USSR AND STALIN
### IB SL HISTORY PAPER 2 - USSR AND STALIN

| Origins and Nature of authoritarian and single-party states | Conditions that led to the emergence of Single Party State:  
| Conditions in Russia before the Russian Revolution in 1917  
| Overview of the Revolution and its impact.  
| The Civil War and Lenin’s Leadership and policies  
| Situation in Russia on Lenin’s Death |

#### Key Question: 'How had Life Changed in Russia under Lenin politically, socially and economically?'

| Origins and Nature of authoritarian and single-party states | Lenin’s death and the struggle for leadership.  
| Emergence of Stalin, his background, aims, ideology and support.  
| Methods used to come to power.  
| Concept of Totalitarianism: Stalin’s aims and overview the extent to which it was achieved. |

#### Key Questions:

'What Methods and conditions did Stalin use to gain power?'

'What were Stalin’s aims and ideology?'

'To what extent was the rise to power of Stalin due to personal appeal and ability?'

| Structure and organisation of Government and administration  
| Methods and use of force: show trials, purges and secret police.  
| Nature, extent and treatment of opposition in his early years.  
| Political opposition, military and ordinary people in opposition. |

#### Key Questions:

'How did Stalin keep control?'

'Account for the ineffectiveness of internal opposition to Stalin.'

"In order to achieve and retain power a leader of a single-party state needed to be ruthless, blind to human suffering and yet charismatic." To what extent do you agree with this assertion?

'Assess the importance of ideology in Stalin’s policies.'

'Assess the methods used by Stalin to maintain power.'
### Domestic policies and impact.

- **Stalin’s Economic Policies:**
  - Modernising Industry: the Five Year Plans and impact.
  - Modernising agriculture: Collectivisation and impact.
  - Successes and weaknesses of economic policies.

### Key Question:
"To what extent were the economic policies for the good of the USSR or were they established to consolidate Stalin’s power?"

### Domestic policies and impact.

- **Propaganda: the Cult of the Personality – Stalinisation**
- **Education and the treatment of the young**
- **The Treatment of Women in Stalin’s Russia**
- **Religion, art and culture under Stalin**
- **Treatment of the Minorities under Stalin**

### Key Questions:
- ‘How had life changed for people living during Stalin’s rule?’
- ‘To what extent had Stalin managed a ‘Social Revolution’?’
- ‘Assess the successes and failures of Stalin’s Domestic policies’.
- ‘In what ways and with what results was propaganda used under Stalin?’
- ‘Examine the treatment of women in Stalinist Russia.’
- ‘Assess the Education policy and/or the developments of the arts in the USSR under Stalin.’
- ‘To what extent was the USSR an orthodox communist state under Stalin?’
Origins of Stalin’s Russia
Background - Geography of Russia

Area: 17,025,200 square km. Around twice the size of the U.S.
Climate: ranging from sub-arctic in Siberia to humid in much of European Russia.
Terrain: Low hills, steppe, forest, arctic tundra, mountains....the lot!
Despite its size, much of the country is either too cold or the soil is too dry for agriculture.
Nicholas II and the crisis of Tsarism

- Came to throne at age 29.

- Historians agree he was unprepared. Wept and said ‘I’m not ready!’

- Little knowledge or experience, timid, yet stubborn belief in moral rightness of autocracy and god-given powers.

- Didn’t want to make decisions, but didn’t trust able ministers

- Made a number of disastrous decisions, including becoming Commander in chief of the Army in 1915 which led to him being blamed for failure at War and leaving Alexandra and Rasputin to rule at home.
Autocracy, Orthodoxy, Nationality

- AUTOCRACY – God’s appointed ruler on earth. The ‘Little Father.’ Tsar Paul I (1796-1801) ‘no one is important in Russia except the man who is speaking to me, and then only when he is speaking to me.

- Moscow was head of the ORTHODOX Church from 1453 (after Constantinople fell to the Turks). The Patriarch of Moscow worked closely with the Tsar

Causes of the February 1917 Revolution

- Difficult living conditions – food and fuel shortages
- World War I military failures
- Role of political groups
- Rasputin
- Autocracy of Nicolas II
- Unemployment and Industrial Unrest.
Key events of February 1917 Revolution

- 23rd February: International Women’s Day. Thousands take to streets to protest about food shortages.
- 25th February: A general strike. Troops fire on demonstrators but lose morale.
- 26th February: Duma refuses to disband; troops join demonstrators.
- 27th February: Provisional Duma Committee and Petrograd Soviet set up.
- 28th February: Widespread looting and violence.
- 2nd March: Tsar abdicates. Provisional government set up. Soviet Order No.1 gives control of the army to the Soviets.

