

## Russian History:

### Chapter One: Struggle for power:

#### Stalins Strengths:

- His positions within the party gave him considerable strength and influence.
- The most significant: General Secretary of the party, which he had been given in 1922.
- He was very close to Lenin in his final months, and virtually controlled who came to see him. He even had Lenins office bugged in order to gain information- a possible sign of early paranoia.
- He was head of the Lenin enrolment programme, which aimed to increase the amount of communist members - allowed him to appoint his own supporters.
- He always kept out of major controversy and was positioned in the centre of the political spectrum, allowing him to support either the left or right, without seeming to contradict himself.
- The policies that he did associate himself with, were ones he was sure would be popular with the people e.g. Socialism in One Country.
- Many of his opponents found it difficult to understand why they had been beaten by Stalin, partly because they were vain and patronising towards him and underestimated his ruthlessness and his abilities.

#### Stalins Power Base:

- **General Secretary:** Stalin ran the party machine. As such, he occupied probably the most powerful position in the USSR and could decide promotions to party positions.
- **Member of Politburo:** Stalin was one of the small group of leading communists who met regularly to make policy. They were effectively the decision makers for the USSR.
- **Secretariat:** This position allowed him to put together the agenda for the Politburo and Orgburo. Thus allowing him to put forward what he wanted to be discussed and not put in anything he didn't want discussed.
- **Member of Orgburo:** Stalin was also responsible for carrying out policy decisions and monitoring party personnel.
- **Commissar for Nationalities:** Between 1917 and 1923, he held this position. In this role, he supervised officials in the non Russian republics that had been part of the old Russian empire and now made up the territory of the USSR. This allowed him to travel around and people knew who he was.
- **Head of Workers and Peasants Inspectorate:** Stalin was in charge of seeking out corruption within the party and supervised the work of all government departments. Allowed him to travel and became well known.

#### Stalins Political Skill:

- After Lenins death, he cleverly presented himself as the upholder of the former leaders legacy.
- He was instrumental in creating the Lenin cult, which included having Lenin's body embalmed and brain sliced into 30,000 slices so that scientists in the future could unearth the genius behind Lenin. The Lenin cult inspired a kind of religious fervour. Because Lenin was regarded as the font of wisdom and the ultimate authority on Marxism, when Stalin began to use Lenin's name to justify his own policies, his opponents found it very hard to criticise them.
- Stalin arranged Lenin's funeral, delivered the funeral speech and stated his determination to continue translating Lenin's ideas into practice.
- Stalin presented himself in the middle as a moderate. This allowed him to go with either left or right wings.
- Party congresses were packed full of his supporters because of the Lenin enrolment programme and his position as General Secretary.

#### Stalins Ambition:

- Years before the revolution he had joined the insignificant Bolshevik Party, and what is more he was a Georgian and an outsider.

- A position of prominence must have seemed very unlikely.
- There probably was a point when he realised that he had a chance of beating his other opponents to the top position, and this was probably when he started to show his drive and ambition to get to the top.

### **Luck:**

- Like most politicians, Stalin enjoyed some luck, especially during the 1920s, when he was one of several leading communists criticised in Lenin's testament, and they all decided not to publish the testament. If it had been published it would have been likely that his political career would have been over.

### **Mistakes and Miscalculations of others:**

- For all Stalin's talents and determinations, combined with luck, his rise to power was also considerably aided by the tactical mistakes of his colleagues - weaknesses that Stalin exploited to the full.
- All of Stalin's opposites underestimated Stalin and looked down on him until it was too late and Stalin had gained too much momentum in his rise to power.
- Trotsky made the biggest mistake of all by not pushing for the testament to be published which would have destroyed Stalin.

### **Zinoviev:**

- Zinoviev was in exile with Lenin until April 1917, and returned with Lenin on the train to the Finland station in Petrograd.
- He then joined Kamenev to protest against Lenin on his call for an uprising in 1917.
- Between 1918 and 1926, Zinoviev was influential as the head of the Leningrad Party Organisation.
- Zinoviev was tried and imprisoned in 1935, given another trial in 1936 and then executed with Kamenev.

### **Advantages in the struggle for Power:**

- Regarded as intelligent, energetic and with a wide knowledge of European culture.
- One of the party's best speakers.
- 'Old Bolshevik' - commanded respect from colleagues.
- One of Lenin's closest associates.
- Had important and influential positions in the Comintern, the Politburo and the Leningrad Party.

### **Disadvantages in the struggle for Power:**

- Gained a reputation for inconsistency, seen in his opposition to Lenin in 1917 and switch alliances between Stalin and Trotsky.
- Subject to considerable and unpredictable mood swings.
- Seriously looked down on Stalin, and underestimated him.

### **Kamenev:**

- An 'Old Bolshevik' - trusted by the older communist members.
- Sent into exile in Siberia in the same settlement as Stalin.
- He allied with Zinoviev in opposing Lenin's idea of an armed uprising against the Provisional Government.
- Kamenev had a power base in Moscow, where he ran the local party machine.

### **Advantages:**

- Old Bolshevik - Lenin trusted him with many of his personal papers in 1922.
- Had influence in Moscow.

**Disadvantages:**

- Like Zinoviev, he gained a reputation for inconsistency and opportunism by opposing Lenin in 1917 and switching alliances between Stalin and Trotsky.
- Regarded by many as too soft, without the wish and ability to be a leader.
- Seriously underestimated Stalin and other opponents.

**Trotsky, the lost leader?****Background:**

- Born into a prosperous Jewish family.
- He was originally attracted to Lenin but in 1903 joined the Mensheviks. After years of revolutionary politics and exile, he returned to Petrograd in 1917 and joined the Bolsheviks. He played a crucial role in the 1917 revolution, planning and executing the takeover.
- After the revolution, he was prominent in Lenin's new Russia.
- He was commissar for war and served in the Politburo alongside Stalin.
- Trotsky played a crucial role in the Civil War, created the Red Army and leading it to victory.
- In the process he fell out with Stalin. Stalin had objected to Trotsky's employment of ex-terrorist officers and disobeyed his orders.

**Advantages:**

- Trotsky was clever, a dynamic speech maker and had shown himself to be an energetic man of action between 1917 and 1921.
- He had demonstrated a combination of formidable leadership skills, ruthlessness and decision making abilities during these years.

**Disadvantages:**

- Trotsky was a late convert to Bolshevism - which made the 'Old Bolsheviks' suspect him.
- Several leading Bolsheviks disliked his perceived aloofness, arrogance and disdain for those intelligent than himself.
- He made no attempt to create a power base.
- There was a fear among many Bolsheviks that Trotsky might use his Red Army links to arrange a military style coup. This was ironic considering he wasn't very popular among the Red Army.
- Trotsky himself thought he was disadvantaged because he was a Jew. Therefore he did not push himself forward.
- Although several other leading Bolsheviks such as Kamenev and Zinoviev were also Jews.
- He also became known for being opportunistic and lacking consistency.
- Trotsky was unpredictable. For all his brilliance, he could, at times, be indecisive and on some occasions show a failure of nerve. There is a suggestion that he was psychosomatic.
- He made crucial errors of judgement. He attacked the party bureaucracy in 1924 after Lenin's death, which was naive as it was seen as a criticism of Lenin and he had only just died. He also argued against releasing Lenin's testament which only helped Stalin.
- Above all, he completely underestimated Stalin, whom he regarded as his inferior, and never really came forward to terms with this.

**Bukharin:**

- Bukharin was an intellectual and a thinker. Lenin regarded him as 'the most valuable theoretician in the party'.
- He helped Stalin defeat the left or untied opposition.
- Bukharin now supported the 'soft' approach to socialism: that is, supporting the peasants to prosper, and thereby pay for later industrial development.
- In 1928, Bukharin was easily outmanoeuvred by Stalin.
- Stalin expelled Bukharin from the central committee in 1932 and in 1938 he was tried and executed.

## Advantages:

- Popular with the party, close to Lenin, and for a long time friendly with Trotsky.
- Intelligent and regarded as the best thinker in the party.

## Disadvantages:

- Naive and lacked the qualities for party in-fighting.
- Made the mistake of appearing to be more popular in the party than Stalin.
- Seriously underestimated Stalin.

## Defeat of the Left:

- **Bureaucracy Speech:** 1924 congress - Trotsky made naive error of making a speech in which he criticised the excessive bureaucracy of the party and the lack of democracy.. As Lenin had just died a few months prior to making his speech, it looked like a criticism of Lenin; to make matters worse prior to making the speech, 45 party members had signed a petition supporting what Trotsky was to say.
- When the speech was voted on at the 1924 congress, unsurprisingly Trotsky lost the vote (Stalin had made sure the congress was full of his supporters). Because of the petition, Trotsky was accused of factionalism. He could have appealed to supporters from the wider party but choose not to; Trotsky was ill and was worried about causing splits to occur within the party.
- **Conflict - Z&K against Trotsky** - Throughout 1924 there was a viscous conflict between Kamenev and Zinoviev against Trotsky. K&Z accused Trotsky of not become a Bolshevik until 1917. Trotsky wrote an account entitled 'Lessons of October' in which he criticised K&Z's opposition to Lenin in the 1917 revolution. Stalin also wrote an article called 'On the foundations of Leninism' in which he critiqued Trotsky for his disloyalty to Lenin. In 1924, K&Z made the fatal error of allowing Stalin to bring more of his supporters into the party, naively believing that they were to help the left, but were actually just there to support Stalin.
- **Policies put forward:** The policies that both Trotsky and Stalin put forward were also discussed widely. Trotsky's policy of 'permanent revolution' isolated him further. Stalin accused the policy of being defeatist and unpatriotic. It was the idea that it was essential for Russia to industrialise if she was to survive the hostile world.; in order to achieve this the USSR would encourage revolutions elsewhere, in the hope that they would help USSR in the future. But it appeared to suggest that Russia could not be successful on its own, which was a very unpopular notion. Furthermore, Trotsky's policy would encourage further wars abroad and would most likely involve the USSR in further wars, something the majority of the Russian population were totally against.
- Stalin's policy however was much more popular, it was 'socialism in one country'. This entailed the USSR concentration on developing its own strength and rolling a path towards industrialisation and eventually a true communist state. This was regarded by many as the correct policy to follow.
- 1925 - Trotsky loses position as Commissar for Military affairs and by December had lost his seat in the Politburo.
- At 1925 congress - new alliance between Stalin and Bukharin along with other members of the right wing. At this congress K&Z criticised Stalin or supporting the NEP, and called for an end to the NEP, a tough line against the peasant and rapid industrialisation. Both men lost every vote at this congress, again Stalin ensuring the congress was packed with his supporters.
- 1926 K&Z and Trotsky for the United Opposition, having lost all the votes at the 1925 congress, the three men tried to appeal to the wider party and attempted to organise demonstrations in Moscow. All three men were then accused of factionalism.
- January 1926, Zinoviev lost his position as leader of the Leningrad Soviet chairman and was ousted from the Politburo.
- Kamenev lost his seat in the Politburo at the same time and in October was removed as leader of the Comintern.
- 1927 - All three men were expelled from the party, but after K&Z recanted their views, they were readmitted to the party.

