

Stalin 5 year plan essay



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Stalin's five year plan was launched and approved by the Communist party in 1928. Visualizing a "revolution from above", Stalin's goal was the swift industrialization and collectivization of agriculture in the Soviet Union. Stalin believed that the Soviet domestic policy should stop being driven by capitalism and the New Economic Policy as soon as possible. In return, the Soviet Union would be transformed into an industrialized socialist state regardless of the cost involved in the process. The five year plan called for swift industrialization of the economy, with an emphasis on heavy industry.

Stalin wanted to achieve a 250 percent increase in total industrial development and a 330 percent expansion in heavy industry. To that end, he had ordered for the development of new industrial centres especially in the Ural Mountains, and for thousands of new plants to be built throughout the Soviet Union. However, these goals were unrealistic. In the Communist regimes, production and distribution were determined by specific state orders, specific quantities of raw materials and services, and specific distribution channels for the final outputs.

Moreover, the work force was fully employed, wages were arbitrarily predetermined, and industry and services were state-owned. With his insistence on his unrealistic production targets, Stalin created serious problems. With the maximum share of investment put into heavy industry, huge surpluses of undistributed goods and huge shortages of products occurred. The five year plan also called for collectivization of the Soviet agriculture under the conviction that collectivization would progress agricultural productivity and would produce sufficient grain reserves to feed the increasing urban labor force.

The Communist regime invested heavily in the transformation of individual farms into a system of large collective farms aiming to cover industrialization expense with the expected surplus produced. Moreover, collectivization was believed to free small farmers and tenants for industrial work in the urban areas enabling the Communist regime to enlarge its political dominance over the remaining peasantry. All these radical transformations caused the hostile reactions of the wealthier peasants, or kulaks.

To anticipate their opposition, Stalin ordered the deportation of approximately five million people, while the rest were forced into collectivization. However, in 1932-33, the turbulent conditions led to the catastrophic disruption of agricultural productivity which consequently resulted in a catastrophic famine. By 1940, the five year plan had collectivized almost ninety-seven percent of all peasant households, although the initial objective was the collectivization of twenty percent of small farmers and tenants households.

In the aftermath, forced collectivization assisted Stalin's vision of swift industrialization, but the human costs were immeasurable. The First Five-Year Plan, or 1st Five-Year Plan, of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was a list of economic goals, created by Joseph Stalin and based off his policy of Socialism in One Country, that was designed to strengthen the country's economy between 1928 and 1932.

The main concerns of the First Five-Year Plan focused on making the nation militarily, industrially, and financially self-sufficient. Launched by the Soviet government in 1928 and administered by the Gosplan, the First Five-Year

Plan employed tactics such as keeping detailed records on every item manufactured in the nation and shipping it to where it needed to go at the right time as well as other procedures of efficiency.

A likely motivator to the inception of the First Five-Year Plan lies in Stalin's basis of stabilizing the Soviet Union domestically through military and infrastructure in order to be prepared to fight (ideologically or physically) capitalism rather than directly finance and support an international socialist revolution (as advocated by Stalin's predecessor, Vladimir Lenin).

The Soviet Union's support of an international socialist revolution could have further crippled the still weak Soviet economy and/or stretched resources so thin that capitalists, or other "undesirable" counter-revolutionaries, could have overthrown the Soviet Union from within. One of the primary objectives of Stalin's First Five-Year Plan was to build up the country's heavy industry. In 1929, Stalin edited the plan to include the creation of kolkhoz, collective farming systems that stretched over thousands of acres of land and had hundreds of peasants working on them.

The creation of collective farms essentially destroyed the kulaks as a class, and also brought about the slaughter of millions of farm animals that these peasants would rather kill than give up to the gigantic farms. This disruption led to a famine in Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan as well as areas of the Northern Caucasus. Besides the ruinous loss of life, the introduction of collective farms allowed peasants to use tractors to farm the land, unlike before when most had been too poor to own a tractor.