Interpretations: ‘one of the most leaderless, spontaneous, anonymous revolutions of all time (Chamberlain). ‘We may not live to see the revolution in our lifetime (Lenin, January 1917)
The lead up to October 1917

- 3rd-4th April: Lenin returns. Publishes April Theses.
- May 1917: Mensheviks and SRs join a new coalition Provisional Government.
- June 1917: First All Russian Congress of Soviets. Kerensky launches disastrous offensive against A-H.
- 7th October 1917: Lenin arrives back in Petrograd.
- 24th October 1917: Kerensky closes Pravda in response to Zinoviev and Kamenev article.
- 25th-27th October 1917: Bolsheviks storm Winter Palace and seize power.
HOW DID THE BOLSHEVIKS WIN THE CIVIL WAR?

**PROPAGANDA**
Bolsheviks used powerful images for posters and AGITPROP trains

**LEADERSHIP**
Trotsky an outstanding leader. Discipline tough – as opposed to White’s Discipline

**UNITY**
Bolsheviks had a unified command structure. Whites had many different groups fighting for different causes.

**GEOGRAPHY**
Reds controlled Moscow and Petrograd. Railways, troops, supplies easier.

**SUPPORT**
Peasants and nationalities favoured Red policies. Not happy with War Communism though.
How did Lenin consolidate his power 1917-24?

SPLINTER

• **SOVNARKOM**  
  Lenin closed Constituent Assembly and formed Sovnarkom made exclusively of Bolsheviks (one party state).

• **PRESS**  
  All opposition press was banned and restrictions were placed on religious freedom.

• **LAND**  
  Decree on Land gave peasants the right to take over land and for a time schools were discouraged to promote work.

• **INDUSTRY**  
  Workers Control Decree gave factory committees the right to control production. Trade Unions were banned though.

• **NATIONALITIES**  
  ‘Rights of People of Russia’ gave self-determination to peoples of Russian Empire.

• **TERROR**  
  Iron Felix and CHEKA. Purges and show trials began and concentration camps set up.

• **ENDING WAR**  
  Treaty of Brest Litovsk, but USSR’s international role left unresolved.

• **RED ARMY**  
  Red Army formed to fight Civil War against ‘Whites’.
THE LEGACY OF LENIN – COMMUNIST PARTY IN USSR

Politburo
Formulates policy
(Political Bureau of Central Committee)
Stalin a member from 1917

Orgburo
Responsible for Organisation and admin
Ran the Politburo
Stalin responsible for Liaising between Orgburo and Politburo from 1919

Central Committee
Ran Party when Party Congress not in session
Included all key officials

Secretariat
Civil Service
Worked for Politburo and Sovnarkom
Stalin appointed General Secretary in 1922

Party Congress
Representatives from Regional and district branches
Elected Central Committee

Council of People’s Commissars
Cabinet of Ministers chosen by leading Members of Party
Each Commissar was responsible for a Department of Gov
Stalin appointed People’s Commissar for War in 1918
By 1921 all members were Communists
Superseded in importance by Politburo after Lenin’s death in 1924

All-Russian Central Committee
Senior Government administrators
Selected from All-Russian Congress

All-Russian Congress
Fulfilled roles of Parliament
Deputies elected from regional soviets
All deputies were Communist
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY DATE</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Death of Lenin</td>
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<td>Politburo decide on ‘collective leadership’</td>
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<td>Lenin’s Testament is suppressed</td>
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<td>1925</td>
<td>Trotsky loses position as War Commissar</td>
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<td>Kamenev and Zinoviev head ‘United Opposition’</td>
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<td>1926</td>
<td>Trotsky joins Kamenev and Zinoviev in Left political bloc.</td>
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<td>Stalin’s supporters defeat them</td>
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<td>1927</td>
<td>Stalin persuades Congress to expel Trotsky from CPSU</td>
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<td>1928</td>
<td>Stalin attacks Right over agricultural policy (NEP)</td>
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<td>1929</td>
<td>Leading figures on Right finally defeated by Stalin and demoted in CPSU</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Trotsky exiled from USSR</td>
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</table>
STALIN’S METHODS OF GAINING CONTROL

STALIN’S PERSONALITY AND BACKGROUND AND CAREER

• 1879 Born in Georgia and began revolutionary activities and was the brains behind many violent campaigns that raised money for the Party.

• 1905 Met Lenin who was impressed by his organisation abilities and willingness to obey orders. He once described him as ‘that wonderful Georgian’.

• 1912 adopted the name ‘Stalin’ (the Man of Steel) and became a member of the Central Committee and founded ‘Pravda’ (‘the Truth’ newspaper).

• 1914-17 spent the war in exile in Siberia.

• 1917 returned to Petrograd and became People’s Commissar for Nationalities. This meant he was in charge of officials from the many regions. Denounced Kamenev and Zinoviev as ‘October deserters’.

• 1919 Liaison officer for Politburo and Orgburo which allowed him to monitor both Party policy and party personnel.