## **Defeat of the Right wing:**

- Since 1925, Stalin had gravitated to the right wing of the party, the most prominent member of the right wing being Bukharin. Others were Rykov and Tomsy. Their view was that Russia was still a peasant based economy and for Russia to industrialise, it would need to encourage the Peasant to increase production, thus increasing taxes which could then be used for industrialisation. They believed that the NEP should continue, and Stalin's policy of 'Socialism in one country' seemed to fit with this view.
- By 1928 however, Stalin had decided that it was time to end the NEP and go for rapid industrialisation. In 1927-28 there had been a war scare with Japan and there was deteriorating relations with Europe, and so in 1928, Stalin made his intentions clear by attacking the right wing's policies and advocating in their place rapid industrialisation and the use of force to make the peasant cooperate.
- At the 1929 congress, Bukharin defended his policies only to be outvoted. At this congress Stalin announced his plans for rapid industrialisation and the first Five Year Plans were introduced.
- Also but he end of 1929 mass collectivisation was announced with the 'liquidation of the Kulaks'
- Bukharin, Rykov and tomsky were all removed from the Politburo by 1929.
- By December 1929, Stalin was 50 years old and in a position of supreme power. It is stop simplistic to say Stalin was out for power for power's sake. He had advantages of a tight control of the party plus the skill to seek out his rivals' weaknesses in order to outmanoeuvre them.
- His take over of the Moscow party shows how he manoeuvred himself into position of power.
- Stalin defeated the right leader using both blackmail and threats. the right wing leader was replaced by Bauman, a ruthless man. he and his officials carried out collectivisation mercilessly and Bauman ended up being sacked. A loyal Stalinist took over, Kaganovich, and the Moscow party was disciplined for its excesses.

## **Great Turn: 1928-29:**

In December 1927, the party congress decided to end the NEP. This policy was introduced by Lenin in 1921 as an emergency measure to offer 'breathing space for the soviet economy'. It was seen as a half-way-house from capitalism to socialism which the communists aspired to for the Russian state. The Communist party believed that the NEP was flawed as it allowed private enterprise to exist (peasant being allowed to sell excess grain. This meant that many Russians were making money at the expense of others and the party believed that this allowed class differences to continue which accentuated class divisions when their true aim was a classless society.

In 1921 the russian economy was in ruins after a civil war and the policy of War Communism along with the famine of 1921 to 1922. In 1921, the Kronstadt sailors mutinied against the regime, which was a stark warning sign for lenin as they had always been staunch supporters of the communists. therefore Lenin introduced the NEP, to bring in some relaxation of controls.

## **Stalin's decision to end the NEP:**

- By 1927 Stalin believed the only chance that russia had, was to industrialise and bring in collectivisation of agriculture.
- He felt that by 1927, the NEP had shown it had severe weaknesses and if Russia was to compete with the rest of the world, then Russian agriculture had to become more efficient.
- This change in direction also allowed him to defeat the right wing of the party.
- It must be noticed that Lenin had already begun collectivisation hoping that these collectives would be very efficient and peasants would therefore choose to join them voluntarily. However, by 1928 only 2% of farmers were in collective farms which had in fact proved to be poorly run that they usually made a loss.

### **Problems with the NEP:**

- **Inefficient Farming:** Farming continued to be very primitive, with many still using the strip method and the three field rotation. The share out of land meant that each plot became smaller and more inefficient. Machinery was scarce with the majority of peasants using wooden ploughs and sickles and scythes. Mechanising agriculture would result in fewer peasants needing to work on the land, releasing peasants to work in industry. **It was crucial that agriculture became more efficient, if there was to be a surplus to export for western goods and to free up workers for industry.**
- **Peasant complaints:** During the 1920s the number of peasant complaints increased massively. They criticised the lack of free speech, questioned why priests were persecuted and demanded to know what amount of grain was being exported. They also criticised the party officials for living lives of luxury and often complained about the fact that the children of party officials received better education and health care.
- **Peasant unions:** Between 1924 and 1927, peasant unions were set up all across Russia to defend the interests of peasants. These unions were destroyed by officials. In the 1925 local elections the communists did badly and those who got elected tended to be teachers or Kulaks, and many of these entered into counter-revolutionary activities such as repairing churches. The Communist party were finding it difficult to control the vast agricultural areas and the peasants became more outspoken in their criticism of the regime. To make matters worse, communist officials were often illiterate and made up only tiny proportions of the population within agricultural areas.
- **Growth in Agriculture:** Despite these many problems, there was significant growth in agriculture between these years, mainly fuelled by the prospect of being able to sell any surplus. In the Volga region, land under cultivation increased more than 25%. This increase in prosperity placed more peasants into the Kulak bracket. But this recovery was not consistent throughout the country and it varied massively region to region.
- **Party relations with the peasants:** There was increasing confrontations between the state and the peasants during the 1920s as the party stepped up its propaganda against the Kulaks as a danger to society. The party assumed that around 3% of peasants were kulaks, but it was very hard to locate them. The campaign against the kulaks initially involved taxing them more heavily, although their treatment gradually worsened.

### **The Crisis 1927-28:**

- In 1926, there was a bumper harvest and the state cut grain prices substantially.
- As a result the peasants started to hoard their grain as they did not want to sell it at such low prices. This meant that by 1927, there was a grain shortage.
- To make matters worse, the government had clamped down on Nepmen who had paid the peasant far better prices for their grain than the state. The peasants could see little point in selling their grain, preferring to feed themselves and their animals with it and also hoarding it in case prices would rise.
- Moreover, there was no encouragement to sell their grain as even if they did make surplus money, the industrial goods they could have bought with this extra cash were scarce and very expensive.
- In contrast, the peasant sold most of their dairy and meat produce privately because the government could not so easily control these.

### **Stalin's response:**

- In 1927, he sent out officials to seize the grain by force.
- This forcible seizure of grain is known as the procurement crisis.
- Poor and middle class peasants were encouraged to denounce the kulaks.
- The grain would then be seized and the kulaks arrested.
- In January 1928, Stalin visited the Urals hence the forcible requisitions became known as the Urals-Siberian method.
- In 1928, the treatment of kulaks also worsened as many were given hard labour, had their property taken away from them and their children deprived of an education.

## **Industry:**

Under the NEP the heavy industries remained nationalised. Many were inefficiently run and over bureaucratic. These state run enterprises lost money, production was cut and workers laid off. Strikes were frequent as workers complained about their wages and the privileges enjoyed by party bosses. The situation improved by the 1920s although industry did not recover as quickly as agriculture. Industrial production rose but was still not up to 1913 levels in many cases. Much machinery was out of date and the rising costs of production meant that productivity fell. The emphasis tended to be on quantity rather than quality. Furthermore there was little incentive for workers to be more productive, as even if workers did reach targets there was no reward for doing so. The workers were also angry about the shortage of housing. Even more importantly, workers in the private sector were paid more than those in the public.

## **How the communists addressed these problems:**

- **In 1926 The Supreme Council of National Economy** tried to increase overall productivity by ensuring more profitable industries, for example textile industries, helped less efficient industries. This was not going to help overall production. On top of this, high production costs led to higher prices, resulting in goods being too expensive to buy. There was a shortage of consumer goods, one of the reasons why the peasants hoarded food or grew less of it.
- The government tried in 1927 to 1928 to increase efficiency once they realised how desperate the situation had become. They set targets for workers but there was no accompanying increase in wages should workers attain their targets. There was also a lack of interest in increased wages because of inflation.
- Strikes also occurred frequently especially in key industries such as mining and metal production, showing how disillusioned the workers had become.

Rather than admit that their policies were wrong, the authorities looked instead for scapegoats e.g. class enemies such as bourgeois specialists, hence the trial of a group of engineers accused of sabotage, the Shakty Trial. Thus this inefficiency caused the crisis in industry. Alongside the crisis, the workers showed themselves apathetic or hostile to the regime. Thus there was a general acceptance that the NEP was not working either ideologically or practically with state owned industries failing to work alongside a market economy. High production costs resulting from inefficiently run enterprises led to higher prices so people could not or would not buy products. Therefore there was pressure for change before Stalin brought in the five year plans. Foreign trade in 1928 was only one third of that in 1913, mainly due to the decline in grain exports.

## **NEP Society:**

- The party was not yet powerful enough to control every aspect of life. It was an authoritarian not totalitarian one in which the state moulded the population's thoughts as well as actions.
- The Agitprop, the agitation and propaganda department tried to monitor activities but were not always successful in getting rid of material considered to be politically incorrect.
- Education was targeted with the communists setting up their own school and also influencing what was taught in state schools. Entries into higher education were screened to ensure only students from the 'right' background were admitted.
- Religion was attacked as a class weapon to trick the masses into accepting their downtrodden status. Campaigns were instigated against the priests and the churches. However religious life especially amongst rural peasants became, if anything, more active showing the communist campaign against the church was unsuccessful.
- Amongst those who were responsible for implementing the changes in cultural and social life there was a backsliding. A good example is the Komsomol, the Party Youth Movement. Many recruits were becoming unacceptable, with many organising drunken orgies and threatening citizens. Many of these young communists rejected marriage as a bourgeois leftover, but this attitude resulted in the complete lack of respect for women and there were many reports from party members who were women, that they had been raped.

