

In this propaganda image, children surround a gentle Stalin.



WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

The Heart of the Party

On the occasion of Stalin's sixtieth birthday, the Communist party newspaper, *Pravda*, or "Truth," printed this praise of Stalin:

“There is no similar name on the planet like the name of Stalin. It shines like a bright torch of freedom, it flies like a battle standard for millions of laborers around the world. . . . Stalin is today's Lenin! Stalin is the brain and heart of the party! Stalin is the banner of millions of people in their fight for a better life.”

Far from helping people fight for a better life, Stalin's ruthless policies brought suffering and death to millions of Soviets.

Focus Question How did Stalin transform the Soviet Union into a totalitarian state?

The Soviet Union Under Stalin

Objectives

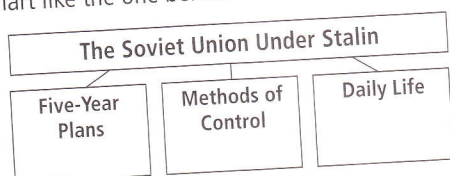
- Describe the effects of Stalin's five-year plans.
- Explain how Stalin tried to control how people thought in the Soviet Union.
- List communist changes to Soviet society.
- Outline Soviet foreign policy under Stalin.

Terms, People, and Places

command economy	russification
collectives	atheism
kulaks	Comintern
Gulag	
socialist realism	

Note Taking

Reading Strategy: Identify Main Ideas
Summarize the main points of the section in a chart like the one below.



In January 1924, tens of thousands of people lined up in Moscow's historic Red Square. They had come to view the body of Lenin, who had died a few days earlier. Lenin's widow, Nadezhda Krupskaya, wanted to bury him simply next to his mother. Communist party officials—including Joseph Stalin—wanted to preserve Lenin's body and put it on permanent display. In the end, Lenin's body was displayed in Red Square for more than 65 years. By preserving Lenin's body, Stalin wanted to show that he would carry on the goals of the revolution. However, in the years that followed, he used ruthless measures to control the Soviet Union and its people.

A Totalitarian State

Karl Marx had predicted that under communism the state would eventually wither away. Under Stalin, the opposite occurred. He turned the Soviet Union into a totalitarian state controlled by a powerful and complex bureaucracy.

Stalin's Five-Year Plans Once in power, Stalin imposed government control over the Soviet Union's economy. In the past, said Stalin, Russia had suffered because of its economic backwardness. In 1928, he proposed the first of several "five-year plans" aimed at building heavy industry, improving transportation, and increasing farm output. He brought all economic activity under government control. The government owned all businesses and distributed all

resources. The Soviet Union developed a **command economy**, in which government officials made all basic economic decisions. By contrast, in a capitalist system, the free market determine most economic decisions. Privately owned businesses compete to win the consumer's choice. This competition regulates the price and quality of goods.

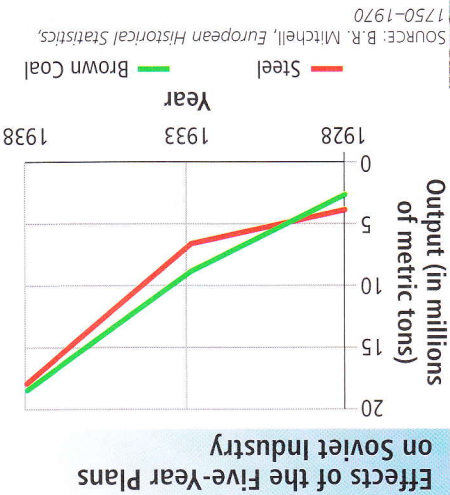
Mixed Results in Industry Stalin's five-year plans set high production goals, especially for heavy industry and transportation. The government pushed workers and managers to meet these goals by giving bonuses to those who succeeded—and by punishing those who did not. Between 1928 and 1939, large factories, hydroelectric power stations, and huge industrial complexes rose across the Soviet Union. Oil, coal, and steel production grew. Mining expanded, and new railroads were built.

Despite the impressive progress in some areas, Soviet workers had little to show for their efforts. Some former peasants did become skilled factory workers or managers. Overall, though, the standard of living remained low. Central planning was often inefficient, causing shortages in some areas and surpluses in others. Many managers, concerned only with meeting production quotas, turned out large quantities of low-quality goods. Consumer products such as clothing, cars, and refrigerators were scarce. Wages were low and workers were forbidden to strike. The party restricted workers' movements.