• 1922 he became General Secretary of the Communist Party in which he recorded and conveyed Party policy. Nothing of note happened that Stalin did not know about. However, he upset Lenin’s wife by calling her a ‘whore’ just before Lenin dictated his ‘Testament’ on the 22nd December 1922 suggesting Stalin should be removed from his position as General Secretary.

• 1924 Delivered the oration at Lenin’s funeral and told Trotsky the wrong date so that he would not attend and be seen as the chief mourner.
# HOW DID STALIN BECOME LEADER?

**PERSONALITY, BACKGROUND AND ROLES IN PARTY**

- See previous slide
- He was always a Bolshevik and had a revolutionary background
- He used his positions to gain the power of patronage

**PROPAGANDA**

- He played on his peasant man of the people background opposed to Trotsky’s aloof reputation
- He doctored photographs to show how he was Lenin’s right hand man
- He didn’t tell Trotsky the correct date of the funeral so he would be chief mourner at Lenin’s funeral
- He suppressed Lenin’s testament

**POLICY/IDEOLOGY**

- He believed in ‘Socialism in one Country’ as opposed to Trotsky’s ‘Permanent Revolution’. This was popular as people had enough of war
- He used the New Economic Policy adopted by Lenin to oppose both the Left and the Right and using both sides of the argument to outwit opponents

**POLITICAL MANOEUVERING**

- Stalin used popular opposition to Trotsky to win the votes in 1925 to remove Trotsky from his position as Commissar for War.
- When Kamenev and Zinoviev wanted to abandon the NEP Stalin used his support to outvote them and get them dismissed.
- He then used the same arguments the Left had used to defeat the Right (Rykov, Tomsky and Bukharin) so he could begin his Industrialisation policies (5 Year Plans and Collectivisation)
# STALIN AND THE SOVIET ECONOMY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AIMS:</th>
<th>To Revolutionise Agriculture and Industry and to transform the country from agrarian to industrial.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Referred to as the ‘Second Revolution’ (or Revolution from above) it attempted to modernise the economy through collectivisation and industrialisation</td>
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<td>Wanted to catch up and then overtake advanced economies of West Europe and USA within the shortest time possible.</td>
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<td>Personal Motives of Stalin to confirm his authority as leader</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Critical Resolution by Party Congress on the future of the Soviet Economy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discussed aim of transforming economy from agrarian to industrial.</td>
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<td>1928</td>
<td>Collectivisation begins</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Start of the First Five Year Plan</td>
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<td>1932-33</td>
<td>Widespread Famine in the USSR</td>
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<td>1933</td>
<td>Start of Second Five Year Plan</td>
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<td>1938</td>
<td>Start of Third Five Year Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Germany invades and occupies Russia</td>
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</table>
**ECONOMIC POLICY – AGRICULTURE - COLLECTIVISATION**

| COLLECTIVISATION | • To raise capital to develop industry Stalin believed he needed to use the land.  
|                  | • He wanted to take the land from the peasants, nationalise it and pool all their efforts and equipment to be more productive  
|                  | • The USSR would then collect profits from land to fund industry |
| TWO TYPES OF FARMS | • **Collective Farms**: farms run as cooperatives in which peasants pooled resources and shared labour and wages  
|                  | • **State Farms**: Peasants worked directly for the state and received a wage.  
|                  | • The plan was to group 50-100 farms together and would be more efficient and could use bigger machinery. |
| THE KULAKS | • He identified a class of peasants who monopolised the best land and who employed cheap peasant labour to farm it. He argued these Kulaks were holding back the workers revolution and preventing modernisation of the USSR.  
|                  | • The Kulaks were a Stalinist myth to persuade and coerce the peasantry to conform to collectivisation. |
| SURPLUS PEASANTS AND GRAIN | • Stalin had little sympathy for peasants as he believed the future belonged to the urban workers.  
|                  | • He wanted surplus peasants to move to the towns to work on industry.  
|                  | • He wanted surplus grain to be handed to the Government so they could sell to make profit – however, there was no surplus grain. |
| DE-KULAKISATION | • Some poor peasants undertook ‘de-kulakisation’ motivated by settling old scores and local jealousies.  
|                  | • Land and property were taken from better-off peasants and their families were attacked.  
|                  | • Treatment was often a prelude to arrest and deportation by OGPU anti-kulak squads. |
| RESISTANCE | • Dec 1929 - March 1930 50% of farms were collectivised.  
|                  | • However demonstrations and protest that amounted to civil war occurred in the countryside often led by women.  
|                  | • He was forced into halting collectivisation for a time. However, by the end of the 1930s almost all were collectivised. |
| UPHEAVAL AND STARVATION | • Social upheaval was inevitable and peasants reacted against the abolition of their traditional way of life.  
|                  | • Many ate their seeds or slaughtered their animals so there were no crops or animals left to be collectivised.  
|                  | • The fall in consumption and livestock was devastating. |
| NATIONAL FAMINE | • Worst during 1932-33. Collectivisation led to peasants not producing in protest or inability to adapt to new enforced system.  
|                  | • So many left for the towns that Stalin had to introduce a new passport system to control their flow. |
| OFFICIAL SILENCE | • The official Stalinist line was ‘there was no famine’ so that Stalin was not discredited or so that he didn’t have to help.  
|                  | • Stalin’s second wife allegedly committed suicide over his treatment of the peasants. |
| JUSTIFIABLE? | • The mass peasantry were uprooted and bewildered and unable to produce the surplus food Stalin demanded.  
|                  | • Estimates of 10-15 million peasant deaths are hard to justify and the fact that Stalin encouraged them to leave the land when productivity fell. However, he needed more industrial workers, so ‘the wrong thing for the right reason’. |
**ECONOMIC POLICY - INDUSTRIALISATION**

