

Stalin's 5 Year Plans

1. What was Stalin's interpretation of Marxism-Leninism?

Socialism internally (Socialism in One Country; nationalism) rather than spreading revolution worldwide (internationalism)
= very different from the Bolshevik theory that the survival of the Russian Revolution depended on proletarian revolutions in countries across Europe.

BUT

Socialism in One Country did not mean that the goal of world revolution should be abandoned

- the one socialist state (Russia) would inspire and assist communist movements in other countries
- Russia could still exist and expand within the region as the only socialist state
- economic development (of Russia) needed to come before international revolution.

So, Socialism in One Country

- allowed USSR to co-exist peacefully with capitalist states
- reflected nationalist beliefs of Stalin.

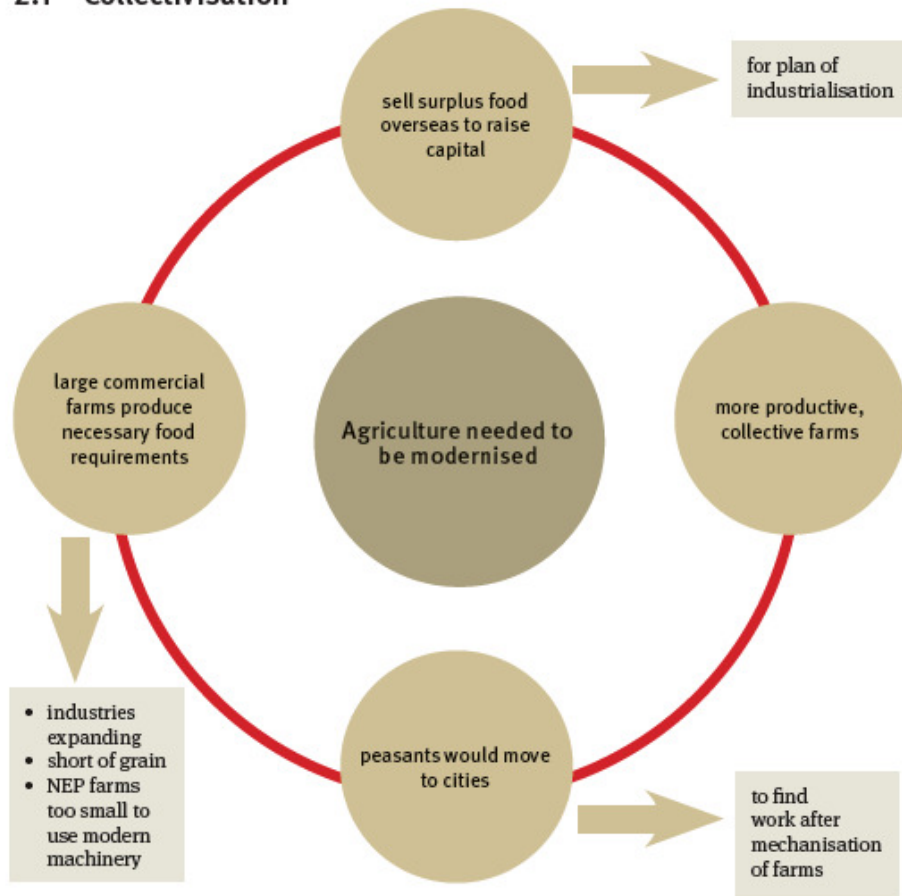
Another aspect of Stalinism was a strong bureaucracy, which began to look after its own interests above those of the working class.

2. How successful were collectivisation and industrialisation in the USSR?

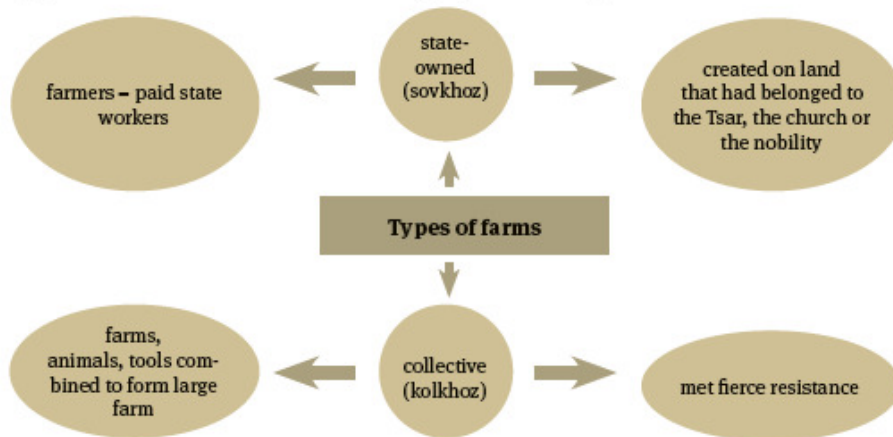
What were the specific aims of economic reorganisation under Stalin?