Forced Collectivization in Agriculture Stalin also brought agriculture under government control, but at a horrendous cost. The government wanted farmers to produce more grain to feed workers in the cities. It also hoped to sell grain abroad to earn money.

As you have read, under Lenin's New Economic Plan (NEP), peasants had held on to small plots of land. Many had prospered. Stalin saw that system as being inefficient and a threat to state power. Stalin wanted all peasants to farm on either state-owned farms or **collectives**, large farms owned and operated by peasants as a group. On collectives, the government would provide tractors, fertilizers, and better seed, and peasants would learn modern farm methods. Peasants would be permitted to keep their houses and personal belongings, but all farm animals and implements were to be turned over to the collective. The state set all prices and controlled access to farm supplies. Some peasants did not want to give up their land and sell their crops at the state's low prices. They resisted collectivization by killing farm animals, destroying tools, and burning crops. Stalin was furious. He believed that **kulaks**, or wealthy farmers, were behind the resistance. He responded with brutal force. In 1929, Stalin declared his intention to "liquidate the kulaks as a class." To this end, the government confiscated kulaks' land and sent them to labor camps. Thousands were killed or died from overwork.

Even after the "de-kulakization," angry peasants resisted by growing just enough to feed themselves. In response, the government seized all of their grain to meet industrial goals, purposely leaving the peasants to starve. In 1932, this ruthless policy, combined with poor harvests, led to a terrible



"Industrialism is the Path to Socialism" As this 1928 poster proclaims, Stalin's government saw rapid industrialization as the key to the success of the Soviet Union. Using the line graph, describe the effect of the Five-Year Plans on steel and brown coal output.

famine. Later called the Terror Famine, it caused between five and eight million people to die of starvation in the Ukraine alone.

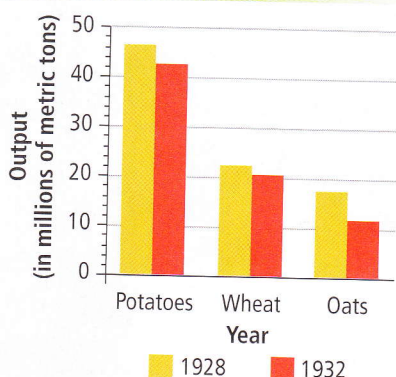
Although collectivization increased Stalin's control of the peasantry, it did not improve farm output. During the 1930s, grain production inched upward, but meat, vegetables, and fruits remained in short supply. Feeding the population would remain a major problem in the Soviet Union.

✓ **Checkpoint** How did Stalin take control of the Soviet Union's economic life?

Food as a Weapon

In 1932, when peasants failed to meet unrealistic crop quotas, Stalin retaliated by seizing all of their grain to sell on the market, leaving millions to starve. Below, a woman and her son search for food during the famine. *Describe the effect of Stalin's ruthless policies on the production of oats, wheat, and potatoes.*

