

Joseph V. Stalin. On Soviet Industrialization Speech to Industrial Managers, February 1931.



...To slacken the tempo would mean falling behind. And those who fall behind get beaten. But we do not want to be beaten. No, we refuse to be beaten! One feature of the history of old Russia was the continual beatings she suffered because of her backwardness. She was beaten by the Mongol khans. She was beaten by the Turkish beys. She was beaten by the Swedish feudal lords. She was beaten by the Polish and Lithuanian gentry. She was beaten by the British and French capitalists. She was beaten by the Japanese barons. All beat her because of her backwardness, military backwardness, cultural backwardness, political backwardness, industrial backwardness, agricultural backwardness. They beat her because to do so was profitable and could be done with impunity. Do you remember the words of the prerevolutionary poet: "You are poor and abundant, mighty and impotent, Mother Russia." Those gentlemen were quite familiar with the verses of the old poet. They beat her, saying: "You are abundant; so one can enrich oneself at your expense. They beat her, saying: "You are poor and impotent "" so you can be beaten and plundered with impunity. Such is the law of the exploiters - to beat the backward and the weak. It is the jungle law of capitalism. You are backward, you are weak-therefore you are wrong; hence, you can be beaten and enslaved. You are mighty-therefore you are right; hence, we must be wary of you. That is why we must no longer lag behind.

We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it, or we shall be crushed.

Source: J. V. Stalin, Problems of Leninism, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953