

Was stalin a disaster for the soviet union essay sample



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Stalin was called many things. Many christened him 'The gravedigger of the Revolution', saying that the entire socialist plans and ideas that were in place after the 1917 revolution were destroyed once Stalin was in power. A whole new socialist and essentially Communist society was expected in Russia but after Stalin took over the ideas never quite made it into daily life. Some call Stalin a murderer and an evil man. One who killed millions of innocent Russians for what was seen as no real reason.

Stalin made it clear to his nation that he knew there was a conspiracy and the conspirers must be eliminated but there was still scepticism among Russians about the truth of Stalin's statement. Other people though look upon Stalin as a creator, a genius, who masterminded the return of Russia into the world's powers and gave birth to many great ideas such as industrialisation, the agricultural revolution and all in the space of 30 years.

Such ideas about a great Russia would have been laughed at in the November of 1917, even after the revolution, but Stalin knew that he had to reach power and knew he would create a world power out of Russia again. Stalin's first role as an important factor in Russia comes soon after the great Lenin's death. A new leader has to be found to carry on the great communist party and the choices are soon restricted to two, Stalin and Trotsky. There are many reasons why Stalin managed to gain power and it's our first insight into how Stalin gained the advantage, through intellectual ways and otherwise.

Out of the two candidates Stalin was the least extreme and his views of bringing Russia to stand on its own two feet were ones mirrored by many.

Stalin also knew however that image was everything and made it his job to make Trotsky look bad. He succeeded at this when for Lenin's funeral Stalin managed to convince Trotsky that he would not be able to make it in time. At the very same funeral Stalin made a great speech while Trotsky was not seen, an apparent sign of disrespect. Stalin defeated Trotsky in a party conference and soon after ditched his two helpers Zinoviev and Kamanev.

An insight into how fickle Stalin may become. Now siding with the right wing of the party he got Trotsky and his two ex-comrades expelled from the country leaving the way clear for himself to take control of Russia. Some would see his underhand tactics as appalling and totally uncalled for, in the world of politics though others would call it genius. The nature of which Stalin gained power is one that gives us an insight into the events of his leadership, what did Stalin do with his power then?

One of the first and most important realisations by Russia's new leader was that there had to be another revolution or two, this time a slightly more organised one. For Russia to become an industrial state, to have great machines and factories as well as a great work force Stalin knew that there first had to be an improvement to the agricultural state of the nation. Collectivisation was Stalin's first big idea. To leave behind an age where every farmer is starving to survive on what he can manage to grow for himself not to mention the great famine and concealing of crop harvests.

Stalin saw great farms, farms covering many fields and all worked on by farmers who would control and equally share the harvest. On the face of it a great idea but on closer inspection the task at hand would be a great deal

harder. Stalin introduced the first of three 5-year plans; the plan was for the agricultural revolution to keep the communist ideals. These plans were urgent due simply to the great famines and despite good harvests between 1925-28 food supplies were still in great need. The state requisitioned many crops and Stalin sent the Secret Police to help in the collecting of Peasants crops without paying them.

Anyone who resisted was killed and in that way the situation went from bad to worse. So much so that millions were dying every year from starvation. Stalin though still sold crops abroad to keep Russia's image overseas a positive one. Stalin needed a scapegoat, someone to blame for the whole affair. The Kulaks were the rich peasants who owned more land and often livestock. Stalin managed to convince the public that it was these Kulaks and not himself who was to blame for the famine and situation in most of Russia.

Many Kulaks were chased from their farms by great numbers of peasants and the killing or arresting of Kulaks to gain their land or livestock soon became commonplace in Russia's farmlands. Many communists supported Collectivisation, it was seen as the best way to move on from the basic forms of farming and the collective farms paved the way for the introduction of machinery such as tractors and harvesters. The ideas of large mechanised farms spawned great enthusiasm among some peasants who were encouraging their fellow farmers to join this industrial concept and new revolution.

Stalin saw past trying to solve the famine situation however, Stalin realised that the new machines would decrease the amount of workers needed. Many

former farmers would have been without work if it weren't for the second part of Stalin's plans, an Industrial Revolution. Stalin's 5-year plans were seen as the way for Russia to become an industrial power. Only a strong economy would be able to compete with the capitalist powers and Stalin was adamant that Communism would prevail and succeed. Stalin's idea was to carry over a large mass of peasants from the agricultural revolution and turn them into an industrial workforce.

