

Communist Russia, the first dictatorship

Headings	Notes
LENIN'S REGIME TSARIST RUSSIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Up to 1917, Russia was an autocracy. Just one man, Tsar Nicholas II, made laws, levied taxes and appointed Ministers, generals, etc.• After a revolution in 1905, Nicholas agreed to an elected parliament, the Duma, but gave it no real power.• Eighty per cent of Russians were peasants (farmers). They had very small farms and their farming methods were old-fashioned and inefficient. They envied wealthy nobles who owned great tracts of land and wanted to acquire it.• In the 1800s, the Tsar had begun to industrialise Russia. Its economy had grown rapidly before 1914, but it was still behind the more powerful countries of western Europe, like Germany or Britain.• Many people in Russia were unhappy with the Tsarist government and wanted to replace it. One of them was Vladimir Lenin. But because political parties were banned, the only way open to them was to plot a violent revolution.
THE IDEAS OF KARL MARX (1818-1883)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lenin was sent into exile for plotting against the Tsar. He joined the Social Democratic Party which believed in the ideas of Karl Marx.• In his book, Das Kapital (1867), Marx claimed to have discovered the scientific laws that governed how societies developed.• He wrote that all societies change because of 'a struggle between the different classes for control of the means of production' (i.e. ways of making money).• Marx forecast that factory workers would stage a revolution against factory owners (capitalists) and take over all property.• That would end the class struggle. After that there would be a 'classless society', all property would be held in common and there would be equality and justice for all.
LENIN ADAPTS MARX'S IDEAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many people were Impressed by Marx's claim to have discovered the scientific laws which controlled social change.• Even socialists who did not want violent revolution believed his claim that a classless society was certain to come about. The only problem was how to achieve it.
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LENIN SEIZES POWER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In April 1917, the Germans helped Lenin to return from Switzerland, hoping he would undermine the Provisional Government.• He saw it was unpopular and ordered the Bolsheviks not to co-operate with it. He told his followers to infiltrate and take over the soviets.• In his April Theses, he called for 'All power to the soviets', promised to end the war and allow the peasants to take the nobles' land. These ideas, summed up in the slogan Peace, Bread, Land, were designed to appeal to soldiers, peasants and workers.• Lenin won the backing of Trotsky and the Red Guards. In July, they tried to seize power, but were defeated. Lenin fled to Finland but returned after the Red Guards prevented the Russian army from overthrowing the Provisional Government.• Lenin now told the Bolsheviks they must seize power at once. They chose 24 October, the day before a Congress of Soviets (with many Bolsheviks in it) was due to meet.• On that day, the Red Guards took over the Winter Palace where the Provisional Government's offices were. The Russian army refused to intervene and Lenin became the new ruler of Russia.
LENIN'S GOVERNMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• On 25 October, Lenin formed a Politburo (Cabinet) with Commissars (Ministers) in charge of different areas of government. Trotsky was Commissar for War and Stalin Commissar for Nationalities.• The Congress of Soviets recognised Lenin's Politburo as the new Russian government. It was the first Marxist government in history.• Lenin and his followers faced huge problems. They had to (a) end the war with Germany, (b) set up a Marxist-style state (no one knew what that might look like in 1917) and (c) hold on to power against all their opponents.
PEACE: THE TREATY OF BREST LITOVSK	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lenin knew they must end the war if they were to survive. He sent Trotsky to hold peace talks with the Germans.• They demanded large areas of Russia. Some Bolsheviks wanted to refuse, but Lenin insisted that peace was essential.
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PEACE: THE TREATY OF BREST LITOVSK	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In March 1918, the Bolsheviks signed the Treaty Of Brest Litovsk. Russia lost Poland, Ukraine, the Baltic states, 30% of its population, 50% of its industry and 30% of its good agricultural land. Russia re-conquered Ukraine during the civil war.
CHANGING RUSSIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Bolsheviks (who changed their name to Communists (in 1918) nationalised banks, mines and factories, abolished private property, ended the privileges of the Church and took over its property, gave women the vote and abolished the Tsarist secret police.• They also let the peasants seize the nobles' land. This was not really Marxist, but they needed to please the peasants.• Lenin let elections for the Assembly, promised by the Provisional Government, go ahead. The Bolsheviks won 175 seats out of 700.• The Assembly met in January 1918, but Lenin closed it after one day. This showed he did not want democracy.
