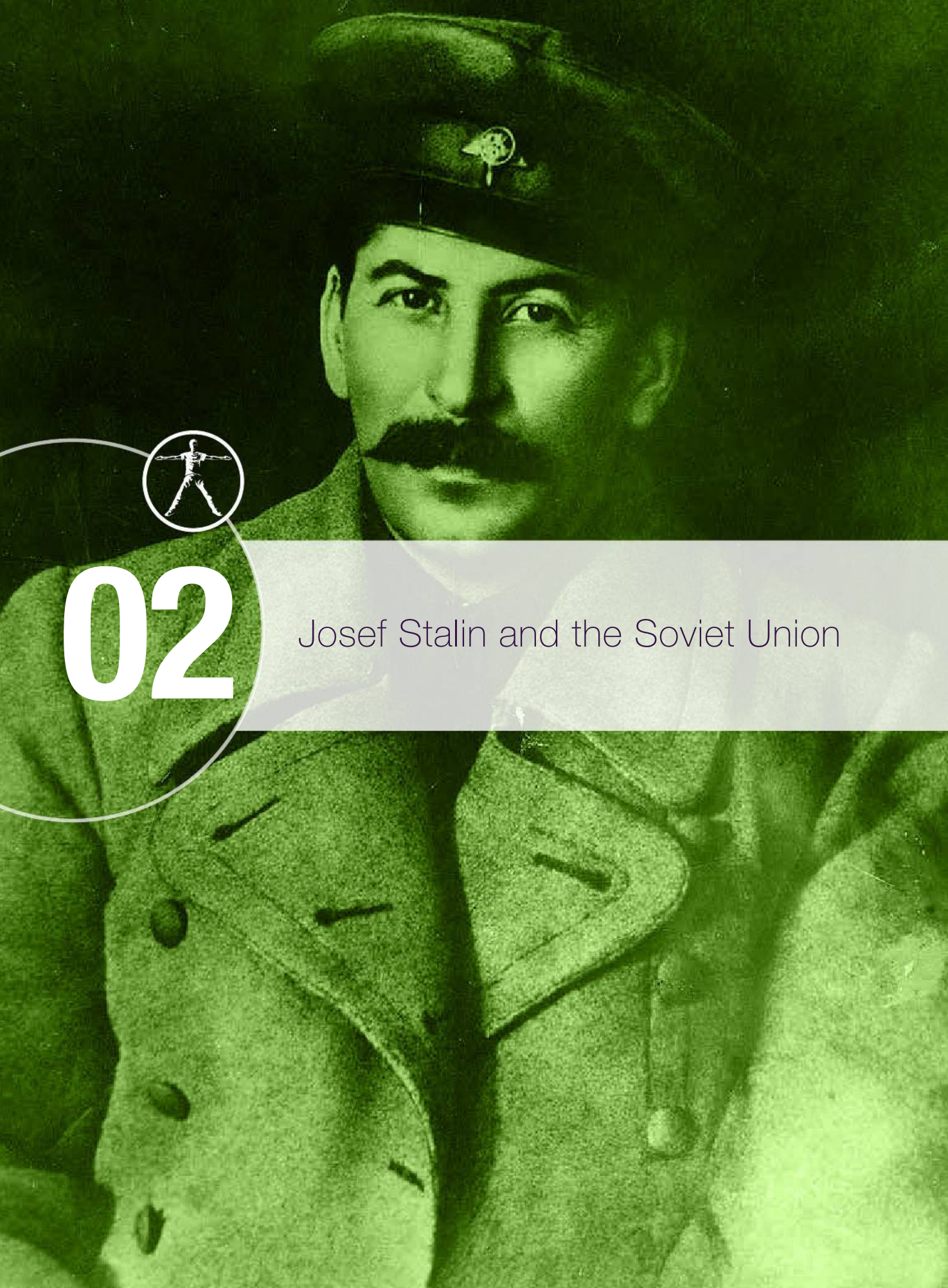


02

Josef Stalin and the Soviet Union

Josef Stalin photographed when he was a captain in the Red Army during the Russian civil war. He became General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1922 and, by 1929, had emerged as its leader.

This chapter examines the rise to power and rule of Stalin as the leader of the Soviet Union. In particular, it focuses on:

- how, after the death of Lenin, Stalin rose to power through the hierarchy of the Communist Party
- the methods Stalin used to achieve his aim to industrialize the Soviet Union and to consolidate his control of the Communist Party
- the social and economic policies that were carried out under Stalin's leadership
- the methods used by Stalin to deal with opposition within the Soviet Union
- Stalin's foreign policy
- Stalin's leadership of the Soviet Union during and after World War II until his death in 1953.

Key concepts:

As you work through this chapter, bear in mind the key concepts we use when studying history.

- **Change**: Think about the ways in which the Soviet Union changed when Stalin established himself as Lenin's successor.
- **Continuity**: What stayed the same in the Soviet Union? Did the daily lives of ordinary people remain more or less the same, despite the change during Stalin's time in power?
- **Causation**: Consider the reasons for Stalin's rise to power; what events were important for this to happen?
- **Consequence**: Consequences can be both intentional and unintentional. What were the consequences of the Great Terror? Did Stalin intend them to be like this? How can we tell?
- **Significance**: As you read through the chapter, think about whether some reasons were more important than others for Stalin's maintenance of power.
- **Perspective**: Are there different perspectives about Stalin's rule? Is he viewed differently today? Do historians' opinions vary according to their nationality or their political beliefs?

One of the most important leaders of the Soviet Union during the 20th century, Josef Stalin established the political and economic structure that remained in place until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. This chapter will cover Stalin's rise to power and how he was able to consolidate his control of the Soviet Union both before and after World War II.

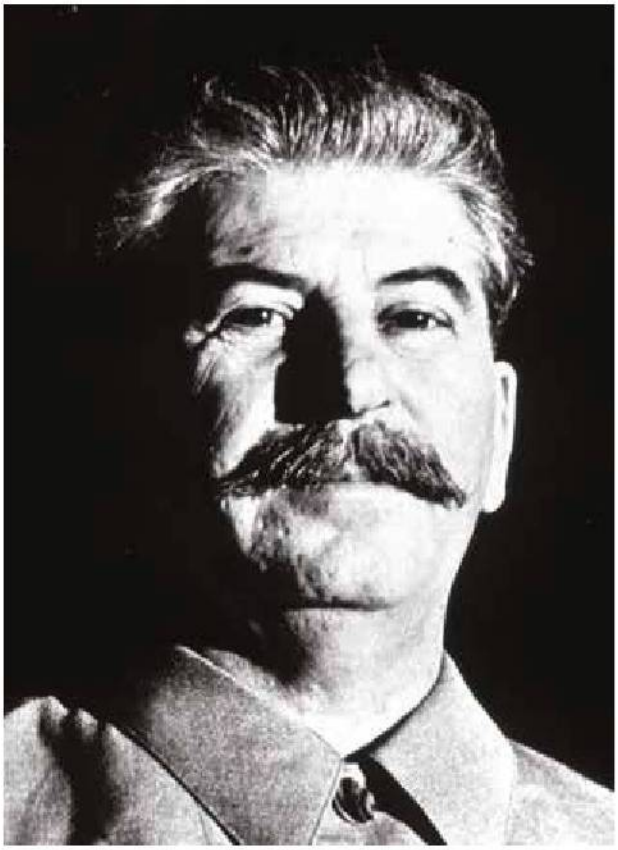
The Soviet Union (USSR)

Known in 1918 as the Russian Socialist Federation of Soviet Republics (or Soviet Russia), the name was changed to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR, or the Soviet Union, for short) in 1922. Lenin wanted each republic to be equal and also to have the right to secede if they chose to do so. In practice, power lay in Moscow and secession was not allowed, certainly not after Stalin took over. In 1936, the number of republics was increased to 11: Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tadzikhistan.

Timeline – 1878–1953

1878	Stalin is born on 18 December in the town of Gori in Georgia. In 1929, he changed his date of birth to 21 December 1879 probably so that his birthday celebrations would be for a more significant 50th (and not 51st) birthday.
1894	Stalin enters Tiflis Theological Seminary.
1898	The Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) is established.

1899	Stalin is expelled from Tiflis Seminary.
1902	Stalin is involved in illegal political activity; he is arrested and exiled to Siberia.
1903	The RSDLP splits into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.
1905	Revolution breaks out in Russia.
1914	World War I breaks out.
1917	The March Revolution takes place in Russia; Tsar Nicholas II abdicates; Lenin returns to Petrograd in April; Stalin arrives in Petrograd and becomes one of the editors of *Pravda*. The Bolshevik Revolution takes place in October; Stalin is appointed commissar for nationalities.
1918	The Treaty of Brest–Litovsk is signed with Germany; civil war breaks out in Russia; Stalin is placed in charge of Red Army forces in Tsaritsyn.
1921	The New Economic Policy is introduced.
1922	The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR or the Soviet Union for short) is founded; Stalin is appointed General Secretary of the Communist Party.
1924	Lenin dies in January.
1925–29	Stalin consolidates his control over the Politburo and removes rivals.
1929	Stalin begins collectivization. The First Five-Year Plan is officially approved.
1930	Stalin's 'Dizzy with Success' speech is published in *Pravda*.
1932–33	There is famine in the Soviet Union.
1934	Stalin's close friend and comrade Sergei Kirov is murdered.
1936	The show trial of Zinoviev and Kamenev takes place and both are executed; Tomsky commits suicide.
1937	Stalin purges the military; the 'Great Terror' begins.
1938	The show trial of Bukharin and Rykov takes place; both are executed.
1939	The Great Terror draws to a close; the Nazi–Soviet Pact is signed; World War II breaks out in Europe.
1940	Trotsky is assassinated in Mexico in August.
1941	Operation Barbarossa begins on 22 June.
1943	This year is seen as the turning point of the war, as Germans are defeated at Stalingrad. Stalin meets with Churchill and Roosevelt in Tehran.
1945	Stalin meets with Churchill and Roosevelt in February at Yalta; war ends in Europe in May; meeting in July at Potsdam with Attlee and Truman; the Red Army occupies much of Central and Eastern Europe; the atomic bomb is dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August; the war in the Pacific ends in September.
1948	The Berlin Blockade is put in place.
1949	The People's Republic of China is established.
1950	The Korean War breaks out in June.
1953	Stalin dies on 5 March.



Josef Stalin

2.1 The emergence of an authoritarian state

Stalin's background and role in the emergence of an authoritarian state in Russia

Josef Stalin was not primarily responsible for the establishment of an authoritarian state in Russia. He was a **Bolshevik** and a member of the political party that carried out the October Revolution, but it was Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (Lenin) who set up the structure of what became known as the Soviet Union. Stalin, however, is associated with the consolidation of the Soviet Union and it was his policies that became the model for all communist states in the 20th century.

Stalin before the Bolshevik Revolution

One of the most notorious authoritarian leaders of the 20th century, Josef Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili (Stalin) was born in 1878 in Gori, Georgia. Although part of the Russian Empire, Georgians had their own language and culture and, for Stalin, Russian was a second language that he always spoke with a heavy accent. Rebellious at school, he later attended a theological seminary; this was not an unusual path for intelligent but impoverished young men who wanted an education. Stalin became influenced, however, by Messame Dassy, a revolutionary socialist group that

Bolsheviks and Mensheviks

In 1903, at a conference held in London, there was a disagreement among the leaders of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party between those who favoured a broadly based mass party (Mensheviks) and those who wanted a small, 'vanguard' party that would lead the workers towards a revolution (known as the Bolsheviks).

wanted to secure Georgia's independence from Russia. Through this organization, he met socialists whose ideology was based on **Marxism**. Stalin was expelled from the seminary in 1899 and in 1901 he joined the **Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP)** and became a professional revolutionary.

There are different accounts of when Stalin first met Lenin. The most likely one claims that they met in London in 1903 at the Fifth Party Congress. Helen Rappaport mentions that Stalin stayed at 33 Jubilee Road under a pseudonym – Mr Ivanovich – and that he developed a liking for toffee sweets (*Conspirator: Lenin In Exile*, 2010, p.144).

Marxism and the ideology of the Communist Party

Based upon the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Marxism formed the basis of the political ideology of the Communist Party. Central to this ideology is the belief that, whoever owns the means of the production of wealth also controls all aspects of society. In feudal times, when agricultural production was paramount, whoever owned the land controlled wealth and power, and structured society to benefit them. When wealth shifted to those who owned the means of industrial production (the bourgeois or middle classes), social and political power also shifted to the middle classes. Marx predicted that the workers (the proletariat), whose labour was exploited by the bourgeois, would rise up to seize power and establish the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. This would lead to the final stage of communism when there would be no private property and resources would be shared.

Unlike leaders such as Lenin, Stalin did not go abroad into exile, but stayed behind in Russia and became involved in organizing strikes among factory workers. Arrested for this in 1902, Stalin was sent into exile in Siberia, although he escaped in 1904.

Stalin was arrested several times by the Tsar's secret police before being sentenced to exile for life in 1913. He remained in Siberia until 1917, when the overthrow of the Romanov dynasty led to the establishment of the Provisional Government and the subsequent release of all political prisoners.

Stalin's role in the 1917 revolutions

Stalin returned to Petrograd (known today as St Petersburg) in 1917 when he joined the editorial board of *Pravda*, a post he had previously held in 1913. He was also elected to the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party.

The Bolsheviks were a minority party in the early months of 1917, but Lenin's leadership and events over the summer gave it publicity and a reputation for being the only party to consistently oppose Russia's involvement in World War I. Lenin also strongly opposed any collaboration between the Petrograd soviet and the Provisional Government.

'Land, Peace, and Bread' and 'All Power to the Soviets' became the slogans of the Bolsheviks, but these also signified a departure from the policies adopted before Lenin returned to Petrograd. As one of the editors of *Pravda*, Stalin was caught up in a struggle within the Bolshevik Party. Lenin now criticized editorials that had supported the war and even accused Stalin of being a 'betrayer of socialism'. Stalin was quickly persuaded to change his approach, to abandon support for the Provisional Government and the war, and to work towards the revolution. Despite his rather senior position within the party, Stalin did not take a leading role in planning the October Revolution, as this was mostly the work of Trotsky and Lenin.

Pravda

This was the newspaper of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Its name means 'The Truth'.

Petrograd soviet

The Petrograd soviet was a council composed of representatives elected by the soldiers stationed in Petrograd and by ordinary workers. It was intended to represent the views of the proletariat. During the February/March (depending on the calendar) Revolution of 1917, the Duma refused to disband when asked to do so by the Tsar. Demonstrations in Petrograd, a mutiny by the army, and growing discontent with the rule of Tsar Nicholas II led to his abdication. The Duma became the Provisional Government and it shared power with the Petrograd soviet that was set up in March 1917.

Leon Trotsky (real name Lev Bronstein) (1879–1940)

Lev Bronstein was a Marxist who became the first chairman of the St Petersburg soviet in 1905. This was quickly suppressed by the Tsar, but Trotsky (the pseudonym used by Bronstein) took up journalism and reported on the Balkan Wars of 1912–13. He was in New York when the February Revolution took place in 1917 and returned to Petrograd to hover on the edges of the Bolshevik Party, although he did not join until the summer. A brilliant strategist, he planned the October Revolution and became a close comrade of Lenin. By 1923, it was widely expected that he would also be Lenin's successor.

Activity 1

ATL Thinking skills

Study the source below and answer the questions that follow.

> *In the days of the upheaval, Stalin was not among its main actors. Even more than usual, he remained in the shadow, a fact that was to cause embarrassment to his official biographers and perhaps justified Trotsky in saying that 'the greater the sweep of events the smaller was Stalin's place in it'… But in spite of their best intentions and indubitable zeal, the official Soviet historians have not been able to write Stalin's name or anyone else's into the blanks left by the deletion of Trotsky's.*
>
> **From Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin: A Political Biography*, Oxford University Press, 1966**

1. What does the source above tell you about Deutscher's views on Stalin?
2. What does he mean by 'official Soviet historians'?
3. What is significant about the date when this was first published?

The Bolshevik Revolution

The October Revolution of 1917 marked the seizure of power by the Bolshevik Party. The traditional Soviet view of the events of October 1917 was that it was a popular uprising expertly led by Lenin and his supporters. Other interpretations suggest it was a *coup d'état* by a small group of determined revolutionaries with limited popular support. More recently, historians who have now had access to the archives of the Soviet Union have leaned more towards interpreting the revolution as popular unrest combined with dynamic leadership from the Bolsheviks. This party of revolutionaries was able to harness enough support to get into power and to stay there long enough to build the structure of an authoritarian state, after which popular support was no longer so important. Soon after the October Revolution, the Decree for Land and the Decree for Peace were issued in response to popular demand. Also issued was the Decree on the Rights of the Peoples of Russia, while the Congress established **Sovnarkom** to run the country.

Decree for Land

Although, according to Marxist doctrine, land would be held communally (no one would own it but all would share it), peasants had already taken over privately owned land and divided it up. Lenin saw this as a done deal and, rather than try to rule against it, he made the land seizures legal by stating that, in theory, there would be no private ownership of land and that it would be 'held in common' by the people who farmed it. In practice, this meant that land owned by landlords (people who rented out their land to small farmers) and the Church would be taken away without compensation being paid for it. The land would then be divided among the peasants.

Decree for Peace

Russia would pull out of the war and begin negotiations for peace with Germany. It also stated that no more secret diplomacy would be conducted.

Decree on the Rights of the Peoples of Russia

This decree set up the structure for a federal state (in which different regions or republics would have their own independent rights over domestic policy); it was followed by another decree in January 1918 that said any state wanting to leave (to secede from) the Soviet Union could do so.

While in Finland, where he had been hiding before the October Revolution, Lenin had written an important book, *The State and Revolution*. In it, he outlined his plans for

a post-revolutionary Russia and indicated that he did not intend to share power with other parties. For Lenin, only one party knew how to proceed towards communism and it was up to the Bolsheviks to lead the way, to be the 'vanguard of the revolution'.

Lenin knew that elections for the Constituent Assembly had been promised by the Provisional Government and that these were expected to take place, although he considered the Soviets to be more democratic than a parliament. Elections were held in November 1917, but the Bolsheviks did not gain enough seats to form a majority. Although Lenin did not prevent the Constituent Assembly from meeting in January 1918, he promptly closed it down. The Soviet Union had not turned into an authoritarian state yet, but liberal parties were banned, and then, gradually, the more leftist parties were excluded from the Central Executive Committee after the Soviet elections in May 1919. By 1921 all opposition was officially banned.

In his book *Stalinism* (1998) Professor Graeme Gill states that:

> *…the closure of the Constituent Assembly, the suppression of other political parties, the elimination of press freedom and the establishment of party control over the soviets all occurred in the early years of Bolshevik rule. These moves effectively limited popular access to the political sphere … and by 1920 had rendered any notion of unfettered competitive politics impossible.*
>
> **From *Stalinism*, 2nd ed., Palgrave Macmillan, 1998**

Treaty of Brest–Litovsk

A very harsh peace treaty with Germany in which Russia (now the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic) lost 32 per cent of its arable land, 26 per cent of its railways, 33 per cent of its factories, 75 per cent of its iron and coal mines, and 62 million of its total population. (McCauley, *The Soviet Union 1917–1991*, 1993)

White and Green armies

The White armies were composed of forces opposed to the Bolsheviks. These were not united in their aims, and ranged from social revolutionaries to fervent monarchists who wanted the return of the Romanov dynasty. The Green armies were composed mostly of peasants and were especially active in the Ukraine. They were nationalistic and fought for regional independence.

For the most part, the Greens would oppose both the Red and the White armies but, when required to choose a side, would more often side with the Reds, who had redistributed land to the peasants.

Activity 2

ATL Research and thinking skills

1. Find out what is meant by 'pluralism' in politics and discuss to what extent Lenin had decided by 1918 that this would not be put into practice in the Bolshevik state.
2. How far, do you think, was this rejection of pluralism a reflection of how the Bolsheviks believed that they were the party to lead the people towards communism?

The Treaty of Brest–Litovsk signed with Germany in March 1918 gave the people the peace they craved, but the price paid was very high and added to the discontent that was growing among opponents of the Communist Party. Three years of brutal civil war followed and this led to radical policies being imposed in areas controlled by the Red Army. What mattered the most now was that the revolution was secured, and the White and Green armies were defeated. Meanwhile, the Tsar and his family were held under guard in Yekaterinburg where they were executed in July 1918.

Stalin after the Bolshevik Revolution

In 1917, Stalin, now a well-established member of the Communist Party leadership, was appointed commissar for nationalities. Unlike Lev Kamenev and Grigory Zinoviev, two other leading members of the party, Stalin had not openly opposed the decision to take power in October and, unlike Trotsky, had been a long-standing member of the Bolshevik Party.

It was as commissar for nationalities, however, that Stalin had his first major disagreement with Lenin. Lenin believed that the republics of the former Russian Empire would support a communist revolution and could be trusted to bind themselves willingly to the Soviet Union. Stalin took a more pragmatic view, however, and wanted to ensure that all the republics were tightly bound to the centre and to the Bolshevik Party. In *The Soviet Century* (2005), Moshe Lewin explains that Lenin wanted a federation of fairly autonomous states but Stalin, influenced by his own experience as a Georgian and also by his experiences during the civil war, was convinced that the republics had to be ruled from a strong centre and with strict discipline.

Activity 3

ATL Thinking skills

Read the source below and answer the questions that follow.

> *In four years of Civil War, we were obliged to display liberalism towards the republics. As a result, we helped to form hard-line 'social-independentists' among them, who regard the Central Committee's decisions as simply being Moscow's. If we do not transform them into 'autonomies' immediately, the unity of the soviet republics is a lost cause. We are now busy bothering about how not to offend these nationalities. But if we carry on like this, in a year's time we'll be verging on the break-up of the party.*
>
> **Stalin quoted in Moshe Lewin, *The Soviet Century*, Verso Books, 2005**

1. What did Stalin mean by suggesting the republics considered the Central Committee's decisions as 'simply being Moscow's', according to the source above?
2. What does this source tell you about how Stalin behaved as commissar for nationalities?

In 1922, the 'Georgian Question' brought this conflict to the surface. Georgia wanted to join the Soviet Union as an independent republic, and the Georgian Central Committee of the Communist Party complained they were limited in their autonomy and always overruled by the Transcaucasian Committee. According to Martin McCauley, Lenin had two irreconcilable aims because he wanted the republics to be independent but party organizations within them to be absolutely loyal to Moscow. Lenin suspected that Stalin wanted to restore centralized control that resembled Tsarist imperial ideology, and when the Treaty of the Union finally came into being in January 1924, Georgia did indeed enter as a member of the Transcaucasian Federation.

The Resolution on Party Unity, also known as 'the ban on factions', passed at the 10th Party Congress in 1921, tightened control over the party at all levels from the state down to the local branches. Stalin was to use this increasing control to good effect, as we shall see.

In 1922, he was appointed Party General Secretary. He was now a member of the Politburo, the Orgburo, and the Secretariat, the only leading member of the party to be in all three. This gave him a unique overview of the everyday running of the most powerful institutions in the Soviet Union.

10th Party Congress of 1921

At the 10th Party Congress that met in 1921, Lenin proposed the Resolution on Party Unity. This established that issues could be discussed at the level of the Central Committee, but once a decision had been made there could be no further discussion or disagreement. To pursue a different policy or to criticize party policy would be considered 'factionalism'. This method of imposing party unity is also referred to as '**democratic centralism**'.

The Politburo, Orgburo, and Secretariat

The Politburo was a group of seven officials elected from the Central Committee of the Communist Party. These officials decided on policies and so were extremely influential. The Politburo met regularly and was chaired by Lenin. After his death, it formed a 'collective leadership', although it was thought that Trotsky would probably succeed Lenin as its chairman and leader. Both the Orgburo and the Secretariat dealt with the more practical but rather mundane aspects of the day-to-day running of the party, such as the election of representatives at a local level, the promotion of members within the party, and so on. It is likely that the other leading Bolsheviks did not care for the rather humdrum work this involved. As the importance of the party grew, however, Stalin was now well placed to ensure that he controlled its membership at all levels.

