Russia and the Soviet Union

Bolshevik Consolidation of Power
An overview of Bolshevik ideology, the October Coup 1917 and Early Soviet Government

Bolshevik Ideology

- Bourgeoisie
  - Those who own the means of production in a capitalist society.
  - Maintain property and make a profit.
  - Could be described as the ‘middle class’
  - Are not the commodity themselves.
  - Make income off their property e.g. factories, farm etc.

- Proletariat
  - Wage earners in a capitalist society.
  - At the mercy of their employers.
  - Could be described as the ‘working class’

- Marxism
  - Political & economic ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.
  - Marx believed that history shows a pattern of struggle between the oppressed and the oppressor.
  - Idealistic → making a classless society.
  - Doesn’t account for Russia not having experienced capitalism à was intended for Germany, England, France etc.

Marxism in Russia

- Russian Marxists establish themselves in 1898 – Russian Social Democratic Labour Party
- 1903 splits into Mensheviks and Bolsheviks
- Lenin and his colleagues had a vision of a future communist society.
  - No poverty.
  - No state = no repression
  - People managing day to day business that kept society functioning.
- “From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.”
- 1900-1917 Lenin develops his ideas on Marxist theory.
  - 1902 – What is to be done?
  - 1916 – Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism
  - 1917 – The State and Revolution
  - 1917 – The April Theses

Background to the October Coup

- Feb Revolution 1917 – Tsar abdicates, end of the Romanov dynasty.
- Feb – Oct 1917 – Russia experienced system of Dual Power [Provisional Government & Petrograd Soviet (Petrograd soviet of workers and soldiers deputies)].
• Prov. Government dismantled Tsarist apparatus.
• Growing power of the soviets severely hampered establishment of an effective political system.
• Soviet dealt with army, railways, communication, employers/employees.
• Prov. Gov “the authority without power”, Petrograd Soviet “the power without authority”.
• Bolsheviks played virtually no role in Feb Rev.
• When Lenin returned from exile, he changed revolutionary dynamic in Russia.
• Bolsheviks had been supporting provisional government (attempting to reach capitalism so that a communist revolution will happen smoothly) → Lenin demanded that this support ceases.
• Lenin believed he could use the Soviet as a power base from which the Bolsheviks could eventually obtain power.’
• “Peace, land and bread”
• Lenin publishes April Theses
  ○ Support for the end of the war.
  ○ Bourgeois phase of the revolution had already occurred, and Bolsheviks must abandon all support for this government.
  ○ Goal of Bolsheviks must be to win control of the soviets currently emerging in all major cities and towns.
  ○ This would bring about true socialist revolution.
• Since July 1917 the Provisional Government was led by Alexander Kerensky → his government was in decline by October.
• Peasant land seizures, law and order breaking down, social and economic distress.
• Most significant mistake was continuing Russia in WWI.
• Lenin decides it is time to act → took great persuasion.

The October Revolution 1917
• Lenin’s will ensured the October Revolution would take place, but Trotsky’s skills of organisation ensured it would be a success.
• Trotsky persuades Lenin to delay the revolution the takeover until the 2nd Party Congress of All-Russian Soviets so that the new government could be presented to the congress and claim could be made that the takeover was in the name of the soviets.
• Trotsky also coordinated Red Guard units to seize key installations and infrastructure in Petrograd and sent the Red Guard units into the Winter Palace to arrest members of the Provisional Government.
• Lenin announced that power had been seized in the name of the Soviets.

How did the Bolsheviks seize power?
• Failures of the Russian government and continuing economic dislocation of the Russian people.
• Bolsheviks worked hard to educate the working class for the task which lay ahead.
● Preached politics and fostered literacy and culture whose sole aim was the successful waging of a class war.
● Hard line approach attracted the working class.
● Those who opposed their ideals continued to disregard them as a real threat.
● Revolution was thus a coup founded on the inability of the government to provide effective leadership and the ability of a small group of people to exploit a situation to its own ends.

**The Early Soviet government**

● Called ‘The Council of People’s Commissars’ or SOVNARKOM and had 16 members.
● Was in a precarious position at the end of 1917 and faced a multitude of problems.
● As a result, introduced as a series of popular measures during the early months of Bolshevik rule.
● Needed to win over the Russian people.

**Coercive measures**

● Knew the new government would need a strong coercive apparatus if it were to survive.
● In addition to a popular reform program, pushed coercive measures.
  ○ Dissolved the constituent assembly after only one day.
  ○ Opposition newspapers closed down à Bolshevik Newspaper = Pravda
  ○ Various political parties banned (Kadets, Mensheviks etc.)
  ○ Purge of the civil service.
  ○ Traditional legal system replaced.
  ○ ‘Enemies of the people’ labelled *burzhui*.

**The Cheka**

● Most significant aspect of Bolshevik coercive power.
● Originally intended to be a temporary organisation created to deal with opposition.
● Soon grew – by 1921 had grown to 100,000 people.
● Evolved into massive state secret police force.
● Brutality far exceeded that of the Okhrana.
● Atrocities during the Civil War – red terror.
  ○ Red Terror = a period of mass killings for the purpose of political repression from 1918-1921.

**The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, The Civil War and the introduction of the New Economic Policy**

**The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk**

● German troops to move on Petrograd.
● Lenin demanded peace with Germany “whatever the cost”.
● The TOBL had major impact on internal developments.
● Handed over vast amounts of territory and 62 million people.
● Was a further stimulus for the outbreak of war.
• Bolshevik enemies organised for the sake of the nation and Russian territorial integrity.
• Many allied troops remained to help bring down the Bolshevik regime.

**Civil War**
• Lasted from middle 1918 – early 1921.
• Cost Russia nearly 1,000,000 lives.
• Half a million civilians displaced.
• Reds (Bolsheviks) vs. Whites (anti-Bolsheviks) vs. Greens (peasant armies protecting their local areas.
• Reds outnumbered and facing intervention from Allies and Whites had experienced Generals.
• Despite this, the Reds emerged triumphant through War Communism

**War Communism**
• To achieve military victory, the army and urban workers supplying the army had to be fed.
• Extreme economic policies of war communism introduced.
  1. All industrial enterprises nationalised under the *Vesenkha*.
  2. Imposition of strict labour discipline.
  3. A strict system of rationing brought in → class based.
  4. End to the market economy.
  5. Grain requisitioning (*prodrazverstka*).

**The Impact of War Communism**
• Was successful in terms of keeping workers fed and enabling the Red Army to operate effectively.
• Some looked positively on War Communism, believing it looked like the birth of Socialism.
• However, it produced a social, economic and humanitarian catastrophe.
• Peasants resisted any way they could → burning crops, killing livestock, etc.
• Intensified Cheka violence.
• First Soviet Labour Camps appeared during the Civil War
• By 1921 ag output plummeted and large-scale starvation swept many areas
• B/w 5–8 million people died due to famine

**The Kronstadt Revolution**
• March 1921 Kronstadt sailors rose up in revolt against Lenin’s government
• Demands revealed anger the impact of War Communism.
• Lenin ordered its suppression with whatever brutality was required.
• Marked a turning point in the party’s relationship with the people as the idealism and genuine link to the proletariat were destroyed.
• Lenin realised there had to be a change in policy direction.
• Kronstadt gave birth to the New Economic Policy (NEP).
**New Economic Policy (NEP)**
- Principal decision at the 10th Party Congress in March 1921 was the introduction of the NEP.
- Russia’s industrial output was 16% of the 1912 level, mining 29%, oil 36% and grain 48%.
- In Petrograd birth rate fell 50% while the death rate increased fourfold.
- NEP was a partial return to capitalism → was unpalatable for Bolshevik ideology but necessary in the short term.

**Impact of the NEP**
- Dramatic and immediate.
- Food began to flow into the cities.
- Shops and restaurants reopened.
- Famine and starvation began to recede.
- Peasant opposition ended.
- Economic revival through accompanied by rampant corruption.
- Private trade fell into the hands of NEPmen who made big profits and became the new bourgeoisie + the kulaks.
- Major increase in crime.
- Scissor Crisis à widening the gap between agricultural and industrial prices.
- As agricultural production increased, there was a consequent fall in the price offered for the goods.
- Conversely, prices for industrial goods rose because of shortages caused by inefficient production methods and the civil war.
- Peasants had to pay more for manufactured goods yet had a lower income from their own produce.
- Concern that regime would lose peasant support again.
- Upturn of economy in mid-1920’s stabilised the situation.
- Overall NEP did not offer an answer to Russia’s long-term development.

**Overall Judgements/Key Points**
- Lenin’s ruthlessness and Trotsky’s military and organisational skills were crucial in the consolidation of power.
- The NEP was crucial as despite victory in the civil war, the Bolsheviks may have been unable to maintain power in the desperate situation they faced in 1921.
- The consolidation of Bolshevik power saw the movement to ‘dictatorship of the party’ and away from the claimed ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’.
- Lenin was forced to take backward ideology steps leading to centralisation as opposed to the idea of representing the workers ‘democratically’ (all power to the soviets).
- Ideology was of major importance to the Bolsheviks; however, they were always ready to compromise on ideology if practical politics made it necessary.
  - Their prime aim was maintenance of power.
The Bolsheviks and the power struggle following the death of Lenin, including
The impact of the Bolshevik consolidation of power, including the creation of the USSR

**Tightening of Political Power**
- By 1924 (Lenin’s Death), Russia had become a one-party dictatorship.
- No longer democratic.
- The Bolshevik government was becoming highly centralised, bureaucratic and hierarchical.
- 1921 → major intra-party division
  - One of the major opposition groups was the **Workers Opposition**.
  - They sought a return to the freer days of early 1918.
- Lenin didn’t approve of this and called for a ban on “factionalism”.
- Price of opposition was expulsion from the party.
- Nomenklatura System put in place.
  - All key party/government jobs allocated by the party.
  - Focused on loyalty, not talent.
  - Developed a party elite.
- 1920’s → intellectual critics of the Bolsheviks deported.
- All publications had to be party approved.
- 1921 → execution of eleven Socialist Revolutionaries.
- The party tightened pressure on the Church.
- Cheka becomes the GPU → Lead by Felix Dzerzhinsky
  - Now a permanent organ of the state.
  - Had power to investigate the political ideas of anyone.
  - Aim was toweed out party careerists, those lacking commitment, the corrupt and the factionalists.
  - At this point the party was controlling the Cheka, but Stalin flips this later on.

**Creation of the USSR**
- December 1922 → ‘Treaty on the Creation of the USSR’ is signed, and Russia becomes the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic.
- 1922 → USSR made up of four republics:
  - Russian SFSR (Soviet Federative Socialist Republic)
  - Transcaucasian SFSR – Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan
  - Ukrainian SSR
  - Byelorussian SSR
- By 1940, the USSR was made up of 15 republics.
- Continues to exist until the breakup of the USSR in 1991.
The Death of Lenin

- 1918 Lenin was shot and survived
- Suffered several strokes
- Late 1923 difficulty moving and speaking
- Final stroke 21 January 1924 and died later that day.

Power struggle between Trotsky, Stalin and other leading Bolshevik figures

The succession
- No procedures had been put in place to decide his successor
- In his last will and testament, he made comments about several leading party figures, both positive and negative, but did not decisively indicate one person to assume leadership
- One clear opinion in his will was his growing distaste for Stalin and had his will been openly published, Stalin’s political future would have been in doubt.

Possible leadership candidates
1. Trotsky- seemed most likely to follow Lenin. Charismatic, intelligent and admired by Lenin. Largely resp. for Red Victory in Civil War. Disliked by many for his arrogance.
2. Zinoviev- opposed Lenin’s call for seizure of power in 1917 and had not distinguished
3. Kamenev- opposed Lenin’s call for seizure of power in 1917 but had Moscow party machine behind him
4. Bukharin- pop with party members. Admired by Lenin as a Marxist theorist
5. Stalin- least likely to assume leadership. Not liked by Lenin. Built up powerful power base in the party bureaucracy.

Stalin ‘under the radar’
- Power had already moved from Lenin’s grasp long before he died
- Isaac Deutscher “two years after the end of the Civil War Russian society already lived under Stalin’s virtual rule, without being aware of the ruler’s name”
- Stalin had accumulated an enormous amount of power and influence within the party as by 1922 he had become:
  o Commissar of Nationalities
  o Commissar of the Workers’ and Peasants’ Inspectorate
  o A member of the ruling Politburo
  o The only permanent liaison officer b/w the Politburo and the Orgburo
  o General Secretary of the Communist Party

Important stages in the power struggle
- Stalin tricks Trotsky into missing L’s funeral. Hurts Trotsky’s reputation. Stalin works to appear as Lenin’s loyal disciple and begins to establish the Lenin cult
- May 1924 Stalin survives the reading of Lenin’s last will and testament
- The triumvirate defeat Trotsky at the 15th Party Congress. Trotsky effectively isolated after this. 1925 Trotsky loses his position as Commissar of War
- Stalin forms alliance with the ‘right’ of the party
- Zinoviev, Kamenev and Trotsky accused of forming a “United Opposition” and are expelled from the party in 1927. Stalin turns on his previously right-winged party allies
- Following 1929 Party Congress, Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky are forced out of the Politburo
- End of 1929 Stalin succeeded in becoming undisputed leader of SU. Defeated his rivals on left and right.