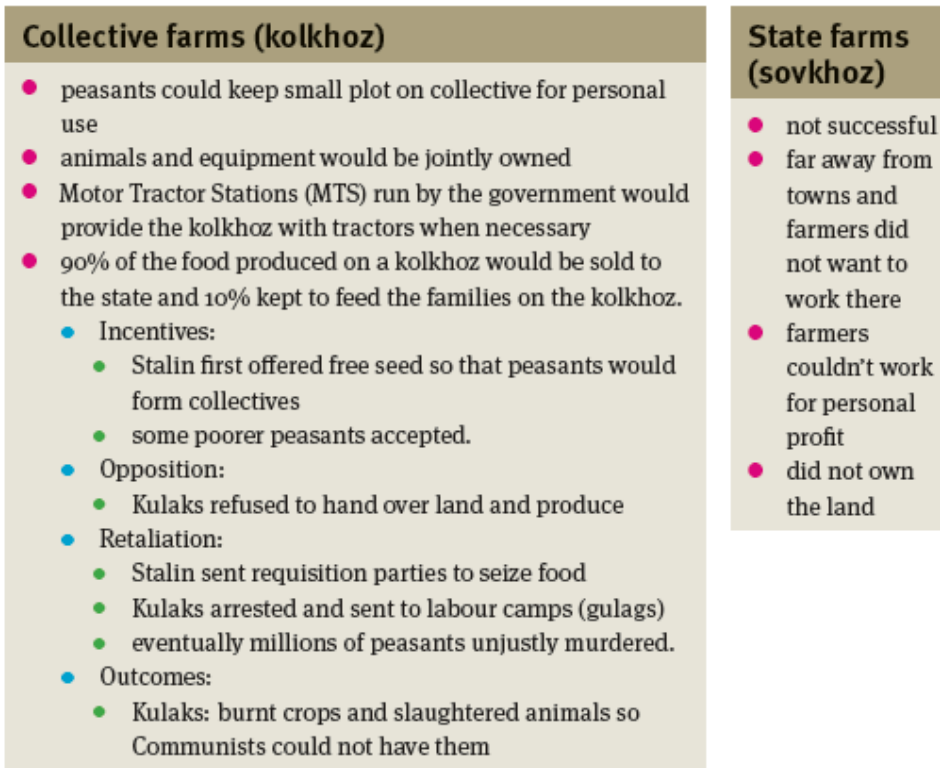
- mechanise and collectivise agriculture to support industrialisation
- move away from private enterprise towards state control of industry (from the capitalist aspects of the NEP to a socialist programme)
- introduce new and more advanced technology in order to rebuild the economy
- build the industrial strength of the USSR in order to become self-sufficient.

2.1 Collectivisation

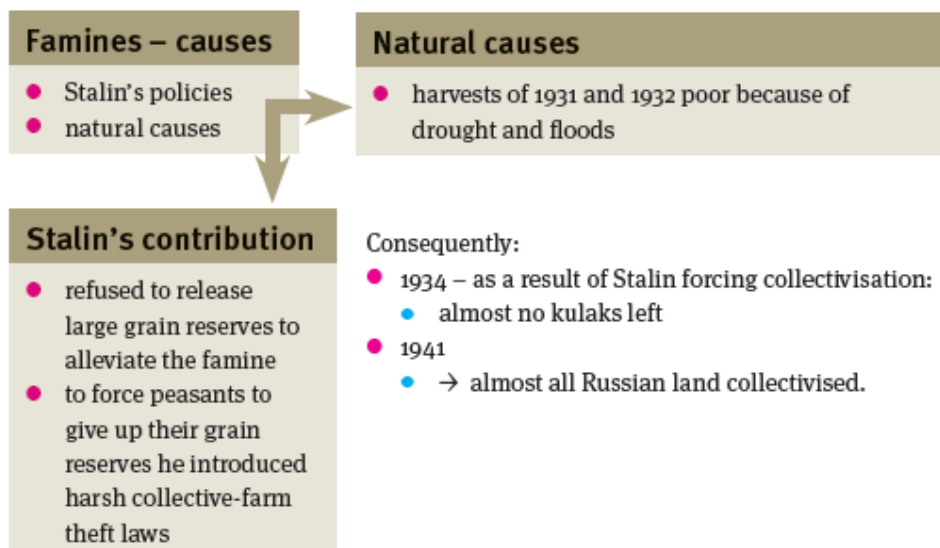


1929: Stalin introduced Collectivisation – programme for agriculture:





→ In the Ukraine, an area of strong resistance by the peasants, the state seized grain on a massive scale. This resulted in countrywide food shortages and food rationing. Agricultural production fell dramatically.
 = 1930 & 1932–1933: huge famines in which 6 million died.