## **Industrialisation:**

### **The Soviet Economy 1918-1928:**

- Many communist members believed that the USSR had to industrialise in order to become a true socialist state; they believed that a socialist society was only possible if Russia went through an industrial transformation.
- This transformation would provide the wealth needed to provide a secure existence for the Soviet people.
- Stalin believed this but also realised that to survive in a hostile world it was necessary for the USSR to become an industrialised state fast.
- In the west, the middle classes provided much of the curve for industrialisation but there were no middle classes in the USSR so the state would have to spearhead this drive for industrialisation.
- Also the Russian people lacked the technological expertise, the country's infrastructure was too weak plus there were too few developed mineral resources for industrialisation to occur without full weight of the state behind it.

### **Why the five year plans?**

- Sokolnikov, Commissar/Minister of finance 1924-1925 believed the state should concentrate on investing in agriculture which hopefully would lead to an increase in grain production. The surplus grain could then be exported for industrial machinery. This was also to become Bukharin's strategy.
- Other government advisers in the mid 1920s believed further industrialisation could be paid for out of existing state owned industry but the existing NEP heavy industry was simply not efficient enough to provide a surplus of profits for investment.

These debates continued, but the shortages of grain in 1927-28 meant that grain requisition had to be brought in, along with planned industry. It also caused forced collectivisation and industrial planning.

There had already been attempts to increase industrialisation in 1926 in Crimea, they built the Metallurgical Factory, but costs tripled by 1928 during the construction of the factory.

Managers in other ventures complained planning was chaotic, for example projects were started in unsuitable areas or were suddenly stopped for no apparent reason. Other complaints were that expensive technology from abroad turned out to be unsuitable.

These disasters led to the government looking for a scapegoat, which they found at the Shakhty Trial of 1928. A group of engineers in the Shakhty coal mines of the Donbas region were accused of sabotage and treason. The central committee stated that the case showed there were new forms of bourgeois counter-revolution emerging directed against the proletarian dictatorship.

**The Shakhty Trial 1928 was significant because of the way it was manipulated by Stalin.** He found members of the ruling elite, decided that 'bourgeois specialists' could not be trusted in the drive for socialism and must be replaced with politically reliable communists who would run industry in the way Stalin wanted.

In May 1928, in a speech Stalin declared the emphasis should be on heavy industry and also called for the speeding up of industrialisation as means of providing more technology for agriculture.

In 1928 Stalin began the drive for industrialisation. It was directed by GOSPLAN, the state planning department. Industrialisation was to be based on a series of five year plans. The government (not the market) would now determine what should be produced. The government claimed it was representing ordinary people's interests rather than the interests of a privileged



minority as in the past. The language of class warfare became more strident as the industrialisation programme started. **Even before the terror of the 1930s, the regime was already dismissing thousands of state employees, for example members of the planning offices.**

Highlighting class conflict was an important part of industrialisation. In the Donbas region over half the engineers and technicians had been arrested by 1931.

**The first five year plan** was approved by the 16th party congress in 1929 although it was backdated to 1928. preparations for this plan began in June 1927 and some major development such as the Dnieper Dam, the Turksib railway had started even before this. Two versions of the five year plans were put forward at the congress and the more ambitious of the two was adopted. This was to prove ambitious partly because it based on insecure data. Despite this, targets to be reached were increased in December 1929 when it was decided the plan should be completed in four years. Anyone who criticised these targets or urged caution were either denounced or ignored.

### **The First Five Year Plan:**

Should have been completed in September 1933 but was deemed to have been a success and ended in December 1932 and was thus declared a four year plan. This focused on heavy industries, e.g. coal and steel. These goods were not designed for their own sake but as a means of making other products. **1928-1930 heavy industry expanded at an accelerating rate with increasingly ambitious targets. Collectivisation was occurring at the same time; the labour force was also rapidly expanding. BUT 1930-32 over ambitious targets meant that industrial production slowed plus collectivisation was also temporarily halted; the government adopted a more realistic approach.)**

### **The Second Five Year Plan:**

Heavy industry remained the overall priority and this plan continued to build on the achievements of the first five year plans. This plan also gave greater attention to consumer goods (**1933 famine gripped large areas of the USSR and the targets were more modest and realistic. 1934-36, economic development was spectacular - many new factories came into operation, agriculture started to recover, productivity increased and the standard of living improved with rationing being abolished in 1935)**

### **The Third Five Year Plan:**

Began in 1938, this plan was disrupted by war. Its focus became the defence of the USSR. This plan was adversely affected but by the terror. However by 1938 people had more money to spend but less on which to spend it.

These plans determined the basic economic structure of the USSR, a structure which remained right up to the break of the USSR in 1991. Once the plans were adopted they gained the force of the law. They made it possible to manage the economy in a centralised way and to develop the creation of a working class among the local economic management bodies.

### **The First Five Year Plan:**

#### **Positive achievements:**

- Several huge projects such as Magnitogorsk were constructed. This steel producing city was built from nothing mainly by enthusiastic young communists. Also huge new tractor works were built in Stalingrad and Kharkov and other places.
- In several areas of heavy industry, for example, engineering, there were impressive gains despite targets not being met in areas such as steel and chemical production.

- There was a rapid increase in urbanisation not just in European Russia but also beyond the Urals and in other republics.
- Wages rose as managers of enterprises tried desperately to recruit the workforce needed to fulfil their targets.
- A major start had been made on industrialisation and the basic structure of the economy had been changed. There were major increase in some basic heavy industries e.g. electricity production trebled, coal and iron doubled and steel production went up by one third.
- The regime succeeded in building up a new workforce (initially inexperienced) which included women, convicts and displaced peasants.
- The regime gained greater control over the countryside during the period of the First Five Year Plan.

### **Negative Aspects:**

- Small scale industries catering for domestic goods were starved of resources and collapsed. The result of this was that consumers' needs were neglected and there were shortages of goods such as shoes and food.
- Not all targets in steel and chemicals were met.
- Textile production fell.
- Road and rail transport proved to be inadequate to meet the demands of industry.
- Transport and housing were also inadequate to cope with the increase in numbers of urban dwellers.
- Despite the increase in the length of the working week in 1931 there was a shortage of labour.
- The lack of specialists meant Russia had to recruit from abroad which was expensive. The lack of expertise was made worse by the fact that many of the new workers were inexperienced peasants.
- Despite an increase in wages for some labourers, there were few goods on which they could spend their money and these shortages were not helped by a rise in prices especially in private food markets.
- Specialists in industry found their task was made more difficult due to the conflicts they had with Communists who had little appreciation of reality or with administration desperate to meet their targets.
- Workers suffered because of the strict disciplines they laboured under e.g. absenteeism was punished with an increase in tax, dismissal or loss of allocated housing.
- Wages were not the same throughout industry as workers in enterprises considered important were given high wages.
- The government continued to export grain in exchange for machinery despite shortages of food at home.
- People dare not criticise any part of the plan, frightening they would be accused of sabotage or treason. Thus faults of this plan were ignored which meant they were not rectified and this undermined Soviet performance over the next 50 years.

### **Conclusion:**

In reality many targets were not met. The Great Depression had driven down the price of grain and so the USSR could not pay for all the machinery needed. Also, a good deal of investment had to go into agriculture because of the forced collectivisation programme. However the soviet economy was kickstarted; there was an impressive growth in certain sectors of the economy and there were substantial achievements.

### **The Second Five Year Plan:**

This was better prepared, more realistic and less chaotic than the First Five Year Plan. One of the reasons for the differences was that by 1933 the USSR was in crisis due to the horrendous famine, shortages, decline in production and investment. Owing to the greater realism there were considerable successes.

### **Positive Aspects:**

- The USSR began to benefit from the improved infrastructure laid down in the first plan.
- Magnitogorsk came into full production.
- There were now large gains in industry, construction and transport.
- Consumer goods received some attention receiving a greater share of investment.
- Productivity and wages rose while prices fell. the rise in productivity was due to workers having greater incentives to work harder, rationing was abolished in 1935, more goods were available and many workers were now more experienced and better educated.
- In industries such as machine building, coal, iron, and rail transport there were impressive gains although not all targets were met.
- The USSR was able to survive with fewer imports such as machine tools because many of these had been manufactured during the first five year plan ( eventually the USSR was almost self sufficient in machine tool production)
- The Dnieprostroi Dam was built in the 1930s; once operating provided hydro-electric power - increase soviet electric power output 5x.
- The Moscow metro was built in the 1930s and became a showpiece of soviet construction.

### **Negative Aspects:**

- The targets were still too optimistic and were not met, particularly in housing, consumer goods and the chemical industry largely through inefficiency, wastage and faulty decisions.
- The plan did not meet the aim of real higher wages.
- The failures were largely due to the higher priority given to defence. Output for defence rose by 300% between 1933 and 1938.
- the growing impact of the terror also had a detrimental effect on this five year plan; managers and many experienced and skilled people disappeared. This was a huge loss to industry. Also many did not dare speak out if they saw anything amiss for fear of arrest and torture. Thus mistakes continued to be made which could have been eradicated and no one dared to innovate.
- labour discipline was still very strict. Targets rose between 10% and 50%. Workers were expected at least to meet targets or even exceed them. Failure to meet targets resulted in fines or even worse.
- The gap between the pay of workers and professionals widened.

### **Stakhanovite Movement:**

In 1935 the coal miner, Stakhanov who worked in the Don Basin in one 5 hour shift succeeded in cutting 16 times more than the average miner was expected to do. He was made into a hero, given a bonus plus other material benefits along with honour awards. It was revealed many years later that it had been a propaganda stunt, and he had some people helping him.

