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# The Federation of Soviet Republics:

## Interview with *Inprecorr*, Moscow, circa Jan. 10, 1923

### by J. Stalin

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*The correspondent of the Inprecorr in Moscow interviewed Comrade Stalin on the union of the Soviet Republics. Comrade Stalin expressed the following opinions:*

The alliance of the independent socialist Soviet republics into a unified federative states, consummated at the first Federative Congress at the end of December 1922, represents a new phase in the development of the movement towards union, already begun in 1918.

During the years of civil war and intervention, as the existence of the Soviet republics was in deadly danger, these republics were obliged to form a military alliance in order to secure their very existence. This phase of *military alliance* [was] now, at the end of 1921 and the beginning of 1922, passing into a new phase of development, for the great capitalist powers have lost faith in the power of intervention, and are attempting to reestablish capitalist property in Russia by diplomatic and not by military methods. At Genoa [April 10-May 19, 1922] and at The Hague [June 15-July 19, 1922] the *diplomatic united front* of the Soviet republics acted as a counterforce to the diplomatic pressure of capitalism. The agreement of the 8 independent Soviet republics, and the Republic of the Far East, formed on this basis after the Genoa Conference, must be designated as a creation of this united front. But later on the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic proved insufficient; the necessity was felt for a closer alliance.

Among the factors pressing the Soviet republics to union, one of the most important is the internal *economic situation* of the republics: the great dearth of resources resulting from the 7 years of war; the insufficient financial means at their disposal for proper utilization and development of the fundamental branches of production. Another factor is the natural division of work historically originating in the economics of the republics, and the uniformity of the traffic network covering the whole federation.

The alliance was further dictated by the position of the Soviet republics with regard to other countries. The danger of attacks on the part of the capitalist powers demands a *united army* and a *united military front* — especially now that the Red Army is reduced to 600,000 men. Besides being liable to military attacks, the Soviet republics are exposed to the danger of economic isolation, of being boycotted by being capitalist great powers. The events that preceded the conference at Lausanne [convened Nov. 21, 1922, joined by Soviets Nov. 28, ongoing as of this writing], and those at Genoa and The Hague, show the endeavor of the Entente to *isolate* the Soviet republics. Unity with regard to foreign relations is thus a necessity.

Finally, the formation of a united federation of socialist Soviet republics is actually dictated by the *nature of the Soviet* as opposed to that of any bourgeois government, in that it is *international* in its essence, and brings every pressure upon the working masses of the separate nationalities to unite into one socialist family.

The combination of all these factors has prepared the soil for the alliance.

The initiative towards the alliance has been taken by the republics themselves. Three or four months ago the republics of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia brought up the question of forming an alliance of republics; the Caucasian republics were joined by the Ukraine and White Russia [Belorussia].

On December 10 [1922], the alliance was decided upon by the Soviet Congress of the Caucasian Federation; on December 13, by the Soviet Congress of the Ukraine; and after this decision had also been accepted by the last All-Russian Soviet Congress [10th, Moscow: Dec. 23-27, 1922] the First Federative Congress of the Soviets was held in Moscow on December 30, and the Federation of Socialist Soviet Republics was formed.

This Union was joined by the RSFSR as a united federative body, the Trans-Caucasian Republic, also as a federated whole (Azerbaijan,

Georgia, Armenia), the Ukraine, and White Russia. The two Soviet republics, Bukhara and Khiva, which are not socialist but people's republics, are not included in the federation. The RSFSR forms the greater part of the federation.

The fundamental principle of the Federation of the S.S. Republics is that the republics are voluntarily affiliated, have equal rights, and retain the right of leaving the federation of republics.

The supreme organs of the Federation of the S.S. Republics are: the Federative Central Executive Committee, based on proportional representation, and the Federative Council of People's Commissars, elected by the former body as its Executive organ. As regards the separate commissariats, those for foreign trade, army, navy, traffic, and foreign relations are amalgamated, so that special commissariats in the separate republics will cease to exist; on the other hand the commissariats for finance, political economy, local government boards, labor, and inspection will be retained in each republic, but in such a manner that they act in accordance with directions issued by corresponding commissariats of the federative center. The remaining commissariats, as those for agriculture, justice, education, national affairs, etc., having special reference to the customs and habits, cultural level, and to the special forms of land cultivation and jurisdiction of the various peoples, are left to the independent regulation of each of the allied republics. One effect of this is to secure the freedom of national development of the peoples belonging to the Federation of Soviet Republics.

This is the form of peaceful relations, of fraternal cooperation, of more than 50 nationalities, within the limits of a united state now created on the frontier between Europe and Asia. This is the solution of the nationality question which has been found by the Soviet republics. What the old and much praised bourgeois democracy has failed to accomplish has been performed in one blow by the new Soviet democracy. The peoples formerly held together by Tsarism, with the aid of the knout, within the limits of a single state, and who strove towards independence with every fiber of their being, these peoples have now united of their own accord to form a united state federation, and to point to the world the way towards the formation of the Socialist World Soviet Republic.

*Edited by Tim Davenport*

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