western ploy to encourage Germany to resume its traditional "Drang nach dem Osten" (the pushing towards

the East). The Agreement might even mean the Germans allowing French troops through to aid the Poles against the Russians. Stalin's fears were calmed slightly by the German Foreign Minister, Gustav Stresemann, arranging the April 1926 Berlin Treaty with Russia, promising neutrality if either was attacked by a third country.

iii. In 1928 five German technicians working in the Donetz mines in Russia were tried for industrial espionage, but in 1929 Russia and Germany came closer together.

Both countries were isolated in the Geneva talks in their plans for disarmament, while the depression in Germany after 1929 meant the Germans wanted good trading relations with the Russians. For their part, the Russians wanted German equipment for their Five Year Plan of development. By 1932, 46% Russian imports were coming from Germany.

Admittedly, Stalin did not entirely trust the Germans and was alarmed by the Western withdrawal 1929-30 of its occupying troops from the Rhineland, and of the Allied Control Commission. The 1929 Young Plan and the 1932 Lausanne Conference, both easing the reparations situation for Germany, were unwelcome signs to Stalin of German rapprochement with the West.

5. Relations with Britain.

i. In February 1924, diplomatic relations were resumed, but October 1924 saw the publication of the Zinoviev (Comintern head, see point viii.) letter of September, instructing British communists to "work for the violent overthrow of existing institutions" in Britain, Ireland and India. The original of the letter was never produced, and its genuineness is still in doubt, but it soured relations (and, coming 4 days before a general election, helped into power the Conservative Party, led by Stanley Baldwin).

ii. In September 1925, the Russian Trade Union leader Tomsy, on a visit to Britain, addressed the British Trades Union Congress, urging "revolutionary strikes". The May 1926 General Strike in Britain was interpreted as Soviet-inspired; its failure convinced the Russians that communism was unlikely to take over elsewhere in the near future.

iii. In May 1927, British authorities raided the Soviet trade delegation in London, seeking incriminating evidence. None was found, but diplomatic relations were broken off until October 1930.

6. Relations with China.

i. Russian leaders were convinced that Britain, the US, and Japan (either together or separately or fighting each other) would try to take over China, including the rail link to Vladivostok (see b and nb. below).

Consequently, Lenin had worked to strengthen China. 1921-22 negotiations with the "official" Peking government having failed, talks began 1922 with the rival Nationalist government in Canton. In 1923 Michael Borodin and a number of Russian advisers (by 1925 1,000 strong) began to help the Nationalists, who also received about \$3 million in aid.

ii. However, in May 1924 a Russo-Chinese Treaty was signed with the "official" government of the warlord Wu Pei-fu in Peking and not with the "rebel" Nationalist government in Canton. This established diplomatic relations; restored joint management of the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER; also called the East China Railway); ended Soviet extra-territorial rights and concessions (although the Amur-Ussuri area, acquired 1858-60, and Turkestan, acquired 1881, were not returned); recognized Outer Mongolia as part of China.

nb. The CER, although in China, was part of the rail link between Moscow and Vladivostok, and had been built jointly by the Russians and Chinese. It formed part of the Trans-Siberian Railway, and was linked by a spur to Port Arthur (Lushun to the Chinese) on the Liaodong Peninsula in China and Seoul in Korea. In 1919, the Russians had given up their claim to the railway, as Vladivostok and much of the railway had been in the hands of the Whites (the opponents of the Reds).

The concessions surrendered had already been lost in the Civil War.

In 1919, during the Civil War in Russia, the Reds had chased the Whites into Outer Mongolia, where a pro-communist faction and eventually government were established, and Russian aid and presence requested. Russian troops left Outer Mongolia 1924, but Russia continued to dominate the area, partly as it was close to the Trans-Siberian Railway.

iii. On the death of the Nationalist leader, Sun Yat Sen (Sun Yixian in Pinyin, the modern system of transcribing Chinese characters into Roman script) in 1925, Chiang Kai Shek (Jiang Jieshi in Pinyin) became the new Nationalist leader. He soon fell out with the Chinese Communist Party. The first Chinese Revolutionary Civil War 1925-26 (between Nationalists and Communists) was patched up, but fighting began again in 1927. Stalin supported the Chinese Communist Party in its efforts to gain power.

iv. In 1929 Chiang Kai Shek (Jiang Jieshi in Pinyin) tried to take over the Chinese Eastern Railway. The Russians, after threats, attacked, seizing two border points. Joint control was restored over the railway, but relations between Russia and the Nationalists were broken off, being resumed only 1932 in view of the Japanese attack 1931 on Manchuria. (The apparent Chinese weakness in 1929 had encouraged the Japanese to attack.)

