

# To what extent was stalins reign successful

Psychology, Success



Throughout the reign of Stalin he was able to establish himself as a successful dictator through totalitarian rule. He became the undisputed leader of the USSR and the factors that enabled him to do so were Industrialisation, his social policies and his ability to defeat Hitler in World War Two. However, through Stalin's political career he also encountered many failures. These were Collectivism, the purges and the terror he caused by the people living in Russia during his reign. Stalin's reign was successful through Industrialisation.

He modernised industry by introducing the 5-Year Plans, which consisted of two plans. The first plan from 1928 to 1933 and the second to 1932 to 1937 and they had the aims of improving the Russian industry. Many of the regions of the USSR were backward. Stalin believed that 'to be backward was to be defeated and enslaved, but if you are powerful people must beware of you.' There were many successes of the 5-year plans. The USSR was turned into a modern state, which was able to resist Hitler's invasion and as well as that there began to be a genuine communist enthusiasm displayed among the young 'Pioneers'.

There were huge drastic improvements in the industry; the output was projected to increase by an enormous 180% over 5 years and there were also huge achievements in coal, steel and hydroelectric power productions. The targets he had set were impossibly high however Stalin believed that he could force a nation to meet them. Overall throughout his reign he achieved fantastic successes, but at a big human cost, and while industrial output soared, the production of consumer goods remained static.

Another way Stalin was successful during his reign was through his social policies. In 1936, Stalin published a new constitution. Soviet citizens were granted the right to a job, social security, equality, healthcare and education. They were also promised freedom of speech and right of a fair trial. Before this, after the 1917 revolution, there had been a lot of social changes however, Stalin returned the USSR to traditional values that related to the communist rules and regimes.

Despite this, there was an increase in the number of women entering the workforce and child -minding services were set up in every factory to accommodate the needs a woman. Women had more rights given to them and the educational systems dramatically improved leaving to key successes. Stalin ultimately wanted the people to believe that strong leadership was good for the USSR and through this time he was seen in a very ' positive light'. Evidently, through the introduction of new social policies, Stalin was successful during his reign over Russia.

By having the ability to defeat Hitler in World War Two, Stalin's reign was successful. Hitler at the time was attempting to invade the Soviet Union, and Stalin kept retreating into the Soviet territory. After many battles within the Soviet Territory, Hitler began to realise that the Soviets were beginning to win battles. The broken troops in 1941 were replaced with new soldiers that were willing to defend the ' motherland'. While Hitler was pouring more of his reserves into the battle, Stalin just began to scratch the surface of his reserves leaving him with more troops.

After the battle of Stalingrad over 91, 000 of Hitler's army had been captured and their supply line was cut. The Red Army pushed the Nazi forces back to

Berlin in 1945 and in The Battle of Berlin; The Red Army took control over Berlin, which is Germany's capital. Through his leadership skills and having the ability to 'not lose his nerve' and stay in Moscow when Germany was closing in he was able to defeat Hitler in World War Two, evidently making Stalin's reign successful. However, Stalin had many failures throughout his reign, one of which was through collectivism.

Stalin had a strong desire to modernise agriculture, which led him to collectivise the farms of Russia, uniting them and putting them under full state control. Stalin thought he needed to collectivise farms because Soviet agriculture was backward, food was needed for workers in towns and this was essential if the five-year plans were to succeed. The NEP wasn't working, by 1928; the USSR was short of 20 million grains that were needed to feed the people in towns. Another reason Stalin collectivised agriculture was because the Kulaks opposed communism, as they liked their 'private wealth'. The Kulaks hid food from the government collectors and became very influential on peasants, so therefore, Stalin wanted to destroy them. From this came disastrous implications which included the fall of stock, an example of this is in 1928, 73 Tons of Grain was produced however, in 1933 this figure fell to 69 Tons of Grain produced. This led to a famine because there wasn't enough food for the people of the USSR and in 1923, 33 million Russians died as a result of the famine.

Another failure was that the Kulaks were eliminated, however, in Stalin's eyes this was a major success. Overall through collectivism Stalin experienced a failure through his reign. Another failure during Stalin's reign was through the Great Purges. At first the actions of the purges were limited to 'removing

membership cards'. However, it became much more brutal as it escalated quickly as it expanded onto the majority of the population. One out of eighteen in the USSR was accused, put on trial and then either sent into exile or executed.

Some of the most developed minds in the government were killed because they didn't agree with the policies Stalin put forward. Purging of the officers in the army in the 1930s also weakened the Red Army, which caused the collapse and loss of Western Russia to Nazi forces in 1941. Through all of what the great purges caused another failure for Stalin's reign. Through the terror that Stalin caused onto the people of Russia, people lived in fear of him, which became a failure of his career. Stalin believed that Russia had to be united, with him as a leader if it was to be strong.

He also believed that Russia has 10 years to catch up with the western world before Germany invaded and because of this Stalin became extremely paranoid and 'power-mad'. The results of Stalin's enforced terror was Russia came to dominate the whole of the USSR, the Orthodox Church was attacked and twenty million people were arrested. Most people lived in fear of the secret police and the industry grew as the terror caused provided free slave labour. A Stalin cult was formed and the army and navy weakened due to the purges of leading officers.

Through all of these things he caused terror to the people of Russia making this a failure in Stalin's reign. Overall, Stalin's greatest success included becoming the undisputed leader of the USSR through Industrialisation, his social policies and his ability to defeat Hitler in World War Two, however this came a greater cost to the people of Russia by collectivisation, the Great

Purges and the terror he enforced upon the people of Russia. So, therefore, Stalin was successful through his reign to some extent however he did have acts that hindered his success.