

Speech Delivered by Comrade J. Stalin at a Meeting of Voters of the Stalin Electoral Area, Moscow

[Text \(English\)](#) | [Audio \(Russian\)](#)

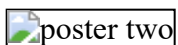
Notes on this document

It may come as a surprise to many that Soviet Communist Party leader Iosif Stalin ran campaigns for electoral political office in the USSR — not once but twice. Not surprisingly, Stalin won both times. The document here is the text of Stalin's one and only "stump speech" from his first electoral "race." The institution to which Stalin aspired was the Supreme Soviet, a large bicameral parliament created by the so-called "Stalin Constitution" of 1936.



From the early 1930s the Soviet Union's calculated and systematic leadership cult was in full swing. Official ideology proclaimed the achievement of socialism to be at hand and a modification of the political superstructure in the form of expanded socialist democracy was deemed by the party officialdom to be the order of the day. Competitive races were strongly hinted at. Even the Great Stalin would run for office, it was declared. This is not to say that Stalin's race would be anything other than a formulaic pre-ordained vote of confidence, a plan made readily apparent when it was announced that Stalin had been nominated by each of the 3,346 electoral districts as their desired deputy. As Stalin could stand for election in only one precinct, the central Moscow district, already deemed to be the "Stalin Electoral District," was chosen, for reasons which seem apparent.

During the first part of December, the top leaders of the Soviet state had each made their own public speeches in the nation's capital as part of the electoral festivities. On Saturday night, December 11, 1937, it was at last the supreme leader's turn. A "special meeting" was held in the ornate Bolshoi Theater with Nikita Sergeivich Khrushchev, head of the Moscow party organization, serving as chairman. Preliminary speeches of nomination were made by two factory workers, a doctor, a teacher, and a housewife while top party leaders sat in the audience and applauded these modest oratorical efforts by these chosen representatives of the masses.¹ Called to the rostrum to speak by Khrushchev, Stalin was met by an extended ovation punctuated by what seems to have been premeditated shouts of adulation. Clad in his trademarked khaki tunic, Stalin delivered a rather sedate and at times folksy 25 minute address to the carefully selected throng of "electors," a speech interrupted some 30 times by applause. The speech was almost certainly broadcast by radio and was recorded and reproduced as a set of five 78 rpm records. The text of this "Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Voters of the Stalin Electoral Area" was quickly published in Moscow in pamphlet form. An English translation soon followed, produced by the main state publishing house under the imprint of the "Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR."



Strangely, this speech was never published in pamphlet form by the Communist Party of the United States, nor by the CPGB in the UK. This situation was doubly peculiar given that this was one of only a tiny handful of speeches delivered by Stalin after 1936. Lest conspiracy theory creep in, scholars should be advised that the speech was in no way "secret" from CPUSA and CPGB members, as it appeared in the daily party press and as the lead article in the January 1938 issue of the Comintern's widely circulated theoretical magazine, *The Communist International*.

Yet, further publication of the 1937 Election Speech remained extremely sporadic. The speech was not included in any edition of Stalin's selected works, nor in Stalin's collected works.² Indeed, Stalin's 1937 election speech was only officially published in English by either the Soviet government or the Anglo-American communist

movement one other time, as the second part of a Moscow-issued booklet headed by Stalin's 1946 electoral speech. The text of this later edition was expurgated to conveniently omit Stalin's tip of the hat to Nikolai Ezhov, former head of the secret police who was shot as an "enemy of the people" on Feb. 4, 1940, after 300 days of investigative incarceration. Scholars should be advised that it does not necessarily follow that this "misstep" in Stalin's 1937 oration was the cause of the omission of this speech from the definitive 11th Russian Edition of Stalin's selected works in 1939.

Notes prepared by

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[1.](#) Pravda, Dec. 12, 1937, cited in Robert McNeal, *Stalin: Man and Ruler*. (Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 1988), pg. 208.

[2.](#) Stalin's selected works was variously titled in English as *Problems of Leninism*, *Leninism*, and *Selected Writings* and was based on the 1939 "11th Russian Edition" and reissued numerous times from 1940 through 1954. Stalin's (very incomplete) *Sochineniia/Works* project was abruptly terminated in Russian in 1952 and in English translation in 1955, halting with volume 13, covering material published through January 1934.

[Audio \(Russian\)](#)

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