7. Relations with Japan.

i. Relations with Japan in Tsarist times had been bad, as both competed for influence in China and Korea. Russia had been beaten by Japan 1904-5, and Japan had occupied northern part of Sakhalin Island during the Civil War.

ii. In 1925 a general settlement was arranged between Japan and Russia, with Japanese leaders of the day following a more conciliatory policy. The Japanese withdrew from Northern Sakhalin (in return for fishing rights along the Siberian coast, and oil concessions), and diplomatic relations were re-established.

iii. In the late 1920s, the Japanese returned to a more aggressive foreign policy. The Japanese occupation of Manchuria 1931-33 was a clear threat to Siberia.

8. The expansion of Communism.

i. Lenin in 1919 had established the Communist International (Comintern), with the goal of spreading communism.

ii. Bolshevik hopes of communist revolution elsewhere were dashed by the failure of the 1923 communist risings in Germany (especially in the Ruhr) and of the 1926 General Strike in Britain. This, however, did not stop Comintern from trying to promote communism, if only to cause difficulty among capitalist countries.

Comintern helped bring about the abortive rising in November 1926 against the Dutch in Indonesia, and in 1927 sided with the Chinese Communist Party in the Civil War (the Second, lasting to 1936) against the Nationalists. Comintern also attempted to penetrate US unions.

iii. In 1928, Stalin concluded that communist revolution once again had a chance of success in view of the apparent decay of capitalism. Thus the alliance with socialism was no longer necessary and, Stalin, at the 6th World Congress of Comintern, ranged European Social Democrats with the Fascists, both being "on the side of the exploiters, on the side of the imperialists and their agents". Comintern also considered that Socialists in power in Europe and elsewhere would delay the eventual, inevitable communist takeover because their modest reforms would postpone the demand for true revolution. The Comintern directive to communists in Europe not to co-operate with socialists and liberals thus weakened those forces which, with communist support, might have formed governments, for example in Germany, thereby preventing Hitler from gaining power. In 1935, Comintern reversed its policy and ordered communists to form "popular fronts" with reformist groups to keep the right wing out of power; this helped bring about the Popular Front in Spain, which sparked off the Spanish Civil War.

IV. 1933-41.

I. Stalin was increasingly preoccupied by the threat from Germany and Japan.

i. 1931-33 the Japanese occupation of Manchuria and the establishment of the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo. This Japanese advance was one reason for the USSR and the US opening diplomatic relations 1933.

ii. In January 1933 Hitler became German Chancellor. In Mein Kampf, Hitler had advocated acquisition of the Ukraine for grain, the Caucasus for oil, and the Urals for minerals. At the 1933 London Economic Conference, the German delegate asked the West for a free hand in the Ukraine, as compensation for the loss of colonies in 1919. Hitler was openly anti-communist, and in 1936 signed with Japan the Anti-Comintern Pact to combat communism.

iii. At first, Stalin neglected the rising Nazi strength, and even welcomed Hitler's becoming Chancellor. This was partly as he was apprehensive about possible French preponderance in Europe (French power was generally overrated in the 1930s), and partly because it would prevent Anglo-French rapprochement with Germany, at a time when the USSR was preoccupied with Far Eastern matters. Hitler also promised to continue previous arrangements with Russia, and in 1933 ratified the extension (negotiated in 1931) for another 10 years of the 1926 Neutrality Pact. Stalin made no great effort to win over the West at first; for example, 1933 witnessed the set-piece trial of British Vickers engineers for allegedly sabotaging the 5 Year Plan.

iv. Stalin seems to have become alarmed when, in 1934, Germany and Poland agreed to settle differences, and went on to make a non-aggression pact (denounced by Hitler only in April 1939); at the same time, Hitler refused to guarantee the independence of the Baltic States.

v. Thus in 1934, Stalin began the "Soviet return to Europe". Simultaneous with the rise of Hitler was the chaos brought about by the first 5 Year Plan (begun partly because of a perceived western capitalist threat; one reason for the show trials was to show that there had been Western plots to destroy communism). Clearly, Soviet security necessitated (temporary?) rapprochement with the West.