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<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Left-wing position</th>
<th>Right-wing position</th>
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</table>
| **Economics**        | Dismantle NEP  
State control of economy  
Push for industrialisation  
"The state should use its position of control over the supply of most industrial goods and its monopolist position in foreign trade to structure the terms of trade...so as to obtain the necessary resources" G'll 1992 | Pro-NEP  
Economic Freedom for peasants  
"Peasants need to grow into socialism" G'll 1992 |
| **World revolution** | Permanent Revolution – Trotsky  
"Trotsky considered it impossible to overcome Russia’s social and economic backwardness by her own internal efforts" Boriasov 1998 | Socialism in one country – Stalin 1924  
"Socialism in one country was a powerful appeal to national patriotism. Indispensably it put Russia first" Carr 1954 |
| **The Party**        | Party solidarity, centralisation of power  
"The bureaucratisation of the Party apparatus has developed to unheard-of proportions by means of the method of secretarial selecton. There has been created a very broad stratum of Party workers, entering into the apparatus of the government of the Party... this accumulates in secret and thus leads to interior strains..." Trotsky 1923 | Broaden the party base  
Cult of Lenin  
"Both Trotsky and Zinoviev portrayed themselves as Lenin’s colleagues and equals, a picture that did not sit easily with the growing veneration around the founder of the Soviet state. In contrast, Stalin projected himself as Lenin’s disciple" Moncombe and Fielding 1997 |
| **Leadership**       | Problem: Although Lenin had been "leader" he had served as the Chairman of the Sovnarkom (Prime Minister). Leadership was perceived as a collective, so no real clear direction forward. There was no single position that a would-be successor could occupy that would bring with it enough power to establish primacy.  
Politburo, Orgburo and Secretariat were interlocking bodied with a degree of overlap, but Stalin the only full member of all three. Politburo – Access to supreme decision making circles  
Orgburo – Access to the power to direct personnel for the fulfilment of Politburo decisions and filling party hierarchy vacancies  
Secretariat – Control over flow of information, setting agendas and control of personnel | |

Reasons for the emergence of Stalin as leader of the USSR

**Immediate aftermath of the power struggle**

- End of 1920s Stalin in total control of the party
- Trotsky exiled from SU
- Other leading figures removed from the Politburo and expelled from the party
- Stalin could now fill all key party positions with his own appointments
- Stalin was tightening his grip on the GPU

**Stalin: the Lenin of today**

- Emphasis from Lenin cult gradually shifted to the cult of Stalin
- Oaths of loyalty being sworn to Stalin
- Party figures quoted Stalin as well as Lenin
- 50th birthday in 1929 was celebrated and declared within the party and throughout the nation as the “Lenin of today”
**Reasons for the emergence of Stalin**

- Stalin had control of the party through his **key positions** in the Politburo and Orgburo as **General Secretary**.
- Stalin stayed in the background, pretending to be a **moderate peacemaker** → no one realised he was a serious power player.
  - He outmanoeuvred his opponents, playing them off against each other.
- **Luck** favoured Stalin rather than Trotsky.
- **Socialism in One Country** was more appealing to most party members than permanent revolution → gave Russians a special historic role.
- Stalin made full use of **Lenin’s funeral** to advance his position.
  - He tricked Trotsky into not attending.
  - He took on the mantle of **Leninism** to transfer Lenin’s prestige to himself.
- Stalin’s **personal characteristics and qualities** helped him become leader of the party.
- Stalin was able to appoint his **own supporters** to key positions in the party.
  - He controlled membership of the party, using his power to expel members **likely to support Trotsky** and bring in new members likely to support him.
- Stalin was politically very **skilful** and **cunning**.
- Stalin was perceived as dull and mediocre – the ‘grey blur’ → no one saw him as a threat until it was too late.
  - He was **tough** and **ruthless**, and determined to protect his power base and make sure that he was not ousted.
- Trotsky himself was **responsible for his own downfall**.
  - He had weaknesses that made him unfit for the power struggle.
- Lenin and Sverdlov died at the right time for Stalin.
- Trotsky had only joined the Bolsheviks in August 1917 and was not seen as a **loyal member of the party**; thus, many Bolsheviks did not trust him.
  - Many thought he would become a dictator.
- Stalin’s **different positions on the NEP** during the mid to late 1920’s and his decision to go for **rapid industrialisation** at the end of the 1920’s were supported by the majority of party members.
- Less high-minded more **down to earth and practical** than other leading Bolsheviks, Stalin was ideally suited to managing the bureaucratic and centralised party that had developed.
- Trotsky was too **high-minded** and **arrogant**, dismissive of his colleagues.
  - He was respected but did not engender affection or personal royalty.
  - He was most seen as the person most likely to call splits in the party.
- Stalin’s **control of appointments** and the membership made him a **useful ally**.
  - Other contenders wanted him on their side because he could deliver votes in the congress.
- Trotsky did not go out of his way to develop or build up **his power base** in the party and allowed Stalin to **erode** the one he already had.
- Stalin was a **very loyal party member** who was one of the few members with **proletarian roots**.
- Stalin adopted policies that were **broadly approved** by the majority of the Communist Party.
  - He was responsive to the mood of the times.
- Trotsky did not like getting involved in the **drudgery of politics**.
- It was **lucky** for Stalin that Lenin’s testament was not read out and that Trotsky was ill for most of the power struggle.

### The Soviet State Under Stalin

#### The nature of the USSR under Stalin

**Background**
- Stalin’s political system in the 1930s has traditionally been presented as the classic example of a totalitarian state.
- Recent research has attempted to place some doubt on the pervasiveness of the totalitarian model as applied to Stalin’s Russia.
- Questions raised about the efficacy of the totalitarian model and its appropriateness for 1930s Russia.

#### Characteristics of a totalitarian state

- Single all controlling party usually led by a charismatic leader. Other political parties are not allowed.
- Individual is subordinated to the will of the nation.
- An official ideology is promoted by the party.
- The state controls the economy.
- All aspects of mass communication are controlled.
- No opposition or criticism is tolerated.
- There exists a system of terror and the police state.
- Process of law is corrupted.
- Moral and ethical codes that are a feature of a liberal democratic state are disregarded.
- The ideology and philosophy of the party in power are indoctrinated into all levels of society.

#### Stalinism as Totalitarianism

- **SINGLE PARTY LEADER**
  - Only one legal political party allowed.
  - All effective opposition had come to an end after the CW.
  - Party banned factions.
  - Stalin had destroyed remaining party opposition by 1929.
- **RELIGIOUS-LIKE IDEOLOGY**
○ Cynics might argue Stalin was only about power.
○ Ideology provided justification for Stalin’s actions and often served to motivate individuals.
○ The party also wanted ideology to supplant traditional religion.

● PARTY LED BY A CHARISMATIC LEADER
○ Development of personality cult of Stalin.
○ Successfully presented Stalin as the nation’s strong reliable leader in troubled time.
○ Became the personification of the Soviet state.

● PUBLIC OPINION & MEDIA COMMUNICATION
○ Party controlled all media – the press, cinema and the arts.
○ Education was controlled to present the party line and inculcate the correct thinking.
○ Socialist realism was the only acceptable style for the arts.
○ Media promoted the cult of personality around Stalin.
○ Stalin even had his people rewriting the past.

● STATE TERROR
○ Collectivisation achieved through the use of state terror.
○ Industrial workers and managers had to be weary of breaking the rules.
○ The purges and the terror of the later 1930’s shows the willingness of Stalin to hurl the full weight of the state terror apparatus against enemies of the state, real or imagined.

● INTRUSION INTO INDIVIDUAL LIFE
○ Where one worked, studied and lived was determined by the state.
○ The demands of collectivisation and industrialisation increased this control with the introduction of labour books and internal passports.
○ The fate of the Kulaks speaks for itself.

● ALL INSTITUTIONS OF THE STATE
○ By the 1930’s, the party had come to dominate institutions in all areas of life ranging from the arts to sport the Komsomol and armed forces.
○ Participation in activities throughout the country was vetted by party officials and all organisations had party officials.

However:

○ Transport links remained limited and unreliable → was difficult to ensure that decisions made in Moscow were carried out across the country in remote ethnic enclaves.

○ Party organisations far from Moscow had a tendency to act on their own volition.

○ *The greater the power Stalin exercised, the more difficult he found it to control the party’s institutions. Increasingly became the target of resentment.* → James Harris

○ *Soviet citizens were not ‘automatons’ acting without free will. Many were enthused by Stalin’s policies*

○ *Though people conformed outwardly, they remained independent thinkers, sceptical of what the authorities said and indeed took risks in declaring their dissatisfaction with things.* → Sheila Fitzpatrick
**Overall judgement:**

- “In some respects, the most totalitarian of all the regimes may appear to have been Stalin’s Russia, since it fulfilled all the categories mentioned. Marxism-Leninism was an all-embracing ideology which was used extensively as a social-engineering force...”
  Stephen Lee
- Recent research from the former soviet archives suggests that the regime had worked out effective methods of pressuring society and the party-state structures.
- Stalin had a strong grip on power and the implementation of important decisions.
## Economic transformation under Stalin

### Collectivisation

### Details

#### Background
- 1927 – facing a potential economic crisis.
  - Inefficiency of exports.
  - Lack of industrialisation and lack of capital to increase industrialisation.
  - Price of industrial goods were high and agricultural goods prices were low – led to the ‘scissor crisis’.
- The NEP was not producing the capital that was needed for industry to expand.
- Two possible solutions:
  1. Increase taxes and lower grain prices → leads to kulaks producing less grain and serious food shortages.
  2. Lower taxes and increase grain prices → leads to prevention of food shortages and less capital available for industrialisation.
- Industrialisation was imperative, but Russia needed increased capital to achieve this.
- Stalin initiates the plan of collectivisation.

#### Process
- Peasant farmers would be forced in to large collective or state farms.
- This would make possible the use of modern technology which would greatly increase the output of grain which would then be sold internationally.
- Stalin knew there would also be political gains:
  - He would be able to remove right-wing opponents.
  - He would gain full political control of the countryside.
  - He would destroy the class of the “kulaks”
- The process unfolded as follows:
  - Committee took everything from the kulaks.
  - The kulaks responded with passive resistance to extreme violence.
- Stalin implemented a man-made famine to wipe out the kulaks in the Ukraine.

#### Results
- Collectivisation was simultaneously an absolute disaster, a massive human tragedy, a political masterstroke, socially transforming and a brilliant long-term economic success.
- Collectivisation as a *disaster*:
- Livestock population plummeted.
- Size of grain harvest fell.
- Collectivisation as a *human tragedy*:
  - Between the violence, deportations and famines, it is approximated that between
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collectivisation as a political success:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>○ Communist party had full control of the countryside.</td>
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<td>○ Private ownership was destroyed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Peasants were now dependent on the state as its employees.</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Ukrainian nationalism was destroyed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collectivisation transforming the countryside:</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Dekulakisation destroyed the previous rural social structure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Weakened the influence of religion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Peasants lost their brief period of independence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collectivisation as an economic success:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Grain procurements as a percentage of the harvest increased from 15% in 1928 to 32% in 1934.</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Grain exports rose from 0.029 million tonnes in 1929 to 4.76 million tonnes in 1930, and 5.05 million tonnes in 1931.</td>
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**The process of industrialisation**

- **1920’s → Russia is predominantly agricultural.**
  - ○ There were some major industrial centres in Moscow.
  - ○ NEP had stimulated some small-scale industry.
  - ○ However, Russia was almost a century behind the western world in terms of industrialisation.
- **By WWII, the Soviet Union had become the second industrial power in the world, behind the USA.**
- **Industrialisation was run by the State Planning Authority through Gosplan (State Planning Commission; formed as part of Vesenkha) → in charge of production targets and setting guidelines.**
- **The economy changes from a mixed economy under the NEP to a command economy (a system where the government, rather than the free market, determines what goods should be produced) under Gosplan which meant the removal of much of the human element of the economic system.**

**Five-Year Plans:**

- **The state took complete control of the economy.**
  - ○ Central Planning → What to produce, where and when to produce it, who would work where, and which sectors of the economy had priority.
  - ○ Plans set long-term targets and short-term targets for production.
- **The plans were backed up by the law.**
It became a criminal offence to not meet the targets set. Managers and individuals could be accused of sabotage or treason if targets were not met. Those who exceeded targets were praised in the press and received bonuses.

- **Central planning as a ‘top down process’**
  - Party established overall targets.
  - Commissariats would work through regional administrators.
  - These regional administrators would then set specific targets for the enterprises.

- **The first Five-Year Plan was extremely chaotic.**
  - Lack of coordination between the sectors of the economy.
  - Party officials interfered with production.
  - Managers were under enormous stress due to the possibility of arrest if targets were not met.
  - Shock Brigades: Groups of young workers used by the state to set an example of correct work habits and put pressure on other workers.

- **Tremendous emphasis on heavy industry.**
  - Based on western economic strength.
  - Focus on enterprises of coal, iron ore, steel, oil and transport.

- **Prestige projects**
  - Building of the Dnieper Dam, the Moscow-Volga Canal and the Moscow underground railway system.

- **The lives of workers and ordinary Russians were tough in the extreme.**
  - There were opportunities for education, training and bonuses.
  - Labour discipline was harsh and there were tough punishments for lateness, absenteeism, poor quality work, leaving without permission and damaging equipment.
  - By the late 1930’s, an internal passport system was in force to control workers’ movements.
  - Each worker had a labour book that documented work history, qualifications, mistakes and poor discipline.
  - Living standards plummeted.
  - The government implemented forced labour, and many kulaks, prisoners and terror victims were sent to work in inhospitable conditions, such as the Baltic-White Sea Canal.

- **Despite the problems faced, hardships experienced, mistakes made, and freedoms lost, the achievement of industrialisation was impressive.**
FIRST PLAN (1928-32)
Concentrated on heavy industry.
1500 enterprises started.
Increases in electricity production, machine tools and tractor works established.
Steel production up by one third.
Decline in consumer industries.
Much investment had to go into collectivisation.
Overall impressive growth in many areas.

SECOND PLAN (1933-37)
Heavy industry still preferred.
Transport given high priority.
4500 new enterprises.
Major increases in metals and machine tools.
Expansion of chemical industry.
Consumer industries still suffering but improvement from the first plan.
Targets made more reasonable.
Excessive excitement of first plan was overcome.
Period of consolidation.

THIRD PLAN (1938-41)
Did not make full term due to German invasion in 1941.
Continued emphasis on heavy industry.
Foreign situation - focus on armaments.
Military priorities led to shortage of supplies.
Third Plan coincided with the purges and the terror.
Key personnel caught up in purges meant that factories were deprived of the people needed to make things work.
Political transformation under Stalin

3 Key Developments

1. The transformation of the Communist Party into a disciplined, obedient, hierarchical structure with Stalin at its apex.
2. The introduction of arguably one of the world’s most democratic constitutions.
3. Chaos and confusion at the lower levels and in more distant regions.

The Stalinist constitution

- Aim to portray the outside world the victory of socialism.
- Found its expression in the 1936 Constitution.
- Based on the assumption that the defeat of the Kulaks meant that the internal class struggle was over and true socialist order could be constructed.
- Greatly extended the power of the federal government
- Highly democratic features.
- Legitimised the notion of the one party state
- However, the power of the Supreme Soviet very limited à rarely met and just rubber stamped decisions already made by higher organs of the state.
- Power remained in the hands of the politburo.

Stalin’s role in the Soviet State

- Dominated the ruling Communist Party → allowed their positions to ‘the great helmsman’ as Stalin was called in Soviet propaganda.
- Became the complete embodiment of the nation as a ‘cult of personality’ was developed.
- Under his leadership the Soviet Union attempted to transform itself into a modern industrialised society.
- Had complete control over the secret police and the whole machinery of security and justice.
- All aspects of soviet society came under Stalinist control.
- Foreign policy was determined by the wishes of Stalin.

