

### 1922 (April)

[Vladimir Lenin](#) created a new post, General Secretary and chose [Joseph Stalin](#) for the post. Stalin had been a loyal supporter of Lenin. Leading members of the Politburo supported Stalin's appointment since they presumed that the post would be insignificant.

### 1922 (25th May)

Lenin suffered a stroke while recovering from surgery to remove a bullet that had been lodged in his neck since a failed assassination attempt in 1918.

### 1922 (June)

Lenin's health began to recover.

### 1922 (August)

Lenin began a part time return to work.

### 1922 (December)

Lenin suffered a second stroke that left him paralysed on his right side. He withdrew from politics though he remained leader of the Communist Party. The effective leader of the party was [Kamenev](#) who took the Chair of the Politburo.

### 1922 (29th December)

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was created. It comprised the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, the Ukrainian Social Republic, the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Transcaucasian Soviet Socialist Republic.

### 1923 (during)

The Lenin enrolment was a recruitment drive to bring more workers into the party. It was ordered by Lenin and carried out by Stalin.

### 1923 (January)

Lenin completed his testament. A document that proposed changes to the structure of Communism and also gave his thoughts on his possible successors. Lenin indicated that he was uncomfortable with Joseph Stalin and suggested that he be replaced as General Secretary. The document was to be read out at the 12th Party Congress.

### 1923 (March)

Lenin suffered a third stroke that left him totally paralysed and unable to speak.

### 1923 (after March)

Although Lenin remained the leader of the Communist Party he could take no part in the actual government of the country. There emerged a power struggle between the Right and Left of the party. Stalin formed an alliance with [Zinoviev](#) and [Kamenev](#) known as the Triumvirate which became the dominant faction. [Trotsky](#) who was left wing opposed the Triumvirate.

### 1923 (April)

Lenin's wife kept his Testament secret in the hope's that Lenin would recover and be able to deliver it himself.

### 1923 (October)

#### The Declaration of the Forty Six

This was a document written by forty-six left-wing Communists expressing their concern about the lack of democracy in the party.

### 1923 (October)

#### The Scissors Crisis

Following the end of the civil war and the famine of 1921 – 22, there was an increasingly

widening gap between agricultural and industrial prices that became known as the Scissors Crisis. By this point Industrial prices were 290% more than in 1913 but agricultural prices were just 89% of their 1913 prices.

1924 (21st January)

Vladimir Lenin died following a heart attack.

1924 (26th January)

Petrograd was renamed Leningrad to honour Lenin.

1924 (7th March)

The new gold ruble was introduced to stop inflation. This new ruble was equivalent to 50,000 old rubles.

1924 (May)

Lenin's wife handed over Lenin's Testament for it to be read out at the 13th Party Congress. The document was critical of the main contenders for party leader but they were reluctant to suppress it so soon after Lenin's death especially as Lenin's widow was insistent that his wishes should be carried out. A compromise was reached where it was read out but largely ignored. Furthermore, Stalin's supporters in the Triumvirate, Zinoviev and Kamenev stated that Stalin had changed and that Lenin's comments were no longer relevant. Trotsky was defeated and Stalin accepted as new leader.

1925 (April)

Stalin announced that he wanted to pursue a new theory of Socialism in one country. Zinoviev and Kamenev could not accept this, both sharing Lenin's ideal that Russia was just the first of many countries to embrace Socialism and so the Triumvirate split. Zinoviev and Kamenev now formed a new opposition to Stalin who allied himself with [Nikolai Bukharin](#) (Duumvirate).

Stalin removed Trotsky from government and also from his position as head of the Red Army. Stalin knew that Trotsky was his main rival and did not want him able to influence either policy making or the army. Indeed Stalin feared that Trotsky could use the army to remove Stalin and make himself head of the government.