**Soviet Agriculture Output
1928 and 1932**



SOURCE: B.R. Mitchell, *European Historical Statistics, 1750–1970*

Stalin's Terror Tactics

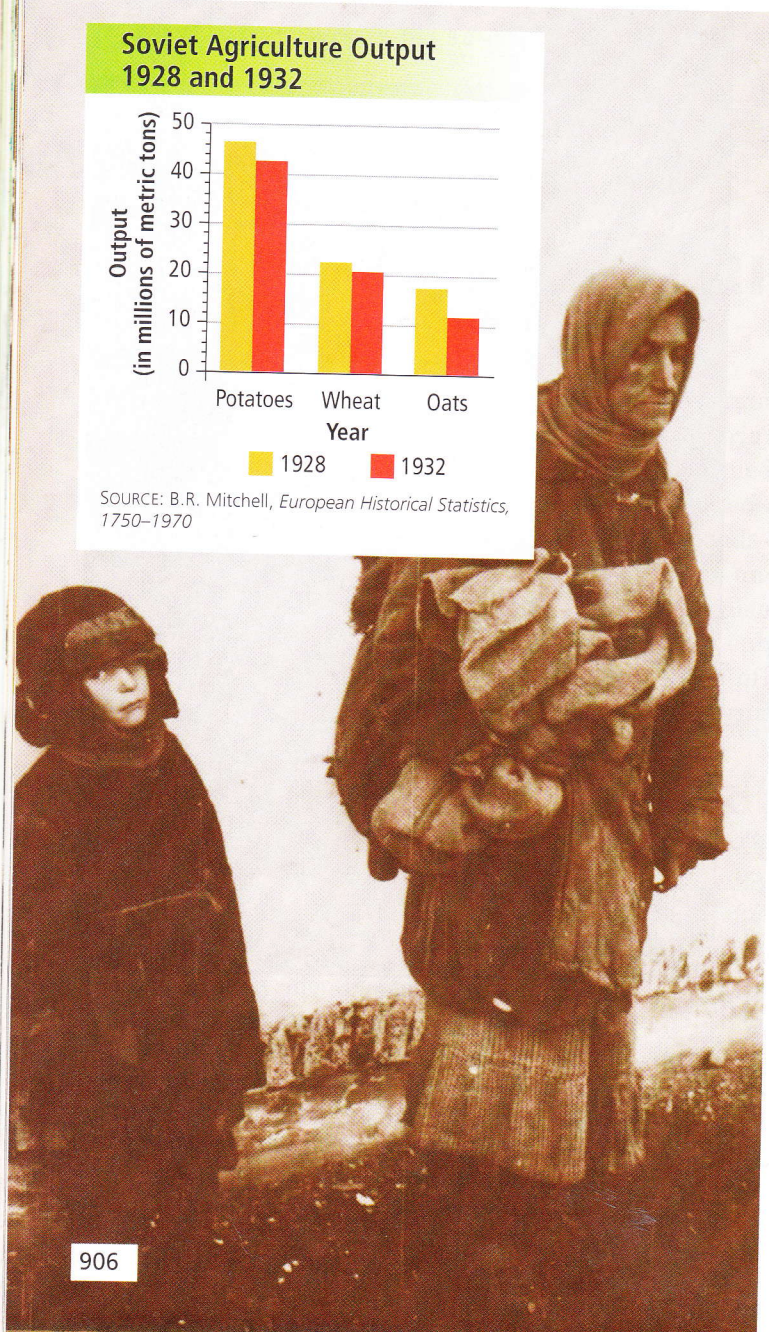
In addition to tactics like the Terror Famine, Stalin's Communist party used secret police, torture, and violent purges to ensure obedience. Stalin tightened his grasp on every aspect of Soviet life, even stamping out any signs of dissent within the Communist elites.

Terror as a Weapon Stalin ruthlessly used terror as a weapon against his own people. He perpetrated crimes against humanity and systematically violated his people's individual rights. Police spies did not hesitate to open private letters or plant listening devices. Nothing appeared in print without official approval. There was no free press, and no safe method of voicing protest. Grumblers or critics were rounded up and sent to the **Gulag**, a system of brutal labor camps, where many died.

The Great Purge Even though Stalin's power was absolute, he still feared that rival party leaders were plotting against him. In 1934, he launched the Great Purge. During this reign of terror, Stalin and his secret police cracked down especially on Old Bolsheviks, or party activists from the early days of the revolution. His net soon widened to target army heroes, industrial managers, writers, and ordinary citizens. They were charged with a wide range of crimes, from counterrevolutionary plots to failure to meet production quotas.

Between 1936 and 1938, Stalin staged a series of spectacular public "show trials" in Moscow. Former Communist leaders confessed to all kinds of crimes after officials tortured them or threatened their families or friends. Many of the purged party members were never tried but were sent straight to the Gulag. Secret police files reveal that at least four million people were purged during the Stalin years. Some historians estimate the toll to be much greater.

Results of the Purge The purges increased Stalin's power. All Soviet citizens were now well aware of the consequences of disloyalty. However, Stalin's government also paid a price. Among the purged were experts in industry, economics, and engineering, and many of the Soviet Union's most talented



Propaganda Stalin tried to boost morale and faith in the communist system by making himself a godlike figure. He used propaganda as a tool to build up a "cult of personality" around himself. Using modern technology, the party bombarded the public with relentless propaganda. Radios

At the same time that he was purging any elements of resistance in Soviet society, Stalin also sought to control the hearts and minds of Soviet citizens. He tried to do this by tirelessly distributing propaganda, censoring opposing ideas, imposing Russian culture on minorities, and replacing religion with communist ideology.