The Purges

- Thousands of party members stood accused of horrendous crimes, were innocent, yet confessed and accepted their fate.
- Accused of everything from planning to assassinate Lenin and Stalin, to wrecking economic enterprises, to being in contact with Trotsky or spying for Germans or Japanese.
- By the late 1920’s Stalin was purging to remove his opponents in the power struggle.
- 1928 → first of show trials occurred.
- Kulaks resisting and targets not being met → scapegoats for these failures had to be found.

The Murder of Kirov

- By 1934 gradual easing of pressure in Soviet Union.
- Targets for 2nd 5 year plan eased, and some concessions granted to peasants.
The calm ended abruptly with the murder of Sergei Kirov on 1 December 1934. He was popular in the party. The alleged assassin was Nikolayev and it was a crime of passion and personal grievance. But 1956 → Khrushchev declared he was murdered on the orders of Stalin. Stalin saw Kirov as a dangerous rival.

**Impacts**

- In March 1935, the Kirov Decrees were announced and included:
  - Minimum age of death penalty lowered to 12.
  - Parasites and anyone who knew a parasite were to be executed.
  - Stalin demanded ‘collective responsibility’ and called people to be on the lookout for ‘enemies of the people’.
  - Thousands denounced to NKVD.
  - Atmosphere of fear gripped the nation.
  - Next few years wave of terror unleashed.
  - Thousands of party members caught up in the hysteria.
  - The Great Show Trials of the 1930’s.

**The Yezhovshchina (The Great Terror 1937-1938)**

- Terror of the late 1930’s went far beyond grand show trials.
- Sep 1936 → Yagoda replaced by Nikolai Yezhov
- Spent 3 years as secret police before he was caught up in the terror and shot.
- Known as the ‘bloodthirsty dwarf’
- Inclined to sadistic pleasures
- The terror unleashed on the country in 1937-8 carries his name
- Drew up vast arrest lists
- Local NKVD offices given quotas to fill; a fixed percentage would be executed
- Innocence or guilt was irrelevant
- The terror spread to all branches of the party, the economy, the arts, the armed forces.
- Key target of NKVD were party members, but thousands of ordinary people were sucked into the whirlpool of the purges.
- Anyone arrested and interrogated was able to provide the names of others to be arrested.
- Even close confidants of Stalin could become the victim.
- Many foreign communists in Russia also became targets.
- Trotsky murdered in Mexico 1940.
- Media campaigns launched exhorting people to seek out potential spies.
- People willing to come forward with names.
- Intellectuals particular targets.

**Statistics**

- 1 in 18 people were arrested.
• Quotas of victims were laid down like production targets, there was no appeal and execution was immediate.
• 1934 – 1million arrested and executed from Leningrad and Moscow.
• By 1937, approx. 18million sent to labour camps – 10 million died.
• By 1939, another 1million shot, 1-2million died in the camps.

**Impacts of the Terror**

• Terror covered the nation in a blanket of fear and atomised society. You did not trust your workmates, friends or family members
• Massive loss of life
• Expected population 1937: 180 million
• Actual population 1937: 164 million
• Terror totally transformed communist party> 1939 only 8% of party members had been members in 1920
• 75% of party members who joined b/w 1921-28 had been eliminated
• Now a young party
• Nearly entire party and its leadership owed careers to Stalin
• Nature of secret police changed > By late 1930s secret police no longer controlled by party. Only Stalin stood above it.
• Non-Russian groups throughout Soviet Union suffered enormously> NKVD systematically removed leadership of non-Russian groups
• Rigorous Russification policies
• The armed forces were catastrophically impacted> massive purge of the leadership of the armed forces.

**Political Consolidation**

• Purges left vacancies - these were filled by Stalin’s supporters - the nomenklatura, who enjoyed enormous privileges
• Allowed Stalin to shape the party to his liking
• “It was characteristic of Stalin to have his own allies “marked” by their own subordinates: In Stalin’s system identical thugs kept replacing each other, like so many Russian dolls” (Stone)
• “This was Stalin’s victory over the Party” (Shapiro)

**Social and Cultural change in the USSR under Stalin**

**Women**

• November Revolution → genuine desire within the party to achieve equality for women.
• Lenin supported efforts of Commissar of Social Welfare, Alexandra Kollontai
• Women made significant gains in the early Bolshevik government:
  • January 1918 given civil, legal and electoral equality.
  • Equality in marriage and divorce by consent.
  • Abortion legalised.
  • Women allowed to be combatants in the Civil War.
  • 1920 Bolshevik Women’s Section formed.
• Given wider education opportunities and encouraged to join the workforce.
• However, Russia did not lose deep-seated male chauvinism overnight.
• Kollontai died a disappointed woman as the revolution she hoped for never eventuated.
• Under Stalin, revert to more conservative values.
• 1930’s period of massive upheavals with millions of workers on the move, with social ramifications:
  ○ Birth rate falling.
  ○ Increasing levels of juvenile crime.
  ○ Soviet cities inundated with large numbers of homeless children.
• Changes made in official approach to women known as “the great retreat”.
• More serious attitude towards marriage now demanded and children were to be taught respect and obedience.
• 1936 à government introduced a family code.
• These hard line policies began to affect domestic issues.
• From 1935 NKVD became involved in dealing with juvenile crime.
• NKVD attempted to clear the streets of homeless children and place them in orphanages.
• Parents fined if their children were guilty of juvenile crime and could have their children taken from them.

Limitations

• For the vast majority of Soviet women in the 1930s, issues of ideology and concern about the place of women were more or less irrelevant.
• What mattered was getting through the daily grind of feeding and clothing their family, coping in cramped living spaces and achieving some sort of tolerance of neighbours in communal apartments.
• Even professional women could not escape the daily grind of domestic duties imposed upon them.

Education

• Late 20’s → cultural revolution.
• Young people encouraged to criticise bourgeois values and discover their revolutionary self and proletarian values.
• Values of schools and authority of teachers questioned.
• Many teachers forced out of jobs, branded as bourgeois specialists.
• Cultural revolutions gained a momentum of its own.
• These young people were active supporters of Stalin.
• Early 1930s Stalin called for an end to cultural revolution.
• Russia needed educated and disciplined citizens and all he could see were schools in chaos.
• Immediate shift to more conservative and conventional approach to schools and education.
  ○ Teaching to be based on a tight curriculum, strict programming and structured timetables.
  ○ Emphasis on practical subjects such as physics, chemistry, maths etc.
Homework, rote learning, uniforms
Discipline was reinforced and respect for teachers.
Conservative nature of schools extended to universities.

- Stalin declared history should be taught with reference to previous Tsars such as Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great.
- Greater emphasis on dates, chronology and great men.
- Rewriting of revolutionary history:
  - John Reed’s book “Ten Days That Shook the World” was no longer printed – it had no mention of Stalin.
  - Trotsky’s historical works banned.
  - 1938 compulsory for all students to be taught Soviet history from A V Shestakov’s “A Short History of the USSR” → Stalin as the central figure and Trotsky completely eliminated unless in a negative light.

Culture and the Arts

- 1920s spectacular period of cultural activity.
- Once Stalin gained supremacy Soviet artistic life was forced to change.
- Artistic endeavour to be mobilised to promote the efforts of the new Russia.
- Artists now had to work within the framework of ‘Socialist Realism’.
- Days of artists expressing their inner feelings and emotions were gone.
- Socialist Realism demanded all artistic efforts be positive, optimistic and heroic.
- Art should assist in the social construction of the time and be in accord with the views of the party.
- Art was to be didactic.
- Socialist realism was instrumental in developing the Stalinist cult of personality.
- Heroes were the order of the day.
- Celebration of glorious present and golden future.
- Late 30s also saw a revival of more nationalistic themes, a development which was promoted more fully in the Great Patriotic War.

Culture and the Arts - Censorship

- Censorship not always heavy handed.
- Party ensured that a positive image of the regime was prominent and details of any shortcomings in industrialisation or brutality of collectivisation did not appear in the media.
- Great publicity given to purges late 1930s but most NKVD activities were under the radar.
- Censorship of arts.
- Censorship was not always clear cut → difficult for party officials to know what to do.
- E.g. first decade of Bolshevik rule, religion was limited tolerance.
- However, from 1929 a new militancy appeared as churches were closed down and priests arrested.
- Backlash → militant campaign eased, and regime could claim it was not involving such things in the first place.
• Caused problems for officials as they could not be informed of policy change.

**Religion**
• Churches and organised religions were condemned
• The League of Militant Atheists were established in 1925 → membership was over 5 million in the 1930s
• There could be no commitment to any other ‘God’
• Priests were arrested and many were executed

**Youth**
• While not at school learning useful things and the correct views of the past, students were forced into the Komsomol, the Communist Youth Leagues, where they were taught about Marxist thinking, maintained healthy bodies and learnt to love Stalin.
• Originally independent of the Communist Party but by Stalin’s time it had come under party control.
• Membership was voluntary but failure to join could be used against a person as evidence of a lack of support for communist ideals.
• Lack of membership could make it difficult to obtain those essential ‘hard-to-get’ things.
• Membership can be seen as a form of blat.
  o Blat is a system of corruption and bribery that develops in order to get the essential things that a person would need.
• Membership made one by definition an ‘activist’.
• Komsomol members would volunteer to assist the party or state organisation – evident in their involvement in the grain procurement during collectivisation and the anti-religion campaigns of the 1930’s
• Had their own uniform.
• Activism had an appeal for many Komsomol members who had great enthusiasm for the idealistic goals of the regime.
• An element of activism was to expose any abuses they discovered in the bureaucracy e.g. Katia Ivanova.
• Not always viewed in a positive light by ordinary Soviet citizens and their activities often resented.
• Religious believers referred to the tie of pioneers as the ‘devil’s noose’ and physical attacks on young activists occurred.
• They were seen by citizens as the regime’s favoured and privileged few.
• Common for young Komsomol members to report their parents for the anti-party behaviour.
  o Example: Paulik Morozov
    • Reports his dad for having extra grain, dad gets sent to a gulag and then is executed, so Paulik’s grandfather kills him for reporting him.
• Many activists involved themselves in an unmasking → a stigma attached to a person form a previously bourgeois or upper class background and many Soviet citizens made efforts to create a proletarian or peasant background.
• Concealment of one’s class became a crime.
• Unmasking could result in loss of work, food, housing, promotion and other essentials of life.

**Youth Idealists**

• For some young people, Soviet rule inspired genuine idealism which went far beyond the exhortations of the regime.
• They sought to do more than obey party dictates.
• They wanted to create a new way of life based on true socialist principles.
• Small groups began to experiment with ideology in a practical way and live on socialist principles.
• They shared living space, earnings, money and possessions.
• Domestic tasks would be rostered.
• By late 1920’s Komsomol estimated that over 50,000 people living in this manner and as young people became involved in Five-Year-Plans, this number expanded.
• This idealism was not to survive the era of the purges and the war.

**Limitations**

• Not all youth enthusiastically embraced the regime.
• Between December 1933 and May 1934 police came across several counterrevolutionary groups such as the ‘Society for the Rebirth of Russia’.
• In Voronezh, police came across groups supporting Trotskyism and fascism in high schools.
• One school had swastikas painted on its walls.
• Impact of youth homelessness at the time.

**Cult of Personality**

• 1930's cult of personality reached unbelievable levels.
• Necessary to provide a unifying figure for the Soviet Union.
• Deliberate fixation of individual dedication and loyalty to an all-powerful leader.
• Ever present image → posters and paintings of Stalin in every home, school, shop, factory, peasant’s hut, museum, gov office- any building capable of hanging a picture
• Impossible to pick up a newspaper without Stalin on front page
• No visit to cinema possible without seeing a newsreel praising his visionary leadership
• Any public celebration would have people carrying massive portraits of Stalin
• Image of Stalin in 1930s varies.
  o Early images presented as humane and understood people’s needs à not a remote, distant figure.
  o Often presented as a man who was intimately involved in the lives of his people.
  o Many images of Stalin with children.
• Late 1930s image had changed
• Stalin presented as man of wisdom
• Seen discussing issues with Lenin
• Instructing party workers in meetings
• As a young man instructing his friends
More heroic and sometimes detached and superior
Paintings and movies produced depicting Stalin as a great Civil War hero
A lone leader, “the great helmsman” guiding the ship of state through troubled waters
Stalin’s words were everywhere.
Newspaper editors vied with each other to see who could include the most quotations and references to Stalin
Stalin’s role in the past was steadily built up over time at the expense of other leading Bolsheviks, esp. Trotsky.
Trotsky written out of Soviet history books
Not only were Stalin’s defeated rivals written out of history, they were “airbrushed” out of history.
Leading party figures who were no longer in favour were removed from photographs.
Soviet Foreign Policy

The nature of Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1941

Key Points

- 1917-21: Revolutionary Pragmatism or Consolidation
  - Response to their need for survival.
- 1920’s: Making Friends
- 1930’s: Search for Security

Overview

- Soviet Union foreign policy by conflicting positions.
- Soviet foreign policy highly contradictory and multi-faceted.
- On the same day could make totally contradictory pronouncements.
- Revolutionary position vs. traditional approach.
- These conflicting approaches fragmented policy from mid-1920’s on (United Front v. Popular Front).
- Rise of Nazism/Fascism saw a significant shift in Soviet foreign policy as it saw itself being threatened – League of Nations, Treaty with France & Czechoslovakia.
- Great Britain and France slow to move against Hitler.
- Allowed him to move eastwards (threat to USSR).
- Munich Conference 1938 final straw.

However...

- Soviet Union soon acting as a typical state.
- Hoped for revolutions but did not eventuate.
- Had become a state with no alternative but to coexist with capitalist states.
- Whilst Comintern doing its best to destroy the Governments of Britain, France and Germany, the Soviet Commissariat of Foreign Affairs was doing its best to develop cordial relationships.
- Once “socialism in one country” had become official thinking, the capitalist west was needed for trade and capital.
- Ideology was to be sacrificed to national state interest.

Revolutionary pragmatism / consolidation 1917-1921

- One aim in 1917-21 survival à all foreign policy actions aimed in this direction.
- Lenin’s first actions concerned the war with Germany.
- Adamant that war with Germany had to come to an end and was willing to pay any price to achieve this.
  - Treaty of Brest-Litovsk
- Threats from Allies and Western governments clear in their intentions.
- “The strangling of Bolshevism at its birth would have been an untold blessing to the human race” – Winston Churchill.
Making International Friends - 1920’s

- Victory in Civil War brought survival but world revolution now a distant dream.
- 1920's dominated by attempts to normalise foreign relations.
- Ideological changes at home ensured this & the need to revive the Soviet economy.
- 1920 friendship treaties signed with immediate neighbours (Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, 1921 Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan).
- 1921 commercial agreements signed with Britain and Italy.
- 1923-24 some diplomatic relations with Britain.
- By 1930 had relations with all great powers except US and attending League of Nations conferences.