### **The Third Five Year Plan: 1938 -1941:**

This plan was prepared 1937 to 1938 but was not formally adopted until 1939 but the 18th party congress. Its targets were ambitious e.g. a 92% rise in industrial production over 5 years plus a promise to expand secondary education. There were some major difficulties such as lack of skilled labour and a shortage of oil. This crisis was alleviated by the occupation of Poland and the Baltic States in late 1939. **The plan was dominated by preparation for war, and any industrial complex was built far from the western border, in preparation for German invasion.**

### **How the Plans worked:**

- Virtually all the plans were made by GOSPLAN, the state planning department.
- Each plan was broken down into small yearly operational plans and sometimes even quarterly targets.
- The political bosses of GOSPLAN decided what target to set and what to produce.

- There were government departments for each industry. The most important department was for heavy industry and was run by Ordzhonikidze. Three other important commissariats covered light industry, food and timber. Eventually there were 20 commissariats.
- The Commissariats gave orders to enterprises and directed them, not just about quantities to be produced, but also what wages should be paid and what prices should be charged.
- There was another layer of bureaucracy provided by regional administrators, and so industry got directions from different departments, and so mistakes were made and there was a lot of confusion.

### **The impact of industrialisation on the Soviet Economy to 1941:**

- Stalin's industrialisation should be counted as a success as it enabled the USSR to withstand the German invasion of 1941 and eventually to win the war.
- However the Soviet economy was never able to sustain a high defence capability and a high standard of living.
- The communist regime exaggerated the growth rates for both foodstuffs and consumer goods: for example grain output was measured by its biological yield that is when the grain was still in the fields. This measurement does not take into account losses incurred during harvesting and transportation.
- However bearing these warnings in mind we can make the following conclusions concerning output:
  - 1928-1940 the Soviet economy probably grew by 5% to 6% per year, an impressive result.
  - Several developments e.g. branches of engineering were started from nothing.
  - The armaments industry was perhaps the most impressive; some of the tanks, aircraft and guns were the equal of and in some areas superior to anything produced elsewhere in the world.
  - There was a geographical shift in industry as Stalin wasn'ted to build it far away from the Western Border for fear of invasion, and so there was considerable investment in Siberia, the Urals and Central Asian republics.
  - There was a considerable population shift; 1926 to 1939 the urban population increased from 26 to 56 million people largely due to the migration from the countryside to towns where there was a higher standard of living.
  - Between 1928 and 1932, the industrial workforce doubled. Women now played a major part; in 1928, 24% of the workforce were women, by 1940 this had increased to 39%.
  - Quality of many consumer goods remained poor despite the overall increase in industrial production.

### **Socialism or Stalinism?**

- Under Stalin the communist never claimed he had achieved a truly communist state as that would mean the withering away of the government. However they maintained that state ownership meant that no profits were being made at the expense of others and that the state was protecting the individual against exploitation.
- Those against the USSR believe it was not a socialist state but a totalitarian or dictatorial power in which all activity, including economic activity, was worked out on the basis of what was good for the party rather than what was good for the people.
- To Stalin and his fellow communists there was a very important ideological motive for industrialisation. Stalin promoted the industrialisation campaign as one of class warfare and used groups like the Komsomol to preach war against class enemies who were trying to hold up progress.

### **The impact of industrialisation on Soviet Society to 1941:**

#### **Peasants:**

They worked very hard in often worse conditions than people in the towns. Much of their produce was taken by the state although those with private plots (from 1935) were allowed to sell their

produce or consume it themselves. The majority of peasants moved to the towns as it was easier to find work. Many found the transition very hard, not being used to either factory discipline or to handling machines. They were cheap labour but as a rule they did not boost productivity.

#### **Workers:**

Many younger communists were enthusiastic about industrialisation (e.g. Magnitogorsk). Also some workers benefited from education and were able to gain promotion plus many experiences a rise in their standard of living. Those who were unenthusiastic were punished sometimes by being sent to prison. By the mid 1930s the workers carried a labour book that recorded their background, labour history and any breaking of the rules. It is difficult to judge how enthusiastic the workers were and how far they had influenced by propaganda.

#### **Women:**

Usually less well paid and received fewer training possibilities, 10 million women had joined the workforce in the 1930s. They were still expected to do the housework and look after the children.

#### **Convict Labour:**

Convict labour grew hugely during the 1930s. Many convicts died building projects such as the Baltic- White Sea Canal.

#### **Explain why Stalin introduced a first five year plan for industry in 1928?**

- Under NEP heavy industry was nationalised but this was very inefficient and full of bureaucracy. Did not reach pre 1913 levels by mid 1920s. Gaps in technology and gap in productivity per head of population worsening. Inefficient management and too many layers of bureaucracy. Targets set under VSNKh had failed to raise productivity and their plan to get more profitable and less profitable industries together failed.
- Many communists disliked the NEP on ideological grounds. It allowed private enterprise and wages earned to be more in private enterprises. There were strikes because of the rift between state and private employees. There was a chronic shortage of housing.
- There was no middle class in Russia and these are the people who had spearheaded industrialisation in Western Europe. This meant that the state had to have its full weight behind planned industrialisation.
- The industrialisation before 1928 had been piecemeal and not a success. They needed serious planning in order to be a success.
- He used it as a way of discrediting the right wing, in his power struggle. The Shakhty trial 1928 was used to show how he was going to replace bourgeois specialists with trustworthy politically reliable communists.

#### **By the end of the 1st five year plan, the soviet economy was in a much stronger position than it had been in 1928? Agree or Disagree?**

##### **Agree:**

- Major start in industrialisation:
- Particular success: share of GDP rose from 28% to 41%. Magnitogorsk was built by young communists. New technology was brought in from abroad.
- Workforce created + rigorous discipline. Absenteeism was punished by higher taxes. Workers books to keep track of past history. Incentives for workers i.e. Housing.
- Rapid increase in urbanisation. Many peasants came to the towns and the urban areas expanded to compensate.

##### **Disagree:**

- Examples of inefficiencies. Production costs very high. Not actually a plan, but a crude set of targets. Output substandard, lorry tyres only lasted a few weeks. Thousands of parts were created that industry didn't need. Some factories lacked the resources and the infrastructure to

facilitate industrialisation. Bribery and corruption was rife. Having to import foreign expertise proved expensive.

- Consumer goods neglected. The small private industries were starved of resources and collapsed. This meant that there was virtually no consumer goods for the people to buy. This meant there was no incentive to work hard and make money. There were severe shortages in textiles, shoes, food, clothes. There was also a chronic shortage in housing.
- Examples where targets not reached. Steel and chemicals did not meet the targets set and textiles also decreased even though it had been efficient during the NEP. Road and rail transport failed to reach the needs of industry.
- Impact of collectivisation on 1st 5 year plan. Agricultural output decreased. There was a famine in 1932, and so rationing was introduced. Agriculture was seen as second after industry but was vital for industrialisation. There was low grain price due to depression, meaning they did not do as much technological imports.
- Culture of fear very evident. Everyone was frightened of being accused of sabotage, meant no one dared to speak out about obvious failures and so they went on without being fixed. Lasting consequence, faults remained which could have been eradicated. Government reinforced fear with show trials such as the Shakhty trial.

### How far had industrialisation met Stalin's objectives by 1941?

- **Discredit the right wing : Stalin was now in complete control, he formed an authoritarian state.** He presents the industrialisation as a war on class divisions, and he wants to get rid of specialists and middle classes.
- **Stalin's economic motives :** USSR would survive the inevitable war with Hitler. The more ambitious first year plan was chosen, to provide a sound base for further industrialisation.
- The fact that the USSR survived the German invasion of 1941, was a success
- Relevant 5 year plans:
  - Electricity trebled, coal and iron doubled and steel increased by one third during the first 5 year plan. By the second plan, the USSR was nearly self sufficient with machine tools.
  - In the second plan, there were more realistic targets. Electricity increased 5x and they were self sufficient in machine tools. Infrastructure was far better under second plan. Magnitogorsk came into production, steel production increased. Military workshops were now attached to every workshop.
  - In the third plan, they wanted to expand secondary education to provide a more educated workforce for the future. This plan was mainly preparing for war. New factories were built beyond the Urals. Many of the armaments that the USSR made were superior or at least equal in quality to those produced in the West.
- **Living standards:** they never managed to achieve a good living standard along with a huge defence capability. There was still a huge shortage in consumer goods, but especially in textiles and shoes. Chronic shortage of housing and so living standards were low.
- **Fear of speaking out:** mistakes were left untreated that could have been fixed. These were detrimental to the development of the economy as a whole. 1928 Shakhty.
- **Resources diverted to agriculture:** industry was seen as a priority, but agriculture was crucial to industrialisation. Resources were used to build tractors and machinery, and people were needed for secret police and agrarian advisers.
- Expansion of workforce and benefit of strict discipline: workers were used to extreme conditions with high targets - Stakhanovites, absenteeism was punished heavily. Appalling living conditions.
- **Conclusion:** Stalin's objectives were met as the USSR survived the war but it was achieved at extreme human cost.

## **Collectivisation:**

### **Agriculture under the NEP:**

- In 1917 the peasants had seized the land for themselves and under Lenin private land ownership was legalised. Under war communism the peasants had their crops seized requisitioned by the government.
- In 1921, the NEP made the peasants pay their taxes in grain. During the 1920s the government made the peasant pay their taxes in money to try and encourage them to put more grain on the market.
- But at the same time the government clamped down on nepmen who bring the peasants grain to the market, who were paying twice as much than the state for grain. The thinking behind this was that the peasants would now receive less for their grain and so would have to sell more grain to the regime to make the same money and pay their taxes. This worked at first but the peasants soon got wise to the ploy and started to feed their grain to their animals rather than sell it at low prices. The prices they received for cattle was far higher than that received for grain. The peasants also saw little point in having surplus money as there was little to spend it on, as consumer goods were both expensive and scarce.
- In **1926** there was a bumper harvest and the price of grain fell further. The peasants started to hold back their grain hoping the price would rise. They were also therefore sowing less grain.
- In **1927** there was a shortage of grain and rationing had to be introduced in the cities. The government had to resort to grain requisitioning and sent troops into the countryside to take the grain by force. This was named the Urals Siberian method, by Stalin going to the Urals to requisition grain in 1928. This method involved encouraging the peasants to denounce the kulaks who were hoarding grain. Their grain would then be seized and the kulaks arrested.

