

# STALIN'S RUSSIA

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When looking at Stalin's domestic policies in the USSR we need to examine three broad topics:

### 1. Collectivisation

### 2. The Five-Year Plans

### 3. The Great Purges

## Collectivisation

n:

- Russian farming backward & inefficient
- Millions of tiny peasant farms to be forcibly gathered into large state-run farms
- Surplus grain to be either sold abroad to buy machinery for modern farming or for industries in the cities or to feed the bigger populations needed in the cities for industrial growth
- Dispossessed peasants to be moved to cities to work in the new factories
- Poorest peasants happy – steady job and wage
- Richer farmers (Kulaks) stand to lose so resist fiercely – burning crops and killing livestock
- Famine results – up to 7m die
- Kulaks as a class of people, 7m strong, either killed or sent to work camps (Gulags) Collectivisation generally seen as a disaster

### 19.1 Collectivisation – Why?

- Soviet agriculture too backward and needs to be modernised (old machinery & subsistence)
- More food needed for workers in towns (essential for 5-year plans)
- NEP not working (cities are 20m tonnes of grain short)
- More workers needed for towns
- Cash crops needed
- Kulaks needed to be brought in line (resisted communism)

### 19.2 Collectivisation – Results:

- 99% of farmland collectivised
  - More modern (machinery, methods etc)
  - 1937 – 97m tonnes of grain produced plus other cash crops for export
  - 1937 – 17m peasants now working in industry in towns/cities
  - Stalin has total control over agriculture
  - Millions died from famine
  - 7m Kulaks killed – whole class eliminated
  - 1937 – livestock numbers still not recovered to levels of 10 years previously
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## Five-Year Plans:

- 1928 – 1933, 1933 – 1938, 1938 – 1941
- Mainly concentrate on heavy industries – coal, oil, steel etc
- Industries examine and given targets to meet
- Factories, dams, power-stations & whole new cities built
- Apalling amount of industrial accidents
- Harsh penalties for failure & some rewards for success
- Targets generally unrealistic & rarely met
- Despite terrible human cost still seen as a success – massive industrial growth in very short space of time
- USSR is now world's number 2 industrial power

## Five-Year Plans – Why and How?

- Soviet Union 50 – 100 yrs behind rest of developed world
- Backwardness = weakness = vulnerability
- Socialism in one country
- Fear of Nazi Germany
- Targets set for every industry, region, mine, factory & foreman
- Foreign expertise called in
- Workers bombarded with propaganda
- Workers fined/sacked etc if late, targets not met etc
- Women called in to boost the workforce
- Order of Stakhanovites set up as incentive
- Slave labour used (Jews, Kulaks)

## Five-Year Plans – Results:

- Electricity – 5m k/w (1927) up to 36m k/w (1937)
- Coal – 35m tonnes (1927) up to 128m tonnes (1937)
- Oil – 12m tonnes (1927) up to 47m tonnes (1937)
- Steel – 4m tonnes (1927) up to 18m tonnes (1937)
- USSR becomes world's 2<sup>nd</sup> industrial power
- New cities, dams, Moscow underground, health service, education and no unemployment
- Industrial accidents, punishments & labour camps, slave labour, no human rights, no consumer goods

## The Great Purges:

- Stalin very paranoid & suspicious of threats to his power
- Perhaps made worse by wife's suicide of 1929
- As no proof of guilt is needed, nobody is safe
- Secret police arrest, deport or kill up to 6m people
- Prominent opponents put on "show trial" where, having been tortured beforehand, readily "confess" to their "crimes"
- Leading Bolsheviks & old allies of Lenin executed
- Head of secret police executed
- Up to 11,000 army officers executed including 8 top generals Huge mistake with war with Hitler on the horizon