2.2 The Five-Year Plans in industry

- *Aimed = revolutionise industry through centralised economy and Five-Year Plans: production targets set for each five year period*
 - plan to transform Russia into industrial superpower
 - become equal to leading world industrial powers
 - Stalin: State Planning Commission = Gosplan → set targets for production in each region – coal, iron, oil and electricity
 - regions set production targets for mines and industries within the region
 - managers set targets for each foreman
 - foremen set targets for each shift and even for individual workers.
- *Propaganda: Stalin warned people that unless five-year plans were followed Russia would be crushed by other countries.*
- *Workers suffered greatly but accepted the need to follow the plans - to achieve a communist economy.*

2.2.1 The First Five-Year Plan: 1928–1933 (completed 1932)

Emphasis on quantity and heavy industry: coal, iron, steel.

Major targets not met BUT outputs in industries = staggering:

- new cities built in places with natural resources
- workers moved to new cities
- new factories; existing factories increased production
- dams and hydroelectric power stations
- new steel mills
- motor, tractor, truck factories
- technicians from Western countries helped
- infrastructure extended; existing roads improved.

2.2.2 The Second Five-Year Plan: 1933–1937

- Built on achievements of first five-year plan.
 - Heavy industry → also focused on quality: USSR became one of world's major steel producers
 - Transport, communications improved (new railways, canals built)
- propaganda increased to motivate workers
- workers fined if targets not met
 - productive workers = 'heroes'

BUT

Deterioration of living standard

- more consumer goods became available → but quality = poor
- World War II came closer → planners moved up production of military goods
- increase in military goods = decrease in quality and quantity of consumer goods
- more housing provided and attempt to increase workers' standard of living → but many industries moved east to protect them from threat of war in Europe.

Other aspects

- childcare made available to encourage mothers to work
- made use of both incentives and punishments to meet targets
- targets eased slightly = reward for first five-year plan finished before deadline
- food production increased, rationing ended – but production in areas such as coal and oil not so good

2.2.3 The Third Five-Year Plan: 1938–1941

Was intended to focus on consumer goods:

- first two years disappointing → goals not met
- only until 1941 → Germany declared war on USSR during World War II
 - meant focus shifted to military goods/equipment
 - railways extended → special attention to transportation of weapons.

2.3 Were the Five-Year Plans a success?

- centralisation of economy brought some success
- steady industrial growth outstripped Western countries
- by WWII USSR = powerful industrial country, could resist German hostility
- success and growth helped USSR recover from war
- weakness: focus on heavy industry, quantity over quality
- led to shortage of consumer goods
- poor quality goods
- rapid urbanisation = shortage of housing (workers to industrial centres)
- cost many lives

Labour

- although some worked voluntarily, many were forced
- political opponents arrested and sent to gulags - forced to work
- conditions harsh, millions died.

Overall

- Centralisation successfully turned USSR into industrial superpower.
- Living conditions, however, still terrible for many citizens.
- Success → came at cost of human lives.

3 Nature of political terror in Russia in the 1930s

By mid-1932 Stalin faced more opposition to policies:

- people criticised him publicly → urged Trotsky to be brought back
- Stalin demanded arrest and execution of opponents at Politburo meeting

- Stalin outvoted → led by friend and colleague Sergey Kirov
- 1934:
 - Kirov shot dead = beginning of terror.