| INDUSTRIALISATION | • He described his industrialisation policies as preparation for a ‘War Economy’ preparing for war against the capitalist enemy.  
• He meant heavy industry as industrial revolutions and had made western countries strong.  
• Gosplan was required to draw up a list of quotas of production across soviet industry. |
| --- | --- |
| FIRST FIVE YEAR PLAN | • Laid down what was to be achieved but it did not say how it was to be done, just assumed quotas were to be met.  
• Local officials falsified targets to say they had been met when they had fallen short – so stats are difficult to determine.  
• Stalin pleased with the success raised the targets further and made them impossible to meet |
| PROPAGANDA AND COLLECTIVE EFFORT | • A huge propaganda project which aimed to convince the Soviet people that they were personally engaged in a vast industrial enterprise.  
• Some of the young felt they were building a new and better world. Stalin encouraged this ‘cultural revolution’ |
| SUCCESSES AND WEAKNESSES | • However badly rigged the figures are still impressive as the output of coal, iron and electricity increased massively.  
• production of steel and chemicals were less impressive but had still increased.  
• Living conditions deteriorated and emphasis on quantity rather than quality meant poor quality goods. |
| RESISTANCE AND SABOTAGE | • Little resistance as Stalin branded resistance as sabotage.  
• The Shakhty trial where mining engineers were tried for anti-Soviet conspiracy frightened the workers into conforming.  
• Managers who did not meet quotas may have found themselves on trial. |
| SECOND AND THIRD FIVE YEAR PLANS | • Modelled on the first but with more realistic targets.  
• Over-production in some areas and under-production in others meant coordination was poor.  
• Hoarding and a lack of cooperation resulted from competition between regions hindered industrial growth. |
| THE WORKERS | • Living standards decreased and a neglect over consumer goods meant there were few rewards on offer.  
• Stakhanovite Movement 1935 – made up a potential working hero to add to the competition.  
• Trade Unions were powerless and just the means by which the Government enforced its requirements. |
| LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS | • Food remained scarce and severe and expensive overcrowding.  
• Stalin said to ask for improved conditions when the nation was under siege was a betrayal of the nation.  
• Government spent their money on armaments |
| SUCCESSES AND STRENGTHS | • Remarkable increase in industrial output: coal, steel, oil and electricity. In over 12 years coal production had grown 5 fold, steel 6 fold, and oil had more than doubled.  
• Allowed for the military economy to survive against the German occupation for four years. |
| WEAKNESSES OF THE REFORMS? | • Only in heavy industry and in sectors where unskilled and forced labour could be used were there successes.  
• His love of Grand Projects meant no attention was being paid to quality  
• Failed to increase agricultural output and forced to rely on foreign imports. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Leaders</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec 20th</td>
<td>Cheka</td>
<td>Felix Dzerzhinsky 1917 – 1918</td>
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<td>Yakov Peters 1918</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Felix Dzerzhinsky 1918 - 1922</td>
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<tr>
<td>1917</td>
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<td>(abbreviation of <em>Vecheka</em>, itself an acronym for &quot;All-Russian Extraordinary Committee to Combat Counter-Revolution and Sabotage&quot; of the Russian SFSR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 6th</td>
<td>GPU (a department of NKVD)</td>
<td>Felix Dzerzhinsky 1922-23</td>
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<td>1922</td>
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<td>Nov 15th</td>
<td>OGPU</td>
<td>Felix Dzerzhinsky 1923-july 1926</td>
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<td>Vyacheslav Menzhinsky July 1926 - May 1934</td>
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<td>1923</td>
<td></td>
<td>(under direct control of the Council of People’s Commissars)</td>
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<td>July 10th</td>
<td>GUGB (a department of NKVD)</td>
<td>Genrikh Yagoda 1934 - 1936</td>
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<td>(Sadist – shot in 1938)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Nikolai Yezhov 1937 - 1938</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(the ‘poisoned dwarf’ – shot in 1940)</td>
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<td>Lavrenty Beria 1938 - 1945</td>
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<td>(rapist, child molester, cruel and cowardly – shot in 1956)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>MGB and KI</td>
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<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>MVD</td>
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<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>KGB</td>
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<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Trial of the Ryutin Group</td>
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<td>1933</td>
<td>Purges began under Yezhov’s direction</td>
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<td>1933-34</td>
<td>Legal System brought under Stalin’s control</td>
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<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Assassination of Kirov, Intensification of Purges under Yagoda</td>
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<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Yezhov, Vyshinsky and Beria took over the organising the Purges</td>
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<td>1936-39</td>
<td>The ‘Great Purge’ of the Party, the Army and the people</td>
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<td>1937-38</td>
<td>The Yezhovschina persecution in the localities</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941-45</td>
<td>Purges removed those accused of undermining the war effort</td>
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<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Purging of the Soviet people believed to have supported Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>The ‘Leningrad Affair’ led to a further purge of the party</td>
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<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>The ‘Doctor’s Plot’ began a purge of the medical profession which ended on Stalin’s death</td>
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Stalin’s Early Purges