GROWING OPPOSITION TO LENIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After this, opposition to the Communists grew, even among other socialists.• In August 1918, Lenin was shot and badly wounded. The Communists then launched a reign of terror (the 'red terror') on their critics.• A new secret police, the Cheka, arrested and executed thousands, including any Bolshevik who criticised Lenin's policies. The Tsar and his family were murdered at this time.
CIVIL WAR: 1918-1920	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tsarists, Social Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and others ('the Whites') joined together to fight Britain, France, the US and Japan sent help to the White armies• The Reds seemed weak at first. They only controlled the area around Moscow and Petrograd. But that was the industrial area where the arms factories were.• Lenin imposed a harsh economic system called 'War Communism'. It suited his Marxist ideas and also ensured food for soldiers and factory workers.• Red Guards went into the country and seized grain from peasants without paying. It was rationed out to soldiers and workers in the arms factories. Other classes got little or nothing.
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CIVIL WAR: 1918-1920	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At first this worked, but the peasants stopped growing food and this brought famine in 1920, in which millions died.• By then, the Reds had won the civil war. Their victory was due to (a) their unity, (b) the military skill of Trotsky who built up the Red Army, (c) War Communism, which ensured the soldiers had food and guns and (d) the passive support of the peasants, grateful for being allowed to take the nobles' land.• The Whites lost the civil war because (a) they were divided in their aims (return the Tsar? a liberal socialism?) and fought among themselves, (b) the peasants did not trust them and (c) having foreign allies made them seem anti-Russian.
PROBLEMS CAUSED BY WAR COMMUNISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• But by 1920, War Communism had produced an economic disaster. A severe drought in 1919-1920 made things worse. In 1920-1921, millions died in a famine.• In 1921, riots and mutinies broke out. The worst one was in Kronstadt Naval Base where sailors demanded an end to the Communist dictatorship.• Lenin recognised that his government was in danger and acted swiftly. He ordered the brutal suppression of the mutinies. The Cheka shot thousands of mutineers without a trial.
THE NEP (NEW ECONOMIC POLICY) 1921-1928	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• But Lenin also changed his economic policy. At the 10th Party Congress, he announced that War Communism was to be replaced by a New Economic Policy (NEP):<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peasants had to give 10% of their crops to the state as a tax, but could sell any surplus they had after that.• Banks, railways and large industries remained in state control, but small shops and private businesses, with fewer than 20 workers, could be set up.• When some Communists protested that this was going back to capitalism, Lenin replied that sometimes it was necessary to take one step back in order to take two forward.• The NEP was successful. By 1928, the Russian economy had recovered. This gave the Communist regime time to establish itself firmly in power.
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THE SOVIET UNION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In 1923, a new Constitution was introduced. The name of the country was changed from Russia to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR or Soviet Union).• Officially, the Congress of Soviets was the governing body that elected the government. But since only one party - the Communist party -- was allowed to exist, the Communist Party leaders were the true rulers of the USSR.
1924: THE DEATH OF LENIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lenin never really recovered from the attempt to assassinate him in 1918. From 1922, he suffered from a series of strokes which prevented him from taking part in the government.• In 1923, suspecting the end was near, he wrote his <i>Testament</i>. In it, he voiced his fears for the future of the communist revolution and criticised the members of the Politburo. He was especially harsh in criticising Stalin, suggesting that he be removed from his job as Secretary of the Party.• Lenin died shortly after writing the <i>Testament</i> in January 1924, at the age of 53.
ASSESSING LENIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lenin set up the world's first Marxist state and steered it through its first difficult years with a mixture of political skill and ruthless brutality.• Lenin was a pragmatist: while he believed in Marxism, he was willing to adopt non-Marxist policies (peasant ownership of land, the NEP) in order to stay in power.• He introduced many necessary reforms into Russia but ruthlessly used force to suppress anyone who dared to criticise him or his policies.• He opened the way for the even more brutal dictatorship of Stalin.
LENIN (VLADIMIR ILYICH ULYANOV) (1870-1924)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lenin was born in 1870 into a prosperous family• He became involved in plotting a revolution after his brother was executed. Arrested, he was exiled to Siberia and then forced to live outside Russia.• He joined the Marxist Social Democratic Party. In a pamphlet entitled 'What Is to Be done?' he suggested important changes to Karl Marx's ideas. This split the Social Democrats into Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, who were Lenin's supporters.• In 1917, he returned to Russia after the Tsar fell.