1925 (December)

At the fourteenth party congress Zinoviev and Kamenev opposed the NEP and advocated large scale industrialisation. They also put forward arguments in favour of World socialism rather than socialism in one country. However, their arguments were easily put down by Stalin and Bukharin and they were removed from the Politburo.

1926

The terms of the NEP meant that some peasants had become wealthy and had money to spend. However, Russian industry did not produce sufficient commodities to satisfy the demands of these wealthier peasants. Because there was nothing to spend their money on the peasants did not need excess money and so stopped selling their grain. This move was known as the Kulak Grain Strike.

1926 (early)

Lev Kamenev and Zinoviev became closer to Trotsky and together they formed the United Opposition.

1927

As a result of the Kulak Grain Strike grain prices had risen alarmingly. The United Opposition argued for a change in policy but were defeated. Zinoviev and Kamenev now allied themselves with Trotsky forming the United Opposition.

### 1927 (December)

At the fifteenth Party Congress Kamenev called for a reconciliation between the factions. His plea was ignored. He, Zinoviev, Trotsky and many other Oppositionists were removed from the Communist Party.

### 1927 (December)

In a bid to keep state expenditure low grain procurement prices were lowered. Additionally a rumour that there could be war with Germany led to people hoarding food. Grain procurement levels were about half that of December 1926.

### 1928 (during)

Stalin rejected the NEP and split with Bukharin. He immediately began working against Bukharin to bring about his downfall.

### 1928 (during)

The Central Committee stated that the State had the right to exercise guidance over literature. This effectively introduced censorship over literature.

### 1928 (January)

Stalin visited the agricultural regions of Siberia and the Urals. To alleviate the grain crisis he imposed grain requisitioning quotas. The peasants responded by decreasing grain production.

### 1928 (January)

Trotsky was exiled to Kazakhstan.

### 1928 (February)

Stalin began removing Bukharin's followers and supporters from the party.

### 1928 (April)

Bukharin won a victory against Stalin during the Central Committee meeting. Stalin stopped grain requisitioning.

### 1928 (October)

Stalin introduced his first five year plan.

Stalin knew that Russia needed to modernise to become more efficient and also self-sufficient. Steel and iron production was to be increased considerably as was the production of energy and tools. To achieve his aims factories were to name and shame those that did not meet required production quotas. Any worker that was absent due to illness or who did not output quotas required was deemed to be working against the state and could be imprisoned or executed.

### 1929 (February)

Trotsky was found guilty of being a counter-revolutionary and was banished from the Soviet Union. He was given refuge in Turkey and settled near Istanbul. While in Turkey he published his "History of the Russian Revolution".

### 1929 (7th November)

Stalin published the "Year of the Great Turn" which outlined his move towards greater industrialisation and collectivisation. It signalled the end of Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP)

### 1929 (November)

At the Central Committee meeting it was decided to send 25,000 industrial workers into the countryside to help impose collectivisation. They were known as the twenty-five thousands.

### 1929 (December)

Forced collectivisation was introduced. All farmers were to pool their resources and work collectively to maximise production of their land. They were to work under the supervision of a twenty-five thousander who in turn reported back to the central committee.

### 1929 (18th December)

On his 50th birthday Stalin made a speech highlighting mistakes made by Lenin. The speech was designed to give the message that Lenin's Russia was gone and that his, Stalin's Russia was just beginning.

### 1930 (during)

Lenin's new mausoleum was unveiled.

### 1930 (30th January)

The Politburo approved "On Measures for the Elimination of Kulak Households in Districts of Comprehensive Collectivisation". This document divided Kulaks into three categories:

1. Those that should be shot or imprisoned
2. Those that should be deported (this included families of group 1)
3. Those that should be expelled from the Kolkhoz and given areas of poor land.

### 1930 (February)

The first of the twenty-five thousanders were sent to the countryside where they were supposed to be the chairmen of collective farms. Many were not well received by local officials and peasants and were given inadequate food. Those that succeeded in their tasks were given awards by the Party.

