

STALIN SPEAKS

The full text of Speeches made November 6-7 and July 3; together with Calls to Action issued by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

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Soviet Leaders by IVOR MONTAGU



TIMOSHENKO

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Timoshenko

SIMEON TIMOSHENKO (Semén Konstantínovitch Timoshénko), Marshal of the Soviet Union, was one of the three Commanders-in-Chief into whose hands was entrusted, in the early part of July, the leadership of the Red Army against the attack by Hitler's Reichswehr.

Timoshenko is a big man, very tall, clean-shaven and with shaven head, high forehead, strong jaw and an extremely attractive smile. He is 46 years old. He was born in 1895, of poor peasant stock, in the village of Furmanka, Izmailov County, Bessarabia. The typically Ukrainian ending to his name "enko," shows that Timoshenko's forbears must be Ukrainian and not Moldavian, as are

the majority of inhabitants of the region of his birth.

Farm Labourer

He went to school in the village. His parents were too poor to send him to high school in the nearest township, as he had hoped, and he became a farm labourer.

When Timoshenko, at the head of the Red Armies, led his troops into Bessarabia in 1940 and the province was re-united to Soviet Moldavia after having been seized by the Rumanian reactionaries twenty years before, Timoshenko met and embraced his brother, still a poor and oppressed labourer, on the estate where he himself had worked in the bygone days.

In 1915, Timoshenko was conscripted into the Tsar's army. First he had six months' training in a reserve battalion. Then he was sent to the First Oranienbaum Machine-Gun Regiment for a course of instruction in the new American machine-guns, of

which a few were arriving for the Russian Army at that time.

On completing this course, Timoshenko was sent to the Fourth Cavalry Division, and participated with it in fighting on what we called the Eastern, and the Russians call the "Western" Front; this was the Byelorussian front, between Minsk and Smolensk, where in July, 1941, this recruit of the first world war took up his post as Commander-in-Chief of the armies stemming the German advance.

Support for Soviet

In the first days after the revolution of October, 1917, the whole of the cavalry division in which Timoshenko was serving declared itself for the new Soviet Government. Soon after, the war against Germany ended; but, assisted by German and other invaders, a number of groups took up arms against the revolution. In March, 1918, as soon as he had been demobilised from the old army, Timoshenko joined the First Black Sea

Detachment of Partisans (or, as they are called today, "guerillas"). This detachment operated in the Crimea against the invaders occupying the coast there and the "White Guard" bands, the counter-revolutionaries whom these were assisting. The guerillas elected their own officers, and Timoshenko was elected first a platoon and afterwards a squadron commander.

Commander

Before long the guerillas transferred themselves northward to the Kuban area, joined forces with the Red Guards there, and the former guerillas reconstituted themselves as the First Crimean Revolutionary Cavalry Regiment, with Timoshenko as commander.

Suddenly the Commander-in-Chief of the Red forces in the Kuban, Sorokin, revealed himself as a traitor and went over to the enemy. Timoshenko extricated his regiment and set

out for Tsaritsyn, fighting intervening White Guard detachments on the way.

"Red Verdun"

Tsaritsyn was being defended by the Tenth Army under Voroshilov, a defence led by Voroshilov and Stalin, and sometimes called the "Red Verdun." Timoshenko and his men became incorporated in the Tenth Army, and he was appointed Commander of the Second Separate Cavalry Brigade. Throughout the siege he led dashing cavalry attacks against the Cossack units of the besiegers at picked sectors of the front

When the siege was relieved and the enemy driven to the south Timoshenko became commander of the Third Brigade of Budyenny's 4th Cavalry Division, acting as second-in-command to Budvenny himself. In this capacity, in October, 1919, his Brigade distinguished itself by a frontal attack on Voronesh, forcing the river crossing

under fire and capturing the city and numerous prisoners.

Following this success, Timoshenko was promoted Commander of the 6th Cavalry Division, and in decisive operations to clear the Voronezh-Kursk railway contributed not a little to the victory at Kastorna. After withstanding repeated and powerful attacks, Timoshenko skilfully managed to get his men around and into position to counter-attack the enemy in flank and rear, while Budyenny and the rest pierced his front, thus obliging numerically enormously superior enemy forces to withdraw in disorder.

On the initiative of Stalin, the various cavalry units were combined to form the First Cavalry Army in November, 1919.

Denikin's armies retreated through the Donetsk coal region, as Stalin had foreseen in his remarkable plan for the operations, pursued by the First Cavalry Army. Bringing up Denikin's rear was the Cossack Army Corps

under Generals Mamontov and Skurov. In the van of the First Cavalry Army was Timoshenko's Sixth Cavalry Division. They caught up with Mamontov and Skurov near the village of Bolshaya Krepskaya, and throughout a whole day launched attack after attack with such fierceness that the whole Cossack Corps was defeated before the First Cavalry Army's main forces arrived on the scene.

Enemy Routed

For his feats here and during the following months in finally disposing the enemy forces in the Don region, Timoshenko was awarded a Sword of Honour by the First Cavalry Army Revolutionary Military Council. On January 7, in a battle at the "General's Bridge" near Rostov, his 6th Cavalry Division after continuous attacks throughout a day had driven the enemy into a panic flight, in which artillery, transport and wounded

had been abandoned. A short while later it participated in the defeat of the enemy resistance in the North Caucasus. Then followed a period in which Timoshenko actively reorganised and trained the cavalry staff commands.