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LENIN (VLADIMIR ILYICH ULYANOV) (1870-1924)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He and the Bolsheviks seized power in October 1917.• He set up the world's first Communist (Marxist) government, nationalised all property, abolished the power of the Church and established a secret police.• With the help of Leon Trotsky, he won a civil war against whites, by a ruthless use of his opponents, the terror and War Communism.• When his policies caused a famine and made the Communists unpopular, he changed to the New Economic Policy (NEP).• He died in 1924 at the age of 53.
STALIN'S REGIME POWER STRUGGLE 1924-1928	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lenin died in 1924 without saying who should take over. This led to a power struggle among members of the Politburo, Trotsky, Stalin, Kamenev, Zinoviev and Bakunin.• Many people thought Trotsky would win because he controlled the Red Army. But he was unpopular with the other Politburo members who feared a military dictatorship.• They did not fear Stalin, who was just the Party Secretary, and agreed to suppress the criticism of him in Lenin's <i>Testament</i>.• Stalin spoke at Lenin's funeral, while Trotsky was absent. This made Stalin look like Lenin's favourite.
DEBATING THE FUTURE OF COMMUNISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the struggle for power, Stalin used debates about the future of communism to outmanoeuvre his opponents.• The first debate was about how to protect communism in Russia. <i>Should they encourage communist revolutions in other countries or concentrate on strengthening communism in Russia first?</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trotsky argued that the communism in Russia was not safe until other countries became communist. He wanted to 'export' a 'permanent revolution' to other countries.• Stalin argued that they should first build up communism in Russia ('socialism in one country') and then it could be spread.• Stalin's view was more popular with Russians, weary of war. In 1925, the Party Congress adopted it and removed Trotsky from his army command.
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DEBATING THE FUTURE OF COMMUNISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A second debate then developed over economic policy. Should they keep the NEP, which mixed capitalism with communism, or should they move to full communism?<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kamenev and Zinoviev wanted to end the NEP and have full communism.• Bakunin wanted to keep it and Stalin backed him, because this was popular.
STALIN BECOMES THE SOLE RULER OF THE SOVIET UNION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By this time Kamenev and Zinoviev realised that Stalin was dangerous. In 1927 they joined Trotsky and planned a workers' revolt. Stalin found out and had then) expelled from the Party. Trotsky was sent to Siberia and in 1929 was exiled from USSR.• Stalin then changed policy. He dropped the NEP and went for full communism. Bakunin too was expelled, and by 1928 Stalin was the only 'Old Bolshevik' (comrade of Lenin) still in power.
STALIN'S ECONOMIC POLICIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stalin wanted to make the USSR into a great military power through rapid industrialisation. In 1928, he said: <i>We are fifty years behind the capitalists; we have ten years to catch them up.</i>• The NEP had improved the Russian economy since 1922, but too slowly to satisfy Stalin. To achieve his aims he developed economic policies that were very different from the policies of any other country at that time.
WHAT STALIN NEEDED FOR INDUSTRIALISATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To industrialise Russia, Stalin needed:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capital to start industry, but foreign banks would not lend him money because Lenin had repudiated earlier loans made to the Tsar's government and the communists took over foreign-owned businesses.• Factory workers, but most Russians were peasant farmers who preferred to work on their own farms.• Some way of feeding the factory workers. Russian agriculture was very backward. There were about 25 million tiny farms, which produced barely enough to feed the peasants themselves leaving very little over to feed people living in towns.
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REASONS FOR COLLECTIVISATION OF AGRICULTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stalin decided the solution to his problems was to collectivise agriculture. That meant combining millions of tiny, peasant-owned farms into big, state-owned 'collective' farms (kolkhoz). For Stalin, collectivisation had many advantages:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peasants who lost their farms would go to work in the new industries. — The big collective farms would be more efficient because they could use modern machinery. Therefore, they would produce enough food to feed the workers in the towns.• The money the state earned by selling food from the collective farms could be invested in industrialisation.