Government owned Machine and Tractor Stations were set up throughout the USSR and peasants were allowed to use these public tractors to farm the land, increasing the food output per peasant. Peasants were allowed to sell any surplus food from the land. However the government planners failed to take notice of local situations. In 1932 grain production was 32% below average; [1] to add to this problem procurements of food were up by 44%. Agricultural production was so disrupted that famine broke out in several districts. [2] The introduction of collectivization spurred industrialization in the nation as millions of people, of the 80% of the total population that was engaged in agriculture, moved from the country into the city.

Despite many of the targets being unbelievably high (a 250% increase in overall industrial development, with a 330% percent expansion in heavy industry), remarkable results were achieved: * Pig iron: 6.2 million tons (compared to 3.3 million tons in 1928, and a prescribed target of 8.0 million tons) * Steel: 5.9 million tons (compared to 4. million tons in 1928, and a prescribed target of 8.3 million tons) * Coal: 64.3 million tons (compared to 35.4 million tons in 1928, and a prescribed target of 68.0 million tons) * Oil: 21.4 million tons (compared to 11.7 million tons in 1928, and a prescribed target of 19.0 million tons) * Electricity: 13.4 billion kWh (compared to 5.0 billion kWh in 1928, and a prescribed target of 17.0 billion kWh) However, while the plan encouraged industrialization, it damaged Soviet agriculture to such an extent that it didn't recover until after the Second World War.

The plan was considered by the Soviet leadership so successful in this sense that the second Five-Year Plan was declared in 1932, lasting until 1937.

Because of the plan's reliance on rapid industrialization, major cultural

changes had to occur in tandem. As this new social structure arose, conflicts occurred among some of the nomadic populations. In Turkmenistan, for example, the Soviet policy of collectivization shifted their production from food crops to cotton. 3] Such a change caused unrest within a community that had already existed prior to this external adjustment and, between 1928 and 1932, Turkmen nomads and peasants made it clear through methods like passive resistance that they did not agree with such policies. [3] This production shift undoubtedly aided Soviet goals but caused what was perhaps not the only example of upset during this time of change. Life for the workers: Life was very hard for industrial workers. Their pay was poor and there was barely anything they could spend their money on even if they had any. Consumer goods were simply not produced.

Working conditions were very dangerous and the hours were long. The homes that were provided were poor. So why did they work so hard? • the young were still idealistic. The whole concept of communism was still intoxicating. Stalin was known as “Uncle Joe” and they were willing to suffer a few years of hardship if they were going to get to the promised land of a better society. • people were encouraged to work hard by propaganda which bombarded the workers in all directions. This played on the belief that if most did it, the rest would follow on as they did not want to be seen as different. rewards were given to the best workers. Groups of workers were encouraged to compete against each other. The most famous worker was Alexei Stakhanov. He was said to have mined 102 tons of coal in one shift. This was fourteen times the amount expected from one person. Logically if he could do it, so could others. To be rewarded for hard work meant that you

were a Stakhanovite. In fact, Stakhanov was not a popular man with the workers – for very good reasons, as this put the burden on them of working harder. Stakhanov, in fact, was frequently not mining after this record.

He was allowed to tour Russia to be greeted as a hero and to give lectures on how to work hard and there is no clear evidence that he did what was claimed. • another way of persuading the workers to work hard was to pay by results. Successful managers were also paid more though whether this extra money was shared by the workers in a factory or mine is unknown. • punishment was also used by those who did not work hard. The fear of the labour camps was usually enough to get people working hard. Absenteeism from work was punishable by being fined or having your ration book taken from you.

In 1940, it carried a prison sentence. All workers had to carry labour books which stated whether you had worked hard or not. Bad comments from your manager could also lead to prison • a lot of hard physical labour was done by prisoners. It did not matter if they died – only that the task was completed. The fact that these people were in prison, was enough for the government to use them as it saw fit. For all the problems and hardship caused by the Five Year Plans, by 1941, Stalin had transformed Russia into a world class industrial power. This was to be vital for Russia as the war was about to test her to the extreme.