Meets Lenin

In 1920 Timoshenko was elected by the First Cavalry Army as its delegate to the Eighth Congress of Soviets, and there, for the first time, met Lenin. In the summer he participated in the fighting that raged to and fro over the, as yet unfixed, frontiers in Poland, Byelorussia and the Ukraine. In a brilliant move he led his division as far as Rovno, and during the subsequent general retreat when the First Cavalry Army became cut off and surrounded, he transferred to command of the Fourth Cavalry Division, and, teaching the necessity of absolute discipline as well as quick initiative in such a situation, maintained morale and breached the enemy lines near

Samosla, enabling the whole army to escape from encirclement.

Badly Wounded

After these operations the Cavalry Army went south again, and embarked on the offensive against Kornilov and Wrangel in the Crimea, launched in October, 1920. In a bitter day-long defence in the course of this fighting, Timoshenko was badly wounded, but continued to command his Fourth Division for several hours despite his wound, receiving an Order of the Red Banner for this heroism. The wound kept him out of active operations for several months, but he was well enough the following year to take part in the clearing up of the bandits under Makhno in the Ukraine and the last remnants of Denikin's forces in the North Caucasus.

From the end of the Civil War, Timoshenko has been associated with the building up of the Red Army as a modern force. He first attended the

Higher Military Academy, graduating in 1922. In March, 1925, he was appointed Commander-Commissar of the Third Cavalry Corps. In 1927, he took and completed the course for the Higher Command. In August, 1933, he was appointed Assistant-Commander of the troops of the Byelorussian Military District. This is the one centred around Minsk, the region where in the present war he first directed operations as Commander-in-Chief of the Western sector. Then for a period Timoshenko was detailed abroad, where he made a study of the armies of other countries.

Local Commands

On his return Timoshenko took up a series of local commands. From September, 1935 to June, 1937, he was Assistant Commander of the Kiev military district; from June to September, 1937, Commander of the troops and member of the Military Council of the North Caucasus Military

District; from September, 1937 to February, 1938, Commander of the troops and member of the Military Council of the Kharkov Military District; from February, 1938, Commander of the troops and member of the Military Council of the Kiev Special Military District.

He thus acquired a comprehensive and personal acquaintance with all the problems of military organisation and the terrain involved in the defence of the U.S.S.R.'s Western Borders.

Thorough Experience

There is not a region where fighting has so far taken place in the present war, where Timoshenko has not already had both fighting and organisational experience. Though the tactics, of course, were on a far larger scale, his victory over von Kleist at Rostov in November, 1940, only repeated his victory there over Denikin's forces twenty-one years previously.

In September, 1939, it was units

under his command who marched into the Western Ukraine. He took part in operations in Finland.

Order of Lenin

For his feats in the Civil War, in which he had been wounded five times, Timoshenko was awarded in all three orders of the Red Banner and a sword of honour. For his services in strengthening the Soviet defence forces during the period of peace, he was awarded the Order of Lenin. For courage in Finland he was awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union, a second Order of Lenin and the Gold Star Medal.

On May 7, 1940, Timoshenko was appointed People's Commissar for Defence in succession to Voroshilov and promoted to the rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union. It was as People's Commissar and thus head of the Red Army that he entered Bessarabia.

To Timoshenko, more than to any

other single man, it has fallen to put the finishing polish on the Red Army, ready for the task it has now to face. The military manoeuvres of 1940 were conducted under his guidance in conditions approximating as nearly as can be possible in mock battles to those of actual modern warfare. There is a remarkable film of a part of them, wherein Timoshenko can be seen here, there and everywhere giving personal attention to every corner and district where the manoeuvres were taking place, and subsequently in person, expounding the lessons of them to the commanding personnel. (Parts of this film are reproduced in the picture shown in Britain as "Our Russian Allies.") The manoeuvres that were beginning in 1941, and were interrupted by Hitler's attack, were being carried out under his supervision in the same manner.

Command in Centre

When Hitler launched his attack on the U.S.S.R., Timoshenko was placed

in charge of the resistance in the centre, along the road through Smolensk to Moscow and, to enable him to concentrate on this, Stalin personally took over the Defence Commissarship.

Here Timoshenko succeeded in holding up the Nazi advance for many weeks, inflicting a defeat on Guderian's tank forces and recovering ground by a counter-attack. When the danger was at its greatest, and the Nazi advance approaching the Moscow defences, which had been organised by Zhukov while in the south, at the end of Budyenny's long and skilful retirements the whole Don basin lay open to the invaders and the Caucasus was threatened, Timoshenko was transferred to reconstitute the southern front, with the brilliant results that are already history.

Dates :

- 1895 Born in Bessarabia.
- 1915 Conscripted.
- 1918-1921 Civil war operations, as guerilla fighter, and as cavalry leader at Tsaritsyn, in the Ukraine, in the North Caucasus, in Poland, in the Crimea, etc.; wounded five times; awarded three orders of the Red Banner and a sword of honour.
- 1920 Delegate to the 8th Congress of Soviets and member of the Communist Party.
- 1922 Graduated from the Higher Military Academy.
- 1927 Graduated Higher Command course.
- 1933 Assistant-Command in Byelorussia.
- 1934 Abroad studying foreign armies.
- 1935-1939 Assistant-commands and commands at Kiev, Kharkov, and in North Caucasus; awarded Order of Lenin for services in army construction.
- 1939-1940 Operations in West Ukraine and in Finland; awarded title of Hero of the Soviet Union, a second Order of Lenin, and a Gold Star Medal.
- 1940 Appointed People's Commissar for Defence and promoted Marshal of the U.S.S.R., operations in Bessarabia.
- 1941 Vice-Defence Commissar and Commander-in-Chief of the Western (Byelorussian) front; later Commander-in-Chief of the Southern front.
- Elected, January 1938, deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.; also elected deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the Ukraine S.S.R.