Exam questions will sometimes ask you to analyse the rise to power of an authoritarian leader. If you want to use Stalin as an example, you could refer to events as far back as the October Revolution. Or, you could begin with the death of Lenin in 1924, referring briefly to Stalin's appointments as commissar for nationalities and general secretary. Don't forget, you should focus on Stalin and not Lenin! Also, if you are asked to compare and contrast certain aspects of the rise to power of two authoritarian leaders, it may be useful to think of another leader who was part of a revolution, but like Stalin, was not the first head of an authoritarian state.

The death of Lenin; Stalin's rise to power

The cast of characters

Grigory Zinoviev

Lev Kamenev

Leon Trotsky

Nikolai Bukharin

Alexei Rykov

Mikhail Tomsky

Grigory Zinoviev A Bolshevik since 1903 and a close comrade of Lenin. He was a member of the Politburo, the leader of the Leningrad (Petrograd) city and regional government. He was appointed the first chairman of **Comintern** in 1919. Tried and executed in 1936.

Lev Kamenev A Bolshevik since 1903 and a close confidant of Lenin. He was a member of the Politburo and chairman of the Moscow Party. Tried and executed in 1936.

Leon Trotsky A Bolshevik only since 1917, he was a brilliant orator and strategist. Planned the revolution in October 1917 and led the Red Army to victory in the civil war. Commissar for foreign affairs and then appointed commissar for military and naval affairs. On Stalin's orders, Trotsky was assassinated in Mexico in 1940.

Nikolai Bukharin A Bolshevik since 1906, he was the editor of *Pravda*. He was in the Politburo and also on the committee of Comintern. Tried and executed in 1938.

Alexei Rykov A Bolshevik since 1903, deputy chairman of Sovnarkom, chairman of **Gosplan**. He was a moderate who favoured Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP; see below). Tried and executed in 1938.

St Petersburg, Petrograd or Leningrad?

In 1914, St Petersburg had its name changed to the more Russian- (and less German-) sounding Petrograd. This remained the name until the death of Lenin in 1924 when, in his honour, it was renamed Leningrad. The name was changed back to St Petersburg in 1991, after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Mikhail Tomsky A trade union leader who joined the Bolsheviks in 1906. A moderate who favoured the NEP, he was elected to the Politburo in 1927. In 1936, he openly criticized Stalin and then committed suicide.

These six staunch Communists were to play a very important role in Stalin's rise to power.

What methods did Stalin use to take power?

Like a number of other authoritarian leaders, Stalin took over an already established authoritarian state. Lenin's health had not been good since he suffered an assassination attempt by Fanya Kaplan in August 1918. He never fully recovered and, in his early 50s, he suffered a number of debilitating strokes in 1922 and 1923. Moshe Lewin considers Lenin's ill health to have been crucial to Stalin's readiness to challenge him and suggests that, without it, Stalin would not have dared scheme against Lenin too openly. As General Secretary of the Party, 'Stalin was charged by the Central Committee with supervising Lenin's medical treatment' and so was kept closely informed about Lenin's health (see Lewin, *The Soviet Century*, 2005).

Lenin reversed his most controversial economic policy, War Communism, in 1921 and replaced it with the NEP. War Communism had provoked a lot of opposition from the peasants, but also from the soldiers and sailors of the Kronstadt naval base (an important source of support for the Bolsheviks in 1917). The so-called Kronstadt Uprising in March 1921 was harshly suppressed, but it made Lenin realize that he needed to turn back to a more moderate economic policy, the NEP.

The NEP was what Lenin referred to as 'one step back', meaning that War Communism had not only failed to introduce a communist economy into the Soviet Union but had plunged the country into economic chaos. A less radical and more moderate solution had to be found and so a 'step back' into capitalism was taken. The NEP retained state control of what were called the 'commanding heights', meaning heavy industry, transportation and so on, but small businesses could be privately owned. Peasant farmers who had suffered greatly under the grain requisitioning policies of the civil war were now allowed to keep any surplus produce after they had paid taxes in kind (in goods). Later, they were allowed to pay tax in cash and so to keep or sell their goods as they wished.

This proved controversial, but Lenin succeeded in putting the new Soviet state on a more stable economic footing. In this way, economic factors were very important in the emergence of Stalin as the leader. Yet the switch to the NEP was so controversial that Lenin had to propose the Resolution on Party Unity to halt further discussion and opposition. Within the Politburo, Trotsky had been vocally opposed to the NEP, believing that it led away from, rather than towards, the development of a socialist state.

CHALLENGE YOURSELF

ATL **Research, communication, self-management, and social skills**

In this section, the focus is on the establishment of a communist state but, during the late 1970s and 1980s, due to economic difficulties, both the Soviet Union and China had to introduce reforms.

Find out more about these reforms (*Perestroika* in the Soviet Union and *The Four Modernizations* in China) and consider how far they resemble the 'mixed economy' system of the NEP.

Then make a presentation about this to your class.

War Communism

During the civil war, Lenin wanted to ensure that food grown in the countryside was delivered to the cities to feed the workers and to the army to feed the soldiers. In order to do this, he ordered the requisitioning of grain. In other words, peasants had to hand over the food they produced. Often, they were left with nothing, leading to widespread famine. Lenin extended this policy to introduce a system of barter to eliminate the need for cash. There was rationing, a ban on the private purchase and sale of goods, and major industries were nationalized. He thought these measures would serve two purposes, to win the war and also to proceed quickly towards a communist society.

By 1923, it was apparent that the NEP suited the peasants, as agricultural production (severely hampered by the war and War Communism) had recovered. Industrial growth was much slower to recover, however, and there was a disparity between the cost of agricultural goods (cheap) and industrial goods (expensive). As a result, farmers had less incentive to produce more food. Trotsky suspected that the peasants were turning back to the old ways of producing food for profit and so, in effect, holding the state to ransom, although Bukharin thought it was an economic trend that would be resolved once industrial production speeded up, providing cheaper, more affordable goods. This was referred to as the 'Scissors Crisis' because, on a graph, the decline in the cost of food and the increase in the cost of industrial goods intersected to look like an open pair of scissors.

Lenin's control of the Politburo weakened as his health deteriorated and he was less able to keep the Soviet Union on the course he had planned. By 1923, the leading Bolsheviks were divided over whether or not to support the NEP. Meanwhile, after a debilitating stroke, Lenin had lost the power of speech and was less able to persuade the Politburo to follow his policies.

Lenin's health continued to worsen; he died in January 1924. Although he had led a modest existence as the head of the Soviet Union, Lenin's funeral turned into many days of official mourning and an elaborate ceremony was organized to commemorate his leadership. Lenin's body was embalmed and displayed in a mausoleum, which was to become a place of pilgrimage for the Soviet people. Lenin's widow, Nadezhda Krupskaya, complained that he would not have wanted this, but her objections were brushed aside by Stalin, who set about turning Lenin into a god-like figure and himself into the closest and dearest disciple.

When you read about Stalin's rise to power, it is tempting to see it all as inevitable. It can read like a story with Stalin as the schemer who plots the downfall of Trotsky, his arrogant rival; how he astutely supports popular economic policies (NEP), moving almost seamlessly from the Right (with Bukharin) to the Left (against Bukharin); how he accuses enemies of 'factionalism', fills the Politburo with supporters; and how, by 1929, he is in sole charge of the Soviet Union.

Could it all have been so easy? Beware of what is called '20/20 hindsight'! Sometimes we look back at events that seem, inevitably, to lead to one conclusion. Did Stalin really plan it all so successfully? Luck probably played a part, but so did events over which he had no control, such as the War Scare of 1927 and popular unrest over the results of the NEP. To what extent did Stalin rise to power, not only because of what he did, but also because of what happened in the Soviet Union?

As you read through the following sections, consider how Stalin both created and took advantage of opportunities to accumulate power. It is important to distinguish between 'methods' and 'conditions' associated with the rise to power of authoritarian leaders. With Stalin, 'conditions' refer to factors such as the rivalry among members of the Politburo or the death of Lenin, while 'methods' would refer to ways in which Stalin took advantage of such conditions by fermenting distrust among the other members of the Politburo, for example, or by creating the cult of Lenin.

Method 1: Stalin and Lenin

By 1923, Lenin was getting angry with Stalin's boorish behaviour towards his wife Krupskaya and this convinced Lenin that Stalin was 'too rude' to continue as General Secretary of the Party. Due to his ill health, however, Lenin was unable to do anything other than to express his reservations about Stalin (and others) in his Testament, a series of memoranda written between 1922 and 1923 outlining his impressions of those in the leadership of the Communist Party likely to be his successors. The Testament was to be read at the 12th Party Congress in 1924, but Trotsky and Zinoviev decided not to publish it because it was clearly quite critical of Stalin, and they had

wanted to spare Stalin's feelings. Another reason for withholding the Testament was because it was felt that the leadership had to appear united after Lenin's death. (The Testament was mentioned by Nikita Khrushchev in his secret speech in 1956.)

Lenin also had concerns about Stalin's Russian chauvinism in his role as commissar for nationalities, and was intending to act on these when he suffered a major stroke in March 1923. After this, Lenin was more or less incapable of directing the Politburo, and Stalin became alert for opportunities to assert his influence. Much has been written about this period from 1923 to 1924, and it seems that Stalin was aware of how much was at stake and was able to take advantage of the power vacuum far more effectively than any of his rivals. For example, although Trotsky was expected to give the speech (the oration) at Lenin's funeral, this very important role was given to Stalin. Trotsky was absent and according to Issac Deutscher, Trotsky claimed that '…he failed to return for the funeral in Moscow because Stalin had misinformed him about the date'. (*Stalin,* 1996, p. 270).

After Lenin's death, Stalin, as general secretary, proposed an expansion of the party membership as a way to honour Lenin. This was known as the 'Lenin Enrolment' and helped to build the cult of personality dedicated to Lenin. However, it was also very useful for Stalin as it changed the composition of the party. The Bolshevik Party had quite deliberately limited its membership to a core of dedicated revolutionaries whose task it would be to guide the masses. Now it was encouraging the masses to join its ranks. Stalin understood, perhaps better than the other Bolsheviks, that the new membership would elect representatives to the Central Committee and that he could influence them. Unlike the founding members of the party who had argued with Lenin over interpretations of Marxism, the new membership would have a ready-made explanation of party policy in *The Foundations of Leninism*, written by Stalin and published in 1924.

Some of this material is useful for showing how Stalin created the cult of Lenin. Do be careful, however, not to over-emphasize this if you are discussing Stalin's rise to power. Stalin could not rewrite the history of the party and the revolution, for example, when he was not yet in full control, when so many of his colleagues would have challenged his version of events.

Method 2: Stalin and the removal of his rivals

Trotsky

Trotsky – with his legacy as the strategist of the October Revolution, his brilliant leadership of the Red Army during the civil war, and his considerable oratorical skills – was best placed to succeed Lenin in 1924. However, he appeared to lack the will for a political fight and was unsure that, as a Jew, he would have the support necessary to lead the Soviet Union. Also, Trotsky failed to forge strong ties with his fellow members of the Politburo, and made enemies by attacking the NEP and by advocating military-style leadership for the economy.

Neither Zinoviev nor Kamenev would support Trotsky, and both saw him as arrogant and overbearing. Along with Stalin, Kamenev and Zinoviev formed a *troika* (group of three) that planned to take over the leadership of the party once Trotsky had been removed. Trotsky now lost support because of his opposition to the NEP and his advocacy of 'permanent revolution', and resigned as commissar for military and naval affairs in 1925. He remained in the Politburo, but was no longer considered a potential leader for the party.

Permanent revolution

Trotsky (and Lenin) had believed that the Russian Revolution would soon be followed by revolutions elsewhere. Support would then be given by the more industrialized countries (e.g. Germany) to help modernize the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, within the Soviet Union harsh methods would have to be used to push it towards communism. Military discipline would be required to organize workers, and peasants would be forced to accept collectivization.

Zinoviev and Kamenev – the Left Opposition

In 1925 there was considerable debate over whether or not to continue with the NEP. Did it favour the peasants over the workers? Kamenev and Zinoviev argued that it did and so should be discontinued. Perhaps it is not surprising that the two leaders whose support lay in the two major cities of Moscow and Leningrad should have sympathized with the workers rather than the peasants. Bukharin, however, argued that the NEP was working effectively to develop the economy of the Soviet Union and should be continued. At the 14th Party Congress in 1925, Kamenev attacked not only the NEP but also Stalin's policy of 'Socialism in One Country'. The Central Committee was now being filled with supporters of Stalin, however, and a vote was taken to remove Kamenev from the Politburo.

The Left Opposition became the United Opposition in 1926 when Kamenev and Zinoviev were joined by Trotsky. They were branded by Stalin as 'factionalists' (see page 59 for a definition), and were expelled from the Central Committee and the Party. Trotsky was exiled to Alma-Ata (known today as Almaty) in Kazakhstan. Kamenev and Zinoviev, knowing when they were defeated, repented and were allowed back into the Party.

Socialism in One Country

Stalin pointed out that the communist revolution had not succeeded elsewhere (by the end of the 1920s, Mongolia was the only other communist country) and it was unlikely to succeed in Germany or France, for example, in the near future. The Soviet Union, therefore, had to depend upon its own resources and to focus on building socialism at home, an idea known as 'Socialism in One Country'. The methods Stalin would use to achieve this, however, were rather similar to the methods Trotsky proposed to achieve permanent revolution.

ATL Social, self-management, research, and thinking skills

Working in a group, compare and contrast what is happening in the Soviet Union and China between 1924 and 1930. In both countries, a leader dies and another replaces him. There is also a struggle to impose one ideology. Don't forget that these two countries are neighbours.

The War Scare

This was the name given to a period of tension following alleged interference by the Soviet Union in the British General Strike of 1926 and the general election of 1927. The following events gave the impression that the Soviet Union had many enemies and so had to prepare for the eventuality of war: In 1927, Britain broke off diplomatic relations after a police raid on the Soviet trade delegation in London; in China, Jiang Jieshi (the leader of the Guomindang in China) had turned against his former communist allies in what was known as the White Terror; in Poland, Voikov, the Soviet envoy to Warsaw, was assassinated.

Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky – the Right Deviationists

Stalin changed his mind in 1927 and began to criticize the NEP, advocating a harsher policy towards the peasants. The War Scare had led to peasants hoarding grain in case of war and this caused food prices to rise. Stalin was not prepared to tolerate this and spoke of the need both to industrialize and to bring agriculture under the control of the state. This was contrary to Bukharin's opinion that the NEP worked effectively as it gave peasants an incentive to increase production. By 1928, Stalin had started a policy of grain requisitioning, and it was clear that he no longer tolerated the NEP or its supporters; Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky were voted off the Politburo.

By 1929, Stalin had established his position as the most powerful member of the Politburo. He had undermined the authority of the Bolsheviks who had risen to power alongside him after the October Revolution. Among the new members of the Politburo were Voroshilov, Mikoyan, and Molotov, three comrades who were to remain alive (quite an achievement) and stay close to Stalin for the rest of his life.

Stalin (left) and Voroshilov

Anastas Mikoyan

Molotov (right) and Stalin

> *Stalin was the most violent of leading Bolsheviks. His terror campaigns in the civil war were gruesome. He adopted a military style tunic and knee-length black boots, and his soup-strainer moustache indicated a pugnacious man. At tactics and conspiracy he was masterful. He had reached dominance in the party before Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Bukharin knew what had happened. There was no keeping a bad man down in the politics of the Soviet Union.*
>
> **From Robert Service, *Comrades: Communism: A World History*, Pan, 2008**

Activity 4

ATL **Self-management, communication, and thinking skills**

1. Look at the list below and write a few lines about each of these points to make sure you understand what each one means. Then, sort the list into two columns: one under the heading 'Conditions' and the other under the heading 'Methods'.

- Lenin's early death
- Lenin's Testament is kept secret
- Disagreements over the NEP
- The Lenin Enrolment
- *The Foundations of Leninism*
- Lenin doesn't seem to have a clear successor
- Trotsky seems easily outwitted by Stalin
- Permanent revolution vs. Socialism in One State
- Changing membership of the Politburo
- The War Scare of 1927
- The Scissors Crisis

You may find it rather difficult to decide where to place some of these bullet points. How, for instance, do you choose where to put the War Scare of 1927? Was this a 'method' thought up and used by Stalin or a 'condition' that he used to his advantage?

2. Now consider the following question:

Evaluate the causes of Stalin's rise to power as the leader of the Soviet Union by 1929.

When you consider how authoritarian leaders rise to power, there are several factors to bear in mind. For example, what conditions allow leaders to centralize power? (In other words, what opportunities are there to enable leaders to seize power?) What kind of methods do they use to get their hands on power?

Essay introductions

The introductory paragraph is an important part of your essay. This is where you can immediately show you understand what the question is asking and explain how you will answer it.

Here are some samples of introductions for the essay question from the previous page.

Student answer A – Patrick

Josef Dzhugashvili (named Stalin), was born in Georgia in 1879, he was the son of a shoemaker and the grandson of serfs. He soon became Marxist and in 1904 he joined the Bolshevik Party. He climbed up the ladder of the party and in 1917 he was the editor of *Pravda*. He became Commissar for Nationalities and was one of the main artisans of the creation of the Soviet Union. He was also General Secretary of the Party's Central Committee since 1922 (a position considered as boring bureaucratic work by the other Revolutionaries) and a member of the Politburo. Before 1924, he was not a public figure but his internal influence was important.

Examiner's comments

This introduction is rather short and has too much narrative content. It does mention Stalin and give some context to his emergence as leader, but it makes no mention of the essay question. It is a good idea to refer to the question in your opening paragraph. In this way, you will show the examiner that you are focused and that you will be answering the question. It also reminds you not to be too narrative in your approach.

Student answer B – Clara

Lenin was for sure the strong commander of Russia till 1922, when he suffered his first stroke. After that, his leadership began to weaken, until his death on the 12th of January 1924. Before he died, though, it was clear to him that there would almost certainly be a struggle for power after he was gone. For this reason he wrote his Testament, in which he gave short portraits of his most probable successors, and their faults. He recognized five possible candidates: Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin and Josef Stalin. Of these, it was Stalin who climbed to the top and became the main leader by 1929. Lenin had warned that although Stalin had great practical abilities, these were offset by his roughness and lack of consideration for his colleagues. Stalin, Lenin said, was 'too rude' and should be removed from his post as General Secretary of the Communist Party. Not only did Stalin manage to keep this quiet, he also managed to outmanoeuvre the other likely candidates for leader. How far, however, was his rise to the top a result of conditions that Stalin was able to exploit or of Stalin's own political skills? This essay will evaluate the causes of Stalin's rise to power and so consider their relative significance.

Examiner's comments

Clara's introduction is quite a lot better than Patrick's. She begins with a reference to Lenin and gives some relevant background before moving on to mention the essay question. This introduction makes a good impression by indicating that Clara will select relevant material and focus on Stalin's rise to power. Furthermore, she has defined the command term 'evaluate' and so has shown that she understands the task.

How you end your essay is also important! A good conclusion should sum up your arguments and, again, focus on answering the question.

Student answer C – Joanna

Among the important causes of Stalin's rise to power were his political skills as well as his pragmatism, his populism, and his patience. Also important was his astute use of propaganda, especially the 'Cult of Lenin'. Propaganda led the new, less educated base of the party to Stalin's cause, marginalizing his opponents. Stalin also benefited from the many errors of his opponent, particularly about Lenin's Testament. Stalin's rise to power left him in a position of entire control. He would soon become a strong authoritarian leader.

Examiner's comments

This is a rather short conclusion, but it does summarize the main points. It would be a good idea to say a little more about Lenin's Testament, however, as it needs to be made clear here why it was so important (was it more important than the accusations of 'factionalism', for instance?). Mentioning 'authoritarian' in the last sentence – thus introducing an entirely new term at such a late stage – is perhaps not such a good idea.

Student answer D – Chris

There is a great deal of controversy regarding how Stalin rose to power as many causes needed to be considered. Stalin was lucky, benefiting from factors such as the premature death of Lenin and his rivals' weaknesses. In addition to this, Stalin benefited from circumstances such as the economic situation in the Soviet Union as well as the failure of revolution abroad. However, Stalin's triumph was not due just to good fortune and accidental circumstances. Indeed, it is not to be forgotten that Stalin's emergence as the single leader of the Soviet Union would not have been possible without his own ruthless political ability and his skill to take advantage of all the previously mentioned circumstances. As Bukharin once said, Stalin was 'an unprincipled intriguer who changed his theories at will in order to get rid of whomever he wished'.

Examiner's comments

This is a much better conclusion. It mentions both methods and conditions, but adds another factor, which is Stalin's political skill. It also ends nicely with an appropriate quotation.

Other aspects of Stalin's rise to power

Were his methods to gain power legal or illegal?

In some cases, authoritarian leaders use a combination of legal and illegal methods to come to power. For Stalin, what he did was entirely legal. He was an elected member of the Politburo, he was appointed to be General Secretary of the Communist Party and to the Orgburo. He had considerable power available to him because he held high office and when he accused his rivals of 'factionalism', he was using Lenin's resolution that had been accepted by the 10th Congress of the Supreme Soviet in 1921. When his rivals were expelled from the Politburo, they were voted off by the majority of the

members. So, you could argue that, whatever his motivations, Stalin's actions were quite legal within the framework of the government of the Soviet Union.

Did Stalin respond to popular opinion?

Historians consider Stalin's ability to gauge public opinion and understand what people wanted to be one of the ways in which he established himself in power. Of course, clever use of propaganda can also be used to tell people what they want, and Stalin was able to use this very effectively.

Since 1917, workers had looked for greater participation in the running of factories and an improved standard of living. The civil war had brought great hardship, but many workers felt the NEP's reintroduction of the right to own small businesses and to hire labour as a betrayal of the revolution. The growth in the number of 'NEPmen' further angered workers, who saw these entrepreneurs, or 'middle men', as exploiters of the working class. Stalin ceased to support the NEP once he had got rid of the Left Opposition and, in doing so, he also seemed to respond to the grievances of the workers.

2.2 Aims and results of Stalin's policies

Stalin's economic policies

Throughout his time in power, Stalin's aim was to establish a powerful, state-controlled economy in the Soviet Union. Ever since the defeat of Russia in the Crimean War, rulers of Russia/Soviet Union sought economic modernization. However, it was the ruthless determination of Stalin that achieved the most spectacular growth in industrialization and urbanization. How did he achieve this?

The Five-Year Plans – 'the turn to the left'

In 1927, Stalin began work on the first of the Five-Year Plans. This was a model of economic planning that would eventually be adopted in almost every communist country during the 20th century.

A measure of central planning had been put in place by Lenin, and Gosplan was set up in 1921 to control the 'commanding heights' of industry that were to be nationalized under the NEP. Another organization that supervised nationalized industry was **Vesenkha**, set up in 1917.

Stalin believed that only strict centralized control would enable the Soviet Union to achieve the level of production it needed to industrialize and urbanize. Since 1855, Russia had been attempting to achieve these twin aims, but with only limited success. Where the Tsars had failed, Stalin was determined to succeed.

The Soviet economy was based on agriculture and it was agricultural exports that underpinned its prosperity. In order to industrialize, new technology needed to be imported from abroad; and to afford it, an increase in agricultural exports was required. In other words, the Five-Year Plan would be financed by agriculture; the peasants, always unreliable in the eyes of the Bolsheviks, would have to work in the interests of the state. To achieve this, farms would have to be collectivized – this became one of Stalin's main aims.

The collectivization of agriculture

The peasants were a force to be reckoned with, as they constituted more than 80 per cent of the population of the Soviet Union, but they were also a force to be harnessed and bent to the will of the state. Bukharin had maintained that financial incentives would encourage peasants to increase production, but Stalin did not want to do this. He wanted to be sure that land and food production was under the full control of the state. Collectivization was also considered to be an important way to instil 'communalism' (people living and working together) and also to provide a workforce for the industrial cities.

In 1929, *kolkhozi*, or collective farms, were established to replace the individual plots owned by the peasants. Those who disagreed or refused to go along with the orders of the party were branded **kulaks** and were severely punished. Norman Lowe states, 'it was probably in September, 1929 that Stalin was converted to total collectivisation' (*Mastering Twentieth Century Russian History*, 2002). Approximately 25 million small peasant farms were consolidated into 200,000 *kolkhozi*, and hundreds of thousands of peasants became paid labourers on *sovkhozi* (state farms). By 1936, 90 per cent of all peasant households in the Soviet Union had been collectivized and so we can conclude that Stalin had achieved his aim.