• Stalin used the Purges as the principal weapon of consolidating and extending his authority.

• The Purges began in 1932 (but Lenin had also used purges in the 1920s)

• The Shakhty affair had been a way of exposing industrial saboteurs in the early stages of the first 5 year plan.

• The Trial of Ryutin and his supporters took place in 1932 and were expelled from the party. This was the prelude to the first major purge.

• The first major purge was between 1933-1934 when nearly 1 million members (1/3) were expelled from the party accused of being Ryutinites. This purge was organised by Nicolai Yezhov.

• The early purges were not as violent or deadly as they later became. Members were required to hand in their ‘party card’ for checking when ‘suspect’ members would not have their card returned to them, which amounted to expulsion. The threat of expulsion forced most to conform and therefore limited the extent of opposition.

• In 1934 the purges developed into terrorising political opponents but also of colleagues and party members.

• Stalin’s behaviour grew increasingly paranoid and therefore purges became a permanent condition of Soviet political life.
MECHANISMS OF CONTROL

• In 1933-34 Stalin centralised all major law enforcement agencies: the civilian police, the secret police, labour camp commandants and guards, border and security guards.

• All of these went under the authority of the NKVD a body that was directly responsible to Stalin. As did the legal system and a special military court was established. These made the purges possible on such a scale. The knowledge that anyone could be arrested at any time turned the system into one of terror and political and social control.

THE POST-KIROV PURGES, 1934-36

• 1st December 1934 Leonid Nicolaev walked into the Communist Party headquarters and shot dead Sergei Kirov, the secretary of the Leningrad Soviet allegedly for having an affair with his wife.

• Many however, believed that Stalin had authorised or even planned the murder. His murder definitely helped Stalin to get rid of a highly popular member of the Party.

• Kirov had been opposed to the speed of Industrialisation and against the extreme means of disciplining Party members. The danger of Kirov leading opposition to Stalin had now been removed.

• Within 2 hours of his murder Stalin began a fresh purge of the party under the guise of looking for those involved in the murder. Many new members who owed Stalin for giving them their jobs eagerly supported the new purges as it improved their own job prospects.

• The Purge was led by Gengrikh Yagoda, head of the NVKD. The outstanding feature of this purge was the status of many victims like Kamenev and Zinoviev.

• Of those 1996 delegates that attended the 1934 Party Congress, 1108 were purged. Of the 139 Central Committee members 98 were murdered.
The Great Purge, 1936-39

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Details</th>
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</table>
| **Party**    | **The Purge of the Left**: A letter from CPSU headquarters in 1936 warned of a terrorist conspiracy by ‘the Trotskyite-Kamenevite-Zinovievite-Leftist Counter-Revolutionary Bloc’ and instructing Party officials to begin rooting out suspected agents. Kamenev and Zinoviev were put on trial and ‘confessed to involvement in Kirov’s murder although they were innocent. They with 14 other Bolsheviks were murdered.  
**The Purge of the Right**: The ‘Right deviationists’ Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky were put under investigation. It was too slow for Stalin, so Stalin replaced Yagoda with Yezhov. In 1938, in the third of the major show trials, the 3 above and 17 other Communists were put on trial. Radek implicated all. They were all shot (Radek saved only to die 2 years later in an Arctic Labour camp) |
| **Army**     | In 1937 Stalin transferred higher ranking officers to end possible resistance of the next purge intended to give Stalin control over Army.  
May 1937 Vyshinsky uncovered ‘a gigantic conspiracy’ in the Red Army. General Tukhachevsky the Chief of General Staff was arrested with 7 other Generals on the grounds they were trying to prevent a Military Coup. The Trial was held in secret and they were charged with treason. In June 1937 they were shot. In the following 18 months 11 War Commissars were removed from office, 3 of 5 Marshals were dismissed, 91 of 101 Supreme Military Council were arrested and 80 executed, 14 of 16 army commanders and 2/3rds of 280 divisional commanders were removed and half of commissioned officer corps, 35,000 in total were imprisoned or shot. All serving admirals in the Navy were shot. By 1939 the armed forces were totally devastated. |
| **People**   | Purges were then used to achieve goals in 5yr plans with the charge of industrial sabotage used. State leaders and legal and academic professions were also purged. Between 1937-39 in Georgia 2 state Prime Ministers were removed, 4/5ths of regional secretaries and thousands of lesser officials lost their posts. Mass fear then spread to the masses as 1 person in every 8 was arrested during the purges. Almost every family in the USSR suffered the loss of at least 1 of its members. Dubbed the ‘Yezhovschina’ NKVD squads arrested and dragged off hundreds of inhabitants to be executed. Recent excavations have revealed mass graves containing over 20,000 bodies. Evidence suggests many were shot in batches of a hundred systematically over many months. National minorities were frightened into abandoning their ideas of challenging Moscow’s control. |
The Later Purges, 1941-53