1922 Treaty of Rapallo

- Claims each had for reparation and compensation cancelled.
- Diplomatic relations restored.
- Granted the other 'most favoured nation status’.
- Article 5 stated each power promised to “cooperate in a spirit of goodwill to meet each nation’s economic interest”.
- Was clearly a “marriage of convenience” à the two powers were worlds apart ideologically.
- For Soviet Union it was a triumph as diplomatic isolation had been broken.
- “It secured for the Soviet Union its first official recognition by a great power.

Soviet-German Relations Obstacles

- Hurt in 1923 following abortive communist coup in Germany.
- Stresemann moved Germany closer to the west with the Treaty of Locarno and their entry into the League of Nations.
- These developments did not stop German-Soviet trade treaty being signed in 1925 + neutrality treaty in 1926.
- Economic ties strengthened and Reichswehr continued its clandestine activities inside the Soviet Union.

1930’s Search for Security

- With the onset of the Great Depression, ambiguity of Soviet foreign policy reappeared.
- Capitalism was facing collapse and briefly revived hopes of world revolution.
- Through Comintern, Stalin ordered communist parties in Western countries to break links with moderate socialist parties.
  - Disaster as it weakened opposition to the rise of fascism.
  - Particularly the case in Germany.
- Had the SPD and KPD worked together, it might have been possible to prevent the rise of Hitler and the Nazi party.
- However this antagonistic policy was accompanied by Soviet desire to sell its surplus grain to western powers in order to finance massive drive towards industrialisation.
- By mid 1920s Soviet foreign policy changed direction.
Stalin saw dangers to the Soviet Union of the growth of Nazi expansionism in Europe and Japanese militarism in Far East.
When Hitler signed 10 Year Non-Aggression Pact with Poland in 1934, fears of joint Polish-German military action in the Ukraine seemed real.
Single most important foreign policy aim for Stalin at this point was avoidance of war.
Going through collectivisation and industrialisation à no condition to fight a war possibly in east and west.
Hitler made no secret for his detestation for the Soviet regime.
Soviet Union was a country of inferior Slavs governed by Jewish Bolsheviks.
Dreams of lebensraum meant destruction of Soviet power and enslavement of Russian people.
Consequently, Stalin ordered western communist parties to forget world revolution and cooperate with anti-fascist groups.
7th Comintern Congress July 1935 ordered them to join “popular front” governments where appropriate.
Such a popular front government was formed in France in 1936.
Soviet Union now attempted to forge ties with non-communist nations to forge a united bloc against the threat of Nazism.

**Steps to forming United Bloc Against Nazism**
- 1932 Treaty of friendship signed with Italy (short lived – Mussolini later signed Anti-Comintern Pact with Hitler).
- 1933 Soviet Union and the United States establish diplomatic relations.
- 1934 Soviet Union joined the League of Nations.
- 1935 Soviet Union and France sign allegiance.
- 1935 Czechoslovakia joined Franco-Soviet combination.
- 1936 Communists joined the Popular Front government in France.
- 1936-39 Stalin strongly backed the Republican anti-fascist forces in Spanish civil war.

**The Nazi-Soviet Pact August 1939**
- August 23, 1939 – Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia signed one of the most incredible documents in diplomatic history.
- The Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact.
- Stalin realised by late 1938 his hopes of forming a united front with the west against the threat of Nazism was going to fail.
- In western ruling circles, Nazism seen as a lesser evil than Bolshevism.
- British Prime Minister Chamberlain May 1939: “I must profess profound distrust of Russia”
- Soviet Union isolated and vulnerable.
- Convulsions going on inside the country not helping (purges etc.)
- Efforts to forge military ties with the west came to nothing.
- Fears increased when Germany, Japan and Italy came together in the Anti-Comintern Pact September 1937 – Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis.
- Chamberlain pursuing policy of appeasement.
- Highpoint of appeasement came Sep 1938 at the Munich Conference.
• Hitler, Mussolini, Chamberlain and Daladier met to carve up Czechoslovakia and gave Hitler Sudetenland area.
• Czech and Soviet Union not invited to attend the conference.
• "The view from Moscow was that western powers were driving Hitler eastwards and hoping for a struggle between fascism and communism in which would destroy the other."

Coming to the agreement
• Stalin began to think about coming to an agreement with Hitler.
• March 1939 - Germany invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia à end of appeasement.
• Britain warns that if Hitler attacks Poland they would declare war against Germany.
• Hitler wanted Poland but wanted to avoid war on two fronts.
• Hitler too now began to think about an agreement with Soviet Union.
• Stalin and Hitler both opportunists – neither trusted the other but an agreement suited them both.

The Agreement
• Benefits for both sides.
• If either finds itself of war, the other will not support the third power.
• Takes immediate effect (Hitler wanted to keep his deadline to attack Poland).
• Secret protocols added – Soviet Union allowed to take over a number of territories.
• Impact:
  ○ Germany invaded Poland
  ○ Russia occupied eastern Poland

After the Nazi-Soviet Pact (September 1939 - June 1941)
• Hitler had no intention of honouring the pact.
• Stalin must have known but right until May 1941 continued to keep his side of the bargain and sending materials to Germany only weeks before German invasion on June 1941.
• Following defeat of Poland a period of “phony war” continued until April 1940 when there was no military action in Europe.
• Then Hitler attacked Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and France.
• By June all had been defeated.
• 1940-41 had also consolidated his position in eastern Europe.
• Now ready to take on Russia.
• 1939 – Soviet Union attacked Finland (who refused Soviet territorial demands).
• The “Winter War” as it became known was humiliating for the Soviets.
• Inflicted several defeats on Russia but Finland eventually defeated.
• Cost for Stalin had been high.
• By 1941, Soviet Union had consolidated its position by annexing Baltic states and Bessarabia and has engaged in massive rearmament drive.
• This was the position when Germany invaded Russia 22 June 1941 in Operation Barbarossa.
Soviet Foreign Policy in the far east

- Threats from west not only concern for Soviet Union in 1930s – also potential of conflict with Japan in the east.
- In 1931, Japan attacked Manchuria and violated Soviet rights on the Chinese Eastern Railway.
- Soviet Union in no position to act against Japan in Manchuria and even offered a non-aggression pact which Japan refused.
- The Soviet Union established links with the Nationalist regime in China.
- Following Japan’s attack on China 1937, Soviet advisors sent to help the Nationalist Chinese forces that were now fighting alongside Chinese communist forces.
- Soviet-Japanese clashes along their common border between 1937-39 resulted in major Japanese setbacks.
- Japanese expansion now directed southwards.

The role of ideology in Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1941

The dominant theme in Soviet foreign policy 1917-1941 was the promotion of national state interest. Domestic concerns and the desire to protect the Soviet future determined policy. The domestic ideological debate only reinforced the national interest line.

National interest takes precedence at all times → informs the changing ideology debate → informs Soviet Union foreign policy.

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<th>Ideological</th>
<th>Not ideological</th>
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| - Critical of old diplomacy and secret treaties.  
  ○ Repudiation of debts, withdrawal from imperialist war.  
  ○ Formation of Comintern.  
  ○ Support of socialist governments in Spain.  
  ○ Support of socialist parties in other countries post 1933.  
  ○ Nazi-Soviet pact was the only option available. | - Traditional foreign policy largely influenced nationalist self-interest aimed at increasing power and safeguarding security.  
  - Examples:  
    ○ Withdrawal from WWI was practical as it was so unpopular.  
    ○ Ideology outdated when realised there would be no worldwide revolution.  
    ○ Hitler’s coming to power demanded pragmatic search for security.  
    ○ Nazi-Soviet Pact was practical and contained a secret treaty. |

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<th>Revolutionary Years</th>
<th>1920s</th>
<th>1930s</th>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic issues</td>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Strategies</td>
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| • Bolshevik consolidation of power.  
• 1917 October Revolution  
• Popular + coercive measures  
• End WWI at all cost - Treaty of Brest-Litovsk  
• 1918-21 Civil War (war communism produced economic, humanitarian catastrophe.  
• Famine and agricultural production plummets.  
• Kronstadt revolution 1921  
• New Economic Policy 1921 | • National recovery → need for stability.  
• NEP in place → retreat from socialism.  
• Impacts of consolidation of power → intra party ideological debates.  
• Trotsky’s ‘permanent revolution’ fails to garner support.  
• Stalin’s ‘socialism in one country’ more accurately captures the national mood.  
• Defeat of left means Soviet national economic development has priority over ideology.  
• Trotsky defeated in the struggle for power and expulsion from party → end of any fanning of revolution in the west. | • Revolutionary Idealism  
• Global revolution → traditional foreign policy would not be relevant in a  
| | | • Pursued a more traditional approach to foreign policy.  
• Establishing relations |
| | • Collectivisation and industrialisation  
• The great terror and purges.  
• Soviet state is weak and vulnerable.  
• Countryside torn apart. | • Create alliances for defence.  
• December 1933 Soviet Foreign Minister “the
| Role of Ideology | At first ideology does play a considerable role in guiding foreign policy.  
1917-18 genuine hope for outbreaks of revolution in Germany | Promotion of traditional foreign policy signals a substantial departure from the original Bolshevik ideology but aligns with Stalinist ideology – 'Socialism in One Country'. | By this time ideology has been completely discarded in favour of protecting Soviet national interest.  
Ideology has ceased to have any relevance to foreign policy. |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| communist world.  
- Comintern established in 1919.  
- Comintern activities caused problems for Soviet Government.  
- Did not join the League of Nations and did not attend 1919 Paris Peace Conference.  
- Call for immediate end to imperialist war → peace at all costs.  
- Revolutionary Pragmatism  
- Soon became clear that global revolution would not happen + new government needed to survive as only communist nation in a capitalist world → more realistic to adopt a policy of cooperation.  
- This was carried out by the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs.  
- No intention of launching a revolutionary war against the west → NEP required trade with surrounding capitalist states. | with capitalist governments.  
- 1920 friendship treaties signed with immediate neighbours (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. 1921 Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan)  
- 1921 Commercial agreements with Britain and Italy.  
- Soviet-German relations formalised in 1922 Treaty of Rapallo.  
- 1925-24 some diplomatic relations with Britain.  
- By 1930 had relations with all of the great powers except the US.  
- Attending League of Nations conferences.  
- Brief change a 1929 onset of the Great Depression – Capitalist system in trouble, Stalin orders Comintern to avoid cooperation with other political parties. Fascist regimes welcomed. | ensuring of peace cannot depend on our efforts alone; it required the collaboration and cooperation of other states”.  
- Comintern gave up its revolutionary policies and encouraged communists to create popular fronts with moderate socialists.  
- Final Comintern congress held in 1935.  
- Wanted to improve relations with the Nazi regime – Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact.  
- Formed defensive alliance with France and Czech 1935, established diplomatic ties with US and joined the League of Nations in 1934.  
- Intervention in Spanish civil war.  
- United block against Nazism  
- Following Japan’s attack on China 1937, Soviet advisors sent help to Nationalist Chinese forces. |
and western nations à desire to export communism.
● Evident in establishment of Comintern, not joining the League of Nations and not attending Paris Peace.
● However, this idealism is quickly overshadowed by the need for survival – civil war etc.
● Therefore did not actively pursue global revolution and can perceive the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk as betrayal of ideology.
● Thus ideology certainly has not been discarded, but not a dominant force in the early years of consolidation → competing with national state interest and need for survival.

• However, brief reappearance in 1929 with onset of Great Depression → fans the flames of ideological fervour but still does not actively pursue and more preoccupied with its internal economic development.
• Despite the brief reappearance of ideology in 1929, national state interest profoundly dominates foreign policy in this period.

• The defence and security of the nation is paramount.
• Ideological goals purely confined to domestic → construction of socialism at home which requires peace in Europe.

Overall aims of foreign policy:
1. Export revolution
Began to lay the foundations to achieve this but did not actively pursue it. This aim was soon replaced by socialism in one country due to the realisation that it was not to actualise.

2. Achieve collective security
Made some significant gains in terms of establishing treaties and alliances which provided some temporary confidence. Overall failed as Allied powers still favoured Nazi Germany over Soviet Russia and establishment of Anti-Comintern Pact. Non-Aggression Pacts not honoured.

3. Evade the major war
Managed to pacify threats in the East somewhat delay Nazi attack, but Nazis were able to attack according to their schedule and at a time when Soviet Union was still weak and unprepared for war.
An overview of Bolshevik ideology

The Bolsheviks followed a Marxist philosophy that advocated a free and egalitarian society in which there was equality of wealth. However, unlike other socialists, Lenin believed that the proletarian revolution was an immediate reality and called for the Bolsheviks to overthrow the bourgeoisie Provisional Government. Other features included:

- A small, tightly organised, highly disciplined vanguard of full-time revolutionaries to organise the proletariat for the coming revolution
- A dictatorship of the proletariat and centralised government; this would mean a government representing the majority of the population but prepared to use force to control the minority that still opposed it.
- An anticipation of socialist revolutions across Europe in which Russia would play a key role
- A global class struggle in which the ‘old’ Russian ruling class would be eliminated.

The October Coup 1917

The March Revolution was the direct result of the war and the heavy burdens the Russian people had been forced to carry. Russia was inadequately prepared for modern warfare, sending soldiers into battle without essential equipment, ammunition or clothing. Because priority was given to the front, the Russian people had to contend with food shortages and increased prices; as the war continued, discontent grew and led to the forced abdication of Tsar Nicholas II and the formation of the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet (Workers’ Council). More than 300 years of Romanov rule came to an end on 14 March 1917.

- The Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet coexisted peacefully in a state of ‘dual power’. Unfortunately, the Provisional Government, while popular with intellectuals, lacked constitutional validity and executive power, and was only to rule until elections for a Constituent Assembly could be held. The Petrograd Soviet, which represented the workers and soldiers and supported the Provisional Government, consisted of Mensheviks, Bolsheviks and Social Revolutionaries. The Petrograd Soviet had the support of the army due to Order No. 1; this undermined the Provisional Government as soldiers were instructed to only follow orders which conformed to those of the Petrograd Soviet.
- On his return from exile in April 1917, Lenin began pushing for socialist revolution. His ‘April Theses’ outlined how this was to be done: the Bolsheviks would gain control of the soviets, provoke class war, end Russian involvement in the war and assist the workers to seize the factories while the peasants seized the land.
- During the ‘July Days’, the Bolsheviks attempted to take advantage of a popular uprising but failed to harness its political power: the government called in troops and crushed the revolt; leading Bolsheviks were arrested and imprisoned while and Lenin fled to Finland.
- The Bolsheviks came to the rescue of the Provisional Government in September when General Kornilov, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army, decided to use his troops to march on Petrograd and overthrow the Provisional Government. Released from prison, the Bolsheviks and their Red Guard protected the Government, which was
discredited by the incident. The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, gained valuable arms, discipline and experience, which was to come into play within months.