For Stalin, there were several advantages to collectivization:

- The Soviet Union had an agrarian economy as most of its people lived in the countryside and worked the land, so collectivization gave the state control to the main source of national wealth.
- Agriculture would fund industry and cheap food would feed the workers in the cities, and would be exported to finance the purchase of machinery from abroad.
- The authority of the Communist Party would be extended over the countryside and peasants. Machine Tractor Stations were set up for each group of *kolkhozi*: tractors and other machinery could be hired from these stations; party officials were also based here to check that party policies were being carried out.
- Food production would be made more efficient; working on larger fields meant it made more sense for the workers to use machinery.
- Not all the peasants needed or wanted to stay in a collectivized countryside, so the 'surplus labour' would be encouraged to look for work in the cities.
- Collectivization would ensure state control over the production of food and this would be centrally planned like the rest of the economy.

Collectivization was not a popular policy and, in 1930, a very poor harvest led Stalin to write an article for *Pravda*, entitled 'Dizzy with Success', in which he called for a temporary halt to forced collectivization.

Stalin also sent a small army of party activists known as the '25,000ers' to the countryside to encourage the peasants to follow party directives.

In the end, Stalin dealt harshly with any resistance – even when people were starving because of severe shortages, he did not slow the pace of collectivization. One consequence was the disastrous famine of 1932–33 that killed as many as 5 to 8 million people, mostly in the Ukraine, where famine is known as the **Holodomor**. Although many historians would argue that the Holodomor was a 'genocide', Robert Service challenges this allegation by pointing out that the requisitioning quotas were cut three times during 1932 in response to evidence of widespread starvation. He also maintains that Stalin needed Ukrainian labour as much as he needed labour from elsewhere, and that a deliberate policy of starvation would not have made economic

Dizzy with Success

This is a reference to an article by Stalin published in *Pravda* in March 1930 that suggested collectivization had been pushed ahead too quickly by party officials who were 'dizzy with success'. The pace needed to be slowed down and so houses, small plots, and animals would no longer be collectivized. Peasants left the collective farms at an alarming rate and planted the spring wheat. Once this had taken place, Stalin resumed collectivization.

sense (*A History of Modern Russia*, 2003). Grain requisitioning was, nevertheless, a brutal policy carried out regardless of the human cost.

ATL Thinking and research skills

The famine of 1932–33 was terrible with thousands of people dying from starvation. It was kept secret and, if you lived in another region of the Soviet Union, there was every chance you would not have known about it. Could this happen today? Can you think of any countries where famines have occurred, or where we think they have occurred, in the last 10 years? What is the usual international response to a famine?

Activity 5

ATL Thinking skills

Study the source below and answer the question that follows.

> *Collectivization was the great turning point in Soviet history. It destroyed a way of life that had developed over many centuries – a life based on the family farm, the ancient peasant commune, the independent village and its church and the rural market, all of which were seen by the Bolsheviks as obstacles to socialist industrialization. Millions of people were uprooted from their homes and dispersed across the Soviet Union… This nomadic population became the main labour force of Stalin's industrial revolution, filling the cities and the industrial building sites, the labour camps and 'special settlements' of the Gulag.*
>
> *The First Five-Year Plan, which set this pattern of forced development, launched a new type of social revolution (a 'revolution from above') that consolidated the Stalinist regime: old ties and loyalties were broken down, morality dissolved and new ('Soviet') values and identities imposed, as the whole population was subordinated to the state and forced to depend on it for almost everything – housing, schooling, jobs and food – controlled by the planned economy.*
>
> **From Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia*, Penguin, 2008**

1. What does the source above tell you about the impact of Stalin's policies upon society in the Soviet Union?

Activity 6

ATL Thinking and research skills

Study the tables of statistics below and answer the questions that follow.

Source A

Table of statistics for grain production and procurement 1929–34 (millions of metric tons)

	Grain production	Grain procurement	Procurement as a % of production
1929	66.8	10.8	(16.2%)
1930	71.0	16.0	(22.5%)
1931	65.0	22.1	(34.0%)
1932	65.0	23.7	(36.5%)
1933	71.0	23.3	(32.8%)
1934	77.5	28.4	(36.6%)

Source: Martin McCauley, *The Soviet Union 1917–1991*, 2nd ed., Routledge, 1993

Source B

Table of statistics for grain production (millions of metric tons) and grain export 1929–33

	Grain production	Grain export %
1929	71.7	0.18
1930	83.5	4.76
1931	69.5	5.06
1932	69.6	1.73
1933	68.4	1.69

Source: Alec Nove, *An Economic History of the USSR*, Penguin Books, 1969

Source C

Table of statistics for numbers of farm animals 1929–34 (million head)

	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934
Cattle	67.1	52.3	47.9	40.1	38.4	42.4
Pigs	20.4	13.6	14.4	11.6	12.1	17.4
Sheep and goats	147.0	108.8	77.7	52.1	50.2	51.9

Source: Alec Nove, *An Economic History of the USSR*, Penguin Books, 1969

1. What do these tables tell you about the rate at which the state procured grain from the peasants?
2. Is there a decrease in the level of procurement? Why did this take place, do you think?
3. What happens to the numbers of farm animals? Why does this happen?
4. If you look at the statistics for the levels of grain production in the two tables, you will see they are different. Why, do you think, is this so? (Think about the reliability of statistics as sources for historians, especially when they are released by authoritarian states.)

Peasants to proletariat

British historian Orlando Figes has written extensively on the political, social, and cultural history of Russia and the Soviet Union. In particular, he has focused on the history of ordinary people and how their lives were impacted by the Bolshevik Revolution and its aftermath. According to Figes,

> *[for] every thirty peasants who entered the kolkhozi, ten would leave the countryside altogether, mostly to become wage labourers in industry. By the early months of 1932, there were several million people on the move, crowding railway stations, desperately trying to escape the famine areas. The cities could not cope with this human flood. Diseases spread and pressure grew on housing, on food and on fuel supplies, which encouraged people to move from town to town in search of better conditions. Frightened that its industrial strongholds would be overrun by famine-stricken and rebellious peasants, the Politburo introduced a system of internal passports to limit the immigration to the towns.*
>
> **From Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia*, Penguin, 2008**

Figes then goes on to describe how internal passports were used to get rid of 'socially dangerous elements' that might rise up against the government. He also states that for many of the dispossessed, having no passport made them move often, seeking work illegally. In this mass movement, children were often abandoned. They were also

abandoned by parents exiled to **gulags** who wanted to spare their children the same fate and, during the famine, by parents who could not feed them. 'They roamed the streets, rummaging through rubbish for unwanted food. They scraped a living from begging, petty theft and prostitution' (*The Whisperers,* 2007).

According to Figes, police figures showed that between 1934 and 1935, more than 840,000 homeless children were brought to the 'reception centres' and then sent to orphanages or the camps. In December 1934, Stalin passed a law stating that children over 12 could be treated as criminals and subject to the same punishments as adults, including execution. Figes states that between 1935 and 1940, more than 100,000 children between 12 and 16 were convicted of criminal offences.

The dark side of the Soviet Union during the 1930s is very bleak indeed, with both Figes and the British novelist Martin Amis, in his book *Koba the Dread*, emphasizing the brutality of a system determined to forge a new utopia. It is claimed Stalin once said that 'to make an omelette, you must break eggs', and that 'if a man is a problem, no man, no problem'. His callousness is demonstrated over and over again, as well as that of his henchmen, who arrested, tortured, imprisoned, and executed victims. These victims were often innocent people plucked at random for having the wrong name, being in the wrong place, or because they had powerful enemies. This 'randomness' was terrifying and meant that no one was safe.

TOK

Slavoj Zizek, a Slovene philosopher, argues that the Soviet Union was different from the German Third Reich because in the Nazi regime the enemies of the state were clearly identified as communists or Jews. In this way, there was a horrible rationale to the death camps, whereas in the Soviet Union, no one knew who would be executed or sent to the gulags.

Those who say that Nazism was worse would argue that at least communism had a utopian vision to fulfil, one that intended to establish a more egalitarian society. Is this an acceptable argument, do you think? If a leader is responsible for the deaths of thousands or even millions of people, can this be justified if it is for the good of the majority?

The First, Second, and Third Five-Year Plans

The Five-Year Plans were Stalin's answer to the economic challenges faced by the Soviet Union. Only by taking full state control of the resources and the labour of the Soviet Union would industrialization be achieved. For Stalin, this policy would result not only in economic growth and economic self-sufficiency, but would also increase state control (party control) over the Soviet Union and create a disciplined **proletariat**. The theory of Marxism would be put into practice not from the bottom up but from the top down, which is why it is sometimes called the 'revolution from above' or 'the second revolution'. The Bolshevik Revolution had occurred in 1917, but the conditions for a Marxist state would now be put in place.

The First Five-Year Plan, 1928/29 to 1932

The First Five-Year Plan was officially adopted in 1929, although, unofficially, it had started in late 1928. It called for a massive increase in industrial output; this was highly ambitious for a country that did not have a workforce with the necessary skills. Stalin now set out to create a proletariat by moving large numbers of peasants from the countryside to the cities, or in some cases, to areas where cities would be built.

The aim of this plan was to 'increase the production of the means of production', in other words, to build iron and steel manufacturing plants, electric power stations, infrastructure such as railways, and to increase the production of coal and oil. This would be the basis for industrialization.

Listed here are some of the problems that Stalin faced with the Five-Year Plan, along with the solutions that he came up with.

CHALLENGE YOURSELF

ATL Thinking and research skills

Now is a good time to reflect on how much change and continuity there was between the Soviet Union of the early 1920s (maybe we can call it 'Lenin's Soviet Union') and that of the 1930s when Stalin's policies were put into practice.

Problem	Solution
To access the necessary skills	Encourage skilled technicians and engineers to come from abroad on fixed-term contracts
To import the necessary technology	Pay for it by accumulating foreign exchange from the sale of grain
To persuade peasants to adapt to the discipline necessary for working in a factory, for example, getting to work on time	Introduce harsh labour laws to punish offenders
To prevent workers from leaving jobs they found too demanding and looking for work elsewhere	Introduce internal passports that prevented workers from changing jobs
To explain why the targets set by the Five-Year Plans were not achieved	Change the statistics or blame the 'foreign experts'

Activity 7

ATL Research, communication, and social skills

Research activity

Go through the 'problems and solutions' table listed above. See what you can find out about when some of these measures were introduced. Discuss your answers with the class.

The Second (1932–37) and Third Five-Year Plan (1937–)

The focus of these two Five-Year Plans shifted to the production of heavy industrial goods. Iron and steel plants were now in production, and the electric power stations were functioning, but the country still needed trains, trucks, and tractors. You can pause here to think about the European context at this time, when Hitler was rearming Germany, and many Central and Eastern European countries were governed by right-wing authoritarian governments opposed to communism and the Soviet Union. For these reasons, Stalin wanted to ensure that the Soviet Union would have the resources to rearm, and this was an important aspect of both the Second and Third Five-Year Plans. (Note that the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 interrupted the Third Five-Year Plan.)

Activity 8

ATL Research, communication, self-management, thinking, and social skills

Study the table below and answer the questions that follow.

Industrial production during the First and Second Five-Year Plans

	1928	1932	1933	1936
Electric power (billion kWh)	5.0	13.5	16.4	32.8
Coal (million tons)	35.5	64.4	76.3	126.8
Pig iron (million tons)	3.3	6.2	7.1	14.4
Rolled steel (million tons)	3.4	4.4	5.1	12.5
Quality steel (million tons)	0.09	0.68	0.89	2.06
Cement (million tons)	1.85	3.48	2.71	5.87
Locomotives (standard units)	478	828	941	1566
Tractors (thousand 15hp units)	1.8	50.8	79.9	173.2
Lorries (thousands)	0.7	23.7	39.1	131.5
Woollen fabrics (million linear metres)	101	89	86	102

Source: R.W. Davies, M. Harrison, and S.G. Wheatcroft (eds), *The Economic Transformation of the Soviet Union 1913–1945*, Cambridge University Press, 1994

If you choose to write about Stalin in an essay question that asks about the success or failure of the economic policies of an authoritarian leader, it is a good idea to support your argument with statistical evidence. You wouldn't need to use all the statistics in the table in Activity 8, but you could perhaps show the increase in the production of coal or the output of electricity.

1. Why does the rate of growth in the production of goods increase quite slowly at first but quite significantly by 1936?
2. Why was the number of tractors produced so significant?
3. Look at what is listed in the table. Why are these goods so important to the Soviet Union during the 1930s? What kind of progress do they indicate?
4. What happens to the production of woollen fabric? What would this be used for? What does it suggest about what is not given importance in the Five-Year Plans?
5. Working in a group, see if you can find similar statistics for another country during the same time period. How do they compare with those of the Soviet Union?

How did Stalin carry out the Five-Year Plans?

Labour discipline

Many of the workers who came to the cities were peasants who were used to working from sunrise to sunset, and working harder in the summer than in the winter. They now needed to adjust to the strict routine of factory life, arriving on time and staying to the end of their shift. Harsh laws were introduced to punish workers who were late or absent. It was a crime to break machinery or to take anything from the workplace. In the most extreme cases, these crimes were punished with execution. Early on during the First Five-Year Plan, workers would move from one factory to the next looking for easier work or higher wages, but this ended when workers had workbooks as a form of internal passport, which tied them to their workplace. Losing a job meant losing the right to accommodation and food rations.

Managers were held responsible for meeting targets given to them by the state. If they failed to do so, they could be charged with 'sabotage' and accused of deliberately preventing the fulfilment of the Five-Year Plan. This was a capital crime, so managers would be sure to meet targets.

Slave labour

It was during the 1930s that many of the gulags were built. These were the labour camps where the kulaks who opposed collectivization were sent and where hundreds of thousands of political prisoners were shipped to during the 'purges' (see Section 2.3, page 81). Conditions in the gulags were so harsh that many prisoners would die, often in their first year of captivity. Many of the gulags were located in the most inhospitable areas of the Soviet Union, where winter temperatures fell as low as minus 50 degrees Celsius. They were remote from areas of habitation so escape was difficult. Often, these locations were chosen because they were rich in resources such as gold, uranium, and coal. Free citizens would not have wanted to work in such places, but prisoners had no choice. When the growth of the Soviet economy during the Five-Year Plans is measured, the forced labour of the gulag prisoners has to be included as part of the terrible human cost.

Enthusiasm

There was enthusiasm among the workers for many of Stalin's ambitious policies, although Robert Service maintains that the enthusiasts were in a minority. Even so, many people believed in the importance of what they were achieving and were ready to endure extremely difficult conditions. Those who toiled to build Magnitogorsk, for example, endured conditions hardly better than those in the gulags. Machinery was

scarce but astonishing feats were achieved with man- (and woman-) power alone. Enthusiasts maintained that they were working for the country's future and so this was not the 'alienated' labour that Marx had written about, but the labour of people building a new world for themselves and for future generations.

Rewards

Workers were given different rewards or incentives for their efforts:

- Posters and party directives extolled the virtues of Stakhanovites, and workers were encouraged to emulate Stakhanov's success. They could receive food that was in short supply, or even a motorbike for doubling or tripling their work quotas.
- League tables were published in all the factories, publicizing what each worker had produced in a week.
- Wages differentiated between skilled and unskilled workers.
- A good work record and party membership could lead to promotion for workers who had little formal education.

Propaganda

Stalin's speeches about the successes of the Five-Year Plans were printed in *Pravda*. Yet the workers who actually built huge factories and electric power plants could see with their own eyes that the Soviet Union was industrializing, and would have found it credible that it was catching up with capitalist countries. Workers were told that the living and working conditions in these western states were dire; during the Great Depression, these claims could be supported by newspaper photographs of food lines in New York and hunger marches in Britain. What Stalin did not tell Soviet citizens was that in the Soviet Union prison camps were overflowing with people put there for no other reason than that their names had been added to a list. Like everything else, there were quotas to be filled with political prisoners.

For ideological indoctrination, Stalin's *History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks): Short Course* was published in 1938 and, like *The Foundations of Leninism*, served as an introduction to the history and the ideology of the Soviet Union.

Activity 9

ATL **Research, thinking, communication, and self-management skills**

Consider the following essay question:

Examine the successes and failures of Stalin's economic policies.

In this kind of essay question, you would need to refer to the Five-Year Plans.

You would also need to use statistics to support your arguments. To help you put these statistics in perspective, you should consider the levels of economic growth in the Soviet Union against other countries. For comparison, check the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of the United States, China, and Nazi Germany between 1929 and 1937, as they might be useful to provide a comparison or a contrast.

Don't forget that, before you can assess the 'successes', you must first consider the aims. For example, when you consider the success of a leader's policies, you need to ask what their intentions were. Then, you can look at the evidence and determine if they achieved their goals. Also, it's worth looking more holistically at the notion of 'success'. Was the policy successful for the citizens of the country concerned? Was the human cost of 'success' too much to bear?

TOK

If you were asked to work hard or to put up with difficult circumstances so that conditions could be better for future generations, how, do you think, would you react? Would you do so willingly?

Consider the question of climate change, when we are asked to reduce energy consumption – or even to become vegetarians – in order to secure the future of the planet at a time when we may not even be alive. What arguments can you think of to support and also to reject such a proposal?

Stakhanovites

Alexei Stakhanov was a coal miner who mined 106 tons of coal or 14 times his quota during a single shift in 1935. A movement was named after him to encourage all workers in the Soviet Union to work harder. It was very popular, with many workers attracted by the rewards such as extra rations, medals, or even a motorcycle.

Stalin's social and cultural policies

How did Stalin change the role of women in the Soviet Union?

This poster shows women on a collective farm. The woman in the foreground is gathering corn and the women behind her are also working. Notice that the supervisors, however, are men.

The role of women did change after the revolution, with new career opportunities – such as engineers and doctors – opening up, which were professions traditionally seen as the preserve of men. Even so, the upper echelons of the Communist Party did not have many women in its ranks and none appeared in the Politburo. Furthermore, by 1930, Stalin wanted to restore more conservative values and this shift backwards became known as 'The Great Retreat': the family once again became the central unit of society; the social freedoms afforded by the revolution had to be reined in. During the revolution, easy divorce had led to the abandonment of many children, and the availability of abortion threatened to halt population growth – although other reasons for this halt included poor nutrition, shortage of accommodation, and exhaustion from hard work. In order to encourage population growth, abortion was made illegal in 1936, divorce was discouraged, and women were rewarded with medals for giving birth to 10 or more children. Moshe Lewin notes that, officially, there was a slight improvement in the birth rate in 1937, but that it fell again in 1939.

As well as being mothers and homemakers, women also had to play their part in the expansion of the Russian economy. This was especially important during and after World War II, when men were drafted into the Red Army and millions did not return from the war. On collective farms, women were expected to do most of the work in the fields. In factories, women had to do the work of men and to take part in construction brigades, which helped to rebuild war-torn cities after 1945. In the military, women were trained as pilots during the war and, unlike their counterparts in the United States and in Britain, they also saw combat duties.

Russian women fighter pilots of World War II. Women had been trained as engineers and technicians during the 1930s, and it is not surprising that they were expected to be on active duty during the war. Of course, the majority stayed at home to be a vital part of the workforce in factories and on collective farms.

The women pilots who flew in the 58th Night Bomber Regiment during World War II were called Night Witches (*Nachthexen*) by the German soldiers whom they attacked. They flew lightweight Polikarpov-Po 2 biplanes and turned off their engines as they approached, making a whooshing sound like a broomstick. Altogether, they numbered around 115 and about 30 were killed in action. See if you can find out more about the Night Witches.

Religion

The Russian Orthodox Church had for centuries been a strongly nationalist mainstay of Russian society. Under Lenin, it was frowned upon to attend church services. Churches were destroyed, bells hauled away to be melted down, and priests were driven out along with the kulaks. Geoffrey Hosking maintains, however, that centuries of religious worship could hardly be eradicated so easily and that many 'underground' churches were formed where people met secretly (*A History of the Soviet Union, 1917–1991*, 1992). In areas where Islam was the dominant religion, most mosques closed and imams suffered the same fate as priests. Such practices as the veiling of women, fasting during Ramadan, polygamy, and travelling to Mecca on the Hajj were forbidden. As with the Christian communities, however, official prohibitions did not end religious belief but, rather, drove it underground.

When World War II broke out, Stalin used the Church to gather support from the people for the war effort. Religion was, once again, linked to patriotism and Soviet efforts to halt a German invasion.

Art and culture

Stephen Lee suggests that music in the Soviet Union underwent something of a renaissance during the 1930s. The compositions of Prokofiev and Shostakovich, in particular, gained critical acclaim and may be considered among the finest music of the 20th century. No other dictatorship is associated with the composition of so much fine music. Stalin himself did not understand music but, clearly, he did not fear it either, although in the post-war period his taste grew more conservative, and even Prokofiev and Shostakovich fell out of favour.

As summed up by Robert Service, 'above all, the arts had to be optimistic' (*A History of Modern Russia*, 2003). The art movement known as socialist realism produced paintings that resembled propaganda posters intended both to entertain and educate the masses. In literature, the writer Maxim Gorky returned to the Soviet Union in 1928. He was feted by Stalin and was provided with a large house in which to live. In 1934, he was instrumental in establishing the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers to 'unite all writers supporting the platform of Soviet power and aspiring to participate in the building of socialism' (Hosking, *A History of the Soviet Union, 1917–1991*, 1992). In other words, the aim was to capture socialist realism in literature. Geoffrey Hosking explains how a number of novels from this period revolved around a hero 'who appears from among the people, … guided and matured by the party … and then leads his comrades and followers to great victories over enemies and natural obstacles in the name of the wonderful future that the party is building' (*A History of the Soviet Union 1917–1991*, 1992). *How the Steel Was Tempered* (1934), an autobiographical novel by Nikolai Alexeevich Ostrovsky, was of this genre and glorified the workers of the new Soviet Union. Another famous novel, called *And Quiet Flows the Don*, was written by Mikhail Sholokhov. It focused on the heroic years of the revolution and civil war, gaining an international reputation when Sholokhov was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1965.

Writers who found favour with the regime were well looked after and led lives of privilege. Not all writers followed Party guidelines, however; Isaac Babel, Oscar Mandelstam, and Anna Akhmatova chose what Babel called 'the genre of silence'.

Sergei Eisenstein, the famous film-maker, had produced epics recalling Russia's great leaders, such as *Ivan the Terrible*. The sequel to this film, however, was interpreted as

being critical of Stalin. Eisenstein was criticized and dismissed from his post as the head of the Moscow Film School.

Sergei Eisenstein (1898–1948)

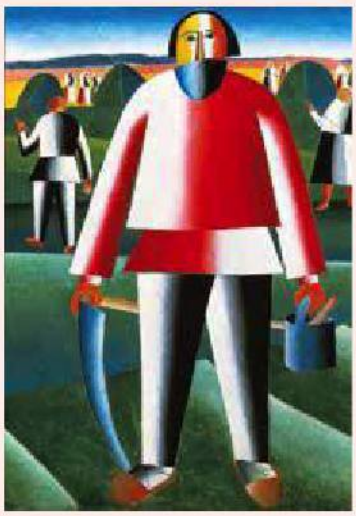
Best known for his film of the mutiny on the battleship *Potemkin*, and for *October*, his account of the 1917 revolution, Eisenstein was one of the leading film-makers in the Soviet Union. He experienced mixed fortunes under Stalin. He was praised both for *Alexander Nevsky* (1938) and *Ivan the Terrible – Part One* (1943), both of which were strongly nationalistic. *Ivan the Terrible – Part Two* (1946), however, depicted the Tsar as a ruthless tyrant, and Eisenstein was strongly criticized. The film was banned and scenes that had been filmed for *Ivan the Terrible – Part Three* were destroyed.

When criticizing *Ivan the Terrible* with Molotov, Stalin said, 'you need to show historical figures correctly in their style. So, for instance, in the first part, it's wrong that Ivan the Terrible spent so long kissing his wife. In those days that wasn't allowed.... Ivan the Terrible was very cruel. You can show that he was cruel but you have to show why it was essential to be cruel...' (Jonathen Brent, *Inside Stalin's Archives*, 2008).

