

# Stalin's russia

People



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To what extent was a totalitarian state established in the USSR in the 1930's? From the start of Stalin's self-imposed reign of control he always had the makings as a leader to create a totalitarian government, for example his ideology. Stalin wanted 'his' people to believe that he cared for them. It's interesting to say 'his' because it refers to the sense that Stalin himself believed he owned the Russian people which completely contradicts a lot of what he did and the reasons for which he did it. For example Stalin always told the people that he was doing things for 'the greater good of the Russian people'.

This contradiction could alter the disposition of things when considering the totalitarianism in the USSR in the 1930s. The term 'totalitarianism' means that a state would hold complete control over everything in it, which is largely what happened in the USSR. Collectivisation is a great example of this total control that Stalin held over Russia, the fact he could take all of the farms and merge them together into one big farm to create more produce which was then sold or traded showed significance in comparison to totalitarianism because it showed that there was complete control over what happened all over Russia.

As well as collectivisation Stalin also used terror to create a totalitarian state. The Great Terror from 1936-38 is a great example of how a totalitarian state was achieved. The Moscow show trials which were essential in justifying a communist government. The main reason for and main success of the show trials were that it showed that the communist was the only party that was trustworthy, although this wasn't true. The fall of Yagoda let Stalin re-

establish a once slacking NKVD as a more brutal force, new, less retrained agents were recruited to help speed up and extend the great terror.

The mass murder created by the Politburo's Order No. 00447 enabled the NKVD to produce a list of over 250,000 people that were associated with 'anti-soviet behaviour'. This led to many Russian people denouncing their friends or family due to the fear of Stalin's Great Terror and the NKVD, this shows great examples of complete control of the people and the state itself through the fear Stalin had inflicted. It was not only fear that Stalin used to put people on his side, Stalin also appeased a lot of what people wanted. Women were given more rights and responsibilities in everyday life in Russia.

For example, in World War One women didn't have a lot to do with it whereas in the Second World War hundreds of women fought on the front line and many women achieved the highest award possible for serving in the armed forces. This was because Stalin believed that women were at the centre point of Russian society and therefore appeased them because he knew how important they were. Stalin also put himself at the point of every family and made it known how he felt about the importance of family life, it was made a rule that every family had to have a picture of him in the house so that he could be at the centre point of everything.

To create a totalitarian state there has to be acceptance from everyone, this was not fully achieved in the USSR, but because of Stalin's Great Terror acceptance was not needed by everyone, the fear he inflicted left a great wound in the Russian people, through his 'reign' Stalin was responsible for over 20 million deaths. This would've meant that people feared for their lives

which led to people being submissive to the State, therefore creating a totalitarian state because of the total control held by the communist government.

Overall I think it's easy to see that a complete totalitarian state was established in the USSR in the 1930s because complete control was achieved by the communist party and by Stalin himself, it was mainly due his Great Terror that inflicted fear to 'his' people that totalitarianism was achieved. Stalin also achieved a totalitarian state because of the ways he made himself known everywhere in Russia, he was inescapable, finally leading to a fully totalitarian state.