### 1930 (February)

Around a quarter of all farm animals were slaughtered and eaten by peasants facing collectivisation because they did not want them going to the collective.

### 1930 (2nd March)

Stalin published his article "Dizzy with Success" in which he called for a temporary halt to collectivisation claiming that the collectivisation quota outlined in his 5 year plan had been reached and that "some of our comrades have become dizzy with success and for the moment have lost clearness of mind and sobriety of vision"

### 1930 (25th April)

The GULAG was officially established. Correctional forced labour camps had been used previously but were now named. They were to be used to house those individuals that were a threat to or disrupted the functioning of the Soviet State. They began housing kulaks immediately

### 1930 (June)

The Central Committee agreed the creation of a network of Machine Tractor Stations (MTSs) to try to increase agricultural output. However, due to the high hire costs few farms were able to afford to use tractors.

### 1931 (during)

An acute shortage of leather led to a government ban on private production of shoes. This meant that people had to purchase state-made shoes which were poor quality and fell apart quickly.

### 1932 (during)

Grain procurement quotas for Ukraine were raised by 42%. Ukraine was the most productive agricultural region in the Soviet Union, nevertheless the raising of quotas meant that there would not be enough food for the populace of Ukraine. Despite the fact that

people were literally starving to death the Soviet policy of not allowing peasants access to food produced by the collective until quotas had been met meant that around 7 million starved to death.

### 1932 (April)

Literary and artistic institutions were reorganised and directed to promote a specific style of literature called socialist realism. All other works were banned.

### 1932 (December)

Stalin announced that his first Five Year Plan, introduced in 1928, had been such a success that he was ending it a year early. The first Five Year Plan had seen:

- An increase in the production of raw materials, iron, steel etc

- The Russian economy had grown by around 14% per year

- The urban population trebled as peasants moved to cities to work in factories

- Members of the working class became managers or retrained as engineers

- A struggle to meet targets cause inefficiency and poor production

- Working conditions worsened with the introduction of a 7 day working week and unsafe conditions

- Many local administrators falsifying production figures

- Those that failed to meet targets being sacked, exiled and even executed as enemies of the state

- The move to eliminate free trade saw the establishment of a black market trade in consumer goods

### 1933 (January)

This year saw the beginning of Stalin's second Five Year plan. The plan proposed to:

- continue to increase industrial production in raw materials, iron, steel etc

- improve communications and infrastructure

- increase production of electricity

- introduce new industries

- increase production of consumer goods

Stalin also stated that socialism did not mean wage equality and that incentives for hard work were essential in the new Russia.

### 1933 (during)

The production of armaments was increased in response to Hitler's seizure of power and rearming of Germany.

### 1933 (July)

Trotsky moved to France after the left wing government agreed to give refuge to those exiled from the Soviet Union. However, the move faced strong opposition from the French Communist Party when Trotsky tried to rally support to overthrow Stalin. Trotsky also tried to encourage German Communists to rise against Hitler and Fascism in Germany as a result the German government put pressure on France to expel Trotsky.

### 1934 (early)

Conditions were beginning to improve, although people were still very poor and conditions were hard. The ban on privately produced shoes continued and there was a real shortage of footwear. Rationing ended and worker's wages were increased. The Politburo also approved a measure that allowed peasants to be allowed for privately farm small plots of land.

### 1934 (10th July)

Stalin appointed Yagoda People's Commissar for Internal Affairs, a role that put him in charge of the regular police and the secret police NKVD.

#### 1934 (1st December)

Sergei Kirov was assassinated at his office. Kirov was a member of the Politburo who had disagreed with some of Stalin's policy. It is likely that the [assassination](#) was carried out on Stalin's orders. Stalin had become increasingly distrustful of those close to him. This event marked the beginning of the Great Terror

#### 1935 (January)

Zinoviev and Kamenev were among a number of Russians accused of complicity in Kirov's assassination.