TOK

Here are examples of the kinds of art that were encouraged and discouraged under Stalin's rule. On the left we have an example of socialist realism; on the right, an example of the work of Kazimir Malevich.

Why, do you think, did Stalin encourage socialist realism? Which painting would be critically acclaimed today? Justify your answers.



Education and social mobility

One of the dilemmas that faced the revolutionaries in their efforts to transform the Soviet Union into a socialist state was how to address education. The children of the better-educated were more likely to go on to higher education, but this would also perpetuate an elitist system. The difficulty lay in how to get more people from poorer backgrounds into higher education. Under Lenin, there was an attempt to make education more accessible, although the actual curriculum in schools did not change much. In 1928, it was pronounced that 65 per cent of those entering higher technical education had to be of working-class origin; by 1929 this figure was raised to 70 per cent, and 14 per cent of students had to be women. The percentage of working-class students in higher education went up from 30 per cent in 1928–29 to 58 per cent in 1932–33, and an effort was made to get rid of non-party lecturers and professors.

By 1931, the Central Committee was determined that the Soviet youth needed to be literate and to understand basic science. By the mid 1930s, there were officially

prescribed textbooks; tests and exams were restored; the teaching of history had to focus on political events and great men; school uniforms were compulsory (including pigtails for girls); and fees were imposed for the three upper forms of secondary school.

But education was not just about reading books and preparing for exams. During the late 1920s, reforms took place to create closer links between education and work experience. As Geoffrey Hosking explains, 'the upper forms of middle schools were reclassified as *tekhnikuny*, or vocational training colleges, and by the end of 1930 all schools were required to attach themselves to an enterprise… The proportion of political instruction was also increased' (*A History of the Soviet Union 1917–1991*, 1992). Hosking mentions some of the side-effects of these reforms, with children as young as 11 working in coal mines or picking cotton for weeks on end. In other cases, factory managers found the attendance of children to be disruptive. Undoubtedly, the dismissal of schoolteachers who were either not party members or had been educated before the revolution opened up opportunities for social mobility as younger 'red specialists' were given teaching posts. The party also realized it needed future leaders from factories, mines, and state farms to study at technical institutes.

'According to Sheila Fitzpatrick, during the first Five-Year Plan, some 110,000 communist adult workers and some 40,000 non-party ones entered higher educational institutions in this way' (Hosking, *A History of the Soviet Union 1917–1991*, 1992). Even so, there were problems, and the quota system imposed in 1929 was abolished in 1935 as it is estimated that '70 per cent failed to complete their course' (McCauley, *The Soviet Union 1917–1991*, 1993).

Urbanization and more access to education often resulted in increased social mobility as young people grasped opportunities they could hardly have previously imagined. As the Soviet Union made economic progress, it needed more managers and technicians. Former peasants moved to cities, where at least a few could become managers and could rise within the ranks of the party to lead privileged lives. By the end of the 1920s, the importance of coming from the 'correct' class meant that a humble background was advantageous.

TOK

Stalin considered himself to be an 'engineer of human souls'. He believed that it was possible to 'fill' an individual with the correct ideology and to create a society of like-minded individuals. For example, if you put a young child in a school that teaches everything according to a set of beliefs or a particular ideology, do you that think that the child will grow up believing and following everything he or she is taught, or is human nature resistant to that kind of control? Even if someone said he or she believed in it, would it necessarily be true?

Activity 10

ATL Research, communication, thinking, and self-management skills

Evaluate the impact of Stalin's social and cultural policies on the Soviet Union up to 1941.

Here are some extracts from student essays where they discuss the impact of cultural change.

Student answer A – Leo

Stalin also wanted to change Soviet culture. He liked art to be used for propaganda and preferred paintings that showed him with Lenin or surrounded by children, but he did not like modern art. He wanted people to read his books such as *The History of the Communist Party* and not novels and poetry. Stalin did like to attend the ballet and composers like Shostakovich were very popular. As long as artists and composers did what they were told to do, they were able to survive and they often lived in large apartments and were part of the elite of Soviet society.

Examiner's comments

Leo mentions art and literature as well as music. His paragraph is rather descriptive though. He mentions a composer, but what about writers, poets, or artists? There is not much supporting evidence here for his arguments.

!

This essay question asks how much social and cultural policies really changed people's lives. Do consider, however, how far lives were changed and how far they remained the same. Try to support your answer with good evidence. It is difficult to know what people really felt about propaganda, for example, but, on the other hand, there is quite a lot of evidence to show that women's lives changed. If you are discussing culture, mention the names of artists or musicians, and show that you know something about their music or books.

Also, he does not mention if there was a change of policy or whether it had any impact on the Soviet Union.

It may be that Leo has left his analysis of 'change' for the conclusion, in which case, he will not score very well. It is important to refer to the question as you go along.

Student answer B – Susan

Another area in which there was change in Soviet culture was in the arts. Stalin understood the importance of music, literature and art and how these could be used to create a 'proletarian culture'. He approved of the music of Prokofiev and Shostakovich and encouraged their compositions. It is not very clear if these composers changed Soviet society in any way, but their music was considered to be very good, even outside the USSR. Also, concert tickets were cheap and everyone was encouraged to appreciate Russian composers, so it was also linked to encouraging nationalism. In literature, the works of Mikhail Sholokhov were available because he wrote about the civil war and the revolution. Stalin did not like the poetry of Oscar Mandelstam, though, because his verses spoke about the Terror. By censoring such poetry, Stalin wanted to limit opposition. Stalin liked the people of the USSR to read novels and to look at paintings that were about the lives of workers and peasants, and the Writers' Union, for example, made sure that novelists knew what they had to produce.

Examiner's comments

Susan has written a much fuller paragraph about culture. She has also included the names of several composers and writers, so there is some supporting evidence. Furthermore, there is an attempt at analysis as she tries to assess the impact on Soviet society. She could have said more about censorship and how this helped to control the kind of culture that was made available, but she has kept a focus on the question.

Activity 11

ATL Thinking skills

Study the source below and answer the questions that follow.

> *Stalin put the matter vividly in 1931: 'To lower the tempo means to lag behind. And laggards [lazy people] are beaten. But we don't want to be beaten. No, we don't want it! The history of old Russia consisted, amongst other things, in her being beaten continually for her backwardness. She was beaten by the Mongol khans. She was beaten by the Turkish beys. She was beaten by the Swedish feudal lords. She was beaten by the Polish-Lithuanian nobles. She was beaten by the Anglo-French capitalists. She was beaten by the Japanese barons. She was beaten by all of them for her backwardness.'*
>
> **From Robert Service, *A History of Modern Russia: From Nicholas II to Putin*, 2nd ed., Penguin, 2003**

In the source above, Stalin makes many references to Russian history. He does not mention communism at all. What does this suggest to you about how Stalin viewed the Soviet Union? Was it a new, revolutionary state, do you think, or the latest manifestation of the Russian Empire? How would you support your answer?

TOK

Stalin said, 'The death of one man is a tragedy, the death of millions is a statistic.'

Consider how this statement may or may not be valid today. Newspapers, the internet, and television carry news stories that cover tragic events on a daily basis. Does the way news is communicated to us reflect Stalin's statement? Is this how we react to the news of a suicide bombing or a train crash?

2.3 Consolidation and maintenance of power

What methods did Stalin use to maintain power?

Like many authoritarian leaders, Stalin did not tolerate dissent and used a number of methods to ensure that his policies were carried out.

The use of force

Securing his own position as the leader of the party and the state, Stalin had removed his rivals from the Politburo by the end of the 1920s. This did not mean that he was in complete control, however, and criticism from Martemian Riutin and associates in 1932 showed that Stalin's policies were not always popular with the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Although the 17th Party Congress in 1934 was named the Congress of the Victors, Stalin knew that the Second Five-Year Plan had huge difficulties in meeting its targets and the human cost of collectivization was devastating for the countryside. More importantly, others knew this too and were not afraid to voice their concerns.

Meanwhile, punishment was meted out to peasants who resisted collectivization; to factory workers who did not work hard enough; to managers who did not meet targets; and to party members who were considered too passive.

For Stalin, terror was one of his methods of ruling the Soviet Union. It made people afraid, and people who were frightened were more likely to be obedient. If instilling fear was his aim, he certainly achieved it. Even those who were not afraid of Stalin would be frightened of the dangers he told them existed. These included the fear of invasion, the fear of a counter-revolution, and the fear of Stalin being removed from power by his enemies. The terror grew as Stalin became more powerful and surrounded himself with supporters in the Politburo and the Central Committee of the party. During the early 1930s, he still had to be cautious, and his recommendation in 1933 that Riutin be executed was opposed by Sergei Kirov. Events such as Kirov's murder in 1934 gave Stalin opportunities to purge the Leningrad Party, to introduce legal changes such as the possibility of a death sentence being sanctioned for children over 12, and the removal of the right to appeal so that a death sentence could be carried out immediately.

The following is a brief list of the purges that were carried out during the 1930s:

- The purge of engineers and managers included the Shakhty Trials. The aim was to instil labour discipline and punish anyone accused of failing to meet targets.
- The purge of the Communist Party to ensure that all members were loyal to Stalin. The purging of the party began after Riutin's criticisms of Stalin's leadership.
- The purge of the leadership of the party that followed the death of Sergei Kirov.
- The purge of the military in 1937 that targeted the officers of the armed forces.
- Random quotas issued to local party branches with instructions that 'counter-revolutionaries', kulaks, and 'Trotskyites' be imprisoned or executed. Party branches would receive orders to arrest a specific number of enemies of the state, whether these existed or not.

An exam question may ask you to consider the extent of opposition to an authoritarian leader. If you choose to write about Stalin, it is worth considering whether it really was so extensive. Certainly, there was opposition from the kulaks, for example, and from some political opponents. But surely, much of it was imagined by Stalin and so it was not so extensive as he claimed. You might argue that Stalin's purges and mass deportations to the gulags were ways in which he prevented the rise of opposition.

Martemian Ivanovich Riutin (1890–1937)

Riutin criticized Stalin's overthrow of the collective leadership of the party, saying that this had led to ordinary people's disillusionment with socialism. The radical nature of collectivization had also contributed to Stalin's unpopularity with some leading cadres. Riutin was expelled from the party in 1930 and his associates were expelled in 1932, accused of trying to restore capitalism and of being kulaks. It is claimed that Stalin wanted the death penalty for Riutin, but that Kirov intervened. Riutin was sentenced to 10 years' solitary confinement, but was shot in 1937.

Sergei Kirov (1886–1934)

A close friend of Stalin, Kirov had taken over the administration of the Leningrad Party after the demotion of Zinoviev. A popular member of the leadership, Kirov had gained more votes than Stalin in the elections to the Central Committee in 1934. Soon after, he was murdered by Leonid Nikolaev who, it was alleged, was jealous because his wife had an affair with Kirov. The circumstances surrounding the murder were mysterious and there has always been a suspicion that Stalin ordered the murder, although no proof for this accusation has ever been found. He did use the opportunity, however, to purge the Leningrad Party and to arrest Kamenev and Zinoviev.

The Shakhty Trials

Named after the town in the Donbass coal-mining region where they took place, these were trials of 'foreign experts' and 'class elements' blamed for breaking machinery and sabotaging the Five-Year Plan. Most likely, the breakage was the fault of unskilled workers, but 'experts' were convenient scapegoats. Public trials were held and 11 death sentences handed down, of which five were carried out.

The purge of the military

The purge of the military in 1937 cut a swathe through the officer ranks of the armed forces. In his unrelenting hunt for career officers who could not be trusted, Stalin executed thousands and put thousands more in prison. This was to lead to problems in 1941, when the early successes of the German invasion were partly due to the absence of experienced officers. It also influenced Britain's reluctance to seriously pursue an alliance with the Soviet Union in 1939.

The Great Terror, as this period became known, affected every aspect of Soviet society. It was one of the most important methods by which Stalin enforced loyalty and by which any opposition was suppressed.

In June 1936, Zinoviev and Kamenev, who had been accused of having plotted Kirov's murder, were tried and executed. Stalin was now targeting influential Bolsheviks who had been members of the party leadership. Genrikh Yagoda, the head of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD, the internal security police), objected to the execution of party leaders and was criticized by Stalin for having started the terror four years too late (Lewin, *The Soviet Century*, 2005). In September 1936, Yagoda was replaced by Nikolai Yezhov, a great admirer of Stalin, who followed instructions to prise out enemies within the party. According to Robert Service, 681,692 people were executed between 1936 and 1938 (*A History of Modern Russia*, 2003). Bukharin and Rykov were put on trial in 1938 and executed, having confessed to betraying the party. Service considers this period of unbridled terror to have had a negative impact upon the Soviet Union's economy and its military, and that even Stalin recognized that events had gone beyond his control by 1938. Slowly, the 'quotas' were reduced and, finally, Yezhov was demoted, imprisoned, and executed in February 1939. It is not clear why Stalin slowed down the process of disposing of imagined enemies, but it is possible that the worsening situation in Europe meant that he had to shift his attention to foreign policy. Yezhov was accused of having been over-zealous in carrying out purges, with the Great Terror being described as the period of *Yezhovchina*.

Historians have argued over the numbers killed as well as the motivation that sparked the process. A study of the documents in the Russian archives released in the 1990s confirms that the numbers arrested and executed started to go up as Stalin consolidated his grip on power. In 1929, for example, 162,726 were arrested and this increased to 331,544 in 1930 and 505,256 in 1933. In 1937, 936,750 were arrested, 779,056 of these for counter-revolutionary crimes and 353, 074 were shot (Jonathan Brent, *Inside the Stalin Archives*, 2008). Brent argues, 'no thinking person could have believed that all 936,750 people arrested in 1937 were Trotskyists or wreckers… During the terror, there is little evidence that Stalin or his closest colleagues ever suffered such delusions or fully believed the objective charges they brought against

those they persecuted. Often they didn't even know the names of their victims' (*Inside the Stalin Archives*, 2008 p. 164).

Mary McAuley, meanwhile, notes the difficulty of assessing the impact of the terror when the statistics were so unreliable. She also considers the difficulty of accumulating eyewitness memoirs when most people who wrote about their experiences were intellectuals. What, she asks, 'of the peasants and workers and the criminals' who were also imprisoned (*Soviet Politics 1917–1991*, 1992)? McAuley notes that Solzhenitsyn argued that the purges were symptomatic of Bolshevik ideology:

> *Solzhenitsyn argues … if one believes that class origin determines behaviour and consciousness, if one believes that individuals' actions and ideas are determined by their social origins and that therefore members of the bourgeoisie cannot but act in a particular way, it is only logical to argue that they should be eliminated … the belief that revolutionary justice should be administered by those with a proper proletarian consciousness, and little else, allowed the riff-raff and sadists of society to staff the penal institutions.*

McAuley also quotes Stanislaw Swianiewicz, a Polish economist:

> *[Stanislaw Swianiewicz] offers us a materialist explanation… Economic development necessitates the finding of resources for investment, for holding back consumption. How could this be done? One way to reduce consumption was to withdraw consumers from the market, place them in labour camps where they worked and consumed almost nothing… The labour camps, Swianiewicz argues, had an economic rationale.*

Both sources from Mary McAuley, *Soviet Politics 1917–1991*, Oxford University Press, 1992

Another historian, Orlando Figes, has researched the 1930s in depth, accessing the archive of memoirs collected 'in collaboration with the Memorial Society organized in the late 1980s to represent and commemorate the victims of Soviet repression' (*The Whisperers*, 2008). He estimates that '25 million people were repressed by the Soviet regime between 1928 … and 1953. These 25 million – people shot by execution squads, Gulag prisoners, "kulaks" sent to "special settlements", slave labourers of various kinds and members of deported nationalities – represent about one-eighth of the Soviet population…'.

Figes also comments on how, inevitably, in a regime that was so repressive, one survival method was for people to identify so strongly with Stalin that even their punishment could not shake their belief in his righteousness. Read Sources A and B in Activity 12 for more on Figes's views.

Memorial Society

Set up during the period of *perestroika* in the 1980s, this society tried to ensure that the victims of the purges were not forgotten. Its work seemed easier during the 1990s, for instance, than in more recent years, when Orlando Figes' *The Whisperers* was a forbidden publication in Russia. In the early 21st century, the officially approved image of Stalin was that of a great leader who had achieved economic growth and victory in World War II. Historical focus had to be on the positive rather than negative aspects of this rule.

Activity 12

ATL Research and thinking skills

Study the sources below and answer the questions that follow.

Source A

> *Immersion in the Soviet system was a means of survival for most people, including many victims of the Stalinist regime, a necessary way of silencing their doubts and fears, which, if voiced, could make their lives impossible. Believing and collaborating in the Soviet project was a way to make sense of their suffering, which without this higher purpose might reduce them to despair. In the words of (another) 'kulak' child, a man exiled for many years as an 'enemy of the people' who nonetheless remained a convinced Stalinist throughout his life, 'believing in the justice of Stalin … made it easier for us to accept our punishments, and it took away our fear'.*

From Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia*, Penguin, 2008

Source B

> *'… a true Bolshevik will readily cast out from his mind ideas in which he has believed for years. A true Bolshevik has submerged his personality in the collectivity, 'the Party', to such an extent that he can make the necessary effort to break away from his own opinions and convictions… He would be ready to believe that black was white and white was black, if the Party required it.'*
>
> **Yuri Piatakov quoted in Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia*, Penguin, 2008**

1. How could you use Source A to support the argument that Stalin continued to be revered even by those he punished?
2. Why, do you think, did they respond in this way?
3. How could you use Sources A and B to agree/disagree with the following assertion: 'Stalin had total control over the population of the Soviet Union'?

CHALLENGE YOURSELF

ATL Thinking, self-management, and research skills

In 1956, Nikita Khrushchev – then the General Secretary of the Communist Party – gave a controversial speech in which he criticized Stalin. Investigate this and find out what the impact of his speech was on:

1. the Politburo of the Soviet Union
2. the leadership of the communist parties in Poland and Hungary.

As an additional activity, see if you can find out how the West found out about this 'secret speech'.

Stalin's political policies – the constitution of 1936

In 1936, Stalin revised the constitution of the Soviet Union. On paper, it sounded very democratic, as it guaranteed freedom of the press, freedom of thought, the right to public assembly, and all other basic human rights. It also stated, however, that these rights would be guaranteed only as long as they were in accordance with the interests of the workers. In fact, everything that was not specifically allowed was forbidden. Even so, the constitution gave the impression or illusion that the Soviet Union was a liberal state, at a time when Stalin was increasingly concerned about its image abroad.

Popular policies

Don't forget that many of Stalin's policies were popular: his rejection of the NEP in 1927, for example, appealed to workers who felt that the Soviet Union had slipped back into capitalism. His punishment of kulaks was probably supported by peasants, who resented their richer neighbours. After they had confessed their guilt in the show trials, it is likely that most people did not question the execution of leading Bolsheviks. Also, the population of the cities increased during the 1930s, with more opportunities for education and job promotion. In 1926, only 17.4 per cent of the population lived in cities, but this almost doubled by 1939 (Lewin, *The Soviet Century*, 2005). Social mobility was a fact of life in Stalin's state, and, in a macabre way, the terror brought employment opportunities – even promotion – for those who were not shot or sent to the gulags.

Stalin's cult of personality was important in ensuring that his image and words were familiar to all Soviet citizens. Paintings, photographs, and statues made Stalin recognizable throughout the Soviet Union; his speeches and messages were carried to the people through radio broadcasts and in the pages of *Pravda*.

The use of language was also an integral part of the Stalinist system. Enemies were defined as kulaks even when they were not rich peasants, or as Trotskyites even if they had no connection with Trotsky. What was important was to use these terms to identify people as counter-revolutionaries. Getty and Naumov stress that the same language was used in private as was used in public. Officials '"spoke Stalinist" as a matter of group conformity and even individual survival' (J. Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror*, 2010).

The extent to which Stalin achieved authoritarian control

An important question to consider is the degree to which authoritarian leaders controlled every aspect of the state. Even with a secret police to arrest opponents (real or imagined) and strict control over the allocation of economic resources, the monitoring of the movement of the population, and so on, how total could control be in a country as large as the Soviet Union?

Nature, extent, and treatment of opposition

Stalin believed that he encountered a great deal of opposition and once stated that he trusted no one: 'I trust no one, not even myself.' It was also said that he had an inferiority complex and thought he was less educated, less intellectual, and less popular than the other Bolsheviks. It is possible to dismiss Stalin as paranoid, imagining enemies around every corner, but was there real opposition to his bid for power and to his policies?

Activity 13

ATL Research and thinking skills

1. What was the extent of the opposition that Stalin faced?

Using the following list, consider what kind of opposition Stalin faced and when. Did Stalin respond to opposition or did he create it, do you think?

- Lenin
- Nadezhda Krupskaya (Lenin's wife)
- Trotsky
- Kamenev and Zinoviev
- Bukharin
- Riutin
- Kirov
- Ordinary party members
- Workers
- Peasants

Don't forget to consider 'extent', so think about how much opposition there really was and where it came from.

TOK

Today, when a government censors information that is broadcast by TV stations or published either in newspapers or on the internet, we usually consider it to be rather authoritarian. Are there ever good reasons, do you think, for censoring information or, indeed, literature and films? For instance, would we accept censorship in a time of war? Are there other circumstances when it would be acceptable, or is it always the right of citizens to have free access to all information?

!

If you are asked to consider the methods that an authoritarian leader used to stay in power (or to consolidate power), you can start your plan by making a list of factors that would apply not only to Stalin but also to other authoritarian leaders you study. Don't forget that you may be asked to compare and contrast two leaders so it is a good idea to plan ahead and to think about which other leaders used, for example, propaganda and terror.

Common factors may include:

- terror
- propaganda
- education and youth groups
- the centralized control of the party
- popular, successful policies.

Once you have done this, include evidence to support your points and some analysis to determine which were the most important.

When planning an answer for this question you probably think of the terror and the gulags. Certainly, these were important methods used by Stalin to deal with his enemies, but don't forget that authoritarian leaders can also be proactive by using propaganda and populist policies to prevent the growth of opposition.

Activity 14

ATL Thinking skills

Another kind of essay question could ask how Stalin actually dealt with opposition, for example:

In what ways and with what success did Stalin deal with internal opposition to his regime?

To answer a question like this, it is a good idea to write a detailed plan, first outlining all the different kinds of opposition to Stalin. These could include:

- opposition from within the party
- opposition from the peasants
- opposition from the workers
- opposition from the Church.

Then consider the methods used to deal with each one and how successful they were.

Also notice that the question has two parts: 'in what ways' and 'with what success'. You need to address both parts so structure your answer accordingly. Begin by mentioning the kinds of opposition Stalin had to deal with and then discuss the 'ways' before ending with an assessment of how successful he was. Alternatively, you can begin by mentioning the different kinds of opposition, then discuss how and with what success he tackled each one.

Form of government and ideology

The Soviet Union followed the left-wing ideology of communism, although both Lenin and Stalin had adapted the ideology according to what they perceived to be the needs of the state. Stalin had become a committed Bolshevik as a young man, and was prepared to break the law for his political beliefs and to spend many years in exile. He had supported the October Revolution and fought to save the revolution during the civil war.

Regarding how the Communist Party planned to run the country, Robert Service mentions that Lazar Kaganovich had produced a pamphlet 'on the party workings' and that, 'already one of Stalin's close associates, (he) spelled out the system of vertical command needed in the party-state if the communists were to enhance their power…' (*Comrades*, 2007).

According to Marxism, the proletariat were meant to rule, but in the Soviet Union this can hardly be said to have been true when the Communist Party had so much control. The excuse given for the 'dictatorship of the party' was that Russia was too backward and the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' could not take place until people had been educated to have the correct values. This policy, of course, would require social engineering. Proletarians would have to be made and made quickly!

Activity 15

ATL Thinking skills

Read the opinions below. They are all about Stalin's political beliefs. Then answer the questions that follow.

- In the secret speech given at the 20th Party Congress in 1956, Nikita Khrushchev said that Stalin was not a 'Marxist'.
- Trotsky referred to Stalin as 'the gravedigger of the revolution'.
- Simon Sebag Montefiore wrote a book about Stalin and called it *The Court of the Red Tsar*.
- Robert Service stated that Stalin 'knew his Marxism and he was a dedicated Leninist' (*Comrades*, 2007).