Communist Attempts to Control Thought

Soviet Union?

Checkpoint In what ways did Stalin's terror tactics harm the

writers and thinkers. The victims included most of the nation's military leaders and about half of its military officers, a loss that would weigh heavily on Stalin in 1941, when Germany invaded the Soviet Union.

A Gulag labor camp in 1934

- Map Skills** Stalin used terror and Gulag labor camps to control the huge, multinational Soviet Union.
- 1. Locate** (a) Ukrainian S.S.R. (b) Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (c) forced labor camp region
 - 2. Regions** How does the map help explain why Russia was the most influential republic in the Soviet Union?
 - 3. Make Inferences** What does the number of labor camps in the Soviet Union indicate about Stalin's rule?



The Soviet Union, 1928-1941

Geography Interactive
For: Audio guided tour
Web Code: nap-2841

and loudspeakers blared into factories and villages. In movies, theaters, and schools, citizens heard about communist successes and the evils of capitalism. Billboards and posters urged workers to meet or exceed production quotas. Headlines in the Communist party newspaper *Pravda*, or “Truth,” linked enemies at home to foreign agents seeking to overthrow the Communist regime.

Censorship and the Arts At first, the Bolshevik Revolution had meant greater freedom for Soviet artists and writers. Under Stalin, however, the heavy hand of state control also gripped the arts. The government controlled what books were published, what music was heard, and which works of art were displayed. Stalin required artists and writers to create their works in a style called **socialist realism**. Its goal was to show Soviet life in a positive light and promote hope in the communist future.

In theory, socialist realism followed in the footsteps of Russian greats Tolstoy and Chekhov; in practice it was rarely allowed to be realistic. Socialist realist novels usually featured a positive hero, often an engineer or scientist, battling against the odds to accomplish a goal. Popular themes for socialist-realist visual artists were peasants, workers, heroes of the revolution, and—of course—Stalin.

If they refused to conform to government expectations, writers, artists, and composers faced government persecution. The Jewish poet Osip Mandelstam, for example, was imprisoned, tortured, and exiled for composing a satirical verse that was critical of Stalin. Out of fear for his wife’s safety, Mandelstam finally submitted to threats and wrote an “Ode to Stalin.” Boris Pasternak, who would later win fame for his novel *Doctor Zhivago*, was afraid to publish anything at all during the Stalin years. Rather than write in the favored style of socialist realism, he translated foreign literary works instead.

Despite restrictions, some Soviet writers produced magnificent works. Yevgeny Zamyatin’s classic anti-Utopian novel *We* became well known outside of the Soviet Union, but was not published in his home country until 1989. The novel depicts a nightmare future in which people go by numbers, not names, and the “One State” controls people’s thoughts. *And Quiet Flows the Don*, by Mikhail Sholokhov, passed the censor. The novel tells the story of a man who spends years fighting in World War I, the Russian Revolution, and the civil war. Sholokhov later won the Nobel Prize for literature.

Russification Yet another way Stalin controlled the cultural life of the Soviet Union was by promoting a policy of **russification**, or making a nationality’s culture more Russian. By 1936, the U.S.S.R. was made up of 11 Soviet Socialist Republics. The Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic consisted of the old Russian heartland and was the largest and dominant republic. The other