- On the evening of November 6, groups of Bolshevik Red Guards, aided by sailors from the Baltic fleet, moved through Petrograd, taking over key points: railway stations, the post office, telephone exchange and the bridges. The next morning, the leader of the Provisional Government, Kerensky left the city in search of loyal troops and found none. At the same time, the Bolsheviks took over the Winter Palace. Lenin announced the fall of the government and the transfer of all power to the soviets, which were dominated by the Bolsheviks. He used this majority to form an all-Bolshevik government – the Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom).

**The early Soviet government**

- One of Lenin’s first measures was to approve land seizures by peasants and end Russia’s involvement in the ruinous war against Germany. In addition, the formal organisation of government – Sovnarkom – was established, with Lenin as its chairman.
- An 8-hour working day, a 48-hour week, and rules for overtime and holidays were established. Unemployment insurance was also announced.
- Political opposition was suppressed; press censorship was imposed; the Cheka (All-Russian Commission for Suppression of Counter-Revolution, Sabotage and Speculation) was formed to deal with opponents and political enemies; and the Bolshevik Party was declared the only political party, changing its name to the Communist Party in 1918.
- The Decree on Workers’ Control abolished private property in productive resources and placed all factories under the control of elected committees of workers, while the Decree on Banking placed all banks under Sovnarkom control.
- The Bolsheviks abolished all forms of legal discrimination based on sex, and the marriage code of 1918 gave married women complete legal equality with their partners. Divorce was made easier and abortions were legalised.
- Other measures included the abolition of the old legal system – to be replaced by elected people’s courts – as well as the old class system and the Table of Ranks, and the dismantling of the police and bureaucracy.
- The scheduled elections for the Constituent Assembly went ahead, but the Bolsheviks only obtained 24 per cent of the vote so they postponed the opening of the assembly. When the Constituent Assembly finally met in January 1918, the Bolshevik government dissolved it within 12 hours.

**The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk**

The new government rapidly issued the ‘Decree on Peace’, and an armistice was signed with the Central Powers in December 1917. Lenin argued that the Russian people wanted peace and withdrawal was necessary in order to focus on internal problems in an effort to consolidate Bolshevik rule. Negotiations began in Brest-Litovsk on December 22 and lasted for two months.

- The Bolsheviks offered an immediate peace without annexations and without indemnities. When the Germans set out their demands for a peace agreement, the leader of the Russian delegation, Leon Trotsky, simply walked out.
• The Treaty was signed on 3 March 1918, after the Germans resumed the offensive, unopposed, into Russian territory and only after Lenin threatened to resign if his colleagues would not vote for the immediate acceptance of peace terms.
• The Treaty was harsh. Russia lost Poland, the Baltic provinces of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, and Ukraine, as well as a third of its population, agricultural land, industrial undertakings and most of its coal mines.
• The Treaty was universally rejected and denounced, even from within the Party. Anti-German and anti-Bolshevik feelings ran high.
• Although the Treaty eliminated the Bolsheviks’ most dangerous enemy, it further divided Russia, weakened Lenin’s popularity and outraged Russia’s allies.
• However, the Treaty did give the new Soviet government the freedom from international conflict that it needed to consolidate its rule. In 1918, Germany was forced to release many of the gains it had made at Brest-Litovsk.

The Civil War
• In May 1918, the Bolsheviks faced civil war as a range of counter-revolutionary forces attempted to reverse the revolution. The Bolshevik Red Army was opposed by four White (the colour of the Tsar) Armies, which, represented a range of opposition groups, including the Mensheviks, Social Revolutionaries and former Army generals. Trotsky, as Commissar for War, took command of the Red Army in March 1918 and recruited thousands of officers from the old Imperial army; to each he attached a political commissar to share command. Compulsory service was introduced for all workers and peasants, and hostages were taken and frequently shot to deter deserters. From May 1918, a number of foreign armies assisted the Whites – intervening in Russia in an attempt to distract the Germans from the Western Front, create a new Eastern Front, prevent the spread of communism, and protect Allied interests in Russia. By autumn 1919, Bolshevik victory was assured and the foreign interventionist forces withdrew as the White Armies collapsed. By 1921, the Red Army had defeated all opposition and reconquered most of the territories that had previously constituted the Russian Empire. There are several reasons for the Communists’ victory:
  ○ The Bolsheviks marshalled their resources under the slogan ‘everything for the front’.
  ○ The Red Army was determined and disciplined, imbued with a sense of cause and better led.
  ○ The Whites failed because their offensives were rarely coordinated, so Trotsky was always able to fight them one at a time. Furthermore, there was no White leader who could match the determination and ruthless leadership of Lenin and Trotsky.
  ○ The Allied effort proved to be less than total.
  ○ Sovnarkom ordered the Cheka to begin a ‘Red Terror’. Cheka units in the countryside hung, beat, shot and burned anyone who had helped or fought for the Whites. In addition, on 17 July 1918, local Bolsheviks in Ekaterinburg murdered the Tsar and his family.
• Introduced in 1918 to cope with the demands of civil war and to help propel the country into socialism, ‘War Communism’ consisted of rapid industrialisation of all industry,
food requisitioning from peasants and severe restrictions on the population. Food was rationed, and the practices of bartering replaced money and strikes were made illegal. The problem of feeding the urban proletariat was considered a priority for the Communists, as stories grew of peasants deliberately withholding grain to drive up prices while the towns starved. Lenin’s solution was simple but ruthless: send out armed requisition squads to seize grain. Private trading was banned. The peasants deeply resented War Communism and refused to grow more food than they needed. Peasants slaughtered their livestock rather than hand over supplies to the government. Thousands died of starvation as food grew scarce, and diseases such as typhoid and cholera became epidemic. Production declined in all sections due to the shortage of workers, raw materials and fuel.

- ‘War Communism’ failed to introduce communism and resulted in the near-total collapse of the Russian economy. During February and March 1921, sailors from the Kronstadt naval base mutinied in support of striking workers in the city. They were dissatisfied with the government and wanted an end to grain requisitioning. Units of the Red Army were sent to suppress the revolt and Cheka units followed behind with instructions to shoot anyone who hesitated to press the assault.

The introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP)

- Convinced of the need to make some changes, Lenin introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1921, which was intended to meet Russia’s urgent need for food and to prepare the economy for more effective socialisation.
- The NEP represented a mixed economy whereby the government retained control of major industry while peasants’ farms and small businesses could operate as private enterprises. Other features included relaxation of central economic control; the abandonment of grain requisitioning, to be replaced by a tax in kind allowing peasants to keep their food surpluses to sell for profit; restoring public markets and private trading; and reintroducing money as a means of trading.
- This represented a temporary and ‘partial’ retreat to capitalism. To prevent Party discord over the NEP, Lenin introduced the ‘One Party Unity’ resolution.
- Although production figures suggest that the policy worked and that the Soviet economy began to make a marked recovery, industry failed to expand as quickly as agriculture, thus wages for industrial workers remained low and urban unemployment climbed. The NEP saved the regime from destruction and remained the official soviet policy until it was jettisoned by Stalin in 1928.

The impact of the Bolshevik consolidation of power, including the creation of the USSR

- There were several impacts of the Bolshevik consolidation of power. Firstly, having defeated the White armies and introduced the NEP, the Communist Party now had to set about repairing the damage caused by seven years of war and revolution before they could continue towards their goal of implementing socialism in Russia.
- Politically, the Communists had effectively replaced the tsarist autocratic system with a dictatorship of the Communist Party, with Lenin as the party head; no other political
parties were allowed and all power rested with the Party's Central Committee, not the All Russian Congress of Soviets.

- Effectively, the foundations had been laid for the Central Committee to be superseded by one man's will, and the stage was set to determine exactly who that would be after Lenin succumbed to ill-health in 1924.
- Secondly, the majority of the Communists' politically enemies had either been killed, imprisoned or fled during the Civil War, and the suffering inflicted on the Russian people during the war and the devastating impact of war communism had severely impacted the potential for effective opposition to form.
- In addition, the instruments of repression in the form of the secret police had already been established and proven successful, making it all too easy for the likes of Joseph Stalin to eliminate potential enemies in the future.
- Thirdly, the introduction of a temporary capitalist economy in the form of NEP had achieved some economic recovery, but the economy was still far too backwards to proceed immediately to socialism. The issue of industrialisation and the economy was to play a decisive role in the power struggle to come, as was the issue of a communist Russia surviving in a capitalist world.
- Lastly, in 1922, Russia became the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. This was intended to be a union of culturally autonomous republics, but in reality, they were under the centralised control of the Communist Party in Moscow, which decided all domestic and economic policy.

The power struggle between Stalin, Trotsky and other leading figures in the 1920s

- After Lenin's death in 1924, the five most important personalities vying for control and power were Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Bukharin and Stalin. Although overshadowed by the others both intellectually and culturally, Stalin's administrative and political talents ensured that he emerged from the power struggle as leader.
- By 1912, with Lenin's backing, Stalin had risen to become one of the six members of the Central Committee. He later became Commissar for Nationalities (1917), Commissar of State Control (1919), Commissar of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection (1920), a member of the Politburo and General Secretary of the Party (1922).
- However, by December 1922, Lenin had become wary of Stalin. In his 'Testament', Lenin even went as far as to urge his comrades to remove Stalin from the position of General Secretary; however, the contents were not released publicly because Trotsky was considered a more immediate danger.
- Trotsky argued for 'permanent revolution', whereas Stalin advocated a policy of 'socialism in one country', consolidating the revolution and the rule of the Communist Party by turning the Soviet Union into a modern state, capable of defending itself. Stalin portrayed Trotsky as an enemy of the Soviet Union.
- 'Attack on the Left' – Stalin first formed a triumvirate with Zinoviev and Kamenev to oppose Trotsky and command a majority in the Politburo. Lacking support in the Party, Trotsky was removed as Commissar for War.
- Having attempted to ally themselves with Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev were targeted by Stalin and Bukharin over the issue of the NEP; all three were expelled from the Party in 1927 and Trotsky was also exiled.
• ‘Attack on the ’Right’ – Stalin disagreed with Bukharin during the procurement crisis of 1927; Stalin took direct action against the peasants, confiscating produce without authority from the Party or the Politburo. Once again, Stalin was able to manipulate the vote in his favour and Bukharin was removed from the Politburo in 1929.
• Time and time again, while the others were making speeches, Stalin discreetly used the Party machine to place his men in key Party positions (nomenklatura). By 1928, the Party had been purged of opponents and Stalin had established himself in power.

**Reasons for the emergence of Stalin as leader of the USSR by the late 1920s**

There are several reasons behind Stalin’s emergence as leader by 1928:

- He had an immense capacity for work, and a vast talent for intrigue and utter ruthlessness. He exploited jealousies among his opponents and profited by being underestimated in comparison with Trotsky.
- ‘Patronage’ – He used his position as general secretary of the Central Committee to appoint nominees he could trust at every level of the party structure. By manipulating Party membership, Stalin created a Congress that unquestioningly supported him and derided his opponents, who were charged with ‘factionalism’.
- While the old Bolsheviks were intellectuals who were able to openly debate government policies under Lenin, those who joined the Party after the Civil War were poorly educated, susceptible to patronage and accustomed to following orders without question.
- Stalin’s ‘socialism in one country’ was more acceptable to the Russian people than Trotsky’s permanent revolution. Stalin portrayed Trotsky as an enemy of the Soviet Union. Stalin’s stand was more acceptable to the patriotic Russian people.
- Stalin also controlled the secret police and the army, using them to his advantage.
- ‘The cult of Leninism’ – By assuming the mantle of Lenin and appearing to carry on Lenin’s work, Stalin established a formidable claim to power.
- It was Trotsky who was vulnerable and who made mistakes. Despite his prestige and significant role in the Revolution and the Civil War, his arrogance, condescension and authoritarian attitude had alienated too many of his fellow communists.
- Furthermore, Trotsky was not an ‘old Bolshevik’, but had only joined the party in 1917.
- Finally, by not attending Lenin’s funeral, where Stalin played a prominent role, Trotsky handed his enemies the ultimate weapon to use against him.

**The nature of the USSR under Stalin, including dictatorships and totalitarianism**

- From 1929 onwards, Stalin was the unquestioned master of the powerful Party apparatus. He became an icon, the embodiment of the nation and the personification of all that was good in Russia.
- The ‘cult of personality’ portrayed Stalin as Lenin’s best pupil. Official photographs were altered to enhance Stalin’s standing, and his role in the Revolution was accentuated while patriotic and idealised images of Stalin repeatedly encouraged the Russian people to work harder. Writers and artists were encouraged to create stories and artworks that emphasised Stalin as the ‘Supreme Genius of Humanity’, universally praised for his achievements and sacrifices for the good of the Russian people. Towns and cities were even named after him, including Stalingrad, Stalinsk and Stalinogorsk.
• Essentially dictator from the 1930s onwards, Stalin was rarely questioned, and anyone brave or foolish enough to criticise him was invariably identified as an opponent, and branded a ‘white guard dog’, ‘Tsarist hyena’ or ‘capitalist dog’, and exiled or executed. Stalin had no need to share his decision-making or seek approval from the Central Committee or its Politburo. From 1934, Stalin could bypass the Party, which was now subject to his personal authority. Party congresses ceased to meet regularly, as did the Central Committee and the Politburo. The foundation of this dictatorship was terror and illusion.

• The term ‘totalitarianism’ is often used to describe the USSR under Stalin; he was the dominant leader of a centralised government, no other political party was tolerated, the OGPU (Secret Police) purges and labour camps dealt with any internal opposition, and the state controlled every aspect of society, including the means of mass communication, the economy, and individual freedoms such as freedom of speech and movement, and religion. However, some historians argue that Stalin did not achieve the features of a totalitarian regime until well into the 1930s, and then only due to a substantial degree of popular support, which was encouraged by propaganda and the cult of personality.

**Economic transformation under Stalin and its impact on society, including collectivisation and the Five-Year Plans**

• Fearing another attack by the West, Stalin hoped to bring the Soviet Union up to a level of industrial production that would enable it to catch up to and overtake the advanced countries of Western Europe and America. This was to be achieved at the expense of Russia’s peasantry.

• ‘Collectivisation’ – Stalin abandoned the NEP and implemented the policy of collectivisation in 1928. It was aimed at eliminating private ownership of land. Almost all peasants were forced onto large collectives (kolkhoz) or state farms (sovkhoz).