### **Soviet agriculture in 1928:**

- Historians have shown that communist party members and many urban working class supported collectivisation believing the private ownership of land was wrong in a socialist state; also many were angry at the shortages of food in the cities.
- More food would need to be grown to support industrialisation. The new industrial towns would have to be fed plus food would need to be exported in exchange for technological expertise and machinery.
- Agriculture was inefficient and small scale. The regime believed production could be increased significantly if farms were grouped together in larger units. Fewer farm workers would then be needed and labour could then be transferred to the factories.
- There was a strong ideological argument going on inside the communist party. The right wing believed the peasants should be encouraged to 'get rich' under the NEP and their resulting prosperity would pay for the industrialisation which was the aim of all communists. However the left wing, which now included Stalin, believed that this process would be too slow and dangerous. Peasants had been traditional supporters of the communist party. Stalin was increasingly unprepared to allow the peasants to be in a position where they could blackmail the regime.

Under pressure from the right wing, worried that Stalin's methods would bring about violence and rural unrest, Stalin agreed to stop the grain seizures in 1928. He tried to raise the market price for grain to encourage peasants to put more grain on the market. He also, in late 1928, tried to persuade the peasants to collectivise voluntarily. However the continuing grain shortages in 1928 meant that Stalin had to resort to involuntary collectivisation. This meant that Stalin had to eliminate the right, which he did through removing them from the politburo and other key positions. The kulaks as a class were eliminated. During 1929, the government had launched a propaganda campaign against the kulaks to try and create a rift between them and the peasants, in order to encourage the peasants to rat them out. Urban activists called the 25 thousandsers, who after a two week course, went with the police, secret police and army to oversee collectivisation. Each region was given a certain number of kulaks to find whether they existed or not. There was a strong opposition from peasants which led Stalin to temporarily climb down and in March 1930 Stalin

seclered in an article called 'dizzy with success' that local officials were behaving in too much of an aggressive way in carrying out collectivisation. Many peasants were allowed to leave the collectives and had their livestock returned to them so long as they were not kulaks. This was only a temporary tactic and once the spring crop had been sown, the process of collectivisation began again. In 1930 peasants were allowed their private plots.

By 1932 , 62% of peasants had been collectivised, rising to 93% in 1937.

### **Opposition to collectivisation:**

- There was a huge opposition to collectivisation which amounted to civil war in the countryside.
- Most peasants did not want to join the collectives especially those from more fertile areas such as Ukraine.
- Many peasants burned their farms and crops rather than hand them over. The armed forces responded by bombing entire villages and deporting thousands of peasants to Siberia .
  - Anyone who resisted collectivisation was classed as a kulak. We estimate that 10 million peasants died because of their resistance to collectivisation.
  - Also by 1939 about 19 million peasants had migrated to towns which meant one in three peasants had moved from the countryside to towns.
  - Collectivisation was known by many peasants as the 'second serfdom' . They were tied to the land but did not own it. A typical collective farm was known as a Kolkhoz which was a collection of villages with peasants living in the same houses as before.
  - Each collective was managed by a chairman appointed by the communist party. The chairman would have little idea about agriculture and were changed regularly.
  - In each area there was an MTS ( machine and tractor station). The stations hired out and maintained machines but the peasants had to pay a percentage of their produce for this service. Each MTS had a political department whose job it was to root out trouble makers. However, the MTS was often unable to supply the amount of machines needed, **which was proof that collectivisation was quite a sudden thing and was only implemented to solve the procurement crisis.**
  - In some collectives, schools and clinics were set up. In 1929 there were 8 million pupils in primary school but in 1933 this had risen to 14 million.

### **The impact of collectivisation:**

#### **Economic impact:**

- Agricultural production fell dramatically: grain production did not exceed pre-collectivisation levels until 1935 and meat production until 1953.
- Peasants worked far harder on their private plots. There was little incentive to work hard on the collective farm - any surplus would be sold and the profits divided between the peasants equally. But there was rarely any surplus.
- The famine of 1932-33 made a dreadful situation even worse with 7 million peasants dying. The worst affected areas were Ukraine, Kazakhstan and the Caucasus ( the most skilled and important farmers disappeared for good) many tried to flee the famine by going to the city, but were stopped by the internal passports brought in in 1932.
- The impact of the MTS proved limited as the stations were short of equipment plus short on agriculture advisers.
- The countryside was poorer than the urban areas although historians have pointed out that due to the lack of preparation for collectivisation, valuable resources were diverted from industry which then suffered as a consequence. The resources included the need to build tractors plus send out advisers, police and secret police.
- Historians have also pointed out that the USSR did not receive as much as the leaders wanted for their grain due to low grain prices internationally due to the Wall Street crash.
- From 1935 peasants were allowed to sell their produce from their private plots in the only free markets allowed in Russia. These plots made up about 4% of the cultivated land but supplied about one third of all marketed food in the USSR.



**Political impact:**

- For the first time the regime had extended its control over the countryside. The peasants would never again be able to hold the regime to ransom.
- It meant the right wing now lost all influence as Bukharin, acrylic and to sky were discredited and lost influence. By December 1929 Stalin was in total control of Russia and of the communist party.
- Apart from the existence of private plots class differences in the country side disappeared and Stalin had moved closer to his version of socialism. The NEP had disappeared.

**Social impact:**

- Millions of peasants died or had their lives totally disrupted.
- Despite the introduction of internal passports there was a serious imbalance as millions of younger people left the countryside for the towns.
- Many peasants regarded collectivisation as the 'new serfdom' some peasants even welcomed the German invasion of 1941 hoping for liberation from the collective.
- There were some benefits to rural areas such as education but the countryside was seen as poor relation to the urban areas. Despite being a crucial part of industrialisation, agriculture did not receive the same attention as industry from Stalin.

**Explain why the peasants resisted collectivisation?**

- 1) ideological reasons
- 2) Collectivisation would strip them of the freedom + rights. They would hate not having the potential to better themselves. Grain requisitioning and hid their grain.
- 3) Hated the methods used in collectivisation.
- 4) Resisted as they knew communist regime would have total control over their lives. Knew MTS had political department - would watch you.
- 5) The way that the Kulaks were treated - they were all friends and family - therefore didn't like regime.

**Why did Stalin launch a campaign to exterminate the kulaks?**

- 1) Stalin needed a scapegoat for the failure of agriculture.
- 2) Majority of kulaks were against the regime and the controls they had.
- 3) Ideological reasons - many in the party disagreed with the private ownership of land and making money at the expense of others. Right wing wanted this, but this not socialist and too slow.
- 4) Kulaks had been holding the regime to ransom. 1927 kulaks were the main people hoarding the grain.

**By 1941 collectivisation had greatly strengthen the USSR?****Agree:**

- Regular supplies of grain:
  - This meant that they could feed the workers in the industry and provide enough grain for export for imports if technology in return.
- Political control over the countryside secured:
  - This meant the party management of the collectives had complete control and could no longer hold the regime to ransom.
- Despite countryside being poor in comparison with urban areas, there were some benefits such as:
  - But there were some benefits e.g. 1929 8 million children received education, by 1933 there was 14 million children in schools.
  - Plus the provision of basic health services, for example, access to clinics available.
- Collectivisation meant industrialisation could proceed:

- Although achieved at great human cost, collectivisation meant industrialisation could proceed. The USSR emerged as a much stronger power, able to survive the 1941-45 war.

### **Disagree:**

- Economically collectivisation was a disaster e.g grain production, meat production and peasants relieved little or no share of profits so no incentive.
  - Grain production did not exceed pre collectivisation levels until 1935 and meat until 1953.
  - Peasants received little or no share of profits - no incentive to work hard.
  - Due to the speed of collectivisation, there was a lack of preparation and so valuable resources were diverted to the countryside.
  - They also had to supply tractors, taking up more resources.
  - 1929 - they received low grain prices because of low grain prices.
- Achieved at severe human cost:
  - Estimated 10 million died as a consequence of collectivisation.
  - 7 million people died in famine of 1932-33. Partly by collec but also severe drought.
  - Most skilled workers disappeared in this drought.
  - 1932 internal passports were introduced to stop peasants from migrating.
- Impact of mechanisation:
  - They had to divert resources and there was not many resources available for peasants to use.
- Historians views:
  - Soviet historians argue collectivisation was a good thing.
  - Some are more critical and say that too many resources had to be diverted to agriculture.
  - The lowering in grain prices meant that they did not import as much machinery.
  - Peasants were spending too much time on private plots.
  - By 1935, 4% of all cultivated land was providing around one third of all marketable grain.

### **The terror:**

#### **In 1933:**

In 1933, the communist party was very unpopular, the main reasons being:

- The violence of collectivisation (Rural communist party members were frequently murdered)
- The famine 1932-3
- The urban workers were angry at their low wages, strict controls and harsh punishments.
- The cities were violent, overcrowded and unsanitary.

The terror lasted from 1934 to 1939. During the civil war terror had been an integral part of the regime. Kirov's murder signalled the start of the terror but there had been indications of this of the regime's increasingly harsh approach. These indications include:

- The Shakhty trial of 1928 when industrial specialists from middle class backgrounds who were based in the coal mines of the donbas region, were tried for sabotage and spying.
- Ryutin, a former Central committee member published a pamphlet in which he criticised Stalin's leadership. He was arrested but not executed until 1937 (due to Kirov's opposition)
- In 1933 six British engineers were tried for industrial espionage.

#### **Kirov Murder:**

During 1933 Stalin asked Kirov to move from being party secretary in Leningrad to move to Moscow and become party secretary there. Kirov refused to move, as he wanted to remain in Leningrad. At the 1934 congress there is evidence that Kirov was asked by a group of old Bolsheviks to stand against Stalin for the post of General Secretary. Kirov refused and told Stalin what had happened. At the end of the congress a secret ballot was held to confirm Stalin as General Secretary, but 25% of members voted against Stalin; Stalin was told the result and the ballot papers were quickly destroyed. Soon after the 1934 congress, Kirov was murdered outside

hi Leningrad headquarters. Kirov's bodyguard who witnessed the shooting was killed the following day in a road accident.