Vocabulary Builder

conform—(kun FAWRM) *vi.* to obey a set of standards

Soviet Art

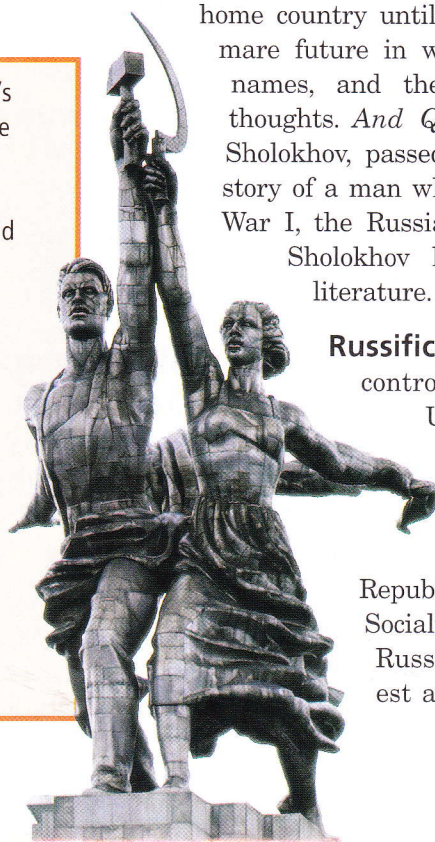
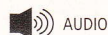
In this Socialist Realist sculpture, a factory worker and a collective farmer raise the hammer and sickle together.

Anna Akhmatova (ahk MAH tuh vuh), one of Russia’s greatest poets, could not publish her works because she had violated state guidelines. Still, she wrote secretly. In this passage from “Requiem,” she describes the ordeal of trying to visit her 20-year-old son, imprisoned during the Stalinist terrors:

Primary Source

“For seventeen long months my pleas,
My cries have called you home.
I’ve begged the hangman on my knees,
My son, my dread, my own.
My mind’s mixed up for good, and I’m
No longer even clear
Who’s man, who’s beast, nor how much time
Before the end draws near.”

—Anna Akhmatova, “Requiem”
(tr. Robin Kempball)





The Party Versus the Church

To weaken the power of the Russian Orthodox Church, the party seized church property and converted churches into offices and museums. Here, Red Army soldiers carry off religious relics from a Russian church. How might the policy of destroying churches in such a public way have backfired on the party?

SSRs, such as Uzbek and the Ukraine, were the homelands of other nationalities and had their own languages, historical traditions, and cultures. At first, Stalin encouraged the autonomy, or independence, of these cultures. However, in the late 1920s, Stalin turned this policy on its head and systematically tried to make the cultures of the non-Russian SSRs more Russian. He appointed Russians to high-ranking positions in non-Russian SSRs and required the Russian language to be used in schools and businesses.

War on Religion The Communist party also tried to strengthen its hold on the minds of the people by destroying their religious faith. In accordance with the ideas of Marx, **atheism**, or the belief that there is no god, became an official state policy. Early on, the Communists targeted the Russian Orthodox Church, which had strongly supported the tsars. Many priests and other religious leaders were among those killed in the purges or sent to die in prison camps. Other religions were persecuted as well. At one show trial, 15 Roman Catholic priests were charged with teaching religion to the young, a counterrevolutionary activity. The state seized Jewish synagogues and banned the use of Hebrew. Islam was also officially discouraged. The Communists tried to replace religion with their own ideology. Like a religion, communist ideology had its own “sacred” texts—the writings of Marx and Lenin—and its own shrines, such as the tomb of Lenin. Portraits of Stalin replaced religious icons in Russian homes. However, millions of Soviets continued to worship, in private and sometimes in public, in defiance of the government’s prohibitions.

Checkpoint How did Stalin use censorship and propaganda to support his rule?

Soviet Society Under Stalin

The terror and cultural coercion of Stalin’s rule made a mockery of the original theories and promises of communism. The lives of most Russians did change. But, while the changes had some benefits, they were often outweighed by continuous shortages and restricted freedoms.

The New Elite Takes Control The Communists destroyed the old social order of landowning nobles at the top and peasants at the bottom. But instead of creating a society of equals as they promised, they created a society where a few elite groups emerged as a new ruling class. At the head of society were members of the Communist party. Only a small fraction of Soviet citizens could join the party. Many who did so were motivated by a desire to get ahead, rather than a belief in communism. The Soviet elite also included industrial managers, military leaders, scientists, and some artists and writers. The elite enjoyed benefits denied to most people. They lived in the best apartments in the cities and rested at the best vacation homes in the country. They could shop at special

stores for scarce consumer goods. On the other hand, Stalin's purges often fell on the elite.