• The majority of peasants resisted the deliberate destruction of their traditional lives. The countryside descended into a virtual civil war as peasants burned their crops and slaughtered their livestock. Successful peasants (Kulaks) were targeted for liquidation; the Kulaks were treated brutally, robbed of their land and deported to Siberia.

• Virtually complete by 1936, collectivisation was unable to produce the surplus food that Stalin demanded. Agricultural production decreased and livestock numbers also fell dramatically. Starvation and famine were widespread, and the national famine of 1932–33 killed between 10 million and 15 million people. Despondent and displaced peasants made for the towns, providing the workforce Stalin needed for his industrialisation policy.

• Stalin used collectivisation and ‘dekulakisation’ to acquire every last grain of food to export to the West and thus acquire overseas revenue with which to invest in industry. The government now had direct control over the countryside and its human and material resources, at the cost of an estimated 7 million casualties.

• ‘Industrialisation’ took the form of a series of Five-Year Plans, aimed at increasing production across the whole of Soviet industry. The First Five-Year Plan (1928–33) focused on industries such as coal, iron, steel and electricity to manufacture ships, railways and factories, and to establish sources of raw materials to feed those factories.
The Second Five-Year Plan (1933–38) focused on the production of consumer goods for the workers and peasants as an incentive to increase their production.

- The Third Five-Year Plan was scheduled to begin late in 1938, and did so, but it was interrupted by the need to prepare for war and never met its targets. Paying workers based on what they produced encouraged hard work and exceptional workers received adoration, medals, better pay and superior housing. Results:
  - The production of industrial goods increased rapidly but consumer goods were generally in short supply.
  - Displaced peasants contributed to overcrowding, housing shortages and a decrease in living standards.
  - By 1939, the Soviet Union succeeded in overtaking the other major European powers in terms of industrial output.
  - While industry prospered, the agricultural sector declined.
  - The level of real wages fell while living standards were lower in 1937 than in 1928.

**Political transformation under Stalin: Growth of the Party, use of terror, show trials, gulags, propaganda and censorship**

Between 1917 and 1930, the Party had grown from 250,000 to 1.7 million members as it soon became obvious that party membership was a prerequisite for ambitious men; those who had joined in the 1920s were from the working class, were young and poorly educated, and thousands owed their careers directly to General Secretary Stalin. As dissent all but disappeared after the 1921 anti-faction rule, Stalin was able to enhance his power and influence by securing majority votes at all levels of the Party. In essence, this gave the Party the sense of unity, strength and discipline it needed to ruthlessly target the peasantry with the policy of collectivisation. In order to extend his personal power base beyond the Party, Stalin increased the power of the secret police to eliminate potential rivals, both internal and external to the Party. In December 1934, after the assassination of the Leningrad Party leader and possible rival to Stalin, Sergei Kirov, Stalin passed the so-called ‘Kirov’ Decrees, which allowed the police to arrest political dissidents, try them in secret and execute them immediately. Stalin also resolved to liquidate all potential opponents in the army and implemented the Yezhovshchina (The Great Terror). Features of the Terror included:

- The show trials – Stalin held three show trials to rid himself of potential rivals from within the old Bolshevik elite. Suspects, including Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, as well as Trotsky supporters, were arrested, tortured and made to confess to crimes they had not committed (crimes of treason, sabotage and spying), found guilty and sentenced to death.

- In 1936, the OGPU became the NKVD (People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs) and carried out Stalin’s purges, regularly using torture and threats against their families to extract confessions from suspects. Ordinary citizens were either shot or sent to forced-labour camps called ‘Gulags’, in Siberia. The great purge ended in 1938 with a purge of the secret police and the execution of its leader.

- Living conditions in these forced-labour camps (gulags) were horrendous – insufficient food rations, impossible workloads, brutal discipline, extreme cold and high mortality.
rates; Stalin’s used these prisoners to help build his massive industrialisation projects, such as the Siberian Railway.

- Although the show trials produced an unfavourable impression abroad, they served to deter further opposition to Stalin. By 1938, somewhere between 7 million and 14 million people had been arrested and sent to labour camps, 12 million of whom were shot or otherwise died in the camps. Politically, the purges secured commitment to Stalin’s policies and his own political position. However, the process of denunciation, punishment and persecution took on a life of its own as people became caught up in the wave of fear and suspicion that swept across the country.

- The press and radio contributed to this atmosphere of paranoia and suspicion via propaganda that promoted the view that the Soviet Union was under threat from capitalist enemies, both internal and external; newspapers published letters from ‘ordinary citizens’ demanding the death sentence for Stalin’s enemies during the show trials, which were always given maximum publicity, and Soviet citizens were encouraged to denounce each other. Propaganda was also used to mobilise support for Stalin as he was routinely credited for any and all achievements; even the results from the first two five-year plans were manipulated for propaganda purposes. Censorship worked alongside propaganda and was all pervasive. The Communist Party had control over all forms of communications, including newspaper and radio, affording it the ability to eliminate opposing views, to hide evidence of internal Party conflict, and to downplay peasant resistance to collectivisation.

*Social and cultural change in the USSR under Stalin*

- Under Stalin, every sphere of cultural life was drastically overhauled, free will disappeared and service to the state became the norm. Education, health and welfare services improved, and for many people the expansion of the economy opened up career paths and created the sort of opportunities that committed them to the system and Stalin.
- The 1936 Constitution guaranteed freedom of speech, conscience, assembly and the press, and recognised two classes in society: the peasantry and the proletariat. An intelligentsia also existed and expanded in size under Stalin. This new ruling elite consisted of white-collar workers largely recruited from the working classes but they enjoyed privileges not afforded to the rest of the working class. Gone were the ‘non-productive’ classes who had previously lived off the ownership of property.
- Under Stalin, all religious property was confiscated, all churches, synagogues and mosques were closed, and church funds were nationalised. However, with the onset of war in 1939, Stalin allowed the Russian Orthodox Church to reopen to lift morale and appeal to the people’s patriotism.
- Stalin continued to subordinate the emancipation of women to the greater good of the entire society. By 1936, divorce became more difficult to obtain, abortion was outlawed and the family was declared to be the basis of Soviet society. Although there were some advances, Stalin stopped short of abolishing traditional women’s roles and eliminating traditional discrimination.
- Every child had access to a free elementary education. Students took state-organised examinations and were taught from state-prescribed textbooks, which included Marxist
ideology. Technical schools were established to help provide a ready-trained workforce for the new industries.

- Stalin was determined that culture should perform a social or political role and that the will of the individual artist, author or composer had to be subordinated to the political and social needs of the Soviet nation. Compromise, conformity and censorship became the hallmarks of culture under Stalinism. Individuals who failed to compromise or conform risked their acceptance, their position, their liberty and sometimes their lives. The concept of ‘Socialist realism’ dictated that culture be happy, productive and directly accessible to the people, who could recognise it and relate it to their own lives.

**The nature of Soviet foreign policy 1917–1941**

- Soviet foreign policy was influenced on the one hand by the Marxist ideological view that worldwide revolution would occur, and on the other by the traditional view that promoted the need to establish good relations with strong capitalist nations to ensure the Soviet Union’s interests and security.
- This traditional foreign policy outlook was favoured once it became apparent that the Russian Revolution would not be followed by successful revolution in other countries.

**The role of ideology in Soviet foreign policy 1917–1941**

- In 1917, Lenin advocated a Marxist ‘internationalist’ view of foreign policy, calling for the promotion of a permanent world revolution and a non-annexationist peace. However, to ensure the survival of his government he was forced into signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.
- During the Civil War, expansion and advancement were dropped in favour of internal consolidation and defence against outside threats. Lenin was prepared to put aside ideological differences to avoid war at all costs until the Soviet Union was strong enough. This policy of ‘revolutionary pragmatism’ consisted of peaceful co-existence and economic cooperation with the capitalist powers.
- From 1927 onwards, Stalin’s ‘socialism in one country’ called for the need to modernise in order to strengthen the Soviet Union against outside threats.
- Communist ideology was cast aside with the ascension of the Nazi Party in Germany in 1933, causing the Soviet Union to give its support to the Western notion of collective security and active participation in the League of Nations. However, despite the Nazi regime’s hostility towards socialism, Stalin signed the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact.
- Germany’s invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 was met with the practical response of the USSR entering into an alliance with the United States and Britain. Once again, the guiding principle behind this decision was the survival of the Soviet Union.
- Even the Communist International (Comintern), formed in 1919 to promote worldwide revolution, had to abandon its revolutionary direction in the late 1930s and focus on safeguarding the Soviet Union.
Assess the view that the Soviet Foreign Policy in the period 1917-1941 was dominated by practical rather than ideological concerns

Soviet foreign policy in the period between 1917 and 1941 was an ambiguous endeavour formed on the basis of predominantly practical concerns, rather than ideological. Between those years, a chiasma was observed between the two concerns; where the initial ideologically fuelled government recognised the error in an ideologically pursued approach to foreign policy, and a rapid eversion towards practicality was employed. As the sole Communist power in the world, the Soviet leaders were to become increasingly focused on the practical necessity of survival in their strategy towards consolidating Foreign Policy.

Within the early years of Soviet foreign policy, ideological and practical concerns were simultaneously employed, aiming to establish national relations while allowing internal survival of Bolshevik power. Given the previous national instability in Russia, it was vital for the Bolsheviks to appease the state while concurrently preserving authority. Following the October Revolution, Russia signalled its withdrawal from WW1 through the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk of 1918. The negotiations that took place between Russia and the Central Powers both placated and burdened ideological and practical concerns regarding the Soviets. Ideally, it allowed the maintenance of Bolshevik power. Practically, the Treaty removed Russia from WW1, creating temporary peace with the warring nations at the cost of severe losses in regards to population, territory and economic output. The negative repercussions of the Treaty are best described by Lenin, by the “abyss of defeat, dismemberment, enslavement and humiliation” that they produced. During the Russian civil war, Western powers intervened on the side of the Whites in a collective effort to prevent the solidification of Bolshevik power. Although the intervention was ineffective, it left a stain on long-term relations between the Soviets and the West, damaging the reality of their ideological goal. During this period, the Soviet regime had constructed the Comintern; a global socialist body whose role was to promote ideological revolution in their respective nation. Furthermore, the organisation embodied practical concerns, considering Bolshevik power was incapable of surviving to ideological standards surrounded by capitalist enemies. The Russo-Polish War was an additional hardship that disrupted the endeavour to establish Soviet-foreign relationships. Soviet defeat during this war resulted in the Treaty of Riga, which concluded the hope of achieving their ideological objective of permanent revolution, as stated by Soviet Army General Tukhachevsky, “Our way towards worldwide conflagration passes over the corpse of Poland”. The Treaty of Riga nationally bounded Russia and economically crippled the nation through the implementation of severe reparations. The burden of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, inefficacy of the Comintern and the humiliation encountered with the Treaty of Riga had culminated to instigate the rejection of an ideologically centred approach to foreign policy, and a diversion to a more practical system within the following decades.

Soviet foreign policy in the 1920s centralised the urgency of practical considerations to achieve successful relationships with powerful countries, void of ideological input. At the beginning of the 1920s, friendship treaties were signed with immediate Russian neighbours to develop
collective security. The USSR became involved with globally recognised peace assemblies, including the Genoa Economic conference of 1922. Russian participation in organisations as such epitomised the fact that within these years, practical approaches to foreign policy overrode the desire for ideologically motivated action. This conference became the stimulus for reconciliation between the Soviet Union and Germany through the signing of the Treaty of Rapallo; an engagement of appropriacy between Europe’s greatest pariah nations. The terms of the agreement satisfied the practical concerns of each nation; renounced territorial and financial claims proposed in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, developed a mutual trade relationship and promised economic cooperation. Since the Treaty of Rapallo, the Soviet Union expanded their foreign policy by restoring diplomatic connections with Britain after a turbulent decade of “political football”, generated by British national instability caused by the Zinoviev Letter and the 1926 General Strike. This action posed immense practical significance towards Soviet foreign policy as it ended constant friction with a powerful global nation. By the late 1920s, Russia had constructed diplomatic relationships with all of the great powers besides the US, as Soviet concerns diverted to focus on state interest and collective security. Collective security became a rapid interest, as “war scares” had significantly fuelled the practical decisions made in regards to establishing foreign policy, considering Russia had been delivered war threats from both the East and West. Within these years, Soviet foreign policy took an exponentially practical turn in an effort to maintain continental peace.

The 1930s confirmed the view of Soviet foreign policy being dominated by practical concerns, as ideological considerations became null given the growing continental tension. The fundamental aim of Soviet foreign policy in this decade became the evasion of being drawn into a war. Stalin noticed threats of conflict from the east and west, and hoped that collective security and relations with other nations were enough delay Russian involvement in the inevitable war. As a display of the state’s willingness to cooperate on a national scale, Russia joined the League of Nations in September 1934. Consequently, Russia established practically beneficial associations with France through the ‘Mutual Assistance Treaty’, Czechoslovakia through a very similar agreement, and the USA through formal diplomatic ties. Each of these agreements were signed in an effort to detain a second world war, as Hitler had publicised his aims of forcefully achieving Lebensraum on Russian territory. Threats of war also permeated from the East, with two battles between Japan and the Soviet Union eventuating in vengeful Japanese defeat in 1938 and 1939. It became heavily evident that ideology was merely a consideration within this period, as the centrality of Russian foreign policy became developing practical cooperation with countries that defied Soviet ideologies. As Hitler came to rise, Russia begun reaching dangerous levels of national vulnerability. Soviet Foreign Minister, Molotov, announced that he and German Foreign Minister, von-Ribbentrop, were to sign the Nazi–Soviet Non-Aggression Pact. This settlement was one of the most notable acts of diplomacy in modern European history, observed between two most ideologically disparate nations. This pact, infamously known as a “marriage of convenience” was observed as a blatant act of pragmatism, considering the ideologies of each country were incompatible. On the 23rd of August, 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union set aside their deep-rooted antipathy of each other and signed the pact. The Soviets inherited many benefits from the settlement, including control of eastern Poland and other territories, but most importantly, time to re-establish their army and consolidate adequate military power for the brewing war. The final years of Soviet foreign
policy displayed the abandonment of ideological input, as it became solely dominated by practical concerns in an effort to suspend involvement in continental conflict.