ENFORCING COLLECTIVISATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At first Stalin thought collectivisation could be voluntary, but by 1929, when peasants would not give up their land, it was brutally enforced.• Peasants resisted collectivisation. They killed animals and destroyed equipment rather than give them to the state. Between 1929 and 1933, crops were not sown and 53% of horses, 45% of cattle and 67% of sheep were destroyed.• Most resistance came from the slightly richer peasants, the kulaks. Communist officials called kulaks '<i>enemies of the workers</i>' and encouraged poorer peasants to turn on them.• The secret police rounded up kulaks. About five million were deported to labour camps where many of them died.• This helped overcome peasant resistance, as anyone who resisted could be labelled a 'kulak' and arrested.• The conflict over collectivisation caused a man-made famine in 1931-1932, in which millions died. It was particularly severe in Ukraine, where it amounted to genocide.• In 1931, Stalin pulled back a little, blaming officials for being 'overzealous'. He agreed to let peasants keep a small plot to grow vegetables for their own use.
RESULTS OF COLLECTIVISATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At least 10 million peasants disappeared during collectivisation - dead from famine or in labour camps.
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RESULTS OF COLLECTIVISATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By 1937, over 90% of Russian land was in state-owned collective farms. As resistance diminished, food production rose and animal numbers had recovered.• On each collective farm, 75 peasant families (on average) worked using modern machinery, like tractors. Each family was paid a wage to work a fixed number of days per year (between 100 and 150). The rest of the year they worked on their own plots.• Peasants worked hardest on their private plots. More food was produced on these plots than on the collective farms.
INDUSTRIALISATION THROUGH FIVE-YEAR PLANS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Industrialisation accompanied collectivisation. It was based on the idea of central state planning of all industry. The state planning body, Gosplan, drew up targets and saw that they were met.• The first Five-year Plan was drawn up in 1928. It set targets for the expansion of heavy heavy industry. In five years electric power was to grow by 335%, iron production by 200%, coal production by 111%, etc. Little attention was paid to consumer goods like shoes, furniture, etc.• Targets were not met but results were still impressive: electric output grew by 160%, iron by 100% and coal by 80%.• The second Plan (1932-1937) was more successful, with many sectors doubling production. Under it railways, canals and airports were built. It placed more emphasis on consumer goods like shoes and clothes. With Hitler Strengthening Germany and threatening the USSR, tank factories were set up beyond the Urals, out of German reach.• The third Plan began in 1937, but was interrupted by purges, then by the German invasion in 1941. It continued to emphasise military expansion.
WORKERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workers were set individual targets. There were prizes for those who exceeded their targets and punishment for those who failed. Absentees got no rations.• Propaganda about building a better world or making the Soviet Union great also encouraged workers to try harder.• A big problem was shortage of skilled workers. It was solved by giving extra pay and prizes for good workers. Internal passports were introduced to stop skilled workers moving from job to job. Some skilled workers were recruited from abroad.
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RESULTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Five-year Plans produced spectacular results. By 1939, the USSR had become Europe's second biggest industrial power after Germany.• Industrialisation produced urbanisation. In 1926, only 15% of Russians lived in cities; by 1940 30% did.• The development of industry helped the USSR to defeat Hitler in the Second World War.
EDUCATION AND THE ARTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education expanded to meet the needs of industry. By 1940, only 15% of Russians were still illiterate and over one million were university graduates.• Access to university was controlled by exam success and the right political views. Students had no choice of career, but studied what the state told them to study.• Artists were told to produce 'socialist realism' celebrating the achievements of socialism. Art, literature, film and music were heavily censored and many artists suffered in the purges.
STALIN'S TOTALITARIAN STATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In 1936, Stalin introduced what he called '<i>the only thoroughly democratic Constitution in the world</i>'.• Everyone over 18 could to vote for Congress every four years (though only the Communist Party was allowed to put up candidates).• The right to work, education, free medicine, freedom of speech and freedom from unlawful arrest were guaranteed, '<i>in conformity with the interests of the working people</i>'. That phrase meant that none of these freedoms operated in reality.• In fact, Stalin's Russia was a totalitarian state? where the government controlled every aspect of people's lives.• The secret police, the NKVD, spied on everyone, could arrest, torture or execute anyone it suspected of dissent and controlled the labour camps where millions of Soviet citizens ended up.• Stalin cultivated a cult of personality. History books were rewritten to emphasise Stalin's role in the 1917 revolution, while Trotsky was left out. Stalin's name and image were everywhere and propaganda encouraged Russians to see him as their protector and revere him almost as a god.