Coupled with great machines and factories Stalin felt that money and jobs would encourage peasants to be a part of the great industrial revolution that was greatly overdue in Russia. If other countries would look at Russia and wish to emulate them then Stalin would have succeeded. Stalin believed that a planned economy was the way to develop industry and it would be the State who decided what was made, how much would be made and issues about prices and wages. Many advances were made by Russia including an amazing new dam and an underground rail network.

The Russian people saw these great works and this brought about great enthusiasm from the Russian people who now more than ever wanted to contribute to the Russian Dream. Peasants were educated in practical skills and worked many hours in mines and in construction. It was such great works that encouraged workers to work hard and make a difference to their improving country. Probably Stalin's greatest tool however was propaganda and he used it to his advantage to motivate his work force. A huge campaign was all over posters and papers and there was a great reward scheme.

Workers gained needed wages at that time and the better a worker you were the more money you earned. Groups of workers were set to compete against each-other and the best workers of all gained better housing for their families, free holidays and even cash prizes. There was the other side of the coin though was the fear, the fear of what power Stalin had and that he was not afraid to use it to get his way. His secret police may have had a name change but the NKVD was still always on the lookout for anyone who was not pulling their weight or causing trouble.

There were mistakes made in the industrial revolution but it was seldom admitted that it was the fault of the workers and definitely not the fault of the government. ' Saboteurs' were created to take the blame. They were forced to admit that they were in effect bringing down the revolution from the inside. If they didn't admit to their " crimes" they would be killed, after they had admitted they were sent to labour camps or killed. The labour camps that Stalin had set up were hell on earth and it would be a close decision as to rather you would want to survive them or not.

The camps had sub-zero temperatures and the victims were forced to work over 16 hours a day on measly portions of bread and cabbage soup, or should I say cabbage leafs soaked in diseased water. Only a small percentage of the people who were sent to the labour camps left them again and torture and rape were common at these camps. The barracks were overrun with bugs and the hours of sleep were few in number, if you could fall asleep that is. Being sent to these camps was feared as much as being shot and the many of the prisoners were actually innocent.

If they were innocent then why did Stalin send the people to die in these camps then? The answer is that it was Stalin's was of deleting these people from society. In the late 20's and early 30's the Kulaks had been sent to these labour camps but by the mid 30's Stalin feared that his position of power wasn't secure. He set about eliminating anyone who could oppose him and with his secret police set about killing anyone who was seen or heard conspiring against Stalin. The Great Purges was the cherry on the top of Stalin's reign of Terror... or should I say the bullet in his gun.

Millions of peasants were sent to these camps for as little as perhaps cracking a joke about Stalin and the more important members of society were not safe either. Many cabinet members who Stalin felt could use the power they already had to try and displace Stalin were purged and erased from history. There were public show trials where people such as Stalin's former colleagues Zinoviev and Kamanev were made to admit to conspiring against Stalin live in front of the world. Not only did it prove that Stalin was right but it was his way of justifying his actions. Both Zinoviev and Kamanev were duly executed; many followed.

Photographs were doctored so that anyone who has been purged would be deleted from history. Most of the pictures seen by the public in the news and seen by children in school textbooks were airbrushed and they didn't even know it. The 'Cult of Stalin' was at large. A man who had more power in his little finger than anyone else in Russia had and would have. He was this God-like figure who made decisions over death, life and controlled all the Russian people. He controlled the arts in such a way that the only work that praised himself or a healthy Russian state were allowed.

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Any form of art that defied the conventions defined by Stalin fell under the category of 'bourgeois' art and the artists would be often arrested. Under such an environment without freedom of ideas it is exceedingly clear that the leader has total control. This was called the Cult of Stalin, Stalin dictator of Russia. So in my opinion was Stalin a disaster for Russia?... well firstly lets look at the meaning of disaster for it is a strong word. "A sudden great misfortune, great failure". Was Stalin a sudden great misfortune, not really.

At first many people took him to heart and saw him as the right person to take the reigns off of the late Lenin and carry on with the one aim or rebuilding Russia. There was no misfortune about it and although many died it is without doubt that Russia profited from Stalin, he was not a failure.

When he came to power Russia relied on simple farmers who still couldn't produce enough food to feed their own nation. Thanks to Stalin Russia was by the 1940's a strong industrial power with a workforce and many great creations to show for it. Stalin can be called many things but in my opinion, not a disaster.