2. The "Soviet return to Europe".

i. 1934:-

the secret military co-operation with Germany was ended (although Stalin continued to supply Hitler with raw materials right up to the 1941

German invasion, in an attempt to appease Hitler. Stalin also worked to appease Japan, doubtless with the 1904-5 war in mind) and started an arms build-up (in full swing only with the Third Five Year Plan begun in 1938).

May, a 10 year Russo-Polish non-aggression pact was signed.

June, relations with Romania were resumed with the USSR recognizing the loss of Bessarabia.

September, Russia joined the League of Nations (which Germany and Japan had just left).

ii. 1935:-

2nd May, France and Russia signed a mutual defence treaty, to support the other if either were attacked by another power.

16th May, a Russo-Czech mutual defence treaty was signed (promising mutual aid in the event of an unprovoked attack by a third country), although Russian aid was to come only if the French fulfilled their 1924 treaty obligations to aid Czechoslovakia. (Unfortunately, the Poles would not let Russian troops pass through Poland to Czechoslovakia, and Romania, which was not such a good route, was not too co-operative.)

July-August, the 7th Comintern congress in Moscow halted revolutionary action against bourgeois governments, and encouraged communists to form popular fronts against right-wing Fascism. (The French and Spanish communists, with Dimitrov of Bulgaria, pressed for the new tactic.)

October, on Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia, Russia in vain demanded oil, coal and steel sanctions against Italy.

iii. 1936:- (nb. Russo-German relations reached their nadir, 1936-37, following the German denunciation of the 1925 Locarno Treaty in March, and the establishment of the Anti-Comintern Pact in November. In the Great Purge 1936-38, many of those tried were accused of working for the Germans.)

18th July, the Spanish Civil War began, with Mussolini and Hitler helping Franco. Litvinov in vain urged the League of Nations to intervene and until 1938 sent a modest amount of aid to the Loyalists (in which the communists were strong).

20th July, the Straits Convention was signed at Montreux. The USSR had supported the Turks in their demands. The convention restored Turkish sovereignty over the Straits at Constantinople, but allowed Black Sea powers to send their warships through in time of peace, while warships of other countries were banned; in time of war, if Turkey was neutral, no belligerent ships were to be allowed through unless authorised by the League; if Turkey was a

belligerent, it was left to the Turkish government to decide what ships might pass through. (This replaced the annex to the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, demilitarizing the Straits - which were to be guaranteed by Britain, France, and Italy - and permitting the transit of all merchant and warships while Turkey was at peace.)

August, conscription was introduced in the USSR.

December: introduction of the new Soviet constitution, in part an attempt to make the USSR more attractive to the West as an ally.

the Nationalists and the Communists in China were encouraged to make the Xian Compromise in December, ending the Second Revolutionary Civil War and forming an alliance to fight the Japanese.

3. Relations with Japan and China.

i. Stalin was anxious to avoid trouble with Japan. Thus, for example, Russia in 1935 sold its share of the East China Railway to Japan (having completed a link inside the USSR to Vladivostok).

ii. In December 1936, the Russians helped bring the Xian Compromise, to deal with the Japanese threat. Soviet equipment and advisers were sent to China. In 1937, China and Russia signed a non-aggression pact. Soviet aid to Jiang Jieshi 1937-39 included \$250 million in loans, 1,500 military advisers and 2,000 "volunteer" pilots.

iii. Between July and August 1938, border clashes between Russians and Japanese (were the Japanese testing Russian strength?) led to full-scale battle on the East Siberia-Manchukuo border at Changkufeng Hill near Vladivostok (usually called the Battle of Lake Hasan by the Russians). After almost two weeks of fighting, involving planes, tanks and heavy artillery, the Japanese were driven back and an armistice signed.

iv. In May 1939, fighting occurred again, the Japanese were thrown back from the Nomonhan district of Outer Mongolia, and agreed to a truce.

v. In April 1941, Russia and Japan signed a Neutrality Treaty for five years (denounceable after four years), but relations were uneasy. The Russian spy in Japan, Richard Sorge, in 1941 notified Stalin that the Japanese had no plans to attack Russia. Finally, on 8th August 1945, two days after the US dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Soviet forces - the Treaty with Japan having been denounced - attacked the Japanese in China, thereby starting the "Nine-Day War". Stalin had met Roosevelt and Churchill in February 1945 in the Yalta Conference, where he had promised Soviet entry in the Pacific Theatre and in turn been promised the Japanese-held territories of Southern Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands.