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CASE STUDY: STALIN'S PURGES AND THE SHOW TRIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In 1931-1932 some Communist Party members criticised Stalin's brutal collectivisation policy, and his wife committed suicide perhaps for the same reason. This increased his isolation and paranoia.
THE START OF THE PURGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At the 1934 Party Conference, there was considerable support for Sergei Kirov, the Party's leader in Leningrad. Later that year, Kirov was assassinated.• Stalin (who may have ordered the assassination) claimed it was evidence of a 'Trotskyite plot' and used it as an excuse to purge the Party. He wanted to rid it of all 'Old Bolsheviks' whose membership went back to Lenin's time and leave only those who owed their position to him.
PURGING THE COMMUNIST PARTY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The NKVD rounded up thousands of Party members, along with their relatives, neighbours and acquaintances. Some were tortured or shot, most were sent to work in slave labour camps (known as the gulags).• State propaganda insisted that all those arrested were '<i>enemies of the people</i>' or '<i>Trotskyites</i>' who were plotting with the exiled Trotsky and even with Hitler, to kill Stalin, overthrow the revolution and destroy the Soviet Union.• As part of this propaganda, Stalin organised 'Show Trials' in Moscow. The purpose of these trials was not to see if the accused were guilty or innocent, but to show their guilt to the world.• In August 1936, 16 senior Party members, including Stalin's old rivals, Zinoviev and Kamenev, went on trial.• The state prosecutor, Vyshinsky, accused them of killing Kirov, plotting to kill Stalin and Lenin and conspiring with Trotsky and foreign governments against the Soviet Union.• For months before, the accused had been subjected to physical and psychological torture and their families had been threatened. As a result, they all pleaded guilty to all the charges, reciting confessions that had been written for them by the authorities. They were sentenced to death and executed at once.• 150 soviet citizens and 30 foreign journalists and diplomats were invited to attend the trial. Amazingly, many of the foreign observers were convinced that the men received a fair trial and a just sentence for their crimes.
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THE SECOND SHOW TRIAL: JANUARY 1937	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• On 23 January 1937, another 17 Old Bolsheviks were put on trial. They included men who had supported Trotsky in the leadership struggle, like Kart Radek.• Again all confessed. Thirteen were sentenced to death. Radek, whose confession implicated others, was sent to a labour camp where he died soon after.
PURGING THE RED ARMY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stalin feared the power of the Red Army and decided to purge it too. In 1937, Marshal Tukhachevsky, the army commander, was arrested, tried in secret and shot.• After that, half of the 35,000 officers in the army were either executed or sent to labour camps. This seriously weakened the Red Army at a time when Hitler was threatening to attack the USSR.
THE GREAT SHOW TRIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The final Show Trial took place in March 1938. Among the accused were Bukharin, one of Lenin's close associates who had criticised Stalin's collectivisation, and Yagoda, who as head of the NKVD had been responsible for the earlier purges.• They were accused of spying, sabotage, and working with Trotsky and Hitler to destroy the Soviet Union.• Bukharin insisted on his innocence until his wife and baby were threatened. In return for Stalin's promise that they would be safe, he confessed. Stalin later sent Bukharin's wife to a labour camp.• All were found guilty and executed.
THE RESULTS OF STALIN'S PURGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fifty-four men were brought up before the Show Trials, of whom 47 were executed.• But at the same time, about five million people were arrested. Nearly a million of them were sentenced to death, with Stalin personally signing thousands of execution warrants.• The rest were sentenced to labour camps where an estimated 90% died of overwork, malnutrition, cold or casual violence.• After the Second World War Stalin reopened the labour camps and continued his purges. In all it is estimated that by the time he died in 1953, he was largely responsible for the death of at least 20 million Soviet citizens.
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RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY 1917-1941	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After 1917, Lenin hoped communist revolutions would break out elsewhere in Europe. In 1918, he set up the Communist International (Comintern) to support and encourage them.
1917-1920: COMMUNISM FAILS TO SPREAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He and Stalin used it to give orders and money to communist parties across Europe.• After the First World War, there were communist uprisings in Germany and other countries, but they all failed.