### **Why did Stalin see Kirov as a threat?**

- For many reasons, many party members felt there was too much upheaval under Stalin.
- Kirov was popular and a good speaker. He was seen as more liberal than Stalin although this popular view probably hid a vicious side to Kirov.
- Suicide of Stalin's wife - many trace Stalin's growing paranoia back to this. The result was that any leading communist was seen as a possible threat by Stalin.
- Stalin and Kirov appeared to be close (holidayed together), Kirov stood up to Stalin, e.g. Against Ryutin's execution which Stalin postponed and refused Stalin's request to move from Moscow to Leningrad.
- 1934 congress, Kirov asked to stand against Stalin as general secretary but he refused. Kirov's mistake was to tell Stalin about this request. To make matters worse, 25% of ballot papers confirming Stalin as general secretary were spoiled. They were then destroyed.
- Kirov murdered outside his Leningrad HQ. His bodyguard witnessed the shooting but died the next day in a car crash, whilst travelling with the secret police. Kirov's growing popularity and that he was prepared to stand up to Stalin meant it was not surprising that Stalin viewed him as a threat.

### **Consequences of Kirov's Murder:**

- Stalin's daughter blamed the NKVD for the murder.
- December 1934 a law was passed which speeded up the process of trying suspects and removed any right of appeal. Families were now collectively responsible for the defendant.
- Kamenev and Zinoviev were arrested.
- The assassination was the signal for Stalin to tighten his grip on Russia. Some believe the suicide of his wife in 1932 made Stalin draw more into himself and become more paranoid.
- The aftermath of the assassination showed no one was safe even those high up in the party.

### **The show trials:**

These were a feature of the Terror. Top communist party members having been tortured, confessed to crimes such as spying and sabotage of the regime. In the 1936 show trial, Kamenev and Zinoviev were put on trial and along with others found guilty and shot. A second show trial was held in 1937 in which Karl Radek was found guilty. The third show trial was held in 1938 and involved Bukharin. At the end of the trial, Bukharin, Yagoda and Rykov were all shot. All three trials were highly publicised with foreign journalists present. Stalin is supposed to have watched the proceedings from a hidden vantage point.

### **Motives for the Great Terror and Purges:**

- Stalin was vindictive and wanted to get rid of those in the party who at some stage had dared to oppose him.
- Terror was an integral part of the communist system seen in its widespread use during the Civil War 1918-21.
- Terror was a necessary part of the huge economic changes taking place. It would need to be used in order to coerce both peasants and factory workers plus huge camps of political prisoners would be needed to provide the slave labour. This type of labour was essential if targets were to be achieved. Finally there would be mistakes dying a time of such upheaval and so scapegoats would be needed to blame when targets are not achieved.
- After Hitler came to power in 1933, his violent anti-communist views bred an atmosphere of fear and suspicion and led to supposed saboteurs being exposed.
- Once the terror started it took on a momentum of its own with local officials taking the law into their own hands.
- Stalin seems to have genuinely believed there was a military coup planned to get rid of him. In 1937 Marshal Tukhachevsky was tried and shot followed by the arrest of other officers.

The worst period of the terror was between September 1936 and December 1938, when Yezhov was in charge of the NKVD. In 1939 when Stalin wished to end the terror Yezhov was quietly removed from office and shot, being made a scapegoat for the excesses of the purges. He was replaced by Beria.

### **Historians' view on the terror:**

Overall there are 4 categories of interpretations by historians concerning the terror:

- State violence was an integral part of the Soviet system, for example under Lenin the suppression of the Kronstadt rebellion 1921. The difference was that Stalin's contribution was on a much larger scale.
- Stalin was personally responsible for what happened. An example which would support this view was the dismissal of Yezhov in December 1938. Stalin wished to end the terror and the dismissal of Yezhov by Stalin.
- The third view is that other leading communists and local party activists played an equally important part and were confident that they would not be checked for taking part. They obviously believed their actions were that was expected by the leading members of the party.
- The final view is that the terror took on a momentum of its own. Many individuals had personal scores to settle and rivals to get rid of and the terror gave them this chance.

### **Key Dates:**

**1934:** OGPU became the NKVD and the ordinary police plus the labour camps came under the NKVD.

**December 1934:** Kirov is murdered. In addition a decree was issued that sped up the process of trials and removed the right of appeal and families now had collective responsibility for the crimes of their family members.

**1936:** The First Show trial Kamenev and Zinoviev, who were tried and shot and Yagoda was arrested.

**1937:**

- The second show trial with Karl Radek
- Political prisoners were now known as 'enemy of the people' and were no longer citizens and were considered incapable of re-education.
- Camps became places where prisoners were deliberately worked to death.
- Up to 1937 it was members of Russia's elite who lived in fear of arrest. A decree in 1937 condemned anti-soviet elements in the USSR and arrest lists were drawn up. White collar workers were most at risk. Targets were set and included members who had to be shot and numbers were to be sent to labour camps.

**1938:** Yagoda, Rykov and Bukharin are put on trial and all three are executed

**December 1938:** Yekhov was dismissed and shot as head of the NKVD. This signalled the end of the terror (At the start of 1939). Yekhov was replaced by Beria.

### **Impact of the Terror:**

#### **Impact on the party:**

- Between 1928 and 1933 the party membership had increased considerably but many new members lacked discipline and could be accused of drunkenness.
- Many were expelled from 1933 onwards, most of whom were the new recruits (NB arrest did not always mean arrest and punishment).
- Thus the party was concerned about the membership long before the onset of the worst part of the terror
- From 1936 onwards, actions against party members were dictated by Stalin and Yezhov, the aim of this being to make the party an obedient tool of Stalin.
- By 1939 less than 10% of the party membership had joined the party before 1920. This newer membership was both younger and better educated.

- The party leadership seems not to have been effected but the terror as is often supposed. Before the terror several old Bolsheviks such as Kamenev, Zinoviev and Bukharin had been discredited and had lost power. Several of the leadership had been important before Stalin's rise to power; by 1939 only 3 men had been appointed by Stalin (one of these Khrushchev) to the politburo.
- However fewer party members were prepared to stand up to Stalin
- Also Stalin frequently humiliated members of the Politburo e.g. Stalin would hit Beria and even throw tea at him. Also the wife of Kalinin carried out heavy labour in a prison camp and the wife of Molotov was also imprisoned.

### **The armed Forces:**

- Marshall Tukhachevsky had been responsible for modernising the Russian army and had thought carefully about improving tactics.
- He and other leading generals were shot in 1937 accused of treason and spying (NB Tukhachevsky had been close to Trotsky) It is clear all these men had been tortured. Yezhov was the main person behind constructing the case against these men. The whole affair was clouded because:
  - There is evidence that the Germany were involved in planting evidence to implicate the Red Army in a plot to put Stalin on trial or to shoot him outright.
  - Since 1922 Red Army officers had worked with German officers (NB the Treaty of Rapallo 1922 Germany and Russia had agreed to support each other in military training).
- From 1936 to 1941 the Russian army increased from 1 million to 5 million men.
- This expansion also involved training on new weapons and tactics.
- During the terror, it is estimated that 23,000 officers were shot or dismissed although many were later reinstated and the great majority of those purged were not killed.
- Owing to the huge increase in the size of the army, 250,000 new officers had to be promoted. The lack of experience showed by the officer class in the first few months of the German invasion was due to them being promoted and cannot be put down to the terror.
- **As a consequence of the terror and the purging of the top generals, political commissars were now attached to the army ensuring the soldiers were firmly under state control.**

### **Impact of Terror on Soviet Population:**

- **The greatest impact of the terror was the loss of experienced army officers, teachers, engineers and other specialists. Many were not necessarily party members but their contribution was vital to the development of the country.**
- Between 1936 and 1939 it is estimated that 10 to 15 million people may have died as a result of torture, execution and exile in camps; in 1990, the KGB put the figures at far less.
- Targets for execution and exile were set by the authorities. Among the most heavily targeted areas were western siberia (thought to be the centre of a military plot against the regime), leningrad region and Moscow. Informers were used to back up the police and it is estimated that there were approximately 400 people for every informer.
- The NKVD was keen to route out people thought to be dangerous to society; gypsies and former members of other political parties. Also people were arrested simply because relatives, friends or workmates had been found guilty of crimes against the state.
- In 1937 the camps were altered from being indifferently managed prisons to places where inmates were deliberately worked to death. Many camp commandants were later purged.
- In 1937 the term 'political prisoner' gave way to a new label 'enemy of the state'. Once you received this label, you were no longer regarded as a citizen and were incapable of re-education and deprived of most of your rights.
- One of the most notorious camps is in the north east corner of Siberia, the Kolyma camp. The Kolyma region was especially rich in mineral resources, especially gold. Stalin needed this gold to export in exchange for western technology and machinery. Camps such as the Kolyma camp were usually dominated by professional criminals (political prisoners were often treated worse than professional criminals) The inmates of Kolyma camp built roads, docks and even the city of Magadan. The conditions in the camps were generally their worst during the Yezhov years but improved when Beria became head of the NKVD, because he believed that if you treat the

inmates better, they would be more capable of working harder. **Many historians believe that the camps did not make money, because of the amount of resources diverted to them, to run them.**

- Well into 1937 it was the members of Russia's elite that were in fear of arrest. During 1937 the government issued a decree condemning anti-soviet elements in the USSR.
- This is when lists were drawn up that included people in industry and the professions. White collar workers and party members now lived in fear of arrest; in fact many resisted promotion simply to stay out of the limelight.
- Ordinary people were rarely imprisoned on political charges. In fact ordinary people, from the evidence we have, believed Stalin's propaganda and accepted the arrests.

#### **Working conditions:**

- These were variable; the industrial workforce doubled. Longer-established workers often did better than new workers.
- Workers often supplemented their wages by eating in work canteens.
- Rationing ended in 1935 and food prices remained stable.
- There were harsher laws on labour discipline but despite these, many workers managed to change jobs.
- Despite the stakhanovite movement workers found the targets more realistic.