4. The Nazi-Soviet or Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact 1939.

i. Stalin's change of policy was the result of deteriorating relations with Japan, together with alarm at Western appeasement of Hitler and refusal to conclude an alliance with Russia.

ii. The Russians were not invited to the Munich Conference of September 1938, when the French and British Prime Ministers, Daladier and Chamberlain, agreed to the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. As the French had not honoured their 1924 treaty with the Czechs, the Russians concluded that their 1935 alliance with France was valueless, and that the West was trying to divert Germany to the East. Russia had publicly announced its willingness to support the Czechs but had not been supported.

iii. In March 1939, following Hitler's seizure on 15th March of the rest of Czechoslovakia, Litvinov proposed a conference of British, French, Polish, Soviet, and Turkish representatives to consider future military action, but the British government rejected the proposal as "premature" and no conference resulted. 21st March 1939, Hitler seized Memel, Lithuania's only sea-port.

iv. On 28 March 1939, Hitler's denunciation of the 1934 German-Polish Non-Aggression Pact was taken by the Russians as a clear signal of Hitler's aggressive intentions. Litvinov, in April, outlined a French, British, Russian alliance, with military commitment against Fascist powers, but Chamberlain's government procrastinated (partly because the Russians demanded too much - a guarantee to the Baltic States, complete reciprocity, and the right to send troops through Poland). However, Chamberlain, who already on 24th March had, with France, guaranteed Poland, now on 25th April signed a Pact of Mutual Assistance with Poland. Consequently, Stalin no longer feared that the West would leave Russia to fight Hitler alone; indeed, if, as seemed likely, Germany and the West went to war, Russia could afford to remain neutral and wait for the capitalists to destroy each other.

v. Thus in May 1939, Molotov was made Foreign Minister, and let it be known that he would welcome a peaceful settlement of issues with Germany.

At Hitler's suggestion, the German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop visited Moscow and 19th August 1939, a 7 year Nazi-Soviet trade agreement was signed for a German credit to Russia of 200 million marks, in exchange for raw materials - petrol, grain, cotton, phosphates and timber. Then 24th August, a 10-year non-aggression pact was signed, with, in addition, agreement for: consultation; arbitration if disagreement; neutrality if either went to war against a third power; no membership of a group "which is directly or indirectly aimed at the other"; and a secret clause, revealed only on Germany's defeat in 1945, establishing spheres of influence in Eastern Europe, with Poland

being divided. Stalin was well aware that Russian mobilization in 1914 had prompted war, and was very cautious in 1939.

Stalin must have been aware that the secret clause was likely to unleash war because it freed Hitler from the prospect of a war against the USSR as well as against Poland, France and Britain. Stalin, who had feared that the West was encouraging Hitler to fight Russia, was now encouraging Hitler to fight the West.

Stalin was always suspicious by nature, and relations with Germany after the 1939 Pact were not perfect; for example, Hitler supported the Finns in their 1939-40 war against Russia and considered Stalin's demands for war materiel excessive.

However, in 1947, Stalin said that he would have continued to work with Germany, had Hitler been willing; certainly, Stalin had more to gain from co-operation with Germany (for example, Poland) than from co-operation with Britain. According to E.H. Carr, Stalin was convinced that no German would be so stupid as to incur hostilities on two fronts, considering it axiomatic that if Germany was at war with the West, it would have to be friendly with Russia.

5. The Fifth Partition of Poland, September 1939, and Soviet expansion 1939-1940.

i. Stalin's expansion in 1939-40 seems to indicate a desire to acquire security through a buffer zone, rather than to acquire territory, or to restore the old Russian Empire, or to spread communism. Thus the occupation of the Baltic States followed the fall of France to the Germans, and the territory acquired from Finland in 1940 was, in the circumstances, a modest security for Leningrad. 1939-41 Soviet forces were expanded 2© times.

ii. When, on 1st September 1939, the Nazis invaded Poland (prompting Britain and France to declare war on 3rd September) and made rapid advances (on 17th September Warsaw surrendered to the Germans, and Polish resistance ended), Stalin, on 17th September occupied the Soviet sphere arranged in August, incorporating it, "by popular demand" into the Ukrainian and Belorussian Soviet Republics; he acted sooner than he had planned, but the German advance had been very rapid. Soviet and German troops clashed when they met up on 19th September near Brest-Litovsk, but general war was averted. While Hitler took Danzig and 32,000 sq. miles, with 22 million people, Stalin acquired 77,620 sq. miles with 13 million inhabitants.