1920-1933: ISOLATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This left USSR isolated. Britain, France and the US distrusted it because they feared communism, and because Lenin had let them down by pulling out of the war and making peace with Germany.• The Soviet Union was not invited to attend Paris Peace Conference (1919) or join the League of Nations.• In 1922, Lenin made the Treaty of Rapallo with the other 'outcast' nation, Germany. Germany was to train its army in Russia and build arms factories. This suited Lenin, as it divided his enemies and made an anti-communist alliance between Germany and its former enemies less likely.• The succession struggle after Lenin's death, collectivisation and industrialisation kept Stalin too busy for foreign policy.
STALIN AND THE RISE OF HITLER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After the Great Depression began in 1929, communist parties in the west grew rapidly.• This convinced Stalin that capitalism was dying as Marx had forecast. He ordered the Communist Parties he controlled through Comintern not to prop up democracy by co-operating with socialist or liberal parties. He thought communists would come out on top if there was a revolution.• Ironically, in Germany this policy helped Hitler, with his anti-communist and anti-Russian policies, to gain power.
STALIN SEEKS ALLIANCES AGAINST HITLER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Realising the threat from fascism, Stalin changed his foreign policy.• He ended Soviet isolation by joining the League of Nations in 1934. He hoped that 'collective security' would protect him against Hitler.• He also encouraged Communist Parties in France and Spain to resist fascism by forming 'popular fronts' with socialists and others.
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STALIN SEEKS ALLIANCES AGAINST HITLER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He sought alliances with capitalist governments against Hitler.• But Britain and France were too anti-communist to accept his overtures. They appeased Hitler instead and did not consult Stalin during the Munich Crisis in 1938.• In August 1939, when Hitler suggested a 'non-aggression pact' between them, Stalin eagerly accepted.• The secret clauses in it allowed Stalin to invade Poland, the Baltic states and Finland to recover the land Russia lost in 1918 at Brest-Litovsk. It also gave time to rebuild the Red Army, weakened by the purges.• Stalin seems to have believed in the pact, but Hitler never did. He always intended to invade Russia when it suited him to do so. He finally did in June 1941.
STALIN (JOSEPH DZUGASHVILI) (1879-1953)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Born into a poor family in Georgia, Stalin briefly studied to be a priest, but was expelled for spreading Marxist ideas.• He supported the Bolsheviks and organised bank robberies to fund them. In 1912, Lenin made him a member of the Party's Central Committee and he edited their paper Pravda (Truth).• He was in prison in Siberia when the Tsar fell in 1917, but returned to Petrograd and led the Party until Lenin returned from Switzerland.• After the Bolsheviks seized power, Lenin made him Commissar of Nationalities, responsible for the 65 million non-Russians in the new Soviet Union. He brutally crushed independence movements, even in his native Georgia.• In 1922, he became Secretary of the Communist Party. After the Reds won the civil war, he appointed the Party officials who ran the re-conquered areas. These officials, who owed their jobs to him, later supported him in the leadership struggle after Lenin's death.• By 1928, Stalin was undisputed ruler of the Soviet Union. He (a) brutally collectivised agriculture, (b) forced the country to industrialise at breakneck speed, (c) ruthlessly purged all opponents and (d) led Russia during the Second World War.• After the war he (a) resumed the policies he followed in the 1930s, (b) extend Soviet control over Eastern Europe and (c) fought the Cold War with Western democracies led by the US.• He died in 1953.
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EXAM QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How did Josef Stalin transform the Soviet economy and/or use show trials to consolidate his power? (HL 2023)• What were the characteristics of Stalin's leadership during peace and war? (HL 2022)• Would you agree that Stalin transformed the Soviet Union, 1924-1945? (HL 2021)• What were the main characteristics of Stalin's rule in Russia? (HL 2020)• What did you learn about Stalin's leadership from his handling of one or more of the following: the Soviet economy; the show trials; wartime alliances, 1939-1945? (HL 2019)• How effective a leader was Winston Churchill or Josef Stalin during World War II? (HL 2018)• [DBQ] What were the aims of the Jarrow March and to what extent were they achieved? (HL 2017)• [DBQ] What did the Nuremberg Rallies and/or Joseph Goebbels contribute to Nazi propaganda? (HL 2016)• How did Mussolini and/or Stalin use propaganda and terror to remain in power? (HL 2015)• What challenges faced the Soviet Union in peace and war, 1924-1945? (HL 2014)• How did Stalin transform the Soviet economy and/or use show trials to consolidate his power? (HL 2013)• What were the main characteristics of Stalin's rule in Russia? (HL 2012)• To what extent did Lenin and/or Stalin bring about social and economic change? (HL 2011)• How effective were the internal and external policies of Josef Stalin? (HL 2010)• What did Lenin and Stalin contribute to communism In Russia? (HL 2008)• How significant was the role played by the Soviet Union in World War II? (HL 2007)• To what extent did Stalin transform the society and economy of the Soviet Union? (HL 2006)