#### 1935 (Spring)

The Norwegian government agreed to allow Trotsky and his family to move to Norway. While in Norway Trotsky wrote "The Revolution Betrayed". In the book he criticised Stalin's Soviet Union stating how it did not measure up to the ideals of the 1917 revolution.

#### 1935 (April)

The age of legal responsibility was lowered to 12 years. This meant that children over the age of 12 could be treated like adults and exiled or executed if they were deemed to be guilty of crimes against the state.

#### 1935 (15th May)

The Moscow metro was officially opened.

#### 1935 (July)

Stalin announced his General Plan for the Reconstruction of Moscow. A Union of Soviet Architects were commissioned to draw up plans for the reconstruction. Stalin's aim was to show the World that the Soviet Union was a great country.

#### 1935 (31st August)

The Stakhanovite movement began. Named after Aleksei Grigorievich Stakhanov, a miner who mined 14 times his quota in 6 hours. Followers strived to beat their quotas by the largest possible margins.

#### 1935 (November)

The first all-Union Stakhanovite Conference emphasised the importance of the movement in improving the Russian economy.

#### 1935 (December)

The Central Committee recognised the Stakhanovite movement and introduced competitions where the most productive workers could be rewarded with rich, quality flats and luxury foods.

#### 1936 (9th March)

The Politburo passed a resolution to protect the USSR from spies. A Commission chaired by Nikolai Yezhov was given the power to purge spies from the USSR.

This measure was the beginning of the Great Terror that was to see Stalin remove his opponents in a series of purges that would last two years.

#### 1936 (25th March)

The head of the NKVD, Yagoda, put forward a measure to remove all Trotskyists to remote camps.

#### 1936 (Spring)

A Committee for Art Affairs was established to tighten the laws on art material that was produced. Art that was produced should reflect life experiences in industry and should inspire workers.

1936 (28th April)

The Sovnarkom (Council of People's Commissars) ordered the removal of unreliable people from the border regions. Nearly 70,000 Polish and Germans were removed from Ukraine and sent to Kazakhstan.

1936 (20th May)

The Politburo approved the measure to remove Trotskyists to remote camps.

1936 (19th June)

Yagoda sent a list of 82 Trotskyists which included Kamenev and Zinoviev to the Politburo.

1936 (27th June)

In a bid to halt the falling population, abortion, which had previously been free to all women, was now banned. Divorce was also made more difficult and payments to those with large families were introduced. The move was dubbed the 'Great Retreat' due to the shift in stance from the 1920s when the family had been considered a bourgeois and free love had been encouraged.

1936 (19th – 26th August)

The first 'show trial', The Trial of the Sixteen saw Zinoviev, Kamenev and fourteen others arrested in January 1935 confess and be found guilty of crimes against the state, notably the assassination of Kirov, plotting to disrupt the five year plans and conspiring with foreign powers to overthrow the government. They were executed.

1936 (26th September)

On Stalin's orders Yagoda was replaced by Yezhov as head of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs. Yagoda was demoted to be People's Commissar for Postal and Telegraph.

1936 (4th October)

The first 'sentencing by lists' saw 585 Trotskyists and Zinovievists whose names were on a list sentenced without a trial.

1936 (6th December)

Trotsky, who had been sentenced to death by the USSR, was offered refuge in Mexico.

1937 (January)

The Trial of the Seventeen was the second 'show trial' that dealt with those former allies of Trotsky including Radek, Piatakov and Sokolinokov. They were accused of plotting with foreign powers, sabotage and maintaining contact with the exiled Trotsky. Thirteen were executed the others were sent to gulags where they later died.

1937 (Spring)

A memo was sent to Party Officials telling them that they should increase efforts to rid the Soviet of spies and traitors. The NKVD set targets for numbers of arrests.

1937 (June)

Stalin, concerned by the fact that the Red Army had been established by Trotsky and that many Generals had been appointed by Trotsky, purged the army. Eight Generals confessed to treason following torture and were executed. 34,000 soldiers were executed over the following eighteen months.