Soviet foreign policy was remodelled between 1917 and 1941 in an effort to achieve practical goals at ideological expense. The early goal of foreign policy was survival of the new Bolshevik regime and promotion of ideological socialism. The 1920s saw an eversion to pragmatic measures being enforced in a strategic approach to national security and conservation, and proved an ideological world revolution unattainable. The final years of Soviet foreign policy observed an ultimate objective of evading a continental war through exclusively practical measures. An analysis of the conflicting concerns that dominated Soviet foreign policy between this period concludes in the affirmation of the view that practicality reigned as ideology withered.

**Stalinism**

*Assess the impact of Stalinism on society, culture and the economy in the period up to 1941*

In the years preceding 1941, the Soviet Union was under total influence of Stalinism, which sparked massive modifications within economic, social and cultural aspects of Russian life. Stalinism is defined as the radical ideology founded on the basis of Joseph Stalin’s ambitions, which governed a national approach to modernisation, industrialisation and an ultimately self-sufficient state. Each economic, social and cultural change under Stalinism amalgamated to allow autonomy. The resurrection of the economy was achieved through the process of industrialisation, involving three, Five-Year Plans, alongside collectivisation. Society under Stalinism generated massive changes within community structure, including the alteration of social constructs and the implementation of political terror and fear. Culture was manufactured meticulously to induce self-sufficiency within the population, through Stalin’s cult of personality, censorship and Socialist Realism. The degree of impact Stalinism executed in the years leading to 1941 was extraordinary, with Stalinist procedures rebuilding the nation’s economy, revolutionising culture and entirely transforming society.

Stalinism played an immense role in reshaping the Russian economy between the late 1920s to 1941, by concentrating national efforts towards industrialisation and collectivisation. To relieve the growing issue of the ‘scissors crisis’, Stalin introduced a program of industrialisation which took place in the form of three, Five-Year Plans; a trilogy of strategies which induced an economic miracle at breakneck speed. Each of the Five-Year Plans focused on the expansion of heavy industry, a much needed development for the nation to achieve self-sufficiency. In order for Stalin to successfully attain national modernisation, he was required to incite a rapid industrial drive throughout Russia. However, Stalin’s implementation of unrealistic objectives made it challenging for success within his economic plans, as the agriculturally based nation lacked the technology to achieve this. Within the First Five-Year Plan, Stalin had successfully assigned economic goals for industrialisation of steel, coal, iron and oil production. Both the Second and Third Five-Year Plans elaborated on the development of heavy industry, increasing coal production from 60.4 million tonnes in 1933 to 128.0 in 1937, and oil from 21.4 million tonnes in 1933 to 28.5 in 1937. Stalin additionally
granted the Second and Third Five-Year Plans individual objectives towards industrialisation; the Second Plan included the development of transport, and the Third plan, although cut short by the threat of German invasion in 1941, promoted reinforcement of Soviet military power. Stalinism provided the framework for industrialisation through the Five-Year Plans, and by 1939, the Soviet Union had overtaken major European powers in terms of industrial output. Alongside industrialisation, Stalin had promoted the implementation of a system of collectivisation to unite the agricultural sector of Soviet economy. This process was established on the fundamental method of capital accumulation; a ‘squeeze’ to promote the movement of peasant labour to achieve industrialisation. The impacts of collectivisation under Stalinism can be argued as either an enormous economic success or a national catastrophe. Grain exports rose from 0.029 million tonnes in 1929 to 5.05 by 1931, possible Ukrainian opposition was eliminated through the construction of a man-made famine and the Kulaks, an extreme “threat”, were eliminated. However, the human impact of this process was immeasurable, with roughly 6 million lives lost, GPU enforced violence through executions, deportations and arrests, and an extremely disrupted social order observed through peasant rebellions towards the procedure. Collectivisation was a Machiavellian process in relation to its strategy, however its economic achievements satisfied the requirements of the program, shifting the nation into one which was on its way to becoming financially self-governing. Stalinism had dictated the collaborative effort of the nation’s drive toward economic development in the primary forms of industrialisation and collectivisation, resulting in an enormous impact on the Soviet economy.

Social constructs under Stalinism within the USSR were entirely reformed within the period leading up to 1941, where all demographics of the Russian population experienced an entire metamorphosis, transforming to perfectly model Stalin’s expectations. A massive modification that occurred through the impacts of Stalinism was the alteration of social classes, namely women and youth. Women under the influence of Stalinism had been robbed of the rights they inherited from the Russian Revolution, and their lives revolved around fulfilling domestic and national duties. Women were expected to singly raise a household while simultaneously facilitating Stalinist objectives including industrialisation and self-sufficiency. The youth were also targeted within society, predominantly through educational programs and youth movements. Youth education was remodelled through Stalinism and its goal of national modernisation. This was exceptionally observed through the introduction of subjects such as physics and mathematics into the curriculum, allowing individuals to develop necessary skills to become industry workers. Youth movements were also launched within the Komsomol; Stalin’s program that focused on delivering subliminal newspeak to the younger generation, as a measure to certify support towards the future of Stalinism. Stalin’s program of collectivisation also had severe social impacts, as it could only be achieved with unified communal support; thus Stalin had called for the liquidation of Kulaks and further devised a ‘dekulakisation’ process which allowed the elimination any member of society who was deemed a potential or related threat to the success of his program. Stalinism further implemented a deliberate, genocidal man-made famine in the Ukraine known as Holodomor, which sparked massive social disruption in his effort toward self-sufficiency. Stalin used his ideologies strategically to impact social reconstruction as it eased his passage to achieving autonomy. Arguably the most impactful measures instituted by Stalinism were the terror and
fear he enforced within his nation. The social conditions of Russia between 1929 and 1941 provided a perfect landscape for Stalin to heighten his supremacy. Fear remained pervasive within the entirety of Stalin’s rule, however to satiate his increasing paranoia, fuelled by growing societal opposition, the USSR launched terror programs through the introduction of purges, show trials and irrational arrests. Purges and show trials were horror devices aimed predominantly at political enemies, however the fear in relation to irrational arrests had significantly atomised society. This involved a division between individuals within the community, where social trust was fragmented and ultimately interfered with Stalin’s goal of self-sufficiency. Assistant to the great terror that was rampant between 1937-1938 was NKVD Chief Nikolai Yezhov. This period became known as the Yezhovschina; a time where the Stalinist regime lacked moral principles, allowing pursuits of sadistic pleasures through terrorising communities. Socially conveyed reactions to this terror were forbidden and immediate punishments including arrests, deportation and death were common. Stalinism is notorious for the terrifying impact it had within Russia, entirely amending the social state of the nation by 1941.

Furthermore, Stalinism exceptionally impacted Russian culture within its sovereignty up until 1941, saturating the USSR with ideals, customs and beliefs that solidified his doctrine. Culture was centralised around Stalin, allowing him to implement personal values and ideologies within society, which eased communal support towards his main goal of establishing a modern, self-sufficient nation. A core cultural foundation he constructed within Russia was the development of a cult of personality. The cult of Stalin was a culturally engineered movement in favour of Stalinism which aimed to promote his beliefs. The nation embraced this cult and allowed themselves to become consumed by the indoctrination of the process to evade suspicion of opposition. Stalin became omnipresent, in the inescapable dispersal of his divine image within facilities, media and the arts. The Cult of Stalin was enhanced through the collective employment of censorship. With the assistance of censorship, the impact of Stalinist manipulation of culture within the state was furthered by the limitations placed on the distribution of information. In order for Stalin to be successfully classified as an omniscient deity, it was essential for him to become the only power in question. To maintain his title of “Shining Sun of Humanity”, Stalin began employing image falsification as a means to sustain ideological hubris within the cult. This was achieved through distorting images by removing ideas, objects and figures that challenged Stalinism in any way. Photographs were retouched by falsifiers whose job was to promote a culture of oblivion within the nation by censoring objection to the Stalinist regime, therefore eliminating past opposition. The implementation of censorship had generated a passive society, of ignorant individuals who could become easily indoctrinated by other developing aspects of Stalinist culture. Socialist Realism was a concept that explicitly correlated with achieving a submissive community in Stalin’s Russia. It is defined as the framework of creative endeavour, aimed at promoting and reflecting Stalinism. Artistic works that abided by the form of Socialist Realism glorified “heroes” within society, particularly Stalin, who was constructed as a national spectacle. Socialist Realism directly impacted culture through the glorification of Stalinism within the art’s. It worked alongside with Stalin’s cult of personality to mutually promote each other, while simultaneously strengthening Stalinist culture. Stalin’s influence on culture was not only community-based, but also impacted economic factions of Soviet Russia. Industrialisation required national
cooperation, and thus the Stakhanovite legacy was embroidered into the culture of workers, deifying individuals to promote increased productivity within the Five-Year Plans. Conclusively, Stalinism influenced culture to such a drastic extent, where the continuity of the impacts linger within the modern world, enforcing how powerful the impression of Stalinism was within Soviet culture of the period preceding 1941.

Stalin had become a keystone in Russian history, where he made a plethora of impacts on economy, society and culture. Within the years of his rule, he had effectively instituted indelible changes within the nation towards achieving self-sufficiency and modernisation. Stalinism had accomplished an extraordinary degree of impact in his years of power leading to 1941, through methods of industrialisation and collectivisation, supported by social cooperation and cultural enforcement of his ideologies.
Essay Scaffolds for HSC

Russia and the Soviet Union

Survey

- Bolshevik consolidation of power
  - Ideology, oct coup and early soviet gov
  - Treaty of BL, civil war and NEP

To what extent did victory in the civil war contribute to the consolidation of Bolshevik power by 1924?

Thesis

Main argument

Stats, quotes and own knowledge

- Significant extent, essential in combating both internal and external opposition
- Without victory in the civil war the Bolsheviks would have been unable to consolidate
- Defeat of external international enemies example
- War communism – gained control of the economy
- Role of Trotsky, propaganda train, leadership of the Red Army
- Gave Bolsheviks legitimacy – rid of foreign invaders and established themselves as the rightful government
- Role of Red Army – spread propaganda of the revolution, creation of political officers – Comrade
- Role of terror – creation of Cheka (internal instrument of coercion)
- Civil war created the infrastructure to allow the Bolsheviks to deal with opposition
- Gained support of the people – defeating the Whites/pro Tsarist supporters and spreading the ideas of Marxism
- However: while victory in the civil war did contribute it came at a huge cost – famine, toughness of grain requisitioning, Red terror, conscription into Red Army, 1921 workers’ opposition meant NEP needed
- NEP significant in the consolidation – necessary breathing space for the longer leap forward.
How successful were the Bolsheviks in consolidating their power by 1924?

Thesis

Main argument

Stats, quotes and own knowledge

Link to Q

● The Bolsheviks were extremely successful in consolidating their power by 1924 through tactical political maneuvers in legislation and policy.

● By 1900 the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party had established itself as a leading political party. As a result of differing factions within the party, Lenin established the Bolshevik Party in 1912 as a separate party.

● Around 1917, Bolshevik leaders who had been exiled as a result of their revolutionary activity began to return from abroad, with a view of making a full takeover of the government.

● The Bolshevik coup of 1917 succeeded as a result of excellent organisation, a weakened opponent (provisional government after the abdication of the Tsar) and because the party had gained popularity and credibility within their aims to upturn Russia’s economic and social structure.

● Although the coup succeeded, Russia was in turmoil and still had enemies who wanted to destroy the Bolshevik party. To combat this threat, Lenin created a political force, the Cheka, who would suppress opponents. You will need to assess how important this measure was in consolidating Bolshevik power.

● Although there was hope that Russia would become a democratic nation, in order to consolidate their power, Bolsheviks dissolved the constituent assembly and banned any non-Bolshevik newspapers.

● You should make a judgement as to how successful the Bolshevik’s sweeping cultural reforms were in consolidating their power by discussing the establishment of the People’s Commissariat for the Enlightenment to disseminate Bolshevik ideology, the sweeping away of artistic institutions established under the Tsar, the abolition of certain educational institutions and the nationalisation of museums and private collections.

● The Bolsheviks consolidated their power by making a clear separation between church and state. They stripped the church of many of its responsibilities in Russian life such as registering births, deaths and marriages.

● As a result of mutiny and famine, Lenin saw the need for economic reform, so in 1921 he announced the New Economic Plan (NEP) and the government planning commission (GOSPLAN) to oversee the changes. This was a move that acknowledged the Bolshevik’s precarious hold on power and was designed to consolidate it.
• The 1923 Constitution was yet another step in consolidating Bolshevik power, establishing a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) with a central government in Russia that would dominate its member Republics.

• Give the dissent and factions that were emerging within the Bolshevik party, Lenin began purges where the Cheka would rid the party of anyone who didn’t fully support the aims of those in leadership. You will need to consider how important terror and repression were in consolidating Bolshevik power.

• In your conclusion, you should summarise the policies and events that allowed the Bolsheviks to consolidate their power, and be clear about the extent to which they were successful.
Focus of study

- Bolsheviks and power struggle after Lenin
  - Impact, creation of USSR
  - Power struggle btw Stalin, Trotsky n others
  - Reasons for Stalin becoming leader

Assess the significance of differing visions for the USSR in the leadership conflict between 1924 and 1929

Thesis

Main argument

Stats, quotes and own knowledge

Link to Q and next para

Introduction: The differing visions for the USSR in the leadership conflict between 1924 and 1929 became the weapon to eliminate political rivals, particularly by Stalin.

Paragraph One: The differing visions for the USSR in the leadership conflict was critically impacted by the formation of the triumvirate between Stalin, Kamenev and Zinoviev which ultimately removed Trotsky from power. Lenin’s death → power vacancy. Lenin’s Will admired Trotsky and stated Stalin was inappropriate for power. Stalin felt jeopardised and created a triumvirate (Zinov+Kam) to politically isolate Trotsky → promotion of rumours and scandals (T not attending L’s funeral & L’s will and testament was not published & surrendering position as Commissar of War) led to the elimination of the promotion of T’s vision - permanent revolution. The culmination of these events resulted in Trotsky’s complete removal from power, with this the removal of his vision for the USSR, allowing Stalin to maintain dominance within the struggle to fill the political cavity.