- The purges didn’t end with the onset of War in 1941 or with the coming of peace in 1945. They became an integral part of the Stalinist system of Government.

- As he grew older Stalin became even more suspicious and paranoid. After 1947 he dispensed with the Central Committee and the Politburo, removing any restrictions to his power.

- In 1949 he initiated another Party purge, ‘the Leningrad Affair’. Leading Party and city officials, including those previously awarded the title ‘Hero of the Soviet Union’ for their defence of Leningrad during the war were arrested, tried on charges of attempting to use Leningrad an opposition base, and shot.

- Soviet Jews were the next section of the population selected for organised persecution in the ‘Doctors’ Plot’. His daughter, Alliluyeva had an affair with a Jewish man of whom he disapproved. In 1953 it was announced that the Kremlin had uncovered a ‘Doctor’s Plot’ in Moscow. It was stated that the Jewish-dominated medical centre had planned to murder Stalin.

- Preparations began on a major assault of the Soviet medical profession, which was only stopped with the death of Stalin in March 1953.

- Motives for all Stalin’s purges are mixed. Was it the attempt to impose his absolute authority by bringing all organs of party and state under his control, or was it his increasing paranoia and isolation that led him to continue them?

- The Key debate revolves around responsibility. How much should Stalin be blamed, or his henchmen or others? Many believe Stalin was responsible at the start, but eager subordinates and even local party bosses were culpable as they provided opportunities of jobs.
STALIN’S DOMESTIC POLICIES

• The ‘Cult of Personality’ – Stalinisation
• Propaganda
• Education and the Young
• The treatment of Women
• Religious policies
• Treatment of the Minorities

(For each, you need to know what his policy was and how lives changed for each group).
Stalin’s Cult of the Personality and Propaganda
Stalin’s aim was to create a ‘cult of the personality’ about himself; as Hitler had said, ‘The personality cult is the best form of Government.’

Stalin hoped to generate a kind of hero worship amongst the Russians, through use of excessive propaganda and exposure in a positive light.

He wanted:

- To establish a personal dictatorship
- To support, build and expand soviet power
- To attack enemies
- To control people
- To increase the war effort
- Create a feeling of unison
From the 1930’s on, Stalin’s picture appeared everywhere. Newspapers, Art, Book, Films, all appeared with a reference to Stalin’s greatness. All of the USSR’s achievements were accredited to Stalin.

A quote from Khrushchev says ‘Stalin is hope, Stalin is expectation; he is the beacon that guides all progressive mankind. Stalin is our Banner! Stalin is our Will! Stalin is our Victory! He became the personification of all good things in Russia.

Statues and road names of Stalin appeared in all towns, and Leningrad was even renamed Stalingrad. His picture was carried on flags during all celebrations, and children were taught the virtues of Stalin in schools.
Stalin claimed that Shakespeare was a Russian, that Russian navigators had been the first to discover America and Russian mathematicians had discovered the secrets of the atom long before Einstein.

When presented with a bottle of coca-cola by US president Truman at the Potsdam conference, he ordered his scientists to come up with a Russian drink to match it, but they had to admit that while Russian science could achieve the impossible, miracles were beyond it.

The seven main ways of propaganda: Posters, Art, Literature, Film, News, Education and Youth groups
Successes

• Stalin managed to brainwash the Russian people. He replaced religion with his own form of Hero-Worship, where he was the main icon, and the people were trained to worship and love him. He was greeted with wild applause wherever he appeared in public, and his birthday was the biggest celebration in the Russian calendar. He became the personification of all things good in Russia.
Failures

- Stalin became generally unpopular in Russian rural areas, especially in the small villages. He was compared unfavourably with Lenin, who had fed them.
- There were several revolts.
Interpretations

• Stalin’s ‘cult of the personality’ succeeded in brainwashing the Russian public, and firmly established his authority, but it came at the cost of isolating him and increasing resentment in the rural sector.
Education

Under Stalin
Background

- After the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 there were some interesting changes in teaching and learning styles. Exams were denounced as ‘bourgeois’ and therefore removed. Traditional academic education was replaced by a heavy emphasis on vocational training.