Purges	Show trials: 1934–1938	Communist Secret Police (NKVD)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● began with murder of Kirov (probably planned by Stalin) murder blamed on Trotsky (conspiracy theory) ● 93 of the 139 Central Committee members were executed: 1934–1939 <p>Red Army purge (1937 →):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stalin was suspicious of high-ranking officials → thought they were plotting against him with Germany <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● may or may not have been true ● Stalin also obsessed with destroying threats to his power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● → Commander-in-Chief and seven generals were shot ● 1938–39: all the admirals and half of the Army's officers had been executed or imprisoned ● 30 000 members of armed forces executed by end of purges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● most of Communist Party leaders who had taken part in 1917 revolutions → accused of treason, executed or sent to gulags ● 1936: Kamenev, Zinoviev and fourteen other party members put on trial, found guilty and executed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1936: Nikolai Yezhov was appointed the head <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● arranged the arrest of all the leading political figures in the Soviet Union ● tortured people to get false confessions
<p>Purges and show trials placed Soviet Union in a weak position at the beginning of World War II.</p> <p>After purges, Stalin was paranoid: → and wanted to get rid of NKVD because they knew too much.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● → Appointed new head of NKVD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to weed out 'fascist forces' that had tortured innocents. ● had senior NKVD officials executed. 		

4 Effect of Stalin's policies on the Soviet people

- People lived in fear:
- political purges/show trials removed any perceived threat to Stalin
 - people terrified of being falsely accused/tried/killed
 - 1920s/30s: 2 000 writers/intellectuals/artists imprisoned → 3/4 died
 - forced removals to Siberia just before/during WWII 20 million sent to gulags: 1/2 died.

Censorship → cult of obedience/worship. Names of executed leaders wiped out of history books

Propaganda → Stalin demanded praise

- posters, sculptures, pictures of Stalin everywhere
- History books changed to portray him as 'Hero of the Revolution'.

Apparatchiks: loyal to Stalin got houses, jobs, holidays.

5 What was the position of women in the Soviet Union under Stalin?

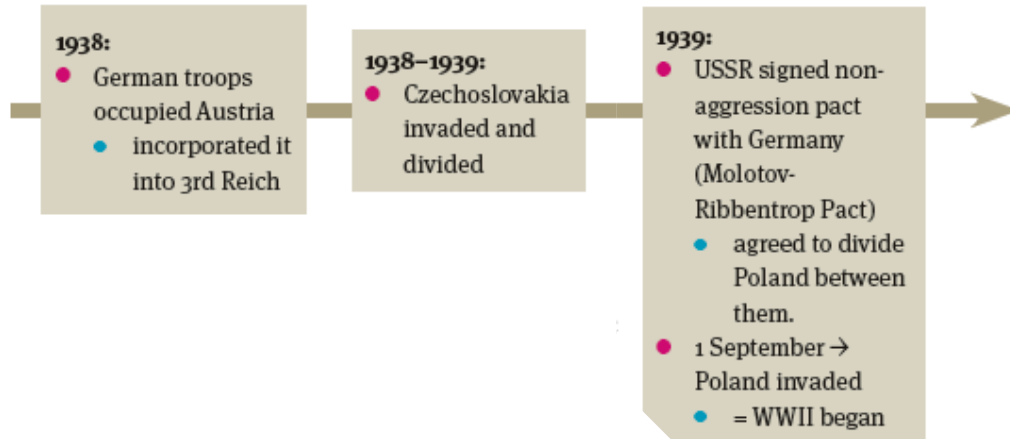
Positive changes	Negative changes	In general
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Russian generation to have prenatal care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hospital births. • Equal education for girls. • Equal employment rights. • More work because of labour shortage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • childcare set up to allow them to work • in 1927 the percentage of women working in industry was 28% → ten years later, in 1937 it was 40% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laws of 1920s changed in order to strengthen family: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • divorce more difficult • child support if unmarried more difficult to obtain • abortion illegal • women lost rights within family. • Still discriminated against in workplace → lower positions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher illiteracy amongst women • Women could be sentenced just for being wives of 'enemies' of state = 'Wives of enemies of the people': <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • despite few women being sentenced themselves, wives had hard time supporting themselves

6 The coming of the Second World War

Stalin wanted USSR to remain neutral:

- planned for other countries to become financially/politically exhausted by war → make USSR the biggest power.

BUT: Hitler's aggression, however, too strong to ignore.



6.1 Relationships during WWII:

Germany and USSR = reasonably strong diplomatic relations, important economic relationship.

BUT: Germany also had competing ideologies, mutual hostility

Germany: Axis Pact with Japan and Italy:

tried to negotiate for USSR to join Axis Pact

USSR made counteroffer, which was ignored by Germany

Open hostilities began:

- 22 June 1941, Hitler sent three million soldiers and 3 500 tanks to attack Russia in an invasion called *Operation Barbarossa*
- → because of non-aggression pact, Russians taken by surprise
- = Russians joined side of Britain and France.