The Bolsheviks in Power

Russian Revolution	The Cheka	Key Figures
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. February 1917 - the Tsar is overthrown by popular revolt. Replaced by liberal government. 2. October 1917 - Bolshevik Revolution establishes communist state. 3. July 1918 – New constitution establishes 'Soviet Federal Socialist Republic' 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Soviet Secret Police. 2. Under control of Dzerzhinsky 3. Root out opponents of Communist Party during civil war. 4. 140,000 executed during the 'Red Terror' 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lenin 2. Trotsky 3. Zinoviev 4. Kamenev 5. Bukharin (Stalin has minor role initially)

Lenin's Reforms	Opposition to Communist Rule
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eight hour working day 2. Workers elected factory committee's who were given far-reaching powers. 3. 'Decree on Land' abolished private ownership of land. Redistributed to the peasants without compensation for owners. 4. Women given the vote and guaranteed equality. 5. Universal free education. Major campaign to combat adult illiteracy. 6. All ranks and titles were abolished. 7. Civil marriages introduced. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 'White Russians' included members of Socialist Revolutionary Party, liberals, nationalists, ex-army officers and fascists. 2. Invasions by 14 different 'Allied Countries to help the White Army. 3. Invasion force totals 250,000 troops including British, French, Americans and Japanese among others. 4. Brutal War lasts until 1923. Trotsky masterminds Red Army victory. Up to 1 million die in fighting and 3 million more from famine and disease that sweeps Russia.

War Communism	New Economic Policy	NEP Results 1921-28
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To preserve the Revolution during the Civil War 2. Grain Requisitioning 3. Banning of private trade 4. Nationalisation of industry 5. Labour discipline 5. Rationing 6. The Red Terror 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By 1921 Russia's economy in crisis. 2. <i>ROTCOM</i> R = requisitioning stopped. O = ownership of small businesses encouraged. T = trade ban lifted. COM = commanding heights of industry with the state. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recovery to pre-war production levels. 2. By 1923 cereal production had increased by 25% on 1920 levels. 3. Rapid increase in agricultural output. 4. From 1920-23 factory output rose by 200%. 5. The emergence of 'Nepmen'

Power Struggle	Stalin Comes to Power
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lenin died 1924. 2. Power struggle between Stalin 's supporters and Trotsky's Left Opposition. 3. Political power struggle 4. Trotsky's 'Permanent Revolution' – Russia's working class too small to build socialism. Encourage spread of Revolution 5. Stalin's 'Socialism in One Country' – Revolution outside Russia unlikely. Russians should get on with building socialism themselves. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stalin's suppresses Lenin's Last Testament that called for his removal as Communist Party General Secretary. 2. Stalin joined with Zinoviev and Kamenev to defeat Trotsky at the Party Congress of 1924. 3. He builds up a network within the Party apparatus through appointing his own supporters to party positions. 4. In 1925 Stalin allied with Bukharin, against Zinoviev and Kamenev, 5. He advocates the continuation of the NEP. 6. Communist Party supports 'Socialism in One Country' 7. In 1928, Stalin turned against the NEP and begins Collectivisation. 8. Bukharin is defeated and Stalin became the undisputed leader of the USSR in 1929.