- However under Stalin's rule, school life and education became stricter once more. An education law of 1935 allowed teachers to use strict methods of discipline. Report cards and test marks, which had been abolished in the 1920s, were reintroduced. School uniforms were restored - including compulsory pigtails for girls.

Aims

- The aim of education was summed up in Rule One of twenty rules of behaviour that all pupils had to learn by heart: *'It is the duty of each school child to acquire knowledge persistently so as to become an educated and cultured citizen and to be of the greatest possible service to his country.*'

- The ultimate goal of the education system was to produce a loyal Soviet citizen intensely proud of Russia's history, and capable of contributing to Stalin's new system. The enforcement of this educational policy was able to take a backward nation, where few people could read and write, and to push the literacy rate to 86 percent in rural areas.
Successes

- One result of these education policies was the almost total disappearance of illiteracy. By 1939, each child spent seven compulsory years at school. Even illiterate adults were encouraged to attend school or evening classes. Thus, by 1939 illiteracy had declined to just 4% of the male and 18% of the female population. Literacy was, however, of little use if there was little to read. Pravda and Izvestia were therefore widely distributed. Stalin revealed his motives behind the literacy drive when he said, ‘The press should grow not by the day, but by the hour, for it is the sharpest and most powerful weapon of our people’

- Children were encouraged to get involved in extra-curricular activities. The young joined party groups, such as the Young Pioneers (up to 14 years), and then the Komsomol until they were 28.

- Children were also given idols of their own age group to admire, as well as these idols they idolised Stalin—looking up to him as the Hero and Father of Russia. This was done through lots of propaganda, alike the extra-curricular activities.

- Education was free and compulsory
Health

Background

• Previously, the healthcare under which Lenin brought in was free, but did not have such a greater impact on the people as Stalin’s policies did

Aims

• Stalinist development contributed to advances in health care, which significantly increased the lifespan and quality of life of the typical Soviet citizen. Stalin’s policies granted the Soviet people universal access to healthcare. Stalin wanted to improve the well being of each citizen in Russia, as well as improving life as a whole
Successes

• The healthcare system effectively created the first generation free from the fear of typhus, cholera and malaria. The occurrences of these diseases dropped to record low numbers → thus increasing life spans by decades

• Infant mortality rates were reduced

• Women under Stalin, were also the first generation of women able to give birth in the safety of hospitals, with access to prenatal care.

• Stalin had introduced a scheme that proved to be far better than those of the Western Countries. Britain didn’t introduce the NHS until 10 years after Russia
The treatment of women in Stalin’s Russia

• What were the policies?
  • How did it work?
• Successes and failures of the policies
• How did life change because of these policies?
Stalin’s main policies.

• June 1936:
  – Unregistered marriages were no longer recognised.
  – Divorce was made more difficult.
  – The right to have an abortion was severely restricted.
  – The family was declared to be the basis of Soviet Society.
  – Homosexuality was outlawed.

• July 1944:
  – Restrictions for divorce were tightened further.
  – Abortion was completely outlawed.
  – Mothers with more than 2 children were made ‘heroines of the Soviet Union’.
  – The right to inherit family property was re-established.
- Lenin’s Bolsheviks had made divorce easier (1 in 2 marriages started ending in divorce)
- Stalin started promoting marriage and how marriage stabilises the society.
- Many women in the party believed that the revolution would bring them female liberation.
- However, Stalin restricted sexual freedom and the emphasis on family and motherhood didn’t allow for the independent, self-sufficient woman to develop.
- The Zhenotdel was set up under Lenin which was an organisation which represented the views of the party’s female members.
- However, this party was allowed to come to an end in 1930 because ‘it’s work had been done’.
- A housewives movement was created in 1936 under Stalin’s patronage which set itself the task of ‘civilising’ the tastes and improving the conditions of workers.
There were some women during Stalin’s Russia who started gaining status and income. However, these women were a minority and tended to be unmarried and without children. Women were allowed to contribute to modernisation as workers. But, Married women with children had to fulfill two roles. A mother and wife AND members of the workforce. Especially in the war of 1941-45. During the war, over half a million women fought in the Soviet armed forces. But this left them more vulnerable to mistreatment. – they were sexually abused routinely (especially by senior officers). Women helped considerably towards modernisation and towards the war. YET THEY RECEIVED NO RECOGNITION/REWARD and even between 1930-1945 their pay rates decreased.
Religion and Treatment of the Minorities under Stalin

By Rosie Samuel
Religion

- Marx had identified organized religion as a threat to the worker.
- Stalin believed anyone who believed in God was a challenge to his position as the ‘personality cult’ was meant for people to worship Stalin.
- As a result of this, Stalin took steps to limit the power of religion in the USSR – churches and mosques were closed and converted into schools or movie theatres. Religious icons were melted down, and meetings were banned throughout the country.
• Stalin believed that religion had no place in a socialist society.