1937 (15th July)

The Moskva-Volga canal was opened. The 128 km waterway that links Moscow and Dubna had been constructed over 5 years from 1932 by Gulag prisoners. The new canal allowed large quantities of materials to be more easily transported through Western Russia.

1938 (during)

The third Five Year Plan was introduced. It was largely concerned with rearmament in order to prepare for war with Germany.

1938 (March)

The Trial of the Twenty-One was the third 'show trial' that accused rightists and Trotskyists of attempting to overthrow Socialism and complicity in the murder of Kirov. Among those accused were former head of the NKVD, Yagoda, Bukharin and Krestinsky. Bukharin was also charged with attempting to assassinate Lenin. They were found guilty of treason and sentenced to death. All those that had been close to Lenin during the years of Lenin's Communism were now dead.

1938 (22nd August)

Beria was appointed deputy to Yezhev, head of the NKVD. With Stalin's approval he began to take over Yezhev's role.

1938 (1st October)

Edited by Stalin himself 'The Short Course of the History of the All-Union Communist Party' was published. The book erased Trotsky from the Party history and also highlighted the contributions made by Stalin to the Communist Party.

1938 (25th November)

Yezhev asked to be relieved from his role as People's Commissar for Internal Affairs. He was succeeded by Beria.

1939 (during)

The State Planning Committee (Gosplan) ordered construction of nine new aircraft factories.

1939 (3rd March)

Yezhov was relieved of his posts.

1939 (March)

Stalin announced the end of the Great Terror.

1939 (10th April)

Yezhov was arrested and imprisoned. Under torture he confessed to being an enemy of the state.

1939 (May)

A Politburo report advocated that the amount of time peasants were able to work on their private land be limited and/or the size of those private plots be reduced in size. This measure was to ensure maximum agricultural productivity for the state.

1939 (24th August)

The [Nazi](#)-Soviet pact was agreed in Moscow. The Treaty officially agreed to maintain a non-aggression stance and increase trade between themselves. Privately the treaty agreed to divide Eastern Europe between themselves with Germany taking Western Poland and Czechoslovakia.

1939 (1st September)

[Hitler](#) invaded Poland, prompting the beginning of World War Two.

1940 (during)



Internal passports were introduced to stop workers changing jobs. Workers had frequently moved from job to job in search of better pay and conditions and this made recruitment and retention a problem for some factories which in turn impacted on the economy.

1940 (2nd February)

Yezhov was tried for crimes against the state. He was found guilty and sentenced to be executed.

1940 (4th February)

Yezhov was executed by firing squad.

1940 (April)

Around 15,000 Polish army officers were murdered in the Katyn Forest

1940 (20th August)

Trotsky was assassinated by Stalin's agents in Mexico.

1941 (April)

Stalin signed a non-aggression pact with Japan.

1941 (May)

Secret intelligence revealed the extent of Germany's re-armament and Stalin concluded that war was imminent and took control of the country's defence.

1941 (June)

The third Five Year Plan came to an end.

1941 (22nd June)

Hitler invaded Russia – Operation Barbarossa. Although Stalin knew that Hitler would break the Nazi-Soviet Pact and invade Russia he had not expected the invasion until mid 1942 at the earliest. Consequently the Soviet Army was not prepared and was initially pushed back.

1941 (late June)

The Sovnarkom issued a decree that all workers should destroy or sabotage any industrial equipment that could fall into German hands.

1941 (Summer)

Stalin ordered a purge of military intelligence personnel to find those responsible for not discovering Hitler's plans to invade Russia. The Soviet army was in a very difficult position. It was facing war with Germany while at the same time facing purges and poor supplies.

1941 (September)

Hitler launched Operation Typhoon – a bid to capture Moscow. With the Germans advancing on the city the people panicked which led to rioting and looting.