Benefits and Drawbacks Although excluded from party membership, most people did enjoy several new benefits. The party required all children to attend free Communist-built schools. The state supported technical schools and universities as well. Schools served many important goals. Educated workers were needed to build a modern industrial state. The Communist party also set up programs for students outside school. These programs included sports, cultural activities, and political classes to train teenagers for party membership. However, in addition to important basic skills, schools also taught communist values, such as atheism, the glory of collective farming, and love of Stalin.

The state also provided free medical care, day care for children, inexpensive housing, and public recreation. While these benefits were real, many people still lacked vital necessities. Although the state built massive apartment complexes, housing was scarce. Entire families might be packed into a single room. Bread was plentiful, but meat, fresh fruit, and other foods remained in short supply.

Vocabulary Builder

access—(AK ses) *n.* the ability to get and use

Crowded Lives

At the start of the first Five-Year Plan, millions of Soviets moved from the country to cities to take jobs in new industrial plants. This influx led to extremely crowded living conditions. These men gather in close quarters in a Soviet hostel in the early 1930s. *How does this photograph reflect the drawbacks of a centrally planned command economy?*

Women in the Soviet Union Long before 1917, women such as Nadezhda Krupskaya and Alexandra Kollontai worked for the revolution, spreading radical ideas among peasants and workers. Under the Communists, women won equality under the law. They gained access to education and a wide range of jobs. By the 1930s, many Soviet women were working in medicine, engineering, or the sciences. By their labor, women contributed to Soviet economic growth. They worked in factories, in construction, and on collectives. Within the family, their wages were needed because men and women earned the same low salaries.



Checkpoint How did Communist schools benefit the state and the Communist party?



Soviet Foreign Policy

Between 1917 and 1939, the Soviet Union pursued two very different goals in foreign policy. As Communists, both Lenin and Stalin wanted to bring about the worldwide revolution that Marx had predicted. But as Soviets, they wanted to guarantee their nation's security by winning the support of other countries. The result of pursuing these two different goals was a contradictory and generally unsuccessful foreign policy.

In 1919, Lenin formed the Communist International, or **Comintern**. The purpose of the Comintern was to encourage world-wide revolution. To this end, it aided revolutionary groups around the world and urged colonial peoples to rise up against imperialist powers.

The Comintern's support of revolutionary groups outside the Soviet Union and its propaganda against capitalism made Western powers highly suspicious of the Soviet Union. In the United States, fear of Bolshevik plots led to the "Red Scare" in the early 1920s. Britain broke off relations with the Soviet Union when evidence revealed Soviet schemes to turn a 1926 strike into a revolution. Even so, the Soviet Union slowly won recognition from Western powers and increased trade with capitalist countries. It also joined the League of Nations. However, mistrust still poisoned relations, especially after the Great Purge.

Checkpoint How did the Soviet Union's foreign policy goals contradict one another?

Looking Ahead

By the time Stalin died in 1953, the Soviet Union had become a military superpower and a world leader in heavy industry. Yet Stalin's efforts exacted a brutal toll. The Soviet people were dominated by a totalitarian system based on terror. The reality of communism fell far short of Lenin's promises. Most people in the Soviet Union lived meager lives compared with people in the West.

SECTION 4 Assessment

Terms, People, and Places

1. What do many of the key terms listed at the beginning of the section have in common? Explain.

Note Taking

2. Reading Skill: Identify Main

- Ideas** Use your completed chart to answer the section Focus Question: How did Stalin transform the Soviet Union into a totalitarian state?

3. Identify Effects

- What were the goals and results of Stalin's five-year plans? How did the effects differ between industry and agriculture?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

4. **Contrast** How did the command economy under Stalin differ from a capitalist economy?
5. **Synthesize Information** What methods did Stalin use to create a totalitarian state?
6. **Synthesize Information** One historian has said that socialist realism was "communism with a smiling face." What do you think he meant?
7. **Compare** Compare life under Stalin's rule with life under the Russian tsars.

Writing About History

Quick Write: Choose an Organization

Compare-and-contrast essays are often organized either point by point or by block. The first organization involves a discussion of one idea first, followed by the discussion of another, and emphasizes the two ideas. The second discusses all of the similarities, followed by all the differences, and emphasizes the comparison or contrast itself. Write an outline for each type for an essay comparing and contrasting the results of the Five-Year Plans in industry and agriculture.