• Coinciding with the beginning of the first five year plan in 1928, a new campaign against the churches began. The orthodox church was the main target but all religions were at risk. Clerics who refused to co-operate were arrested and thousands were sent into exile. This timing was not accidental as the drive for industrialisation required the commitment of the whole nation.
• Conformity was essential and had to be imposed. Religion, with its other worldly values, was seen as an affront to the collective needs of the nation.

• The suppression of religion in the urban areas proved fairly straightforward, but it was a different story in the countryside. The destruction of rural churches led to revolt in many areas. The result was widespread resistance across the rural provinces of the USSR. The authorities responded by declaring that those who opposed the restrictions were really doing so to resist collectivisation. Religious protesters were branded as ‘Kulaks’ and being forced to perform demeaning tasks.

• Stalin later eased off, as the anti religious programme attracted worldwide attention, but this was only temporary. In the late 1930s, the assault on religion was renewed. By 1940 only 500 churches were open for worship – one percent of the figure for 1917.
Soviet Culture

Policies regarding art and culture and their effects.
Intro:

- Cultural works in all their forms and states had to conform to the standards set by Joseph Stalin. He became the great cultural judge and arbiter. Stalin was keen to keep his policies in line with Lenin’s idea that ‘the purpose of art and literature is to serve the people.’ Artists who did not conform were likely to be killed, jailed or sent to Gulags.

- Socialist realism.

- In 1932 Stalin declared to a gathering of Soviet writers that they were ‘engineers of the human soul’. This, in essence, meant that their role as writers was essentially a social not an artistic one. Self expression was irrelevant. They were only to be used to reshape the thinking and behaviour of the soviet people. An artist’s work was expected to be appropriate and relevant to the society he was serving by conforming to socialist realism which was a form of representational art which the people could understand and relate to their own lives. If he failed to do this he was engaging in bourgeois self indulgence making himself more important than the people he was meant to serve. This was clearly artistically limiting.

- It is worth noting that some argue the technology did not exist at the time for total control and censorship yet Stalin’s aims and severe punishments were enough to create and atmosphere which conditioned the way in which artists worked.
Writers:

**Policy:** the soviet union of writers was formed in 1934 and stated that a writers work would be acceptable...

- If the party approved of the theme and presentation.
- If written in a style and vocabulary that would be immediately understandable to the workers who read it.
- If it contained characters whom the readers could either identify with as socialist role models or directly recognise as examples of class enemies.
- If it was optimistic and uplifting in its message and thus advanced the cause of socialism.

This would be harder for some writers than others. Some sold out, praising Stalin and his policies in their works and continuing to write while others found it harder to willingly compromise their artistic integrity and lost their position, liberty and often their lives.

In such a repressed atmosphere suicides became common and ‘more great intellectuals perished in the 1930s than survived.’ At this time the mediocre of the writers’ world were elevated to a position of influence and power as they revealed and brought down their betters as means of further advancing their own career.
Effects on theatre and film:

To give you some idea of the repression...

- In 1936-37, 68 films had to be withdrawn in mid-production and another 30 taken out of circulation.
- In the same period, 10 out of 19 plays and ballets were ordered to be withdrawn.
- In the 1937-38 theatre season, 60 plays were banned from performance, 10 theatres closed in Moscow and a further 10 in Leningrad.

Vsevolod Meyerhold was a prominent victim who had a major influence on European theatre. He said that ‘the theatre was a living creative thing. We must have freedom—yes, freedom’. His appeal for artistic liberty was cut short ended in his arrest in 1938 and after a two year imprisonment during which he was regularly flogged until he fainted he was shot.
Other art forms:

Painting and Sculpture were too limited, bound by the ideas of socialist realism. Paintings would often depict the ‘mighty’ Stalin walking through a modernised Russia to show just how much he had achieved.

Abstract and experimental art forms in general, were frowned upon because they broke with rules of socialist realism and were not immediately accessible or meaningful to the public.

For instance Jazz was condemned as decadent. Music in general, though harder for the Soviet censors to link with Stalin’s notion of Socialist realism (since it is essentially abstract) did not escape suppression.

Stalin claimed to be able to recognise socialist music when he heard it and placed restriction on anything deemed to be ‘bourgeois or formalistic’. However some composers protected by their international reputations managed to maintain some artistic dignity and integrity, such as Dimitri Shostakovich.