**"By 1941, the Great Terror had strengthen the USSR". Explain why you agree or disagree with this view.**

<b>Agree:</b>	<b>Disagree:</b>
Terror strengthen Stalin's position over the party - hence over Russia. Strong dictatorship but <b>not</b> totalitarian.	Terror caused massive disruption - bourgeois specialists replaced by inexperienced communists - this damaged industrial development and led to huge inefficiencies ( many goods had to be scrapped) Targets may have been reached without the fear elements.
Terror meant rapid industrialisation achieved - economic growth impressive (1928 -40, 5%-6% economy grew) - without this growth USSR would not have withstood German invasion + fear meant workers made	

#### **Social Impact of Stalin's policies:**

##### **Role and impact of propaganda:**

- Since 1917, the soviet state had relied extensively on propaganda (in the civil war of 1918-21), propaganda had been an important factor in the Bolshevik victory.
- Propaganda had a dual purpose. It had to win the support for government policy but it also had to indoctrinate the population.
- Under Lenin the bolsheviks had used enormous resources for propaganda, plus due to strict censorship had a monopoly of control over public information. Despite this there is evidence to suggest ordinary people were not convinced by the messages coming from the government.
- Under Stalin propaganda was more effective both in its scope and nature than during the NEP period due to:
  - Collectivisation meant the government was able to influence peasant attitudes more and spread the party line more effectively. however the peasants remained largely unimpressed

by soviet propaganda shown by their angry response to attacks on churches plus the peasants tended to work harder on their small private plots. The communist party had greater success in the towns and cities.

- Peasants were often forced to go to party meetings and were more likely to be literate as schools were set up on the collectives both for children and for adults. (Teachers were forced to work in places that would not have chosen e.g. in rural Russia). As literacy levels were much higher in the 1930s compared to the 1920s this enabled a greater variety of propaganda to be used.
- Within the larger number of schools evident in the 1930s more political content was included in the curriculum.
- 1920s cultural activity was relatively free of communist ideology whereas in the 1930s the state took greater control of all aspects of the media and culture. the concept of censorship was well established by the 1930s and had become far more rigorous. (NB Lenin eliminated all non bolshevik papers by 1918)
- In the 1930s it was increasingly accepted that only one viewpoint would be tolerated -the communist one. This led to increasing clashes with the orthodox church and continued attacks on church property and priests.
- the language of propaganda was established by the 1930s. People were used to expressions such as 'the enemy' .
- The growing membership of the komsomol helped as the members' enthusiasm for projects such as industrialisation helped to gain support for the people even if they were not ardent communists.
- In the 1920s, communist organisations were relatively new, and certainly not well established in the countryside. Even though the regime tried to influence the peasants to support communist policies, it was often competing with the influence of the orthodox church. There were too few committed communists in the countryside, and many peasants were illiterate.

Social realism is apparent in propaganda in the 1930s. This style of art was practiced from 1932 onwards and always conveyed the message that life under socialism was happy for ordinary workers and peasants.

### Culture:

- There is a distinct difference between the NEP and Stalin's Russia in that by the 1930s creativity was encouraged but within clearly defined limits.
- In the 1920s there was a mixture of old and new from artists and intellectuals although some of these people produced art forms designed to appeal to the masses even though there was no pressure from the regime, at this stage, to do so.
- Examples of art forms were:
  - **Agitprop** which was a movement for popular theatre involving street performances and street processions. These were supposed to be competing with the religious processions especially easter.
  - **Design and architecture** designed everyday objects such as clothes and furniture using geometric shapes which were often influenced by industrial design. Designers and architects who were involved in using such radical designs were known as **constructivists**. Two such people were Tatlin and Lissitzky.
  - **Literature**, for example Mayakovsky, a poet and dramatist who believed he was writing for the masses. (he later fell out of favour as he attacked the excessive bureaucracy in the USSR and committed suicide.)
  - **Cinema** was taken up enthusiastically by the communists. the best known soviet director was Eisenstein who in 1925 made the silent film, Battleship Potemkin using new techniques, for example the use of music, which were influential throughout the world. Eisenstein's work later influenced Goebbels in Nazi Germany. Eisenstein later fell out of favour with the regime and worked abroad until 1938 when he returned to the USSR and made a public confession of his errors. His final film, Ivan the terrible, drew uncomfortable parallels with Stalin and was not shown until after his death.

- **Authors**, perhaps the most famous being Maxim Gorky who had been famous during the Tsarist era. He had returned to Russia after the February revolution but lived abroad again between 1911 and 1928. He was persuaded by Stalin to return and Gorky then went on to help with the development of Socialist Realism. Gorky died while undergoing an operation. Another writer was Sholokhov who became very wealthy because of the novels he wrote. Despite criticising the treatment of the Kulaks, Stalin loved good literature and protected him.
- **Musicians** such as the composer Shostakovich was very successful in the 1920s and the 1930s until Stalin said his opera, Lady Macbeth was incomprehensible.

### **Culture in Stalin's USSR: Cultural revolution:**

- 1928 was the start of the First Five Year plan along with voluntary collectivisation. This year also marked the start of a cultural revolution. Its aims were:
  - To attack old values associated with the NEP
  - To ensure that all art was proletarian in theme.
- This cultural revolution led to violent attacks on churches and religion and on old art forms.
- Films, books, and the theatre were to have easily understood messages which emphasised the important role of the ordinary workers and peasants.
- Eisenstein was criticised for not doing this sufficiently in his films.
- Plots were to have happy endings reflecting the regime's ultimate goal of utopianism which was an ideal proletarian future.
- This socialist realism which meant paintings were to show contented peasants with an abundance of corn.
- Music was also to be jolly and optimistic (Shostakovich was criticised for his music not being easily understandable by ordinary people)
- In 1931 the **Association of Proletarian Artists** was set up and only those who promoted Socialist Realism could practice their craft.
- **RAPP - Russian Association of Proletarian Writers** controlled the output of writers to ensure Socialist realism prevailed with themes such as industrialisation and titles such as 'How the steel was tempered'. Writers were expected to work on industrial and agricultural sites. Cheap books were produced in bulk ensuring an increasingly literate population lapped up the propaganda.
- In 1931, the cultural revolution ended. Those of the intelligentsia who had toed the party line were treated well and became very successful. Those who did not conform suffered and hundreds disappeared in the Great Terror, many being executed.
- **In 1932, all artistic organisations were merged into one union. Stalin's hold over cultural life was complete.**

### **Education:**

- There was a definite shift in policy in education. Just as with culture and propaganda, the state was gaining a stricter control on education.
- During the 1920s much experimentation was tried in education such as it was forbidden to exercise discipline. There were also insufficient resources given to schools.
- During the cultural revolution of 1928 to 1931 the acquisition of knowledge was despised and there was an emphasis on children doing socially useful work outside school. Exams were scrapped and traditional teachers were driven out to be replaced by more committed communists. Stalin saw this as disastrous - the USSR needed a more educated work force.
- **Narkompros** was the party organisation responsible for education. Under this organisation control over education became centralised. Thus a more organised school structure was reintroduced along with traditional methods such as the wearing of school uniforms.
- Children now started nursery at 3 years old and infant school up to 7 years. At the age of 7, a child would progress to secondary school where they would remain until at least age 15 years.
- Many adult education institutions were also set up in which more emphasis was put on the higher training of specialists who could help with the industrialisation drive.
- A political slant was put on subjects such as history. There was also an emphasis on learning a sense of duty and loyalty.



- Teachers now had a higher status.
- In 1938, the Russian language became a compulsory school subject.

### **Living standards:**

- Between 1929 and 1935 life was hard.
- There was rationing because of grain shortages and a famine in 1932-33.
- This caused major problems in towns which were swamped by refugees from the countryside. In 1932 internal passports were introduced and urban registration (city dwellers had to have residence permits thus making it easier to expel illegal residents).
- There was an acute shortage of houses and many families were crammed into communal apartments whilst many workers lived in barracks at their factories.
- Many cities had no sewerage, street lighting, public transport and water was rationed.
- Living standards dropped - the worst year was 1933.
- Between 1935 and 1937 there were improvements - 1937 was probably the best year for living standards. Because of major shortages some private traders were made legal again such as shoe repair, hair dressing and plumbing.
- The problems increased after 1937 as the impact of bad harvests was felt in 1936. There was also a continued rise in the urban population which also contributed to worsening living standards.
- Urban workers coped better than peasants as they could use their work canteens and shops, something peasants were not able to do.

### **Religion:**

- Under Lenin, despite confiscating Church property, issuing hostile propaganda and persecuting priests the Bolsheviks did not actually ban religion.
- The reason for this was that the church commanded the loyalty of many millions of peasants throughout Russia. The same could be said for Islam in some of the Asian republics.
- To have banned religion would have been one step too far and may have jeopardised the regime.
- In 1920s the focus was on propaganda and education to spread the message that the church's promises were based on falsehood.
- Members of the Komsomol often raided churches and disrupted religious festivals.
- However many of these activities led to the peasants to complain and there is evidence of a religious revival (NB In the Ukraine anti religious activity was stopped by the regime as it was proven to be counter productive).
- **Under Stalin:** the regime lost patience when it realised the people could not be persuaded to renounce their faith
- In 1929 the regime:
  - Banned the teaching of religious creeds.
  - Hundreds of churches were destroyed or shut down.
  - All religious schools were closed.
- There was a relaxation of the campaign in 1935 but it was soon renewed with vigour. Priests had to function in secret. However the regime found it impossible to kill off religious belief not just in the Orthodox Church but also amongst the Jews and followers of Islam. Many soviet citizens held on to their faith.