1. Can you find evidence in this chapter to support and/or oppose each one of the opinions above?
2. To what extent can Stalin be considered a Marxist?
3. To what extent can Stalin be considered a Leninist?
4. Is there a difference between a Marxist and a Leninist? How would you explain the difference?

Activity 16

ATL Research skills

Read the source below and answer the questions that follow.

> *Robert Service in* Comrades *mentions how Alexander Herzen, a 19th-century Russian essayist, '… expressed fear of bloody revolution in his country. He thought that, if ever the peasantry rose against their masters, they might be led by some "Genghis Khan with the telegraph".' Service goes on to describe the Bolsheviks as 'Jacobins with the telephone and the machine gun'.*
>
> **Adapted from Robert Service, *Comrades: Communism: A World History*, Pan, 2008**

1. What was meant, do you think, by the phrase, 'Genghis Khan with the telegraph'? (A better way to describe it today, perhaps, would be 'Genghis Khan with a smart phone'!)
2. Do you know who the Jacobins were? Why, do you think, does Service compare the Bolsheviks to them?

The structure and organization of government and administration

The governmental structure of the Soviet Union was established by the constitution of 1922 and amended slightly by the constitution of 1936. In both, the hierarchical structure for both the soviets and the party were outlined. Each republic had a Congress of Soviets, which sent representatives to the Union Congress of Soviets that elected the Central Executive Committee. This body, divided into the Congress of the Union and the Congress of Nationalities, appointed the members of Sovnarkom. Similarly, the Communist Party had local branches that sent representatives to the Central Committee from which the Politburo was elected. It was imperative that members of the soviets, even at a local level, were members of the party and so the party dominated the government. It was the Politburo that was the policy-making organ; Lewin mentions that by the late 1930s, the Politburo had in practice become limited to a 'quintet' of Stalin, Molotov, Mikoyan, Beria, and Malenkov. Although it was often reduced to Stalin and Molotov consulting only each other (Lewin, *The Soviet Century*, 2005).

Lavrenti Beria (1899–1953)

Lavrenti Beria was Stalin's 'hatchet man'. He took over the leadership of the NKVD (the secret police) in 1938 after the dismissal of Yezhov. He remained close to Stalin, becoming a member of the Politburo in 1946. He was arrested and executed after the death of Stalin in 1953.

Activity 17

ATL Thinking skills

1. What does the above paragraph tell you about the way power was centralized in the Soviet Union under Stalin?

When you consider all these points about Stalin's rule during the 1930s, you can see how he had many methods he used to consolidate his power. The structure of the party, as well as the ideology of Marxism–Leninism, are also important to consider as these also helped Stalin to centralize power.

Was Stalin an authoritarian leader?

To be an authoritarian leader implies complete power and control over the state. When Stalin ordered the purges of the party and the military, did he really have complete control over exactly what took place?

> *Although by the end of the decade he was unquestionably the supreme leader, he was never omnipotent, and he always functioned within a matrix of other groups and interests.*
>
> **From J. Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932–1939*, Yale University Press, Updated and Abridged ed., 2010**

Getty and Naumov stress that communication was very difficult when not all the regions of the Soviet Union had a telephone connection. Party messengers had to struggle on motorbikes along poor roads carrying instructions from Moscow. What hope was there, then, of keeping a close eye on what went on across the vastness of the Soviet Union? This argument suggests that Stalin may have had a lot of power but it is difficult to imagine that he had complete control or was able to influence all the decisions made in the most remote areas of the Soviet Union.

An overview of Stalin's domestic policy

Now is a good time to think about Stalin's aims, his domestic policies, and the results of these polices.

They have all been mentioned throughout this section of the chapter, and here is a table that you could complete to provide an overview that may be useful for revision. You could start with a table for economic policies, then create different tables for each of the following areas of domestic policy: education, women, religion, culture. For example:

Domestic policy area	Education	Women	Religion	Culture
Aims				
Achievements				
Failures				

Stalin's foreign policy up to 1941

In Stalin's opinion, the Soviet Union was a fragile state. It did not have a well-developed industrialized economy; outside its borders there were many countries that feared the spread of communism. By the early 1930s, Fascism was well established in Italy, and Nazism was on the rise in Germany. Both of these very similar ideologies had their roots in socialism, but were vehemently opposed to communism. In a war, the Soviet Union would need to defend its borders and have a well-trained and well-equipped army.

Timeline – 1930–1941

1930	Maxim Litvinov is appointed commissar for foreign affairs.
1933	The United States establishes diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.
1934	The Soviet Union joins the League of Nations.
1935	The Franco-Soviet Pact; Comintern orders cooperation with anti-fascist governments.
1936	The Spanish Civil War begins (1936–39); Germany signs the Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan.
1937	Italy joins the Anti-Comintern Pact.
1938	The Munich Conference; border conflict with Japan begins and ends in 1939.
1939	Molotov replaces Litvinov as foreign minister; the Nazi–Soviet Pact is signed; World War II begins; Poland invaded and divided between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union; the 'Winter War' with Finland begins in October.
1940	The Katyn Massacre; the 'occupation' of the Baltic States and Bessarabia.
1941	Operation Barbarossa – the German invasion of the Soviet Union – begins.

The 1930s were a decade of great tension in Europe and the Far East. Authoritarian states had emerged across Eastern Europe as well as in Germany, Italy, and Japan, although these three countries also had ambitions to expand into neighbouring (and

more distant) countries to acquire empires. Stalin was not unaware of the threat posed by Germany and Japan to the security of the Soviet Union. In particular, Stalin feared a two-front war and this became a greater threat after Germany and Italy signed the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1936.

Stalin and the Spanish Civil War, 1936–39

Having remained rather isolated from events outside of the Soviet Union, in 1936 Stalin was drawn into what is often described as 'the dress rehearsal for World War II'. In Spain, a civil war had broken out after an attempted military coup to overthrow the Popular Front government. The Nationalist or Rebel forces – led by General Francisco Franco – were aided by Hitler and Mussolini who sent arms, planes, and soldiers. The Republican government was made up of representatives from the left (anarchists, socialists, communists, etc.) and the centre-left; it looked to France and Britain for support. Although France was keen to provide arms to its neighbour, it argued in favour of neutrality and proposed the Non-Intervention Committee.

On 25 July 1936, the Republican government of Jose Giral asked Stalin for assistance. At first, Stalin hesitated for the following reasons:

- He did not want to aggravate Hitler into taking action against the Soviet Union.
- He did not want to alienate Britain and France in case he needed their support to fight against Fascism.

As the only communist leader in Europe, however, it was difficult for Stalin to avoid giving aid to a left-wing government.

According to Antony Beevor, Trotsky lost no time in criticizing Stalin's failure to provide assistance as 'betraying the Spanish revolution and aiding the fascists' (*The Battle for Spain*, 2006, p.139) and that this may have 'goaded (Stalin) into action'. For Stalin, an acceptable compromise was to provide just enough aid to show support but not so much as to affect the outcome of the war that was, by 1938, clearly moving towards a Nationalist victory.

What aid was sent from the Soviet Union?

In response to Giral's pleas, Stalin sold fuel to Spain at a very favourable price. This was followed by military aid that arrived in October 1936. Meanwhile, the Spanish Communist Party grew rapidly from 38,000 members in 1936 to 300,000 by 1937. Beevor mentions two interpretations of why Soviet aid was sent to Spain:

- It was sent to help establish a pro-Soviet regime.
- It was sent, with no ulterior motive, to help the legal government of Spain.

Beevor says that neither interpretation is completely accurate and that the second (that Stalin had no ulterior motive) is perhaps least likely. Whatever the reason for sending aid, there was a heavy focus in the Soviet Union on propaganda films and newspaper articles to evoke sympathy for Spain. Senior officers were sent as military advisors and Comintern was represented in Spain by Palmiro Togliatti, the exiled leader of the Italian Communist Party. As the situation of the Republican government worsened, Largo Caballero, also known as 'Spain's Lenin', persuaded Stalin to send aid; the Soviet T-26 and BT-5 tanks proved to be better than the German tanks sent by Hitler. In addition, Stalin sent 42 IL-15 biplanes and 31 IL-16 monoplanes. Arms were also sent, but many of the guns predated World War I and the ammunition, of different calibres, often did not fit the guns. The aid sent by Stalin was of some help but it was not enough to win the war.

Non-Intervention Committee

This was established in 1936 to advocate the neutrality of the European powers to prevent the spread of the war into neighbouring countries. A policy was signed by 27 countries including Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union; in reality, it was a sham: the policy was flagrantly ignored by the three latter powers who were committed to containing the war within Spain and refused to assist either side. Not only did Britain turn a blind eye to repeated (and successful) attempts by Italy to get past naval patrols of Spain's coastline, but along with France it prevented the sale of much-needed arms to the beleaguered government.

ATL Thinking skills

Can you think of other examples when governments gave aid to support one side in a war? For what reasons do governments usually do this? How do they justify the expense to their tax-paying citizens?

Who paid for all this?

It is well known that the gold reserves of Spain (the fourth largest in the world at the time) were transferred to Moscow as a kind of advance payment. According to Beevor, in September 1936, 510 tons of gold and silver, worth $518 million, were shipped to Moscow. Furthermore, 'nothing was free' and 'creative accounting' meant that Moscow presented a bill for $661 million and so Spain, effectively, had spent its entire reserves (*The Battle for Spain,* 2006, p. 154).

The International Brigades and their link to the Soviet Union

The volunteers who came from the rest of Europe and the United States to aid the Republicans were collectively known as the International Brigades; they were recruited by the Comintern. Between 1936 and their departure in October 1938, an estimated 32,000 to 35,000 volunteers from 53 countries joined the Brigades, of whom an estimated 50 per cent were members of the Communist Party. As the Non-Intervention Committee forbade volunteers to fight in Spain, an elaborate travel plan was set up for recruits to travel to Paris, and from there either to be sent by sea to the Spanish coast or on foot across the Pyrenees.

Some of the volunteers had fought in World War I but many were inexperienced recruits, drawn mostly from the ranks of the unemployed and manual workers. Their training was inadequate, and many carried rifles for the first time as they marched to the battlefronts.

Republican soldiers in Barcelona looking at propaganda posters urging women to join the fight to save Spain.

There is evidence to say that, on the Republican side, a civil war was being fought within the civil war. The Workers' Party of Marxist Unification (***Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista;* POUM**) and the National Confederation of Labour (***Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*; CNT**) in particular had their ideological differences with the CNT alleging that Andres Nin, the leader of the POUM, was a Trotskyist. Although this is disputed, Nin's reputation as a one-time friend of Trotsky was enough to spread rumours that he and his followers were fascist sympathisers to be arrested and executed. Both factions were, however, targeted by the Communists in the government and the Communist Party of Catalonia. The May Days of 1937 in Barcelona were an example of how the factions on the left fought bitterly against each other, and how these purges also extended to the International Brigades. In this way, you can see that Stalin extended the reach of his purges into Spain and, according to Beevor, the Spanish Civil War also impacted the intensity of the purges in the Soviet Union. If there were rumours that a Soviet official in Spain was not absolutely loyal to Stalin, they would be executed.

The Spanish Civil War ended in 1939 with the victory of Franco and the Nationalists. By this time, Stalin was already looking for a closer relationship with Nazi Germany. This would result in the Nazi–Soviet Pact signed on 23 August 1939.

In 1998, Welsh rock band the Manic Street Preachers released a track called 'If you tolerate this, your children will be next'. The lyrics were taken from the wording on a Spanish Civil-War poster showing a dead child beneath a flight of bombers. Do some research on this to find out why the band used these lyrics and what they aimed to achieve. Do we run the risk of trivializing tragedy if, as in this case, it is likely that people listening to the song would be unaware of its origins?

The legacy of the Spanish Civil War also inspired the English band the Durutti Column. See what you can find out about the name, the band, and the music they played.

A Republican propaganda poster showing the image of a dead child below planes with swastikas on their wings.

TOK

Activity 18

ATL Research and thinking skills

Read the source below and answer the questions that follow.

> *The Spanish Civil War is one of the comparatively few cases when the most widely accepted version of events has been written more persuasively by the losers of the conflict than by the winners. This development was of course decisively influenced by the subsequent defeat of the nationalists' Axis allies.*
>
> **From Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936–1939*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007, p. 239**

1. According to the source, what was Beevor saying about the legacy of the Spanish Civil War?
2. How far, do you think, did the involvement in Spain influence Stalin's rule in the Soviet Union? Did it influence the image of the Soviet Union abroad?
3. Can you think of other examples where the 'losers' won the propaganda war?

A change of course, 1939

Stalin's economic policies were certainly driven in part by his determination to rearm his military forces and to prepare for war. The military leadership was also thoroughly purged, probably because he did not trust his officers and also because executions and imprisonment would instil fear and so guarantee loyalty in the event of war.

Maxim Litvinov

Vyacheslav Molotov

Maxim Litvinov was appointed the commissar for external affairs in 1930, and until his replacement in 1939 he was the architect of Soviet foreign policy. At first glance, Litvinov had many of the characteristics of Stalin's victims: he was an 'old Bolshevik' who had joined the party in 1903; he was well travelled and spoke many languages; he was married to an Englishwoman; he was Jewish. Yet Litvinov survived possibly because his skills were needed in determining foreign policy, which was not an area of expertise for Stalin. It was Litvinov who proposed collective security for the Soviet Union, resulting in its joining the League of Nations in 1934. He also favoured closer cooperation with anti-fascist governments, a policy approved by the Comintern in 1935, after which **popular front** governments were established in France and Spain and the Second United Front was set up in China (for more, see page 123).

The weakness demonstrated by the League of Nations over the Manchurian Crisis of 1931 and the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in 1935 damaged the reputation of 'collective security'. A natural alliance might have been with Britain and France, but Britain, in particular, was reluctant to ally with the Soviet Union. This possibility was also undermined by the events of 1938, when Stalin was not invited to attend the Munich Conference, although the Soviet Union had an alliance with Czechoslovakia.

Activity 19

ATL Thinking skills

Study the source below and answer the question that follows.

> *Litvinov explicitly told the British delegation to the League [of Nations] that, if the Germans invaded Czechoslovakia, the 'Czechoslovak–Soviet Pact would come into force', and proposed a conference between Britain, France and the Soviet Union to 'show the Germans we mean business'.*
>
> **From Niall Ferguson, *The War of the World: History's Age of Hatred*, Penguin, 2006**

1. How reliable, do you think, is Litvinov as a source for what the Soviet Union intended if Germany invaded Czechoslovakia?

By 1939, a close alliance with the French and the British looked increasingly unlikely, although in April a poll held in Britain showed that 87 per cent of respondents said they favoured an alliance with France and the Soviet Union (Ferguson, *The War of the World*, 2006). The government of Britain did eventually send a delegation to Moscow in July, but they travelled by sea, suggesting there was no sense of urgency. Turning away from the West, Stalin aimed to foster closer cooperation with Nazi Germany; Litvinov, who would have been an unlikely emissary to Berlin, was replaced as commissar of external affairs by Vyacheslav Molotov.

The Nazi–Soviet Pact

On 23 August 1939, German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop and the Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov signed the Nazi–Soviet Pact. This was the result of several months of highly secret negotiations that began in May 1939 with discussions about trade and developed into tentative enquiries made by Molotov about a '**rapprochement** with Germany' (from the Foreign Office Memorandum, June 15, 1939, retrieved from the Avalon Project, Lillian Goldman Law Library).

There were several possible reasons for this dramatic shift in Soviet diplomacy:

- Maxim Litvinov, who had been in favour of closer links with the democracies of Western Europe, was replaced by Molotov as foreign minister in May 1939. Molotov was more flexible and more willing to enter into negotiations with Nazi Germany.

- The Munich Crisis of September 1938 had influenced Stalin's opinion of Britain and France as likely allies, as he considered them to have abandoned Czechoslovakia, as well as being weak and vacillating in their negotiations with Hitler.
- Stalin was concerned about growing tensions with Japan and feared a border conflict. These might be alleviated if he reached out to Germany, Japan's ally in the Anti-Comintern Pact.
- Neither Britain nor France had made any concrete offers of an alliance with the Soviet Union, possibly because Britain feared that such a treaty might antagonize Japan, but also because the show trials and the brutal purges of the Soviet military raised questions about the Soviet Union's capability in the event of war with the Axis Powers.
- There was the question of Poland, which did not want to be part of an alliance that included the Soviet Union.
- An alliance with France and Britain was likely to provoke Nazi Germany into attacking the Soviet Union.
- An alliance with Nazi Germany was intended to ensure a 10-year breathing space, if war did break out, as well as extra territory.

In the preliminary negotiations that took place mostly between Molotov and von der Schulenburg, the German Ambassador in Moscow, it was agreed that foreign policy could be determined regardless of internal ideological convictions. The Anti-Comintern Pact, Stalin was assured, was an alliance formed against Britain and not the Soviet Union.

Possible objections from Italy and Japan, the other members of the Anti-Comintern Pact, were taken into consideration by Germany and assurances given that the security of either partner would not be put at risk.

By July, tentative agreements had been reached on a 10-year non-aggression pact as well as recognition of areas of interest, such as Danzig for Germany and the Baltic States, and Bessarabia for the Soviet Union. The treaty was signed on 23 August and consisted of six articles that outlined the terms of the non-aggression agreement that would last for 10 years and, if no objection were raised, for a further five years. Immediately, a further Secret Protocol was also signed. This related to what was referred to as 'territorial rearrangement'.

Friedrich Werner von der Schulenburg

Von der Schulenburg was German Ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1934 and, in 1939, worked tirelessly to achieve an agreement between the Soviet Union and Germany. When he became aware of Hitler's plans to invade the Soviet Union in June 1941, he tried to obstruct this by exaggerating the strength of the Red Army. When Operation Barbarossa was launched, he left for Turkey and was later appointed to head the Russian Committee in Berlin, although this post had no political influence. In 1944, he participated in the Stauffenberg Plot that attempted to assassinate Hitler. Schulenburg was among the conspirators arrested, tried, and hanged.

Activity 20

ATL Research, thinking, and self-management skills

Study the sources below and answer the questions that follow.

Source A

Secret Additional Protocol

On the occasion of the signature of the Nonaggression Pact between the German Reich and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics the undersigned plenipotentiaries of each of the two parties discussed in strictly confidential conversations the question of the boundary of their respective spheres of influence in Eastern Europe. These conversations led to the following conclusions:

1. In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement in the areas belonging to the Baltic States (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the northern boundary of Lithuania shall represent the boundary of the spheres of influence of Germany and the U.S.S.R. In this connection the interest of Lithuania in the Vilna area is recognized by each party.
2. In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement of the areas belonging to the Polish state the spheres of influence of Germany and the U.S.S.R. shall be bounded approximately by the line of the rivers Narew, Vistula, and San.

The question of whether the interests of both parties make desirable the maintenance of an independent Polish state and how such a state should be bounded can only be definitely determined in the course of further political developments.

In any event both Governments will resolve this question by means of a friendly agreement.

3. With regard to Southeastern Europe attention is called by the Soviet side to its interest in Bessarabia. The German side declares; its complete political disinterestedness in these areas.

This protocol shall be treated by both parties as strictly secret.

Moscow, August 23, 1939.

For the Government of the German Reich:

V. RIBBENTROP

Plenipotentiary of the Government of the U.S.S.R.:

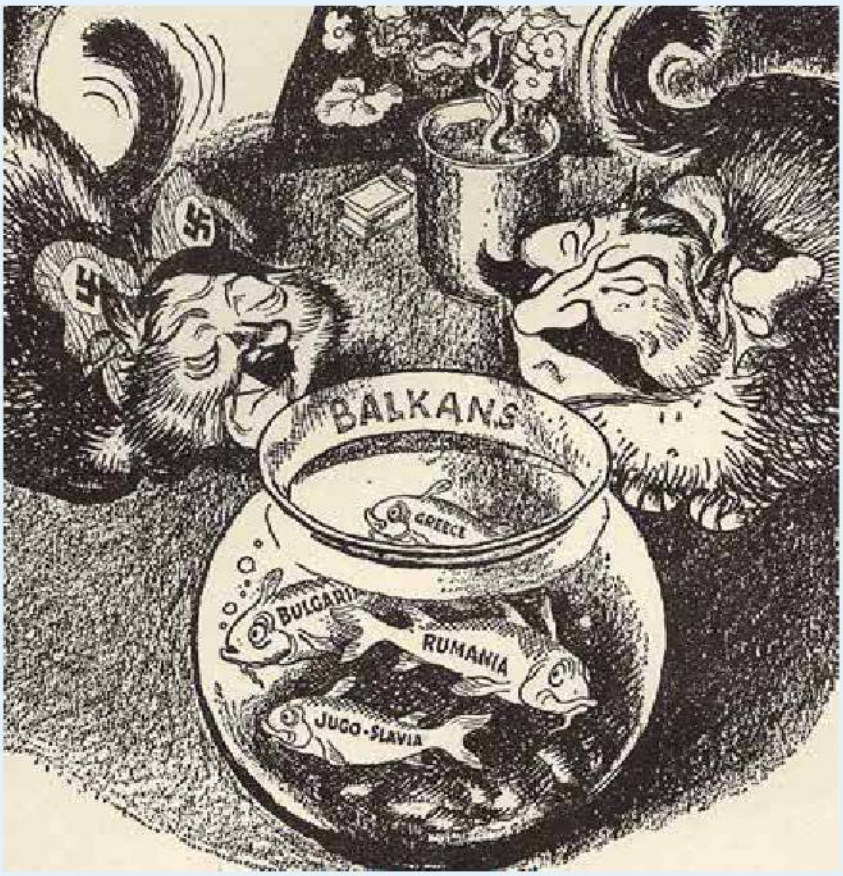
V. MOLOTOV

Source retrieved from the Avalon Project, Lillian Goldman Law Library

1. What is implied by the phrase 'territorial and political rearrangement' used in the articles of the Secret Protocol in Source A?
2. According to Source A, what fate lies in store for Poland?
3. Find out when the Soviet Union invaded Poland.
4. Find out which territories were taken by Hitler and by Stalin in 1939–40.

The famous (infamous) Nazi–Soviet Pact was signed in August 1939. In a decade that came to be synonymous with messianic ideologies used to justify unspeakable acts of terror, it was truly shocking to see two avowed enemies sign a pact of neutrality that agreed to carve up Poland between them. The following contemporary cartoons reflect some of the disbelief and cynicism that greeted this unexpected alliance. Study them carefully and answer the questions that follow.

Source B



This cartoon from 1940 shows the Balkans being eyed enviously by Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin.

Source C

This is a cartoon making fun of the Nazi–Soviet Pact of August, 1939.

5. What, do you think, is the message conveyed by Source B?
6. As an extension to your answer to question 5, find out what happened to the 'goldfish' in the bowl in 1940.
7. How does the cartoonist in Source C show that the two ideologies of Nazism and Communism are now united?
8. How long did the 'honeymoon' between Stalin and Hitler last? Why did it end?
9. The caption in Source C reads 'How long will the honeymoon last?' Why were there doubts about this 'marriage'?

War on the Eastern Front

For Stalin, the Nazi–Soviet Pact signed on 23 August 1939 could be seen as a win-win situation. Not only was there a guarantee of 10 years' peace with Germany, the Soviet Union also regained the land it lost in 1918 to Germany and in 1921 to Poland. This must have seemed a far better deal to Stalin than signing a treaty with two reluctant allies (France and Britain), receiving no territory and possibly being dragged into a war against Nazi Germany. Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1939. After some hesitation from Stalin, but encouragement from Hitler, the Red Army invaded Poland on 17 September. Just over a week later, on 27 September, the Boundary and Friendship Treaty with Germany handed Lithuania over to the Soviet Union in exchange for some of eastern Poland.

Soviet rule over conquered or annexed territories was brutal and Stalin was determined to 'decapitate' Polish society. Niall Ferguson points out how, after experiencing life under Soviet rule, many Poles who had sought refuge in the east now asked to be sent home, believing that life under the Nazis could hardly be worse than under Soviet occupation (*The War of the World*, 2006). For many Poles, however, the choice was between ending up in a concentration camp under the Nazis or a gulag under the Soviets.