1941 (November)

The American 'lend lease' scheme was open to the Soviet Union. While it had little impact on industrial production it was useful in increasing food supplies and transport. Stalin was reluctant to use lend-lease since many American made goods were of much better quality than Russian produced goods thus proving that Capitalism was superior to Communism; something he did not want to do.

1941 (December)

General Zhukov successfully managed to counter-attack the Germans and push them back some 200km from Moscow.

1942 (26th May)

Churchill signed a treaty of alliance with Stalin.

1942 (June)

Hitler launched Operation Blue – an attempt to capture Stalingrad

1942 (23rd August)

The Battle of Stalingrad began.

1942 (September)

The Soviets launched a counter-offensive at Stalingrad (Operation Uranus)

1943 (February)

The Germans were defeated at Stalingrad.

1943 (November)

Stalin attended the Tehran conference with Churchill and Roosevelt

1943 (December)

The Germans had been driven back and two thirds of German-occupied territory had been reclaimed

1945 (early January)

Soviet forces had entered Germany and were advancing steadily.

1945 (4th – 11th February)

The Yalta Conference was a meeting between Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt to discuss details of the end of the war. It was agreed among other things that: Germany and Berlin would be divided into four occupied zones – Soviet, British, French and American

Prisoners of war would be returned to their country of origin

Poland would be allowed to stage free elections

1945 (30th April)

Hitler committed suicide in his Berlin bunker. The Russian Red Army had reached the outskirts of Berlin and Hitler did not want to be captured by the Russians.

1945 (early May)

Stalin's Soviet Red Army had now occupied: East Germany, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Poland, Bulgaria and Albania in addition to the entire Soviet Union which included the former Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarussia, Ukraine and Moldova.

1945 (8th May)

Germany signed an unconditional surrender agreement ending the war in Europe.

1945 (9th May)

Soviet workers were given the day off. For many it was their first day off in years. Throughout the war they had been expected to work 12 to 18 hour shifts seven days a week.

1945 (Autumn)

Soviet prisoners of war were returned, against their will. Stalin deemed them guilty of not following his orders to evade capture and they were all exiled to Siberia where most died.

1946 (February)

The Zhdanov Doctrine was formulated by Central Committee secretary, Andrei Zhdanov. The doctrine stated that the World was divided into two camps: the Imperialist Capitalist camp headed by the United States and the Communist headed by the USSR. It went on to state that conflict in culture should be between the good and the best and that culture that did not represent the good or the best (follow the party line) should be banned.

1946 (5th March)

Winston Churchill made his famous 'Iron Curtain' speech where he warned the Western powers against the expansionist aims of the Soviet Union and stated that an 'iron curtain has descended across Eastern Europe'.

1948 (February)

The Communists took power in Czechoslovakia.

1948 (Summer)

Stalin ordered a blockade of Western Berlin. He wanted to stop supplies reaching Western Berlin which was under the control of the Western Allies. It was only relieved after Allied aircraft airlifted supplies into the Western part of the city.

1949 (January)

The Leningrad Affair.

Leningrad was the Soviet Union's second largest city and Stalin was concerned that he did not have total control over it. When senior Leningrad party officials organised a trade fair to raise money to help those that had survived the siege of Leningrad they were accused of using the state budget to further Leningrad, of trying to make Leningrad more important than Moscow and of taking state funds for themselves.

1949 (September)

The Soviets successfully exploded their first atomic bomb, RDS1

1950 (14th February)

Sino-Soviet Friendship. This was a friendship agreement between the Soviet Union and China.

1950 (25th June)

The Korean War began. The war was fought between North and South Korea with the North being helped by China and the Soviet Union while the United States helped the South. The war which lasted until July 1953 served to further distance the Soviet Union from the West.

1950 (30th September)

Those Leningrad officials that had been accused in January 1949 were now found guilty and sentenced to death.

1953 (5th March)

Stalin died of a brain haemorrhage at the age of 73 years.