Stalin's Economic Policies

Collectivisation

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

Collectivisation – Why?

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

Collectivisation – Results:

1. 99% of farmland collectivised
2. More modern (machinery, methods etc)
3. 1937 – 97m tonnes of grain produced plus other cash crops for export
4. 1937 – 17m peasants now working in industry in towns/cities
5. Stalin has total control over agriculture
6. Millions died from famine
8. Kulaks class eliminated. 7million killed.
9. 1937 – livestock numbers still not recovered to levels of 10 years previously

Five - Year Plans

1. 1928-1932 – Development of Heavy Industry, Industrial machinery and Agricultural equipment. Good progress made.
2. 1933-1937 – Continued machinery production and some Consumer Goods -
3. 1938-1941 – Consumer goods soon overshadowed by War Production

Five - Year Plans

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

Five-Year Plans – Why and How?

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

Five-Year Plans – Results:

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

Stalin's Show Trials

Leon Trotsky

1. Stalin removes opponents
2. Left Opposition banned in 1927.
3. Trotsky exiled to Kazakhstan in 1928.
4. Expelled from Soviet Union in 1929.
5. Murdered by Stalinist agent in Mexico in 1941.
6. Trotsky's son Leon Sedov murdered by Stalinist agent in Paris in 1938. Another son Sergei Sedov was murdered in 1937 during the Great Purges.

The Moscow Show Trials

1. Stalin's political enemies and rivals were accused of treason, spying for Germany and Japan and for having links with Trotsky.
2. Three political show Trials take place in 1936, 1937 and 1938.
3. A Military Show Trial takes place in 1937. 25 out of the top 29 army and navy commanders were executed. Half of the 35,000 Red Army officers were shot or imprisoned.
4. The majority of those found guilty were sent to the Gulags (prison camps).

The First Show Trial 1936

1. The Trial of the 16.
2. Prosecutor Vyshinsky.
3. Principal defendants Kamenev and Zinoviev.
4. Defendants accused of murdering Kirov and attempting to kill Stalin, Lenin and others.
5. Amazingly – all 16 defendants plead guilty.
6. All defendants executed within 24 hours.
7. Family members killed or exiled.
8. Stalin promised Kamenev and Zinoviev their lives would be spared if the pleaded guilty and blamed Trotsky.

The Second Show Trial 1937

1. The Trial of the 17.
2. Principal defendants Pyatakov (former industry minister) and Radek (a leading member of the Trotskyist opposition).
3. Most of the remainder had backed Trotsky against Stalin.
4. Accused of working with Trotsky to wreck the Soviet Union and restore capitalism in Russia.
5. Thirteen executed the day of their conviction.
6. The other four given lengthy prison sentences after 'implicating' others in the 'conspiracy'.
7. Radek died two years later in a Gulag.

The Third Show Trial 1938

1. The Trial of the Twenty One.
2. Principal defendants Bukharin, Rykov and Kretinsky.
3. Yagoda, who organised the earlier show trials was also accused.
4. Charged with spying and sabotage and attempting to murder Stalin.
5. All crimes were committed on the 'instructions' of Trotsky.
6. As with the other trials – the defendants were tortured and forced to make 'prepared' confessions.
7. Bukharin initially pleaded innocence and then guilty to no particular charge. He was repeatedly tortured and eventually caved in when the lives of his wife and infant son were threatened.
8. All the accused were executed immediately.
9. Bukharin's wife spent 20 years in a Gulag. She wrote a powerful and moving account of the Show Trials that was published in 1988. His son grew up in orphanages. Yuri Larin only found out who his father was in 1956.

Results of the Show Trials

1. The terror of the trials spread throughout the country.
2. After the Military Show Trial the army was unprepared for war with Germany due to the loss of its commanders.
3. Only 54 people were tried and found guilty.
4. At least 7 million people were executed or died in the Gulag.
5. A further 10 million died from famine or forced collectivisation in the early 1930's.