Activity 21

ATL Research, thinking, communication, and social skills

The source below gives some indication of the nature of the 'terror' that was carried out in Soviet-occupied Poland. Study it and answer the questions that follow.

> *Beginning on the night of February 10th, 1940, the NKVD unleashed a campaign of terror against suspected 'anti-Soviet' elements. The targets identified … were 'those frequently travelling abroad, involved in overseas correspondence or coming into contact with representatives of foreign states; Esperantists; philatelists; those working with the Red Cross; … priests and active members of religious congregations; the nobility, landowners, wealthy merchants, bankers, industrialists, hotel [owners] and restaurant owners.'*
>
> **From Niall Ferguson, *The War of the World: History's Age of Hatred*, Penguin, 2006**

Look carefully at all the different categories of people targeted in the source above.

1. What, do you think, do the categories of people all have in common?
2. Why were these people seen as a threat to Soviet control?
3. Up until 1939, despite both fearing Germany, Poland and the Soviet Union were unlikely to form an alliance. Why, do you think, was this so? Discuss your answer with the class.

One of the most widely known wartime atrocities carried out by the NKVD was the Katyn Massacre of 1940. More than 4,000 Polish Army officers, as well as police officers, prison guards, government officials, and other 'leaders' of society, were taken into the Katyn forest in Russia, shot and buried in mass graves. Meanwhile, in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, government representatives were required to sign 'defence treaties' and, in 1940, to 'request' that they be incorporated into the Soviet Union.

Stalin was also concerned about security to the north and demanded that Finland relinquish territory to the Soviet Union. When Finland refused, the Winter War broke out in November 1939 and, although some Finnish territory was lost, more than 200,000 Red Army soldiers were killed. The weakness of the post-purge Red Army had been revealed and this was noted by Hitler.

Stalin's foreign policy from 1941

Stalin's wartime foreign policy can be thought of as consisting of two parts. The first part is the alliance with Nazi Germany that began in August 1939 and continued until June 1941; the second part is the alliance with Britain and the United States, a result of each of these countries being at war with Nazi Germany. Two interesting questions to consider as you read through this section are: How far was the latter alliance a temporary one? Did the fundamentally different ideologies mean this was solely a convenient arrangement that would end as soon as the common enemy was defeated?

Operation Barbarossa

Hitler's policy of *Lebensraum* led to the invasion of the Soviet Union and the planned colonization of its territory by the German/Aryan race. Niall Ferguson mentions that the timing of Operation Barbarossa in June 1941 may have been influenced by Hitler's

Lebensraum

This was Hitler's policy of expansion eastwards to find 'living space' for the Aryan race. He believed that the Third Reich should colonize lands to the east such as Poland and the Soviet Union where the Slav people would either be displaced or become slave workers for the Reich.

concern about Stalin's encroachment on Romania and the Balkans. In the summer of 1940, Stalin demanded that Romania hand over northern Bukovina and Bessarabia (known today as Moldova); this demand was followed by a 'promise of security' for Bulgaria. Hitler started to plan the invasion of the Soviet Union at this point, beginning with a meeting of his military chiefs in June 1940. When did Stalin begin to suspect something was afoot? Geoffrey Roberts suggests that when Molotov failed, in 1940, to negotiate an extension to the Nazi–Soviet Pact, Stalin knew that war was likely (quoted in interview with Aaron Leonard in historynewsnetwork.org, 2009). Moreover, Stalin was alerted to German invasion plans: by Richard Sorge, a double agent working in the German embassy in Tokyo; by the British who had cracked the German military ENIGMA code; by German informants who swam across the River Bug (the border between German and Soviet-occupied Poland) but were shot as enemy agents. Ferguson estimates that there were 84 warnings in all sent to Moscow and that Stalin ignored them all. It could be that Stalin still trusted Hitler, and was afraid that any defensive action by the Red Army would be interpreted by the Germans as preparation for an attack, or – and this would not be contradictory – he wanted to do everything possible to delay war for as long as possible.

Stalin as a wartime leader

Stalin knew that the war against Nazi Germany would take a tremendous toll on the people of the Soviet Union and that they would have to accept enormous hardship and sacrifice. It was unlikely they would do so in the name of communism, and Stalin understood that an appeal to nationalism would be far more compelling. Propaganda now turned this into a war to save the Soviet Motherland. It was named the 'Great Patriotic War' and the Orthodox Church was restored to a position of prominence to help rally the people to save their country.

Initially, the German strategy of ***blitzkrieg*** meant that the ***Wehrmacht*** made rapid advances but the German divisions were halted at Moscow when Stalin, despite being warned of an offensive from Japan on the eastern border, recalled General Zhukov from Siberia and provided him with whatever was necessary to organize the city's defence. The Wehrmacht now changed strategy and moved towards Stalingrad in 1942.

Stalingrad could not be sacrificed, in part because its original name, Tsaritsyn, had been changed to Stalingrad in honour of Stalin's defence of the city during the Russian Civil War (today, it is named Volgograd). It also had a strategic importance because, if captured, Soviet oil supplies from the Caucasus to the Red Army force further north would be compromised. The German Army Group B nearly succeeded in capturing the city, but a Soviet counter-offensive encircled, trapped, and destroyed the German Sixth Army and much of the Fourth Army. The German defeat at Stalingrad in early 1943 is seen as the turning point of the war and the beginning of Germany's retreat. Hitler refused permission for General Friedrich von Paulus, the commander of German forces at Stalingrad, to break out from the encirclement in a timely manner, thus consigning hundreds of thousands of men to either death or capture. Dmitri Volkogonov mentions how, although it took time to explain that an encirclement of the German forces was the best strategy – ' Zhukov… had to explain it three times' (*The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire*, 1999, p. 119) – Stalin agreed to it, and victory was secured when defeat had been very close. It is an interesting example of how Stalin, unlike Hitler, listened to his generals and heeded their advice.

The Soviet Union and Japan

There had been conflicts on the border between Japanese-occupied Manchuria and the Soviet Union in 1939–40 but these ended when a neutrality pact was signed in April 1941.

The German advance during Operation Barbarossa.

The siege of Leningrad, 1941–44

Among the most famous events of World War II on the Eastern Front were the long drawn-out efforts of the Nazi invaders to force the surrender of Leningrad, the cradle of the Bolshevik Revolution as well as the 'Venice of the North'. It was considered imperative that the city be saved, and from 1941 to 1944 its population suffered bombardments and starvation to win through a 900-day siege. It is estimated that more than 600,000 people died out of a population of approximately 2,500,000.

The battle of Moscow, October 1941 to January 1942

Known as Operation Typhoon, the occupation of Moscow was considered by Hitler to be vital to the success of Operation Barbarossa. The defence of Moscow was led by General Zhukov and, aided by extremely harsh winter conditions, he was able to prevent German victory.

The battle of Kursk, 4 July to 23 August 1943

One of the largest land battles of the 20th century, the battle of Kursk was fought between the Red Army fielding 3,600 tanks and 1,300,000 soldiers, and the German Army of 2,700 tanks and 800,000 soldiers. Although the Red Army lost 1,500 tanks and suffered 860,000 casualties, this engagement was their victory and the battle of Kursk led the way to the recovery of the city of Kharkov.

The end of the war

The tide began to turn against Germany in 1943, and over the next two years the Red Army slowly but methodically marched westwards in the wake of the retreating Germans. The Red Army claimed to have 'liberated' the Baltic States, Poland, and

Activity 22

ATL Thinking skills

Study the source below and answer the questions that follow.

A Soviet poster from World War II showing how 'The Big Three will tie the enemy in knots'. The arms of Soviet Russia, Great Britain, and the United States tie a strangling knot around Hitler's neck.

1. What is the message conveyed in the cartoon?
2. What methods did the Big Three use to 'tie the enemy in knots'?

much of Central and Eastern Europe. Post-1989 interpretations in these countries, however, would argue that although the German Army was driven out, what followed was another occupation. As the Red Army marched to Berlin, they had no pity for the German people: an estimated 2 million German women were raped in the areas that were now under Red Army occupation. Rape was both a weapon of war and a revenge for the destruction wreaked on the Soviet Union, when German forces had razed 70,000 villages, killing hundreds of thousands of civilians.

The wartime conferences at Tehran, Moscow, and Yalta discussed the borders of post-war Europe. Stalin was adamant that, in future, any invasion launched against the Soviet Union would be halted in neighbouring countries, which would provide a security zone to protect the Soviet Union. The German surrender took place on 8 May 1945, although the commemorations in the Soviet Union always took place on 9 May. It was not until 9 August that the Soviet Union joined the war on Japan, occupying northern Manchuria, and acquiring the Kurile Islands and South Sakhalin.

Activity 23

ATL Thinking, research, and self-management skills

1. Why did the Red Army defeat Germany?

Just as it is a good idea to consider why victorious countries win wars, it is also worth asking why the defeated countries lose. Consider why the Soviet Union, with its purged military and recently industrialized economy, was able to hold off the German invasion. It is also worth asking why a vast landmass where the people had endured so much hardship in the name of 'socialism' would be prepared to wage war to save a regime that was so brutal. Some possible reasons are listed in the following section.

Reasons for Stalin's victory

Control over resources and strategy

The Soviet Union was already a planned economy in 1941, and it made a seamless transition to '**total war**' conditions in which the government controls the production

and distribution of resources. Stephen Lee, in *Stalin and the Soviet Union*, mentions however that production levels in the Soviet Union escalated with the loosening of centralized control in 1943, suggesting that local control of production proved more effective than central planning.

The State Committee of Defence (GOKO) was set up on 30 June 1941, with Stalin as its chairman. He was an indefatigable war leader, taking charge of every aspect of the defence of the Soviet Union. He rarely visited the frontline, but he followed the actions of his generals closely and made it clear to them that retreat or defeat in battle was not an option. Order No. 270 of the State Committee of August 1941 decreed that 'those who surrendered to the Germans "should be destroyed by all means available, from the air or from the ground, and their families deprived of all benefits", while deserters should be shot on the spot and their families arrested'.

Stalin used propaganda very effectively during the war. As mentioned earlier, the so-called 'Great Patriotic War' was fought to save the Soviet Motherland rather than an ideological war to save communism. Stalin understood that people would fight to save their country, when they may not have fought so determinedly for an ideology.

A 'racial war'

For Hitler, this war in the East was a racial war against an enemy that was considered to be 'sub-human'. It was to be a war of extermination in keeping with Nazi ideology, but strategically this was a huge error. Initially, there was support for the German forces in areas of the Ukraine and in the Baltic States, as they were often seen as liberators. This mood changed, however, as the death toll of civilians mounted from German policies of extermination and eviction. Even so, an estimated 2 million Soviet citizens fought on the side of the Germans. To prevent any risk of further internal disturbance, Stalin 're-settled' large numbers of Chechens, Karachais, Meskhetians, Crimean Tatars, Balts, Ukrainians, and Cossacks further east. Stephen Lee considers that this had possibly thwarted the risk of more serious rebellion within the Soviet Union (*Stalin and the Soviet Union*, 1999).

The Soviet Union – climate and geography

The *Wehrmacht* made swift progress towards Moscow in the first five months of the war, but stalled just short of the capital city as 'General Winter' brought rain followed by frost and snow. The severe climate may not have been the main reason for the long-term defeat of the German Army, but it contributed to slowing their advance in 1941 and gave the Red Army a breathing space in which to recover. Stalin brought General Zhukov back from the border between Japanese-occupied China and the Soviet Union in order to defend Moscow, a crucial and very successful decision.

The huge expanse of the Soviet Union was also an advantage. The Soviet forces could sacrifice territory to the advancing Germans and retreat eastwards. Also, many factories could be dismantled and the infrastructure, along with the workforce, shipped east of the Urals, reassembled and brought back into production. Geoffrey Hosking mentions that 10 million people were transferred east of the Urals and that by 1945, over half of the metal output of the Soviet Union was produced there, compared with a fifth in 1940 (*A History of the Soviet Union 1917–1991*, 1992, p. 283). This was enormously important as it meant that the Soviet Union was able to keep its factories working.

Allied assistance

External help was also important, as Stalin received very substantial aid, especially trucks and jeeps, from the US Lend-Lease arrangement that was extended to the Soviet Union as early as the summer of 1941. Britain's merchant marine, assisted by the Royal Navy, also shipped vast quantities of equipment to the Soviet Union along the treacherous Arctic passage to Murmansk.

Theatres of war

The end of the siege of Stalingrad came around the same time as the defeat of German forces at El Alamein in North Africa. The Allied invasion of Sicily also took place at the same time as the battle of Kursk, requiring German forces to be diverted to Italy. Although there can be no doubt that the brunt of the fighting in Europe took place on the Eastern Front, some of the more momentous turning points need to be placed within the context of World War II as a whole.

More than 27 million Soviet citizens (of whom at least 20 million were civilians) were killed during World War II. This was a tremendous sacrifice, and made the losses of Britain and the United States seem small by comparison. This fact was not lost on Stalin, who used it to his advantage at meetings with Churchill and Roosevelt.

Stalin's leadership

Stalin's leadership was an important factor in his victory. Historians such as Roberts and Volkogonov assert that Stalin learned from his generals, and his skills as a wartime leader improved over time. He was also ruthless in his willingness to sacrifice troops and tireless in his efforts to keep the war effort going.

Stalin emerged from the Great Patriotic War as the undisputed *vozhd* (leader) of the Soviet Union. It was Stalin who, according to state propaganda, had saved the Soviet Union from the Nazi invaders. Even though Stalin visited the front only once, in 1943, he made a great deal of this theatrical appearance and referred to it in correspondence with Roosevelt. Posters and postcards were produced to herald his commitment to the war effort; statues were raised to praise his role as 'liberator'; articles and books placed Stalin in the pantheon of Great Russian leaders, such as Peter the Great. Less was known inside the Soviet Union of the 'smaller fronts', as they were called, such as the hard-fought battles in the Pacific, North Africa, or Western Europe following the Normandy landings in June 1944.

The Soviet Union came out of World War II with territorial gains that restored land taken in 1919 from the former Russian Empire. Stalin was now a world statesman and the Soviet Union a world superpower. Despite this, its economy was devastated and Stalin lost no time in demanding more sacrifice, more unrelenting hard work, and promising more lean years with no hope yet of a better standard of living for Soviet citizens.

Stalin visits the frontline

Stalin made a visit to the Kalinin Front in August 1943. He stayed in the small village of Khoroshevo in the cottage of an old lady. He met with his generals, who travelled many miles to the meeting and who were astonished by the humble surroundings. One whispered to another that the very basic environment was intended to 'resemble the front', and so create a favourable impression for propaganda purposes.

Research and thinking skills ATL

Find out what happened in one or more of the following countries as the Red Army 'liberated' them from Nazi rule: Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania. How did the political structure of these countries change as the war came to an end?

The East–West divide after 1949.

An overview of Stalin's foreign policy in his maintenance of power

Like many authoritarian leaders, Stalin used foreign policy to enhance his control over the Soviet Union. For example, he emphasized the threat from external enemies to justify the very harsh methods used to achieve the rapid industrialization of the Soviet Union. The population had to accept that the very survival of the Soviet Union was imperilled if the Five-Year Plans did not succeed. Also, you may recall that during the

purges, managers who failed to meet production quotas were labelled as traitors and spies. In the same way, leading members of the Communist Party, such as Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Bukharin, were accused of being spies and of supporting Fascism. The same accusation was made against Trotsky and those labelled as Trotskyites. In this way, Stalin heightened the fear of war, and convinced the population of the absolute necessity for unity and an unquestioning acceptance of his guidance and leadership.

In the Soviet Union, the use of propaganda to convey foreign policy to the population was very important. The swift turnaround from Nazi Germany being an arch-enemy to being an ally reflects how successful propaganda could be (or was the population too afraid to ask questions?). Similarly, when World War II was over, propaganda showed Britain and the United States as bitter enemies. The fear of another war, this time against former allies, justified the endurance of further hardship to ensure the rapid recovery of the Soviet Union and a policy of anti-cosmopolitanism to enforce isolation from the West.

Activity 24

ATL Thinking skills

This is a good time to reflect on the aims of Stalin's foreign policy up to 1945.

1. Make a list of how there was a) change and b) continuity in Stalin's foreign policy from 1929 to 1939, and again from 1941 to 1945.
2. What were the causes of the changes and the continuity that you mentioned?

2.4 Stalin and the Soviet Union after 1945

The Soviet Union emerged from World War II as a world superpower. The people had suffered enormously and made huge sacrifices, but when the war was finally over, it was evidently clear that the Soviet Union had regained the borders of the former Russian Empire and that its political reach extended into Central and Eastern Europe.

Economic recovery after 1945

The devastation suffered during the war meant that the recovery of the Soviet economy was a gargantuan task. Some indication of the scale of the challenge is given in a book written by John Fischer, a member of the United Nations Relief and Reconstruction Agency (UNRRA) mission to Ukraine in 1946. He wrote about his experiences in *The Scared Men in the Kremlin,* published in 1947. He described daily life both in the cities and in the rural areas that he visited, and repeated many times that he was at liberty to ask any questions he liked and to mix freely with ordinary members of the public as well as party officials.

Fischer's account provides a fascinating insight into post-war Ukraine and he recognizes the enormous hardship experienced in simply finding enough food, clothing, and shelter in a region devastated by war.

> *In Kiev, least damaged of the big cities, each person was supposed to have six square metres of living space. That means a strip of floor about ten feet long and six feet wide – somewhat larger than a grave – on which to sleep, cook, eat and store one's possessions. In Kharkov … the official allocation was 4.8 square metres… If you really want to know how a typical Ukrainian family lives, pick the smallest room in your house or apartment and move your wife*

and children into it. Then pack in the beds, spare clothes, and furniture which you regard as absolutely indispensible. Knock off a few chunks of plaster and most of the paint… Scrap the radiators and cooking range and substitute for both a brick stove which seldom raises the winter temperature much above freezing. Break off the hot water tap in the bathroom, which you will share with several other families. Finally, invite your widowed cousin Sophie and her four youngsters to move in with you.

From John Fischer, *The Scared Men in the Kremlin*, Hamish Hamilton, 1947

John Fischer also wrote of the difficulty faced by ordinary people to find fresh food, beyond the small pieces of meat, limited array of vegetables, or the few eggs brought into markets by peasants who were able to cultivate small private plots. When the Fourth Five-Year Plan was announced in 1946, it called upon the citizens of the Soviet Union, once again, to put aside any hope of increased production of consumer goods and to focus on industrial and agricultural production.

Just how bad this news was did not dawn on the Russians until March 15th 1946, when the government announced the details of the first of its new Five-Year Plans. This document outlined a truly back-breaking task. It called for the restoration of all industries wrecked in the war, plus an increase in output nearly fifty per cent above the pre-war level.

From John Fischer, *The Scared Men in the Kremlin*, Hamish Hamilton, 1947

The losses were so immense that they were almost incalculable: 70,000 villages, 98,000 kolkhozi completely or partly destroyed, 1,876 sovkhozi, 17 million head of cattle and 7 million horses driven away; 65,000 kilometres of railway track, half of all railway bridges in occupied territory, over half all urban living space there, 1.2 million houses destroyed as well as 3.5 million rural homes. And then, there was the greatest loss of all, the 20 million dead, as well as the maimed in body and mind.

From Martin McCauley, *The Soviet Union 1917–1991*, 2nd ed., Routledge, 1993

Despite the enormous task that lay before the Soviet people, and despite the immense difficulties of restoring infrastructure and repairing factories and mines, the official claim was that by 1950 industrial production was 75 per cent higher than in 1940. The rearming of the Red Army remained a priority that increased in importance as the Cold War took hold. Labour and resources were also diverted to the building of the atomic bomb, tested in 1949. Agriculture was far slower to recover and by 1950 the grain harvest amounted to only 40 per cent of that of 1940 (McCauley, *The Soviet Union 1917–1991*, 1993). The recovery of numbers of farm animals was also slow and was hampered by the pseudo-science of Lysenkoism.

Lysenkoism

Named after Trofim Lysenko, this was a popular 'scientific' hypothesis that was based upon the theory of 'inherited characteristics'. Put simply, it was the belief that characteristics (in animals or plants) developed in one generation could be passed on to the next. Such ideas had been popularized by Professor William McDougall who, working at Harvard University, had suggested that rats could learn to negotiate a maze and that this characteristic could be passed on to new generations. Lysenko experimented by freezing wheat grains in snow in the belief that he was developing strains of wheat that would grow in winter. He also thought that breeding cows with high milk yields with those with high beef yields would automatically produce animals with both characteristics. Although they remained popular in the Soviet Union until the 1960s, his ideas were based on faulty genetics.

Domestic policies after 1945 – aims and results

Stalin continued to push forward his plan for 'Russification', as he wanted to introduce Russian settlers into the Baltic States, to weaken nationalism, and impose the Russian culture and language. This plan extended to Moldova, where the purging of the local population and the 'planting' of ethnic Russians took place. Anti-Semitism also resurfaced with a crackdown on Jewish literature, journalism, and culture, as well as a purging of Jewish officials from the higher levels of the party leadership.

Known as the *Zhdanovshchina*, a campaign was led by Andrei Zhdanov, the Leningrad Party leader, to remove all 'Western' influence from music and literature. Prokofiev and Shostakovich were among the composers whose music was now criticized, along with the poetry of Anna Akhmatova. There was even criticism of Einstein's theory of relativity, which was declared to be 'bourgeois' and 'reactionary'.

After Zhdanov's death in 1948, Stalin carried out a purge of the Leningrad Party known as the 'Leningrad Affair'. This was followed by another purge known as the 'Doctor's Plot' in November 1952, when the mostly Jewish doctors in the Kremlin were arrested and accused of killing their patients, including Zhdanov. It was probably Stalin's death in March 1953 that saved the lives of his closest comrades, including Beria, Molotov, Mikoyan, and Malenkov.

Terror and propaganda after 1945

The purges of the 1930s were not repeated on the same scale after 1945, although returning prisoners of war, along with White Russians and Cossacks whom Stalin had insisted be returned to the Soviet Union, were often shot or sent to a distant gulag. Stalin did not want to risk knowledge of the outside world penetrating the walls of the Soviet Union. Norman Lowe notes that an estimated 2.8 million soldiers who had survived imprisonment in German camps returned to the Soviet Union 'to be arrested and interrogated by the NKVD' (*Mastering Twentieth Century Russian History*, 2002). Of these, only around 500,000 (or one-sixth) were allowed to return home.

New labour camps were built mostly to hold 'bandits', the term used to denote nationalists in Ukraine and in the Baltic States. Dmitri Volkogonov in *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire* estimates that more than 90,000 'kulaks and their families, bandits, nationalists and others' were deported from the Baltic States alone. By 1947 there were more than 20 million prisoners in the gulags and 27 additional camps had been built. A law was passed 'imposing twenty years hard labour for anyone attempting to escape from exile' (*The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire*, 1999). For most people, however, the Great Terror was a grim memory and few people would have dared to plot against Stalin or even to criticize Soviet rule. Show trials and the purges did take place in Central and Eastern Europe, however, where local communist parties were ruthlessly purged with the same random selection of victims as in the Soviet Union during the 1930s.

Within the Soviet Union, gratitude for victory in the Great Patriotic War boosted Stalin's popularity further, and the suffering undoubtedly led people to believe that whatever hardship came with peace, it did not begin to compare with the suffering endured during the war.

Activity 25

ATL **Research, thinking, and communication skills**

There is no doubt that the Cold War had a decisive influence on Stalin's decision to push for a rapid recovery for war-torn Soviet Union and to divert resources towards the building of an atomic bomb. He feared the West and galvanized the Soviet population, once again, to rearm and to rebuild the economy.

It is also worth considering where Soviet policy towards Central and Eastern Europe fits in. Is this domestic or foreign policy? Countries such as Poland, Romania, and Hungary are not within the Soviet Union, and so need not be discussed in an answer to an exam question that asks about Stalin's post-war domestic policy. Even so, via **Cominform** and **Comecon** the Soviet Union did have a very significant impact upon the internal policies of these countries and, to a lesser extent, vice versa.

For example, consider the following question:

> ***Compare and contrast the successes and failures of the foreign policies of two authoritarian leaders, each chosen from a different region.***

If you chose Stalin as one of your leaders, you could go beyond 1941 (unless the question states otherwise) and you could make a reference to the extension of Soviet influence to Central and Eastern Europe (using some specific examples), linking this to Stalin's concerns about security.

