

Different impressions of stalin



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Sources A, B and C are sources published throughout the nineteen thirties. All three sources give a separate insight into Stalin's different policies which were inflicted on his own nation, where many people suffered. In this essay I will first outline the points given in each Source and the message behind them, then counter argue the different impressions each source depicts on Stalin's personality and the similarities between the sources. Source A portrays Stalin presenting a pyramid of Skulls. His facial expressions are presented to be dark and menacing this immediately reflects the evilness within Stalin's personality.

Subdued in the back round are pyramids of skulls with dead crows feeding off the remains and a large blurb that reads " **Visitez U. R. S. S es Pyrmides**" (visit the pyramids of the USSR). The title is bolded and written in capitals and looks as though it has been stamped, this makes the picture look punchy and dramatic. The Source could be suggesting one of two evil policies which took place within the time frames of the source. The first policy was collectivisation. This took place when Peasants were to put their lands together to form large joint farms called Kolkhoz but could keep small plots for personal use.

Animals and tools were to be pooled together ninety percent of the kolkhoz produce and would be sold to the state and profits shared out. The remaining ten percent was used to feed the kolkhoz. The government had tried to sell these ideas to the peasants offering free seeds and other perks however complications erupted soon. The peasants were always suspicious of the government. They disliked the fact that they were being asked to grow flax

for Russia's industry rather than grain to feed themselves, they were abandoning a way of life that they and their ancestors led for centuries.

The kulaks simply refused outright to hand over land and produce.

Collectivisation started to become a grim and bitter battle. Soviet propaganda tried to turn people against the kulak, where Requisition parties were formed taking the food required by the government often leaving the peasants to starve. Kulaks were sent to prison or labour camps called gulags where they were harshly tortured and killed grotesquely. The Second event Source A could be referring to is the purges. This is when Kirov, the leader of the Leningrad Communist in the party is murdered. Stalin used this murder as an excuse to "purge" or clear out his opponents.

In show trials loyal Bolsheviks such as Kamenev and Bukharin confessed to being traitors of state. The purges extended to the wide public where around 18 million were purged and sent to the gulags (labour camps) where the end of their lives was met. Nearly every family in the Soviet Union had lost someone to the purges, where raids in the middle of the night took place and some people "simply disappeared." Source A thus gives an impression of an evil Stalin, portraying him as an egotistical, captivated, unscrupulous monster with no sense of morals or conscience, slaughtering vast amounts of people to fulfil policies of suspicion or due disobedience.

The sheer size of this slaying is portrayed with the skulls of pyramids where this is used as a metaphor; this helps us to visualize the scale of these deaths. The source also portrays that Stalin felt good about it, as it meant nothing except of it being a tourist attraction with Stalin presenting his proud

doings. Source B is a painting of Stalin in the nineteen thirties, this painting is sending across Stalin's policies of propaganda, the five year plans and industrialisation.

The five year plan is one that industrialised the Soviet unions industries and raw materials, where produce was boasted with unemployment falling. The five year plans were used effectively for propaganda purposes. Stalin had wanted the Soviet Union to a beacon of socialism and his publicity machine used successes of industrialisation to further that objective. This propaganda motivated, with many effective slogans for the public to work at times of need. This propaganda was at times exaggerated especially in the world war to when the public's conscience was at low (with world war looming and the depression started).

Propaganda encouraged the workers to put aside their unhappiness and use their goodwill to the governments need. Source B portrays Stalin in a very positive light, liked by workers dressed in military clothing but its is white rather than green this gives the impression of purity cleanliness, discipline and removes him from the image of aggression and killing normally associated with an army uniform, Setting is very calm sea trees sunny dies gives the impression of a peace loving and gentle man. This contradicts source A, which portrays Stalin as a cruel dictator.

Source C portrays amongst a crowd the wives of army officer cheering and commending Stalin. This could be because of Propaganda in order to encourage more women to work as there was a shortage of workers. Thus the government concentrated on drafting more women into industry. It set

up thousands of new cri?? ches and day care centres so that mothers could work. The source could also be used as a means of propoganda to get wives of normal men to be ashamed of their husbands as they are not participating in the protection of the country.

The source could also be used to increase the supporters of Stalin. The impression the reader can build in source C is that Stalin is a much loved person and the way the women are cheering at Stalin, makes Stalin look as though he has a prophetic role and is a religious figure and a well admired person. The sources are similar in different ways. The first similarity between the sources is that Source A and B are printed in the 1930's the same time frame suggesting a particular point of time.

Source C is not dated thus gives the source insignificance because it could be referring to dates before 1930's where public opinion of Stalin was better then the 1930's, therefore it wouldn't be reliable to use that source. The second similarity is that the credibility of all three sources can be disputed as they are produced in different countries Source A being in France, which was against Stalin's policies, while Source B and C were written by officials in the Soviet Union. Thus one can immediately appreciate the reasons to the differences of the images.

Source A was printed in France in the nineteen thirties, before world war two. At the time France had bred anti sentimental feelings to the Soviet Union as it was a communist nation. It wasn't invited to the Munich conference because of the Communist radical extremist beliefs the French saw in the USSR. Source B and C where both printed in the USSR at the time The soviet

people were deluged with portraits, photographs and statues of Stalin every Russian town had a Stalin square or a statue of Stalin. Poets, artists, composers wrote music praising him.

These two sources might not be very reliable because it is probably a piece of Soviet propaganda. A painting reliant on artistic invention influenced by harsh censorship governed by Stalin where he would've not welcomed an unflattering critical picture; the artist would have been punished. Propaganda was needed to increase support of Communism as an ideology to show that it was better than capitalism. Heroic Russian workers to motivate people to cooperate with Stalin's policies; this source is showing as one of his policies which is the five-year plans to promote cult and worship of Stalin.

Also analysing source B carefully there is a clear contradiction to the workers being happy and supporting Stalin because in reality on great engineering projects such as dams and canals, many of the workers were prisoners who had been sentenced to hard labour for being political opponents or suspected opponents of Stalin or for being kulaks. Source B doesn't show the harsh factory life under Stalin.

Factory discipline as strict and punishments severe. Lateness or absences were punished by sacking. There are many contradictions in the source; this includes the painter not portraying the harsh conditions without basic amenities, the harsh punishments etc. Source B is a source which strongly agrees to be part of Stalin's propaganda policy: brainwashing not only his citizens but the world at large that his five-year plans ran smoothly.

After analysing all three sources in detail I have been able to integrate the sources together to be able to present myself with a reasonable outlook on the different impressions of Stalin the sources have shown. The essence of source's B and C are similar where they focussed on Stalin being an integral part of communist society where he was loved and idolized by people. The essence of source A is strikingly different to the other two sources presenting the results of what happened when people didn't abide by Stalin's harsh rules.

However the main difference between these sources is who they were written by, as all were written by extremist opinions from either side (source A is by France trying to deter countries away from communism in any way possible and source B and C by the USSR who clearly wanted to persuade people of the happiness in communist life) Thus it can be concluded that all three sources show conflicting stories and thus all three can be seen to be untrustworthy and biased.