### **Ideology and opinion in Stalin's Russia:**

- The secret police compiled reports on public opinion. Ordinary citizens also sent millions of letters to political leaders on subjects such as abuse of power by local bureaucrats.
- This was a tradition that had continued since Tsarist times.
- Hence from this wealth of information we can discover something of what the people thought of the regime, despite living in a totalitarian regime.
- Obviously during the terror people were too afraid to express their opinions

- Although negative sentiments were expressed this does not mean that the regime was on shaky ground:
  - The regime had mostly positive effects on young people's lives.
  - Conditions improved in the 1930s and despite grumbles, the people understood that the state provided for their basic needs such as food, housing and education even when these were not of sufficient quantity or quality.
  - Stalin was usually immune from criticism. It was local officials who were blamed for the failings and Stalin was seen as a caring but firm figure.
  - During the Second World War, Stalin was very clever and asked the people to fight for mother Russia not for the Soviet regime, an indication that he appreciated the Communists had not totally won over the people.

## Women in Russia:

- The Bolsheviks had always maintained a belief in gender equality.
- In 1920 Russia became the first European country to legalise abortion.
- In 1926 a new divorce law was passed. The law simplified divorce procedure, one partner merely had to fill out a form. Divorce rates rocketed. For the women who were divorced, though almost half of them were unemployed or economically dependent on their husbands.
- Therefore for these women divorce resulted in huge hardship.
- Thus although there was supposed to be gender equality, the reality was that women had by no means achieved this, in rural areas especially, where traditional values prevailed, women were still classed as second class citizens.
- Soviet propaganda painted a very different picture to the reality, making out there was equality between the sexes. Women were depicted as proudly independent rejecting outdated bourgeois concepts such as worrying about makeup.
- Both industrialisation and collectivisation had a very negative impact.
- Severe housing shortages plus the large disruption led many men to desert their wives or girlfriends soon after the birth of children.
- Another difficulty was if you remarried to a husband who had been a victim of the purges you were seen as an enemy of the state.
- Women were usually paid less and were also more likely to become unemployed with no compensation. Little wonder why so many women drifted into prostitution.
- Even women in the party found they were discriminated against as much as in society at large. By 1928 there were only about 65,000 women members compared to 1 million members in total.
- In the 1930s the **Great Retreat** meant that the regime suddenly became positively pro-family. This was partly caused by evidence of falling birth rate due to family break ups. There were also reports of large numbers of orphaned and abandoned children and a soaring juvenile crime rate.
- In May 1936 the **Family Code** was introduced. This consisted of the following:
  - Abortion was now illegal
  - It was more difficult to obtain a divorce
  - If a mother had six or more children she received cash payments.
  - Child support payments were fixed for fathers who had neglected their responsibilities but these were difficult to collect (men often married several times).
  - From the age of 12 children would receive the same treatment as adults if they had committed crimes.
  - New laws passed against prostitution and homosexuality but the regime regarded these as 'capital vices' and was reluctant to accept their existence.
- One benefit for women was that by 1940, 60% of graduates were women. However, on the whole women struggled and had a lower status.
- They were still expected to look after the children and homes even though they now had the additional burden of contributing to the full-time workforce.
- There was also insufficient kindergartens for the children of working women.

## **Stalinism:**

### **Strengths of USSR:**

- The USSR survived the war against Germany, suggesting that the USSR must have had considerable strength given the formidable nature of the German army.
- Stalin's industrialisation programme had given the USSR a strong base from which it could mobilise industry for the war, allowing it to out produce Germany in materials and heavy industry, despite the devastation caused by the German invasion.
- The centralised nature of the Stalinist command economy enabled it to adapt quickly to the needs of total war.
- Propaganda during the 1930s created a 'siege mentality'. The people were used to hardship.
- Stalin was respected as a strong leader.
- For all their faults, the five year plans had achieved a remarkable growth, and gave the USSR a strong base for future development. The increase in electricity and heavy industry are most noticeable.
- Consumer goods were starting to appear when the war began.
- There was a considerable increase in literacy which enabled the propaganda to be more effective.
- The workforce had become more skilled.
- There was a development in basic social services such as health.
- Living standards were probably beginning to rise again after considerable fall in the early 1930s.
- Even in rural areas, the provision of education was beginning to catch up to urban areas.
- Enthusiasm for the regime was especially evident among the young.

### **Weaknesses:**

- Stalin's economic policies caused immense disruption to many people's lives, both in urban and rural areas.
- Terror was an integral part of Stalin's policies, and millions of people were killed, imprisoned or suffered in other ways. Family life was disrupted. Many people lived in fear.
- Economic policies had limited success. Agriculture remained a weakness, with low yields and an unenthusiastic workforce.
- The urban workforce lived hard lives, with strict labour discipline and harsh conditions.
- There were many social problems caused, for example by poor and overcrowded housing, deficiencies in public services.
- Most women were still classed as second class citizens.
- There was no personal freedom. Religious believers were often persecuted, there was no free press. All cultural activity was controlled by the state. People could not travel freely. There were no free elections.

### **Nationalities:**

- 1939 - 170 million citizens, 100 million of these were not Russian. In 1939 with the takeover of Poland and the Baltic provinces 20 million more people were absorbed into the USSR.
- Nationalities were strictly controlled from Moscow. Many republics suffered appallingly e.g. The Ukraine during the famine 1932-33 + Uzbekistan's agriculture was destroyed by being ordered to produce cotton to supply the Russian industry.
- Nationalities were educated in their own languages but in 1938 Russian became a compulsory subject.
- Despite the terror in the late 1930s there were waves of national deportations. The persecutions of Muslims in the Central Asia republics occurred after 1928 but Islamic beliefs were not destroyed. In 1935 pilgrimages to Mecca were made illegal.

## **Stalinism:**

- A personal dictatorship.
- A centrally controlled economy known as a command economy e.g. Centralised planning and target setting, emphasis on quantity rather than quality, an economy driven by the state which decided what the priorities should be rather than the state responding to consumer needs.

- A politicisation of life meant all activities were given a political slant due to censorship and propaganda which effected art, literature, cinema and education.
- A social structure which in theory meant everyone was equal. In practice the communist party dominated all aspects of life and those with senior position in the party had more privileges.
- A culture whose content was determined by the state.
- The move towards a more conservative approach e.g. Policy towards education, women and the family became more conservative.
- A huge bureaucracy which was very brutal. Rather than the state withering away it in fact grew. Officials were selected from the list known as the Nomenklatura which consisted of those regarded as politically reliable. Lenin had warned of bureaucrats being more concerned with protecting their own position rather than with running the country well, this indeed proved to be the case as the higher up the bureaucracy, the better the lifestyle you enjoyed. Even Stalin came to realise that the bureaucracy was inefficient and preferred to work through individuals rather than through the state organs knowing he stood a greater chance of the task being carried out.

### **How much power did Stalin have?**

- Stalin's rule was a dictatorship.
- The party dominated the population but Stalin dominated the party.
- Stalin was the directing force of the party; even his closet colleagues feared him. His influence is evident in the thousands of death warrants he signed during the purges and in the fact the politburo met far less as Stalin proffered to work through individuals
- However the USSR was not a totalitarian state as it was not efficient enough. There were always some who were not brainwashed such as religious believers, peasants resisting collectivisation and workers angry at the strict controls over them.
- Having said this though, the vast majority conformed outwardly.
- The **cult of personality** meant Stalin was portrayed as a God-like figure, the successor of Lenin.
- The party organisation ran alongside the government organisation. The system was known as democratic centralism whereby people views were passed up through the soviets and decisions were then passed down to the people.
- The party was the key institution although less than 10% of the population joined. There were responsibilities in that you had to organise meetings plus in the 1930s party members were most likely to be purged than any other group. Despite attempts to purge the party it remained loosely organised and even chaotic.

### **1936 constitution:**

- This was introduced by Stalin who declared that socialism had been achieved.
- He said that 3 classes now existed : workers, peasants and working intelligentsia. Civil rights were guaranteed such as freedom of press and religion.
- The republics were given extra rights such as overseeing primary education but in reality no power was relinquished and the population remained under the control of the central government.
- NB A shift in emphasis from the USSR under Lenin was from an international outlook concentrating on consolidation in Russia under Stalin.

### **Impact of Stalinism:**

#### **The command economy:**

- The command economy was firmly in place soon after Stalin acquired power at the end of the 1920s. Its main features were centralised planning and target setting, an emphasis on heavy industry and defence, comparative neglect of agriculture. The state was driven by the state determinations priorities rather than responding to consumer needs.

#### **Politicisation of life:**

- Marxists had always taken the view that it was hard to separate politics from other areas of human activity. Political structures reflected the concerns of the dominant class in society. Stalin claimed that class differences had largely disappeared by the 1930s and the three classes

defined under this constitution of 1936 were looked after by the regime. Therefore there was no need for individual pressure groups or trade unions. Anybody who wanted to opt out of collectivisation was either insane or against the regime and was a traitor. Stalinism made sure that all culture served the interests of the public, by censoring it and creating strict guidelines, such as all culture being easily understandable. All activity was politicised and had a message, as evident in movements such as socialist realism.

**Social structure:**

- In theory all people were equal in the socialist state. In practice this was far from the case. Those higher up in the party were better off with better education and healthcare, those who were more skilled got paid more than those with no skills, most women were classed as second class citizens, ordinary workers were denied the right to join a trade union.

**Culture:**

- Cultural activity was closely monitored by the state. It was part of the politicisation of life. Censorship and the extensive use of propaganda were part of everyday existence.

**Revolutionary conservatism:**

- The idea of the socialist state was to build a society that was equal and fair for all, and when true socialism was achieved, the withering of the state would begin and all people would work in harmony with each other.
- Ironically under Stalin, the state grew in size and took control over more of the population than ever before - there was no sign of the state withering away. He claimed that the state had to remain in control until all Capitalism was destroyed across the world. He claimed that as long as capitalism still remained, it would remain a threat to the USSR and so it was the duty of the government to protect the USSR from this danger.
- The result of this, was a huge bureaucracy, and in Stalin's Russia it was a very brutal one. Those who ran the bureaucracy didn't want to get rid of it, as it would get rid of their jobs and benefits.
- The conservative approach was clearly evident in 1931 when he announced that bourgeois specialists could be rehabilitated so as to help the economy grow.
- The policy of promoting people from the working class because they were proletarians was replaced by an emphasis on skill and ability.