Paragraph Two: The differing visions for the USSR in the leadership conflict were significantly impacted by Stalin’s manipulation and exploitation of political rivals which led to Stalin’s control over Russia. Stalin extremely manipulative (changing alliances; violation of policies) within the Politburo. Zinoviev and Kamenev stuck with Stalin to create ‘Left Opposition’; ideology involved removal of NEP, war-communism policies, collectivisation and industrialisation. It aimed to defy ‘permanent revolution’ however many Russians opposed this as it introduced the chance of western conflict. Stalin utilised his opportunism and denounced members of the ‘Left Opposition’ and joined Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky who supported the ‘Right’, socialist model (continue NEP, mild peasant tax and guaranteed peace). Those in support of the Left model were outvoted in the 14th and 15th party congress and Stalin’s alliance was completed when Trotsky, Kamenev and Zinoviev were all expelled from the party. Stalin’s role as General Secretary was an “apparatus giving him the facility to eavesdrop on the conversations of dozens of the most influential Communist leaders”, allowing him to expand upon his vision while oppositional ones were eliminated. The removal of the ‘Left Opposition’
Paragraph Three: The differing visions for the USSR in the leadership conflict was further influenced by the removal of those who supported the ‘Right’ model from power. After defeating ‘Left Opposition’, Stalin switched political teams again to investigate into the ‘scissors crisis’ which was impeding Russian economic growth and the inefficacy of NEP. He began promoting a ‘Left’ idea of rapid industrialisation, feeling no obligation to consider the remaining members of the Politburo (Bukharin: “Stalin will strangle us. He is an unprincipled schemer who subordinated everything his lust for power”). Stalin was able to eliminate any vision alongside their respective pioneer within the Politburo that defied his own, evident through the removal of Tomsky, Bukharin and Rykov at the 1929 Party Congress. At this point, Stalin was awarded complete control over the party and had become a revered political figure among the population (“Lenin of today”). The complete ejection of the remaining members of the Politburo was a vital aspect in Stalin succeeding within the conflict between differing visions of the USSR between 1924 and 1929.

Conclusion: The differing visions conflict within the USSR between 1924 and 1929 was the weapon used by Stalin to eliminate political rivals through the success of the Triumvirate, removal of the ‘Left Opposition’ and the ejection of remaining Politburo members.
To what extent can Stalinism be considered totalitarianism in the period leading up to 1941? 

To what extent can Stalinism be considered totalitarianism in the period to 1941? 

To what extent was the USSR transformed into a totalitarian state under Stalin?

*This scaffold is most suited to respond to the first question

**Thesis**

Main argument

Stats, quotes and own knowledge

Link to Q and next para

**Introduction:** Stalinism did not fully equate to totalitarianism during the period of 1917-1941 despite its obvious dictatorial features such as suppression, political domination, and arbitrary control of population, Stalinism cannot truly be considered a Totalitarian State due to political resistance.

**Paragraph One:** One of the aspects of totalitarianism is a single, dominant leader and merciless crushing of internal opposition, however after Lenin’s death there was no clear leader, thus the leadership struggle began. Stalin’s administrative power → political power = manipulation of party members to win leadership struggle. Sphere of influence through role as General Secretary = greater control. Trotsky: “In his role as general secretary, he became the dispenser of favour and fortune” (appointment of manipulation and loyalty from others). Stalin was able to assume power through the elimination of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Trotsky, Bukharin, Tomsky and Rykov and the wavering between ‘Right’ and ‘Left’ models, he did not gain immediate absolute power. The inauguration of Stalin as leader of the USSR through a leadership struggle was evidence regarding the fact that Stalinism was not initially totalitarian.

**Paragraph Two:** However as Stalin’s desire for political domination grew into paranoia, he had many of those he trusted liquidated; The totalitarian aspect of merciless crushing of internal opposition became extreme. The murder of political rival Sergei Kirov in 1934 sparked controversy regarding the assassination and Stalin’s involvement. Kirov was a rising political figure who angered Stalin with his growing popularity. The existence of political resistance toward Stalin evidently deduces the fact that Stalinism was not entirely totalitarianism - emphasises degree of mercilessness of crushing opposition (confirms totalitarianism). Thus...
began the Red Terror and Purges. Purges became a method of mass murder, including members of the party and government. Quotas were set for identification and execution of enemies of the regime (including Trotskyites). Many people were interrogated and denounced, with terror being introduced. Labour camps were erected, NKVD was purged along with significant leaders. Show trials were conducted which saw the execution of several party leaders. During the years after Stalin had consolidated his power amongst the USSR, fear and terror drove a society that became increasingly totalitarianist.

Paragraph Three: Although, a factor that stands in the way of the USSR under Stalinism being a complete totalitarian state was the fact that Stalin was not hated by his people. Cult of Personality → Stalin was omnipresent (buildings, walls, busts, portraits in houses, workplaces, bus stops (Kazan bus station Moscow had 151 busts of Stalin)). Referred to as "Granite Bolshevik" and "Supreme Genius of Humanity". Population was indoctrinated by positive stalinism → "Lauded him as the inspiration of the nation". He planned to satiate his population ("If it is what the people want, I see no harm in it"). Young children thanked Stalin for their blessed childhoods as a demonstration of devotion → extremity of the cult. Strength of the cult of personality made it seem very totalitarian, though propaganda and censorship aided in this. Though from a totalitarian perspective – he rewrote history in his favour and dispensed propaganda through media. Although with the state of technology, constant surveillance was impossible and thus it was difficult for complete submission to the regime to be enforced (not totalitarian). Factors of Stalinism in the period leading up to 1941 accounted for the state of the nation to not be solely considered as a Totalitarian state.

Conclusion: Thus considering the aspects of Stalinism in comparison to totalitarianism, it becomes clear that although some aspects of totalitarianism were present leading up to 1941, Stalinism never quite achieved complete totalitarian features, hence it is feasible to conclude that Stalinism, whilst very similar to totalitarianism does not completely emulate totalitarianism in its entirety.
Assess the impact of Stalinism on society, culture and the economy in the period up to 1941.

Assess the impact of Stalinism on the Soviet state until 1941.

Account for the changes in Soviet society under Stalin to 1941.

To what extent did Stalinism transform Soviet society, culture and the economy?

To what extent did Stalin influence the development of the Soviet State in the period to 1941?

Assess the role of the purges and terror in establishing a totalitarian state in the Soviet Union between 1928 and 1941**

Assess the role of the cult of personality in the creation and maintenance of a totalitarian society in the USSR in the period 1928-1941**

*This question can be easily adapted to any of the questions if appropriately adapted to focus on the centrality of the question (argument must be centred on what the question specifically asks)

** These questions can be obtained from the society and culture paragraphs respectively, and also linked in addition with the essay above regarding totalitarianism (statistics, quotes and own knowledge would merge)

**Thesis**

**Argument - Society**

**Argument - Culture**

**Argument - Economy**

Stats, quotes and own knowledge

Link to Q and next para

**Introduction:** In the years preceding 1941, the Soviet Union was under total influence of Stalinism, which sparked massive modifications within economic, social and cultural aspects of Russian life. The degree of impact Stalinism executed in the years leading to 1941 was extraordinary, with Stalinist procedures rebuilding the nation’s economy, revolutionising culture and entirely transforming society.

**Paragraph One:** Stalinism played an immense role in reshaping the Russian economy between the late 1920s to 1941, by concentrating national efforts towards industrialisation and collectivisation. Issue of ‘scissors crisis’ → introduced Industrialisation through Five-Year
Plans; trilogy of strategies inducing economic miracles. Expansion of heavy industry to achieve self-sufficiency. This was unrealistic as Russia was heavily agriculturally based and lacked sufficient technology. 5-yr plans increasingly elaborated upon heavy industry; coal doubled in 4 yrs; oil 21.4mil (1933) → 28.5mil (1937). 2nd plan = transport and 3rd plan = military power (cut short by war). Stalinism provided framework for this. Collectivisation; capital accumulation; a ‘squeeze’ of peasant labour to achieve industrialisation. Impacts either economic success/national catastrophe. Grain → 0.029mil (1929) – 5.05mil (1931); eliminated Ukrainians → man-made famine; Kulaks were eliminated. 6mil lives lost, violence, executions, deportations and rebellions. Collectivisation was Machiavellian yet it allowed industrialisation to flourish. Stalinism had dictated the collaborative effort of the nation’s drive toward economic development in the primary forms of industrialisation and collectivisation, resulting in an enormous impact on the Soviet economy.

Paragraph Two: Social constructs under Stalinism within the USSR were entirely reformed within the period leading up to 1941, where all demographics of the Russian population experienced an entire metamorphosis, transforming to perfectly model Stalin’s expectations. Social class; women + youth. Women = robbed of rights from Russian Revolution, revolved around domestic and national duties; facilitated economic and cultural stalinist objectives. Youth = education (to become workers) and youth movements (Komsomol = certified Russian devotion). Social impact of collectivisation → dekulakisation = elimination of threats to society. Genocidal ‘Holodomor’ - Ukrainian hunger purge = social and ethical disruption. Terror and fear - pervasive under Stalin → purges and show trials as horror devices; irrational arrests. Fragmentation of social trust. NKVD Chief Yezhov - ‘Yezhovschina’ - period of time where regime lacked morals and promoted sadistic pleasures through terrorisation (arrests, deportation, torture and death). Stalinism is notorious for the terrifying impact it had within Russia, entirely amending the social state of the nation by 1941.

Paragraph Three: Furthermore, Stalinism exceptionally impacted Russian culture within its sovereignty up until 1941, saturating the USSR with ideals, customs and beliefs that solidified his doctrine. Centralised around stalinist notion of self-sufficiency. Cult of personality - promotion of stalinism / little/no opposition → omnipresent through media and arts. Employed through censorship → manipulation of culture through limitations → eliminating opposition to regime. Stalin = “Shining Sun of Humanity”. Image falsification through the arts - sustained ideological hubris through distortion of images (editing photographs). Socialist Realism - glorified heroes and aspects of life that reflect stalinism. Culminated to strengthen Stalinist culture. Stakhanovite legacy - patriotism and nationalism. Stalinism influenced culture to such a drastic extent, where the continuity of the impacts linger within the modern world.
enforcing how powerful the impression of Stalinism was within Soviet culture of the period preceding 1941.

**Conclusion:** Stalinism had accomplished an extraordinary degree of impact in his years of power leading to 1941, through methods of industrialisation and collectivisation, supported by social cooperation and cultural enforcement of his ideologies.
To what extent did the show trials and ‘the Terror’ shape the Communist Party and Soviet society in the period 1934–1941?

**Thesis**

**Main argument**

Stats, quotes and own knowledge

- Show trials and ‘the Terror’ shaped the Soviet Union to an enormous extent as they completely changed the nature of BOTH the communist party and Soviet society.

- Show trials – Communist party: elimination of internal and legitimate threats to Stalin, old Bolsheviks, party members with the deepest understanding of Marxist ideologies are gone.

- Show trials – Soviet society. Paranoia – idea that no one is above the purging, unsettled society that great communist leaders were traitors to the cause. Broadcasting of show trials as Stalinist propaganda, coercion of defendants to confess to give legitimacy to the trials.

- Cements Stalin’s authority in the eye of the people / cult of personality.

- The Terror: Kirov Decrees allowed for increased police state.

- Impact of the Terror on the Communist party – members make up the highest percentage of victims, established a party of ‘Yes’ men who now owe their position to Stalin. Destabilised Communist party, allows for restructure under Stalin. Party transformed to people in it for their own gain rather than traditional Marxist ideology (people settle old scores by informing on their colleagues).

- Impact of the Terror on society – paranoia and fear, increased role of the NKVD to arrest and detain, decrease of personal liberty, enormous number of murder victims, sent to Gulags, exile. Sentenced without trial. Loss of expertise eg engineers, teachers, artists, scientists. Purge of the army, loss of leadership. Destruction of family life, propaganda to encourage citizens to turn in each other.

- Rise of the cult of personality and dominance of Stalin.

- Students could also consider other factors that shaped Soviet society, such as economic factors, social and cultural policy eg The Great Retreat.
Introduction: Soviet foreign policy in the period between 1917 and 1941 was an ambiguous endeavour formed on the basis of predominantly practical concerns, rather than ideological

Paragraph One: Within the early years of Soviet foreign policy, ideological and practical concerns were simultaneously employed, aiming to establish national relations while allowing internal survival of Bolshevik power. Became vital for consolidation of Bolshevik power and appeasement of the state. Treaty of BL (1918) signalled withdrawal from the war → allowed maintenance of Bolshevik power. Treaty removed Russia from WW1, creating temporary peace with the warring nations → severe losses in regards to population, territory and economic output. Lenin “abyss of defeat, dismemberment, enslavement and humiliation”. Allied intervention in Civil War stained foreign relations, damaging their ideological goal (“permanent revolution”). Construction of the Comintern, a global socialist body whose role was to promote ideological revolution in their respective nation. Comintern was also practical; considering Bolshevik power was incapable of surviving to ideological standards surrounded by capitalist enemies. Russo-Polish War → Soviet defeat = Treaty of Riga → concluded hope of permanent revolution. Army General Tukhachevsky: “Our way towards worldwide conflagration passes over the corpse of Poland”. Treaty had territorial and mass economic repercussions. Burden of BL + inefficacy of Comintern + Treaty of Riga = rejection of ideological approach to FP and a diversion to practicality.
Paragraph Two: Soviet foreign policy in the 1920s centralised the urgency of practical considerations to achieve successful relationships with powerful countries, void of ideological input. 1920 = Friendship treaties to develop collective security. USSR involved with peace assemblies e.g. Genoa Economic Conference 1922. Involvement epitomised the abandonment of ideologically motivated action toward FP. Conference became stimulus of reconciliation btw Russia & Germany; Treaty of Rapallo - united Europe’s greatest pariah nations. Satisfied practical concerns; revoked terms of BL, mutual trade relationship and economic cooperation. Russia restored diplomatic connections with Britain after yrs of political instability; Zinoviev Letter and the 1926 General Strike → ended global friction. Soviet concerns focused on state interest and collective security → “war scares” from east and west fuelled practical decisions regarding FP. Within these years, Soviet foreign policy took an exponentially practical turn in an effort to maintain continental peace.

Paragraph Three:

The 1930s confirmed the view of Soviet foreign policy being dominated by practical concerns, as ideological considerations became null given the growing continental tension. Aim of FP became evasion of war → Stalin hoped collective security n foreign relations were enough to delay Russian involvement. Russia joined League of Nations (Sep 1934). Practical associations → Mutual assistance Treaty (France and Czechoslovakia) and USA through diplomatic ties. All signed to detain WWII as Hitler publicised aims of forceful Lebensraum on Russian land. War threat from East - Japanese defeat in 1938 and 1939. Ideology was merely a consideration during this period; centrality became practical global cooperation. Russia reached threatening levels of vulnerability → Molotov and von-Ribbentrop signed Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact (August 1939) → “Marriage of convenience”; blatant act of pragmatism as national ideologies were incompatible. Practical benefits of pact; control of eastern Poland and time to re-establish army and military power for the war. The final years of Soviet foreign policy displayed the abandonment of ideological input, as it became solely dominated by practical concerns in an effort to suspend involvement in continental conflict.

Conclusion: An analysis of the conflicting concerns that dominated Soviet foreign policy between this period concludes in the affirmation of the view that practicality reigned as ideology withered.