Stalin's role as a world leader

Even before the end of World War II, Stalin was already a recognized world leader and his meetings with Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt to determine post-war arrangements have been well documented. Unlikely allies, the 'Big Three' were in close contact throughout the war and historians have discussed, extensively, the nature of their pre-war, wartime, and post-war relationships. It is still a matter of heated debate at what stage the wartime allies became post-war enemies.

Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin meet at Yalta in February 1945.

Activity 26

ATL Thinking, research, and social skills

Along with Tehran (November 1943) and Potsdam (July 1945), Yalta was one of the three wartime conferences.

1. What was discussed at Yalta and what decisions were made about the post-war world?
2. To what extent was Yalta both the end of the wartime alliance and the beginning of the Cold War? Working with a classmate, think of how you would support arguments to both a) agree and b) disagree with this assertion.

How did Stalin influence the Cold War?

There is a great deal of **historiography** concerning the role of Stalin in the outbreak of the Cold War. His actions and motives have been carefully scrutinized by many historians, but the following events are worthy of investigation.

- In 1945, Soviet expansion into Central and Eastern Europe aroused the fears and suspicion of the United States. There was concern that Stalin was intending to extend Soviet influence over the whole of Europe.
- After the Potsdam conference in July 1945, Stalin did not meet again with the Western leaders and this contributed to a climate of suspicion. Unlike Franklin Roosevelt, President Truman did not seem to want to cooperate or compromise with Stalin.
- Stalin's 'election speech' of 1946 suggested that the Soviet Union was, once again, using anti-Western rhetoric and this implied that the post-war peace was fragile.
- Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought in the atomic age and although Stalin had placed Beria in charge of a project to build a Soviet atom bomb, this was not tested until 1949. Meanwhile, the Baruch Plan of 1946 was proposed but rejected by Stalin, who was not content to have UN control over nuclear arms.
- The Marshall Plan of 1947 (European Recovery Programme) was condemned by the Soviet Union as 'dollar imperialism', and Poland and Czechoslovakia were prevented from taking part in this US-led plan for economic recovery. This prompted the communist takeover of Czechoslovakia.
- When the United States and Britain united their zones of Germany in 1946, calling it Bizonia, Stalin objected as he argued that this was contrary to agreements on the administration of occupied Germany. France was persuaded to attach its zone to Bizonia in 1948, making it Trizonia. The Marshall Plan also made it imperative that the economy of the Western zones was placed on a sound footing, leading to the introduction of a new West German currency. Whether or not this could also be introduced into the western sectors of Berlin led to a difference of opinion with the Soviet Union and prompted what became known as the Berlin Blockade of 1948–49. Although Stalin's intention was to push the Western powers out of Berlin, this strategy rebounded on him, and he had to lift the blockade in May 1949.
- In many of the Central and Eastern European states that came under Soviet control, free elections were held in the post-war period. Gradually, however, 'salami tactics' (cutting something slice by slice) enabled the communist parties, which were often part of coalition governments, to control the police or the justice system. Little by little, the communists would end up in power and these countries became known as the 'satellite states'.
- The Cold War turned into a 'hot war' in 1950 with the invasion of South Korea by North Korea. At the time, the United States suspected that this had been instigated by the Soviet Union, although later research showed quite clearly that Kim Il Sung, the leader of communist North Korea, had been the one to approach Stalin to ask for support.

Activity 27

ATL **Self-management, research, communication, and thinking skills**

If you already study the Cold War, then it is likely that you will be familiar with Stalin's very significant contribution to post-war international relations. This belongs to World History: Topic 12, The Cold War, and so will not be discussed in detail here.

The list you have read earlier includes most of the main events that are discussed in relation to the origins of the Cold War. See if you can rewrite each one to reflect the different historiographical interpretations of the Cold War (see Interesting Fact opposite).

For example: 'The United States misread Soviet concerns about security and believed that Stalin intended to expand Soviet influence beyond Central and Eastern Europe.'

Historiography of the Cold War

The three interpretations of the origins of the Cold War include the following:

1. The Orthodox view sees US actions to be a response to the expansionist policies of the Soviet Union.
2. The Revisionist view blames the United States for over-reacting to Soviet concerns about its security.
3. The Post-Revisionist view sees both the United States and the Soviet Union reacting with fear and suspicion towards each other.

The death of Stalin

Stalin ruled the Soviet Union from 1929 until 1953, longer than any other leader. He created the Soviet system of government and was the undisputed leader of world communism during his lifetime. Stalin had not been in good health for several years before his death, and in March 1953 he suffered a serious stroke that killed him. When he died, there was much relief but also anguish about the future of the Soviet Union. Stalin had gathered around him a small group of dedicated supporters who knew that not only their jobs but their lives depended on Stalin's goodwill. He never ceased to tell those most likely to succeed him that when he was gone, the West would challenge the Soviet Union and 'the capitalists will crush you like little kittens.' In fact, the Soviet Union maintained its role as a world superpower, but the legacy of Stalin continued through the all-powerful secret police, the lack of political freedom, and the strictly controlled command economy.

Activity 28

ATL Thinking, research, and communication skills

This chapter has looked at the rise to power of Stalin and his time as the authoritarian leader of the Soviet Union. Exam questions on authoritarian states/leaders may ask about:

- the rise to power of a ruler or the establishment of an authoritarian state
- the kinds of policies that were introduced, how they were implemented, and how successful they were
- how a leader consolidated his power
- what kind of opposition he faced and the methods used to deal with it.

When you prepare for the exam, be sure to revise these themes. You may also be asked to compare and contrast two authoritarian leaders, for example:

Compare and contrast the methods used to consolidate power by two authoritarian leaders.

Plan an essay outline that addresses each of the following topics, showing the similarities and the differences in the way they were used by Stalin and one other leader:

- Propaganda (Don't forget to consider how propaganda was communicated as well as what it conveyed.)
- Economic policies (Did they both use a planned economy?)
- Social policies (What was the role of education, the role of women, religion, etc.?)
- The use of terror and the secret police
- Purges of the ruling party

Can you think of any other 'methods' you could add to this list?

The way we look at the past and the kinds of opinions we have about leaders like Stalin or the origins of the Cold War are influenced by the work of historians. Invariably, historians judge events differently according to their fields of research, their scholarly backgrounds, or their generation. Throughout this chapter, the works of different historians have been mentioned so you can see where the information comes from. It is quite a good idea when you answer an exam question to remember that historians have reached different conclusions about Stalin's purges, for example, and it can be useful to mention one or two historians to show that you are familiar with more than one interpretation. Do be careful, however, not to just list the names and views of different historians without answering the question. Examiners like to see that you are aware of what has been written about a topic, but a list of pre-learned quotations from historians does not make a good response.

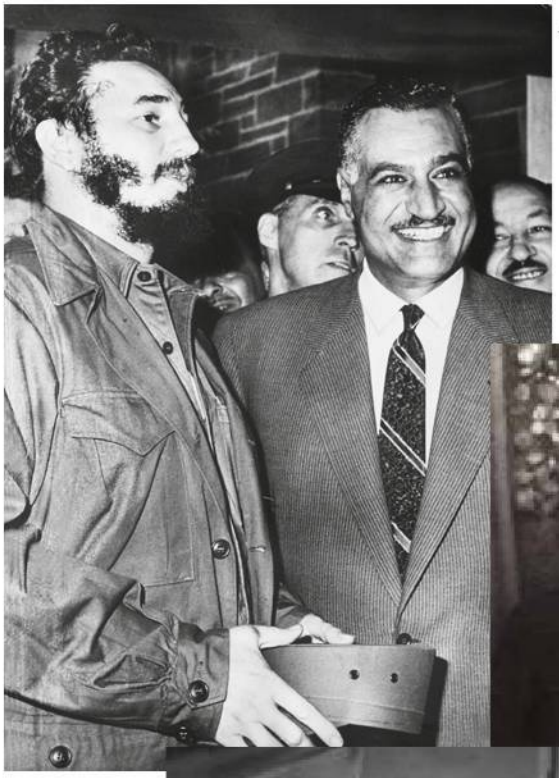
Activity 29

Revision activity

Look back at the chapter breakdown on page 53. Do you feel confident that you could answer an examination question on all of these topics? Pick your weakest topic and spend some time revising it, then try out one of the practice questions contained in this chapter. Go to the chapter titled 'Comparing and contrasting authoritarian states', and compare Stalin or the Soviet Union with another leader or region. There are lots of ideas in that chapter to help you draw out relevant points for comparison.

To access websites relevant to this chapter, go to www.pearsonhotlinks.com, search for the book title or ISBN, and click on 'Chapter 2'.

Comparing and contrasting authoritarian states



Nasser and Castro

Stalin and Mao

Mussolini and Hitler

Paper 2 Topic 10 only asks open questions, which means questions will not refer to specific leaders or countries in their wording. This means you will be able to select the leaders you would like to use as examples to answer any question on Topic 10.

Some of these questions will ask you to compare and/or contrast two leaders in relation to some of the prescribed content in a topic. They may ask you to choose authoritarian states from different regions, for example Mao (Asia) and Castro (Americas), or allow you to select any two leaders that you have studied.

How to select the appropriate leaders

When studying authoritarian leaders for Topic 10, you will come to realize that some leaders are more 'suitable' than others for specific questions. For example, if a question asks you to *compare and contrast the impact of the policies of two leaders on minorities*, you will probably conclude that Fidel Castro and Nasser may not be the most suitable leaders to write about as neither had particularly strong policies on minorities, which means you would quickly run out of things to say. The question could be addressed more effectively, however, if you choose to write about Mussolini and Hitler.

Likewise, if a question asks you to *discuss the establishment of an authoritarian state*, Stalin may not be the best example to use, because he succeeded Lenin and so an authoritarian state was already established when Stalin became leader. Nasser, however, would be a good example, as although he was not the first president of the Republic of Egypt, it was Nasser who influenced and introduced many of the methods that were used to turn Egypt into an authoritarian state. On the other hand, if the question asks about the rise to power of authoritarian leaders, you could certainly use Stalin.

So, as you work through the chapters in this book, it is important to consider how each of the authoritarian states you study compares with the others. You should also know which ones can be used more effectively for each prescribed content. Using charts like the ones below can help you do this.

Topic	Prescribed content	Leader 1	Leader 2	Leader 3
Emergence	Conditions in which they emerged			
	Methods used			

Topic	Prescribed content	Leader 1	Leader 2	Leader 3
Consolidation	Use of legal methods			
	Opposition			
	Foreign policy			

Topic	Prescribed content	Leader 1	Leader 2	Leader 3
Aims and results of policies	Political			
	Social			
	Economic			
	Cultural			
	Women			
	Minorities			

How to answer *compare and contrast* questions

It is very important that you offer running comparisons and contrasts. Suppose you were asked the following:

> ***Compare and contrast the aims and effectiveness of the economic policies of two authoritarian states.***

A running comparison between Mussolini and Castro might read as follows:

> Although both Mussolini and Castro aimed at making their economies less dependent of other countries, it could be argued that Mussolini was relatively more successful than Castro. Mussolini wanted to make Italy an autarkic country in order to be able to pursue an aggressive foreign policy. Among the policies he put into practice, we can mention the Battle for Wheat, which aimed at making Italy self-sufficient in grain. Although the battle achieved relatively good results in that the production of wheat increased as expected, it was at the expense of traditional Italian products such as wine and olives. In the case of Fidel Castro, his attempt to raise the production of sugar to 10 million tons to achieve economic independence failed dramatically. Unlike Italy, Cuba fell far from the target, and the impact of the policy on other areas of the economy was greater than in Mussolini's case, as Castro became even more dependent on Soviet aid.

What works in the comparison above?

Both the opening and closing remarks make explicit reference to the aims and the results of the economic policies discussed. This shows an understanding of the demands of the question.

There is sufficient level of detail. It would not be enough for you to say that both policies faced problems. It is always more effective to be able to provide examples of the type of problems faced (e.g. the cost, dependency) – this shows you have specific knowledge that you can effectively apply to address the question.

Planning your answer

You may be asked to compare and/or contrast the rise to power of authoritarian leaders from different regions. In this case, you would need to think quite carefully about what the question is asking. Consider the following question:

> ***Compare and contrast how two leaders, each from a different region, used the following methods to establish an authoritarian state: a) ideology and b) use of force.***

Here, you could choose to write about Mao (Asia) and Nasser (Africa and the Middle East).

To help plan your answer, consider devising a two-step plan similar to the one shown on the next page. Start by noting down any points you can think of under each method (see step 1). Add as many relevant points under each method as you can. Using the notes you have gathered in step 1, you can then create a table to give you an overview of the similarities and differences between the leaders and their methods (see step 2).

Step 1: Ideas

Mao

- *Ideology:* Communism–Maoism; appealed to peasants who were the majority in China; united members of the Communist Party of China and gave them ideals to fight for; Mao was also seen as a nationalist and this ideology added to his appeal
- *Use of force:* Response to White Terror; civil war; purging of opponents in the CPC

Nasser

- *Ideology:* Nationalism was very important and linked with anti-colonialism; The Philosophy of Revolution; speeches; appeal of socialism and land reform as ways to improve the lives of the poor
- *Use of force:* the coup of 1952; the imprisonment of opponents such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Communists

Step 2: Plan

Comparing and contrasting Mao and Nasser

	Comparison	Contrast
Ideology		
Use of force		

Now use the same steps to plan an answer to the following question:

> ***Compare and contrast how two authoritarian leaders, each chosen from a different region, were able to use the following methods to rise to power: a) persuasion and coercion, and b) propaganda.***

Note that the question asks about *leaders*, not *states*, so you could choose Stalin as one of the leaders.

When preparing for the exam, do pay attention to the following:

- Avoid the 'one size fits all' approach – don't just revise two leaders and hope they will be good examples to use for all questions.
- Check a map of where the regions are, and make sure you have revised leaders from at least two.
- Make sure that you are familiar with the prescribed content from the IB History Guide and use this as a basis for your revision.
- It can be a good idea to revise leaders with different ideologies, for example, Mussolini and Stalin, as the contrasts as well as the comparisons may then be easier to find.
- Don't forget that the World history topics all have a global context, and that one aim of the course is to encourage you to look at examples from different regions to see how people respond in similar as well as different ways to events that may be local or global in their significance.

Theory of Knowledge

Introduction

The Theory of Knowledge (ToK) course is part of the core of the IB Diploma Programme and, along with the subject-specific courses, counts towards the Diploma. History is both one of the subject-specific courses in the IB Diploma and an area of knowledge in ToK. This chapter aims to discuss the key concepts of ToK, showing the interaction between the History course and its function as an area of knowledge within ToK.

There is a substantial overlap between history and ToK as both emphasize the importance of critical thinking. Both ask the question, 'How do we know?' Both want you to understand that your cultural identity is rooted in the past.

ToK uses knowledge frameworks as a concept to differentiate between areas of knowledge. This table helps you see how a knowledge framework could apply to IB History.

Scope/ applications	• It is the study of the recorded past. • It helps us to understand that our cultural identities are rooted in the past.
Concepts/ language	• It discusses change and continuity. • It explores causation and consequences. • It recognizes the power of language in influencing thoughts and actions.
Methodology	• It has a clear, strong, and demanding methodology. • It has recognized ways of collecting evidence, questioning sources, and constructing theories. • It tests significance. • It asks, 'How do we know?'
Historical development	• It recognizes that current values affect our views of the past. • It changes over time in subject matter and interpretations.
Links to personal knowledge	• It acknowledges the influence of individual historians on shared knowledge. • It allows for a range of perspectives. • It recognizes the importance of a shared history on a person's identity.

You will find that an understanding of ToK will help you to evaluate sources in your History course. It will also help you to complete the reflection section of the Internal Assessment component of the History course.

You may also find that an understanding of history is useful in your ToK course. It will help you to analyse the real-life issue in your ToK presentation and will provide a strong area of knowledge, with great examples, to refer to in your ToK essay.

Ways of knowing

Both ToK and history ask the question, 'How do we know?' ToK answers this question by identifying eight possible ways of knowing. Your knowledge must come from somewhere, and by analysing where it comes from, you are able to assess its reliability.

ToK identifies the eight ways of knowing as:

- Language
- Perception
- Reason
- Emotion
- Memory
- Intuition
- Imagination
- Faith.

You can use these concepts in ToK to assist in:

- checking the reliability of first-hand testimony
- analysing the way emotions influence the witness and the interviewer
- determining the possible bias in the language used
- assessing the fallibility of memory
- analysing the desire to see a rational explanation for events.

You can also use them in history to assist in establishing the origin, purpose, and content of sources, in order to assess their value and limitations.

Language is one of the key ways of knowing, so here is a case study exploring the use of language in the accumulation and communication of knowledge in history.

Case study: The role of language in Communist China

In Mao's China, language was very important in the communication of revolutionary rhetoric. For example, in 1956 the intellectuals were not exhorted to 'tell the Party what you think', but rather to 'let a hundred flowers bloom'.

In this way, the opportunity to express criticism was couched in benign, even romantic, terms.

Source A

Mei Xian Qiu, 'Let a Thousand Flowers Bloom'.

This is an image created by a contemporary artist based in Los Angeles. Its title is 'Let a Thousand Flowers Bloom', a clear reference to the campaign of 1956. The subject of the image is wearing the traditional uniform of the People's Liberation Army during the Cultural Revolution and is holding a flower in his mouth. The artist described this work as 'a sweet conceit of romance and violence'.

Similarly, during the Cultural Revolution, language was condensed into slogans such as 'To Rebel Is Justified', 'Bombard the Headquarters', and 'The Four Olds'.

In *A Bitter Revolution*, historian Rana Mitter points out the following:

Source B

> *The combination of a dominant governing party, a leader with a particular political agenda and a culture hermetically sealed from the outside world meant that there was no tempering mechanism when that leader's project turned out to involve the assignation of violent meaning to words…*
>
> **From Rana Mitter, *A Bitter Revolution: China's Struggle with the Modern World*, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 210**

According to Mitter, there was also what he termed a 'verbal violence' of the big-character posters put up on walls to denounce enemies.

Iconoclasm is a term that is often used to describe how the Cultural Revolution (and the May 4th Movement of 1919) attempted to break down links with the past so that a new future could be created. *The Thoughts of Chairman Mao* enshrined the words of *The Great Helmsman*, and quotations were read out loud by study groups. These words were the weapons of the Cultural Revolution.

In *Modern China: A History*, Professor Edwin E. Moïse claims that,

Source C

> *Neither Mao nor his followers (published) any clear, rational explanations of their goals during the Cultural Revolution. (They) … often referred to enemies as 'ghosts and monsters', 'freaks' or 'demons'. The intent of these phrases was to indicate that anyone so vile as to oppose the true revolutionary doctrines of Chairman Mao could hardly be considered human. With hindsight however, such language looks like a symptom of the fact that some of Mao's followers, not having been told exactly who or what they were struggling against, were having to conjure pictures of the enemy out of their imaginations. The result was chaos.*
>
> **From Edwin E. Moïse, *Modern China: A History*, 3rd ed., Routledge, 2008**

Activity 1

Study the sources in the case study above and answer the questions that follow.

1. What knowledge do you get from the photo in Source A? The artist described this image as 'a sweet conceit of romance and violence'. Why, do you think, did the artist use these words and how do they help us to understand the image? Why did the artist use 'a thousand' rather than 'a hundred' in the title?
2. To what extent do Sources B and C say the same thing about the use of language during the Cultural Revolution?
3. One of Mao's famous sayings was that 'a revolution is not a dinner party'. What image does this bring to mind? Do you think it is an accurate impression of what he meant to convey?

Areas of knowledge

History is one of the eight areas of knowledge identified by the ToK course. A full list of the areas of knowledge is:

- Mathematics
- Natural sciences
- Human sciences
- History
- The arts
- Ethics
- Religious knowledge systems
- Indigenous knowledge systems.

You can use these areas of knowledge to understand why we approach different types of knowledge in different ways. We recognize that a work of art is not the same as a chemical formula or a historical interpretation. We test them using subject-specific criteria, recognizing that a historical fact cannot be verified in the same way as a scientific fact. History uses a rigorous methodology to test its facts, but it is not the same method as used in the natural sciences. Here is a case study exploring the methodology of history.

Case study: Perceptions of Nasser

Historians writing in English about Nasser have a difficult time finding sources. One of the most well-known is a biography of Nasser written by Anthony Nutting, a politician rather than an academic historian. He knew and admired Nasser, and had resigned from the British government in 1956 over the Suez Crisis.

In the biography, Nutting concludes that:

Source A

> *Abdel Nasser was a remarkable man. His contribution to Egypt has guaranteed him a place in history. He gave a sense of national dignity and pride to a people who had known little but humiliation and oppression for two and a half thousand years.*
>
> **From Anthony Nutting, *Nasser*, Constable, 1972, p. 477**

One of the most recent biographies of Nasser, *Nasser: The Last Arab*, by Said Aburish, was published in 2004. Aburish was a Palestinian-Egyptian journalist and in this biography, he describes his response to the news of Nasser's death in 1970:

Source B

> *In faraway California, I heard the news while driving a rented car. Momentarily I lost control of it. After I finally managed to stop it I put my head in my hands and sobbed uncontrollably.*
>
> *A state trooper stopped to ask the reason I had parked the car so awkwardly, but after he had a look at me, he asked, "What seems to be the matter, sir?"*
>
> *"Officer, there has been a death in my family. I've just heard it on the radio."*
>
> **From Saïd Aburish, *Nasser: The Last Arab*, Duckworth, 2004, p. 311**

Finally, here is a photograph of Nasser, who is considered to have been immensely charismatic.

Source C

Photograph taken in 1960.

Activity 2

Study the sources in the case study on the previous page and answer the questions that follow.

1. There is some background information given about the authors of Sources A and B. What else would you need to know about the authors and the sources before evaluating their reliability?
2. Is Source A or Source B more memorable? Should historians write a good story?
3. Source C is a photo of Nasser. Do you think historians are influenced by such images? Is charisma a 20th-century concept? Does it make sense to ask if, for example, Napoleon was charismatic?

There is an interesting interplay between the arts and history. In one sense, the arts reflect the historical forces at play in society, but in another sense, the arts influence history. The next case study explores the complex relationship between them.

Case study: *Guerrillero Heroico*

The image below shows Cuban photographer Alberto 'Korda' Díaz holding his famous photograph of Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, known as *Guerrillero Heroico* or 'Heroic Guerrilla Fighter'.

Source A

Guerrillero Heroico by Alberto 'Korda' Díaz, 1960.

At the time the photograph was taken, Guevara was listening to a speech by Fidel Castro. It became internationally popular after Guevara died in 1967. It is now considered the most reproduced image in the history of photography.

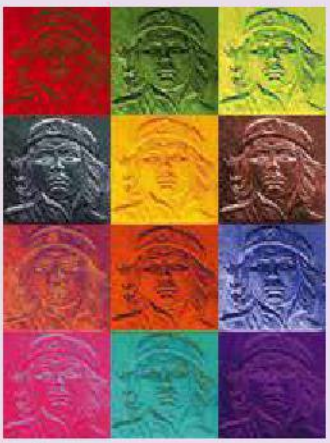
Some of the applications of the photograph include the three-peso Cuban banknote, the image of a vodka brand, tattoos worn by superstars, t-shirts, underwear, watches, cigar cases, and smartphone cases. It has also gone from being an image of protest to merchandising, not to mention appearing in museum exhibitions all over the world. This has certainly contributed to making people more aware of Che Guevara and events in Cuba.

'Heroic Guerrilla Fighter' has also been a source of inspiration to other artists. Study the images opposite.

Source B

Portrait of Che by Jim Fitzpatrick, 1968.

Source C



A Pop Art image of Che Guevara.

Activity 3

Study the sources in the case study on the previous page and answer the questions that follow.