In 1943, the Germans announced that they had found about 4,500 bodies in the Katyn Forest near Smolensk. Stalin denied German accusations that he had eliminated as many Polish leaders as he could; what

evidence there is corroborates the German claim (and probably at least 15,000 Poles in all were murdered).

Stalin denounced the Second World War as "an imperialist conflict" between "degenerate democracies and Fascism."

iii. The Winter War against Finland, November 1913-March 1940. The Finns (whose independence the Russians had recognized in 1920 by the Treaty of Dorpat) rejected Soviet offers of a mutual assistance treaty, and an exchange of territory, so that Leningrad would no longer be only 20 miles from the Finnish border. The Russians thereupon denounced their non-aggression pact with the Finns and attacked, without adequate preparation; possibly Stalin had assumed diplomacy and the threat of force would suffice. The Finns put up a heroic resistance but after 15 weeks had to agree to the March 1940 Treaty of Moscow. The Finnish border was pushed back a further 70 miles from Leningrad, but the Finns lost only 16,000 sq. miles (out of 118,000); neither was to attack or join an alliance against the other (however, 1941, the Finns joined the Germans, in the Finnish "War of Continuation", but once again, in 1944, had to make peace with the Russians). In December 1939, Russia was expelled from the League for aggression; Japan, Germany and Italy had left before being expelled.

iv. On the fall of France in June 1940, the Russians occupied Lithuania (according to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact within the German sphere, and so Stalin paid 30 million marks compensation), Latvia and Estonia, which had gained their independence from Russia during the First World War. Northern Bukovina (never part of Russia) and Bessarabia (which joined Romania after the First World War) were seized from Romania. The fall of France had meant that Russia would not be the arbiter of the war, and might even be the next victim, so the above buffer zones were needed.

6. Operation Barbarossa, June 1941, and the Great Fatherland (or Patriotic) War.

i. Stalin seems to have been convinced that Hitler would not attack, and ignored warnings from a number of sources about an impending attack. When the attack (Operation Barbarossa) began, 22 June 1941, Stalin seems to have lost his nerve; at least, there was no public announcement from Stalin until 3rd July (although, thereafter, he courageously stayed in Moscow and directed the fighting, even when German troops reached the outskirts of Moscow).

ii. However, Stalin had planned for a great expansion of the Soviet armed forces, to be completed by 1942. Already, by 1941, the Soviet army had increased in size by two and a half times and as much industrial production as possible had been moved beyond the Urals, where it would be

safer. (Nevertheless, Medvedev maintains that Stalin did not make full use of the respite from 1939; for example, many tank units were without their full complement of men and equipment; spares were in short supply; much equipment was in threatened areas; and the army had no defence plan in the event of attack, and no camouflage.)

iii. Stalin's condemnation of the West, especially of Britain (the Russians had objected in particular to the British blockade of Germany as an infringement of maritime commerce), not surprisingly ended, and 12th July 1941, Britain and Russia signed the Moscow Treaty for mutual assistance (extended by the May 1942 treaty).

V. 1941-53. (see work on the Second World War, the Cold War, and China).

1. The Great Patriotic War, although it devastated the USSR, left the USSR as one of two super-powers, dominating Eastern Europe (if not Western Europe too).

2. The relatively good relations between Russia and the West (especially the US) did not long survive the Second World War, and by 1947, the Cold War was under way. The first phase of the German Crisis (the Berlin Blockade of 1948-49) and the Korean War 1950-53, seemed to take the world to the edge of general war. In 1949, the USSR exploded its first atom bomb, 4 years after the US.

VI. An estimate.

1. Stalin saved Russia and communism from destruction (for example, by gaining adoption of the policy of socialism in one country; by his modernization, admittedly negated to a large extent by the purges; by his leadership from 1941, when, with Molotov, Voroshilov, Malenkov and Beria - the five of them making up the Supreme Defence Council - he ran the war).

2. The Second World War enabled him to make the USSR a great power.

3. Medvedev takes Stalin to task for not expanding communism more, despite the opportunities. For example, he failed to help Mao and the Chinese communists in the 1946-49 Chinese Civil War against the Nationalists.

Stalin's failure to help was probably the result of his having more pressing use for scarce resources following the war, and his view that Mao was not a true communist. Medvedev also points out that communism would have done better throughout the world, had Stalin not tarnished its reputation by his brutality (with the Russians). In December 1939, Russia was expelled from the League for aggression; Japan, Germany and Italy