1. Are you familiar with the image of Che Guevara in Source A? If you have seen it before, can you remember the context in which you have seen it? To what extent does your knowledge of the Cuban Revolution affect the way in which you interpret and appreciate the photograph in Source A?
2. How do you think the diffusion of the image of Che Guevara as shown in Source A has affected what is known and believed about the history of the Cuban Revolution?
3. At a 2006 photography exhibition that focused on the history of Korda's iconic portrait in the four and a half decades since it was taken, Jonathan Green, director of the UCR/California Museum of Photography, noted how 'Korda's image has worked its way into languages around the world... There isn't anything else in history that serves in this way.' Can you think of other examples where works of art have become symbols of events or people?
4. Consider the statement: 'A work of art is enlarged by its interpretation.' To what extent do these re-enactments (Sources B and C) of *Guerrillero Heroico* contribute to or change the interpretation of Korda's work? What light do they throw on how Guevara is perceived as a leading figure of the Cuban revolution?

Historical development

Historical development is one of the criteria on the knowledge framework that ToK uses to differentiate between the areas of knowledge. Historical development is part of all the areas of knowledge, recognizing that our knowledge and the way we approach that knowledge changes through time. For instance, the way we approach natural sciences and what we know about them today is quite different from a hundred years ago.

You can use this concept to explore how our approach to history changes, i.e. what subjects we study in history, how our views change as more information comes into the public domain, and how our current values influence our view of the past. Historians use reason to construct a logical interpretation of the past based upon the available information. Sometimes there is so much information that it is difficult to find a single thread of cause and effect in it. Sometimes there is too little information. Occasionally new information becomes known, as official documents are released or research is completed.

Historians are human beings with roots in their own time, place, and background. Their interpretations have an emotional and cultural context, so it is not surprising that the interpretations change over time as society's values change.

Here is a case study exploring how both history and our view of history can change.

Case study: Changing perceptions of Mussolini

The historical perspectives of Mussolini that seem to prevail nowadays are associated with the failure of the Fascist State and his incompetence in World War II. However, if you had lived before the invasion of Abyssinia (1935), you would probably have had a very different perspective.

Source A

Below are examples of what two of Mussolini's political contemporaries had to say about him during the 1920s and 30s:

Mahatma Gandhi, for example, had called him

> *one of the great statesmen of our time*

Winston Churchill had said:

> *If I had been Italian, I am sure I would have been with you from the beginning.*

In 1934, a composer called Cole Porter mentioned Mussolini in the lyrics of his song 'You are the top'.

Source B

> *You are the top*
> *You are the great Houdini*
> *You are the top*
> *You are Mussolini*
>
> **Cole Porter, 'You are the top', 1934**

Source C

In 1933, President Roosevelt praised Mussolini in a letter to an American representative:

> *… I am much interested and deeply impressed by what he has accomplished and by his evidenced honest purpose of restoring Italy and seeking to prevent general European trouble.*

However, in July 1943, upon hearing Mussolini's resignation, Roosevelt said,

> *the first crack in the Axis has come. The criminal, corrupt Fascist regime in Italy is going to pieces.*

Quotations from www.ihr.org/jhr/v15/v15n3p6_weber.html and www.azquotes.com/author/12604-Franklin_D_Roosevelt/tag/purpose

Activity 4

Study the sources in the case study above and answer the questions that follow.

1. What was the context in which the different perceptions of Mussolini were expressed in the sources? Think of specific policies and events of the interwar period that may help to explain why Mussolini's government was perceived as a successful example to follow at the time. How important do you consider the context to be in explaining why these perceptions of Mussolini changed dramatically after 1935? Do we understand things as *they* are or understand them as *we* are?
2. Did you react to Gandhi's statement about Mussolini (Source A) in the same way as to Cole Porter's song (Source B)? Explain your answer. To what extent is the 'messenger more important than the message'? How important is this when assessing the reliability of what we read?
3. Can history be written without appealing to value judgements, or do we get a more meaningful experience if we are exposed to them?
4. Why do the negative judgements of Mussolini seem to have prevailed? Is there such a thing as a 'more acceptable history'? If so, what contributes to it?
5. Are we considering the past in all its complexities if we dismiss the positive views as mistaken? How, if at all, do they enrich our understanding of Mussolini and his times?

Personal and shared knowledge

ToK is interested in the links between shared knowledge and personal knowledge as it relates to history. You can use this concept to explore the role of key historians in shaping our shared knowledge, but you can also use it to investigate how our shared knowledge helps shape our own identities. One of the key concepts of IB History is that multiple interpretations are possible, and one of the key concepts of ToK is that individuals should be encouraged to think critically for themselves.

You can use the ToK concept of memory as a way into this topic. On a personal level, memory is important in creating our personalities; on a cultural level, collective memory is important in uniting, but also in dividing, people. The next case study explores memory in history.

Case study: Collective memory of life in the Soviet Union

History is a dynamic subject and historians always look for new ways to interpret the past. They do this by studying new sources that become available or, depending on the political or economic circumstances in which they are working, by asking different questions of the past.

Authoritarian leaders used history to shape a collective memory for the state they ruled. For example, consider *The History of the All-Union Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): Short Course*. Published in 1938, it was a piece of work commissioned by Stalin.

According to historian Robert Service,

Source A

> *…the book was intended as the Bible of the regime. People were expected to read chapters at home after work … Attentive readers who wanted to believe in pronouncements issuing from Moscow persuaded themselves to put their trust in Stalin. And they had to suspend their doubting faculties at the same time.*
>
> **From Robert Service, *Comrades: Communism: A World History*, Macmillan, 2007, p. 180**

In the book, there was no mention of Trotsky or of the other Bolsheviks who had been purged by Stalin. Even if people had personal memories that were different from the official version of events, it was wise to forget those and to accept a different version of the past. Fundamental to the ability of leaders like Stalin to rewrite history was their power to determine what was true.

This next extract is taken from *Inside the Stalin Archives* by Jonathan Brent (2008). This book is an account of Brent's time in Russia in 1992, just after the end of the Soviet Union, when he was negotiating access to archive material for Yale University Press. Brent writes here of seeing a folder of documents on the Doctor's Plot of 1952. Inside was the testimony of Seymon Ignatiev, head of the MGB (later the KGB) at the time of the arrests.

Igantiev stated that Stalin had told him to pass all the 'confessions and testimony' directly to him because:

Source B

> *…we ourselves will be able to determine what is true and what is not true, what is important and what is not important … Stalin himself would determine the truth.*
>
> **From Jonathan Brent, *Inside the Stalin Archives*, Atlas & Co., 2008, p. 231**

The photograph below is taken in an Orthodox Church in Gori, Georgia. A man is seen holding an image of Stalin as if it were a religious icon. This service was held in 2005 to commemorate the 62nd anniversary of Stalin's death in March 1953.

Source C

Photograph by Vano Shlamov.

Activity 5

Study the sources in the case study above and answer the questions that follow.

1. Sources A and B both give us some indication of how Stalin influenced collective memory in the Soviet Union. He decided what could be known and, once it was known, what was remembered. How 'true', do you think, are memories of people living in an authoritarian state?
2. In Source C, the commemoration of Stalin's death being part of a church service seems rather incongruous. What does this tell us about how societies 'manage' the act of remembering authoritarian leaders? Can you think of other examples where dead leaders are still revered, despite having been dictators responsible for the deaths of thousands (or millions) of their people?
3. In many countries today, the state decides what students should to be taught in history classes. Why, do you think, is this so? Work in groups to come up with specific examples from different countries.
4. Are there events that you remembered differently after you shared your memories with other people? Test this by discussing an event, perhaps from a year or more ago, with the class. Did someone else's memories remind you of something you had forgotten? How ready are we to accept that other people's memories of a shared experience may be more reliable than our own?

Conclusion

There is a considerable overlap between history and ToK. The concepts of change, continuity, significance, causation, consequence, and perspectives are included in the IB History syllabus and they fit well into the knowledge framework in ToK.

You can use skills you develop in history to add depth and meaning to your ToK presentations and essays. You can use skills developed in ToK to help you evaluate sources and to write the reflection section of your historical investigation. You can use the methodology of history to address the real-life issues that you discuss in ToK. By collecting evidence, weighing the value and limitations of sources, and building a logical, consistent interpretation of the facts you will be able to construct sound, well-supported arguments. History is one of the key areas of knowledge in ToK.

For further information about the ToK course, consult the *Pearson Baccalaureate: Theory of Knowledge, 2nd edition*.

Books and articles

Chapter 1: Fidel Castro and Cuba

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Websites

To visit the following websites, go to www.pearsonhotlinks.com, enter the title or ISBN, and click on the relevant weblink.

Chapter 1: Fidel Castro and Cuba

The Economic History of Cuba

Documents relating to Cuba's economic and social history – click on Weblink 1.1.

Latin American Studies

Provides useful links to other websites. Links are classified by category – clink on Weblink 1.2.

The International Institute for the Study of Cuba

A London-based organization devoted to studying the 'social experience' of Cuba – click on Weblink 1.3.

Castro Speech Database

Includes some of the most important speeches and press conferences given by Castro between 1959 and 1996 – click on Weblink 1.4.

Magnum photos

Online exhibition of photographs to commemorate the revolution's 50th anniversary – click on Weblink 1.5.

Fidel Castro – PBS

Contains maps, timelines, original footage and articles on the history of Cuba under Fidel Castro – click on Weblink 1.6.

Propaganda posters

These posters will help you understand Cuba's view on many of the Cold War conflicts – click on Weblink 1.7.

Chapter 2: Josef Stalin and the Soviet Union

History of the Soviet Union

Lots of great archive material on many aspects of Soviet society, economy and culture – click on Weblink 2.1.

Old posters about Stalin and the Soviet people

A good site for propaganda posters published in the Soviet Union – click on Weblink 2.2.

Marxists website

A useful site to browse for more information on 'socialist realism' and with good links. Be a little wary of the source, however – click on Weblink 2.3.

Holocaust Research Project

Information on the German invasion of the Soviet Union – click on Weblink 2.4.

Cold War – National Archives

Useful archives or links to the role of Stalin in the Cold War – click on Weblink 2.5.

Soviet archives

A Library of Congress exhibition on the Soviet archives – click on Weblink 2.6.

Chapter 3: Mao Zedong and China

The Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

Full text of the book by the Foreign Languages Press – click on Weblink 3.1.

Stefan Landsberger's Chinese Propaganda Poster Pages

Stefan Landsberger's book and website are invaluable sources for anyone studying China under Mao. The series showing how China's perception of the role of women changed over time is well worth viewing – click on Weblink 3.2.

Selected Works of Mao Zedong

Extensive collections of writings by Mao Zedong from Marxists.org – click on Weblink 3.3.

Chapter 4: Benito Mussolini and Italy

Propaganda Posters

An interesting collection of government propaganda posters – click on Weblink 4.1.

Mussolini Declares War in 1940

It's very useful to see Mussolini 'in action'. Also, to assess popular reaction to the declaration of war and the support for Mussolini – click on Weblink 4.2.

Political Speeches

This website contains all of Mussolini's speeches between 1914 and 1923 – click on Weblink 4.3.

Chapter 5: Gamal Abdel Nasser and Egypt

Six-Day War

Website about the 1967 conflict, which includes some analysis of Nasser's handling of the situation – click on Weblink 5.1.

Mid East Web

A major website on Middle Eastern affairs. Search the website with the term 'Nasser' to bring up primary and secondary sources – click on Weblink 5.2.

Suez Crisis

In-depth BBC history of this episode in Egyptian history – click on Weblink 5.3.

The Other Side of Suez

A documentary on The Other Side of Suez – click on Weblink 5.4.

Glossary

abrogate: To revoke or do away with a law or formal agreement.

anschluss: The annexation of Austria by Germany in 1938.

apartheid: Meaning segregation, the term refers to a former policy of segregation as well as political and economic discrimination against non-whites in the Republic of South Africa between 1948 and 1994.

Arab League: Negotiations to set up a league of Arab states began in 1942. A meeting took place in Alexandria, Egypt, in 1943 but it was not until 1945 that the Arab League was officially established. It consisted of six Arab nations: Egypt, Transjordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Lebanon. Yemen joined soon after.

asylum: Granting a citizen of one country refuge in a foreign, sovereign state, or its territory.

autarky: Meaning economic independence or self-sufficiency.

Ba'athist Party: Meaning renaissance or resurrection, the first Ba'athist Party was founded in Syria in 1940 and began as a secular anti-imperialist political party that aimed to unite the Arab countries.

Baghdad Pact: In 1955, Britain, Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan joined together in a NATO-style alliance with the aim of preventing the spread of Soviet influence into the Middle East.

barefoot doctors: Introduced into China in 1965, these were farmers who had received basic training in primary care services such as immunization and delivering births. The aim was to bring health care to rural areas using both traditional Chinese and modern Western methods.

batistianos: Supporters of Cuban president Fulgencio Batista (1940–1944). Batista was also a Cuban dictator from 1952 to 1959, before being overthrown during the Cuban Revolution.

blitzkrieg: The German term for 'lightning war'; an intense military campaign intended to bring about a swift victory.

Bolshevik: A member of the majority faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, which seized power in the October Revolution of 1917.

bond: A certificate issued by a government or a company promising to repay borrowed money at a fixed interest rate at a specified time.

capitalism: An economic system where a great deal of trade and industry is privately owned and runs to make a profit.

centrally planned economy: A system in which the state directs and controls all major economic areas and decides upon the distribution of resources and production, following a national plan.

class enemies: According to Karl Marx, class struggle lay at the heart of human interaction: conflict between classes, each one fighting for its own interests, lay within every society. For example, in China, the interests of the middle classes (or bourgeois including the GMD) would not be the same as those of the peasants or the proletariat whose interests were championed by the CPC.

Comintern: The abbreviation for the Communist International. This organization was set up in Moscow in March 1919 and its task was to coordinate communist parties all over the world, helping the spread of global communism.

communism: A political viewpoint in which all businesses and farms should be owned by the state on behalf of the people. Only one leader and party is needed, and goods will be distributed to individuals by the state. Everyone will thus get what is needed and everyone will be working for the collective good.

Communist Information Bureau (Cominform): Established in 1947, Cominform was, to some extent, a response to the development of the Marshall Plan or European Recovery Plan. Czechoslovakia and Poland had shown interest in taking part in the Marshall Plan, but Stalin wanted to ensure that there was a uniform (negative) response among the satellite states of the Eastern Bloc.

Communist Party of China (CPC): The ruling political party of the People's Republic of China, founded in 1921. In 1949 it defeated the Guomindang and has been in power since.

Confederación Nacional del Trabajo **(CNT):** Translated as the National Confederation of Labour, it was founded in 1911 but was banned at various times, it was the largest labour union in Spain and supported by the Comintern.

cooperative: An association managed by the people who work in it.

Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon): Established in 1949 as a kind of trade organization among communist states. It was not limited to the Eastern Bloc and, in time, included Mongolia, Cuba, and Vietnam.

coup: A violent or illegal seizure of power by a small group or clique.

democratic centralism: A decision-making system and disciplinary policy adopted by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, subsequently followed by the Communist Party of China and by communist parties in other countries.

Democratic Movement for National Liberation (DMNL): This party united the Egyptian Movement for National Liberation with Iskra. Both parties had been set up in 1943 and both were communist. The DMNL was also known by its Arabic acronym, *Haditu*.

détente: The easing of hostility or strained relations between countries.

economies of scale: A term used by economists to convey the idea that an increase in the scale of production can increase total output and can reduce the average cost of each unit of output. In the case of Chinese agriculture, the bigger the farm, the more efficient the production, because of mechanization, cooperation, and specialized labour. This was supposed to lead to higher productivity.

embargo: An official ban on trade or other commercial activity with a specific country.

expropriation: Taking property out of an owner's hands by public authority.

fascism: A political ideology that favours limited freedom of people, nationalism, use of violence to achieve ends, and an aggressive foreign policy. Power is in the hands of an elite leader or leadership. Italian Fascism (Fascism for short) is the name given by Mussolini to his movement from 1922.

fedayeen: It means 'freedom fighters'. These were Palestinian refugees living in Gaza and Sinai who launched surprise attacks on Israeli border posts or settlements.

fellahin: The name given in Egypt to the poor peasant farmers who worked the land. The land reforms carried out after the 1952 revolution were intended to benefit the *fellahin*.

feudalism: In European history, the system of feudalism refers to a system of government whereby the King would parcel out land to his knights, who swore loyalty to him. They would be given ownership of both the land and the peasants who farmed it.

Gang of Four: This was the name given (as an insult) to the group that included Jiang Qing, Wang Hongwen, Zhang Chunqiao, and Yao Wenyuan. They behaved ruthlessly during the Cultural Revolution enforcing the purging of all opposition and readily condemning party officials as 'counter-revolutionaries'. It was said that Mao was the first to refer to them as a gang, when he warned them not to behave 'like a gang'.

Gosplan: Meaning the State Planning Commission, it was set up in February 1921 to coordinate and organize the Soviet economy. It was very important in gathering statistics and allocating resources for the Five-Year Plans. It continued to function until 1991.

Great Depression: The economic crises that began in the United States in 1929 with the collapse of the stock market, and which led to financial ruin of banks in Europe and the United States, and impacted on economies worldwide during the 1930s.

guerrilla: An irregular military force fighting small-scale, fast-moving actions against conventional military and police forces. Guerrilla tactics involve constantly shifting points of attack, sabotage, and terrorism. The strategy of the guerrilla is to wear down the enemy until he can be defeated in conventional battle or sues for peace. (The word guerrilla means 'little/small war' in Spanish.)

gulag: A network of forced labour camps in the Soviet Union, or a camp in this network.

Guomindang (GMD): This is the name of the Nationalist party led by Jiang Jieshi that fought against the Communists in the Chinese Civil War. After it lost to Mao Zedong's Communists in the Civil War, it set up Chinese Nationalist government on the island of Taiwan (also known as Republic of China).

historiography: The study of the writing of history and of written histories.

Holodomor A Ukrainian word that means to kill by starvation.

ideologue: A supporter of an ideology who is uncompromising in his or her belief.

Islamic Caliphate: An area ruled by a caliph or chief Muslim ruler.

kulak: The name given to many of the peasants in the Soviet Union who resisted attempts by Stalin to collectivize farms. These so-called 'richer peasants' were arrested and either deported or executed.

League of Nations: An international organization set up after World War I intended to maintain peace and encourage disarmament.

lictor: A Roman official who protected the magistrates of the city.

mandate: A commission from the League of Nations to a member state to administer a territory.

manifesto: A public declaration of a political party's or candidate's policy and aims, most likely to be issued before an election.

martial law: An extreme measure to control society during war or periods of civil unrest. Certain civil liberties are suspended and government military personnel have the authority to make and enforce civil and criminal laws.

Marxism: A political ideology based on the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the main belief of which was that the workers would rise up against the middle and upper classes to create a society where all resources are shared.

mass line: A term used in communist literature to refer to the leadership of the masses (hence, mass line). In Maoist thought, the 'mass line' referred specifically to the leadership that came from the peasants. Mao often used the phrase 'to learn from the peasants', meaning to use them as a source of practical knowledge, as opposed to party ideology that was too theoretical.

monoculture economy: The agricultural practice of producing or growing one single crop over a wide area.

Muslim Brotherhood: This movement embodied anti-colonialism with a call for a rejection of 'modernity' and a return to a more fundamentalist Islamic state.

national liberation movement: A group that arises in a developing nation to gain independence from foreign rule.

nationhood: The status of being a nation or developing a national identity.

nomenklatura: The members of the *nomenklatura* formed the 'ruling class' of the Soviet Union. These were the senior officials of the Communist Party, the ones who made the policies. The name comes from the list of jobs that were available within the Party.

non-alignment: A term to describe the movement in which a group of countries pursued a neutral position in the Cold War. The Non-Alignment Movement was officially established in Belgrade, 1961.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO): A military alliance founded in 1949 by European and North American states for the defence of Europe and the North Atlantic against the perceived threat of Soviet aggression.

Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO): Set up by the Arab League in 1964 to use armed struggle to secure the 'right of return' for all Palestinians. Yasser Arafat was appointed chairman of the PLO in 1969 when it broke away from the control of the Arab states after their resounding defeat in the Six-Day War.

paramilitary organizations: Groups organized along military lines that are not part of the regular armed forces of a country.

***Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista* (POUM):** Translated as the Workers' Party of Marxist Unification, this organization was founded in 1935 and had its strongest base in Catalonia. Its ideology was linked to that of Trotsky rather than Stalin.

***Partito Socialista Italiano* (PSI):** Translated as the Italian Socialist Party, the PSI was founded in 1892. It was one of the first Italian parties to have national presence. During World War I it adopted a pacifist, neutral position towards the conflict.

plebiscite: A plebiscite means that voters are given the opportunity to express their support of or opposition to a single issue.

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP): An organization founded in 1967 by George Habash, who became its first secretary-general. Its ideology was both secular and socialist, and it called for armed struggle for the recovery of the Palestinian state.

popular front: A term to describe governments composed of left and centre-left parties, including members of a communist party. Until 1935, communist parties outside the Soviet Union had been ordered not to take part in government. With the rise of anti-communism, this policy was now reversed.

positive neutralism: A term used to describe the policy of non-alignment in the Cold War.

proletariat: Meaning the working class, they are wage earners who must earn their living by working.

Qing dynasty: A dynasty established by the Manchus that ruled China from 1644 to 1911.

rapprochement: An establishment or resumption of harmonious relations between two parties in international affairs.

***ras*:** A term for local and regional Italian Fascist party bosses, named after the Ethiopian chieftains that had defeated Italy in 1896.

Red Week: A period in June 1914 when large-scale strikes and protests took place across Italy against liberal government reforms.

Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP): This political party was set up in Minsk in 1898 and focused on the role of the workers in the overthrow of the autocratic system in Russia. Almost immediately, the leaders were arrested and sent into exile. Lenin, among others, went abroad.

Salò Republic: The Italian Social Republic was named after the town of Salò, near Lake Garda in northern Italy where Mussolini initially located his government.

self-determination: The process that enables a country to determine its own statehood and form its own government.

socialism: A political theory of social organization stressing shared or state ownership of production, industry, land, etc.

Sovnarkom: Meaning the Council of People's Commissars. The overthrow of the Provisional Government after the October Revolution of 1917 meant that it had to be replaced by a temporary government until elections could be held. Sovnarkom was the name of the council made up of 15 commissars or ministers. Lenin was the chairman, Trotsky became the commissar for foreign affairs, and Stalin was appointed the commissar for nationalities.

Stresa Pact: An agreement between Italy, Britain, and France signed in April 1935 to act collectively to resist a German challenge to the Treaty of Versailles. It broke down two months later, when Britain and Germany signed the Anglo-German Naval Agreement.

terms of trade: The relationship between the prices at which a country sells its exports and the prices paid for its imports.

theocracy: A system of government in which officials rule in the name of a god, or by divine guidance.

total war: A term used to describe a war in which all the resources of the state are put at the disposal of the government to achieve victory. This will often entail the taking over of vital industries for the duration of the war; the rationing of food and other necessities; the conscription of men (and women in some cases) into the army or into factories; restrictions on access to information, on travel, and so on.

Treaty of London (1915): Also known as the London Pact, it was a secret pact signed in London on 26 April 1915 by the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and Italy.

Treaty of St Germain (1919): A peace treaty concluded in 1919 between the Allies and the Austrian Republic that ended the Austro Hungarian Empire, redistributed parts of its territory and forbade Austria to unite with Germany.

Tripartite Agreement (1950): An agreement made between Britain, the United States, and France in 1950 to defend the armistice line (as determined by Arab–Israeli armistice agreements) and to control the sale of arms to the Middle East.

Twenty-one Demands: These were a set of Japanese demands made in 1915 that would have given Japan significant control over China.

universal suffrage: The right of almost all adults to vote in a political election.

Upper and Lower Egypt: These are geographic terms to describe the Upper and Lower stages of River Nile. Upper Egypt refers to the south, where the Nile enters Egypt from Sudan, and Lower Egypt refers to the north, where the Nile flows into the Mediterranean Sea.

veil: This refers to the niqab or the short veil worn to cover the face. The hijab or headscarf was more common in the countryside than the cities where, during much of the 20th century, the middle classes especially were less likely to adopt either the hijab or the niqab.

Vesenkha: Meaning the Supreme Council of the National Economy, this institution was set up in December 1917 to control the newly nationalized industries of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic and later of the Soviet Union. It existed until 1932, when it was reorganized into different departments.

Wehrmacht: The term used for the German army between 1935 and 1946.

Zionist: A follower of the political movement originally created for the re-establishment of a Jewish nation; it now focuses on the development and protection of the Jewish nation in Israel.

Index

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