

The great patriotic war (1941-1945) essay sample

War



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

After the Great Patriotic War of 1945, the state of the USSR had massively deteriorated due to suffering heavy losses as the consequences of war, its estimated in excess of 20 million troops were killed and two thirds of soviet industrial property had been destroyed. This dramatically impacts the USSR's position economically, socially and politically. Hence after the war Stalin re-adopted his hard-line stance, and called for doubled efforts of the people in order to rebuild the strength of the USSR, full recovery became priority and resulted in serious hardship.

Despite this society expressed patriotism after success in defeating Hitler, and engaged in mass support for Stalin as the figurehead of war, resulting in the period 1945-1953 being coined ' High Stalinism.' But the argument in hand is whether did the USSR actually recover prior to Stalin's death, to its former pre-war ability, and i believe it predominantly did not, despite clear economical and industrial advances they're impact on recovery are exaggerated and overplayed. The USSR emerged into a totalitarian state, oppressed with little gain and regression in social and political aspects, it did not fully recover until succession of Stalin.

The only evident improvement and clear recovery in the USSR was economically but this does not apply broadly, only to specific areas such as heavy industry. Stalin effectively managed to reinforce growth by implementing the fourth 5 year plan, emphasising quantitative production key to recovery , as well as other objectives such as national reconstruction and the development of the atomic bomb also considered a necessity. It was arguably successful in achieving it goals, industrial production by 1950 was 75% up on that of 1940, and big increase in investment for coal and steel, <https://assignbuster.com/the-great-patriotic-war-1941-1945-essay-sample/>

the consequences of which meant coal production increased from 149 million tons in 1945 to 261 million. Statistics of this recovery, although the trend of progression and increased output are realistic, are likely to be manipulated and exaggerated.

Furthermore full economical recovery appeared far adrift due relatively to the targets of the 5 year plan. It negated to take into account the need for consumer goods as a fundamental area for economic recovery, hence basic necessities such as clothes were scarce, and resulted in increased trade on the Black Market, effectively losing wealth. Statistics show the GDP per head by 1948 did infact exceed 1938 (pre war) suggesting recovery. Peter Kenez stated ' even if we take into consideration the exaggerations built into soviet statistics, it is still indisputable that the Stalinist methods worked and that the speed of reconstruction was impressive' but i refute this, on looking at the big picture, the post war period was referred to as the ' Golden Age' as all countries experience economic group, the USSR's recovery comparable to countries such as France was less swift in achieving this, hence its not necessarily as impressive as first perceived. The five year plan was reliant on mass workers, and this was an error as the USSR was fundamentally lacking man power as a consequence of war.

This resulted heavy intensive labour being the Stalinist methods resulting in serious hardship, the technique was inadequate and lead to lower productivity than what would potentially have been achieved if the structure was changed and more high tech machinery were to be introduced. The USSR also struggled more economically as they lost help provided during the war such as the American Land Lease policy which constituted some 23% of <https://assignbuster.com/the-great-patriotic-war-1941-1945-essay-sample/>

the total aid to the USSR during the war. Although heavy industry undoubtedly improved, light industry was neglected and agriculture suffered massively, resulting in the 1946-47 famine, collective farming disrupted production and led to lack of incentive, the countryside became depopulated and it scarcely brought return and all revenue was invested in industry whilst farming remained low, production in 1946 was one third amount of that in 1940, and in 1952 the 1940 figure was not even reached, this implies the economy was not as successful and expressed and furthermore has regressed in some areas rather than recovered.

Politically, there was no recovery but purely regression, both on an international and domestic level. In 1945 Stalin during the war co-operated and built alliances in Europe with countries alike Britain, by 1953 these relations had vastly deteriorated and instead developed into fierce competition and tensions, especially with the USA within the beginning of what is known as the Cold War, the only political factor that can be considered a recovery, it the USSR gained political status and influence, particularly in eastern Europe, but also created enemies on the national stage. Furthermore the USSR had developed into a totalitarian state, replicating that of the old tsarist regime but to a greater scale in that Stalin possessed ultimate power and feared so much that no one would oppose, was worshipped like a deity (through the cult of personality) and ruled as a dictator, often oppressively, no other party except the communist party existed which Stalin led, meaning no democratic decisions could occur.

In 1945 Stalin had delegated powers to greater use, a prime example being Zhukov in his military leadership during the Great Patriotic War. This <https://assignbuster.com/the-great-patriotic-war-1941-1945-essay-sample/>

practice by 1953 was completely eradicated, and Stalin reformed the political structure so that it was completely centralised, even within his close circle of the politburo he extensively moved supporting officials such as Zhdanov so no person could gain a power base, ensuring they all remained inferior and obeyed to his rule. This period was more militarised, secretive and punitive than the late thirties, evident in the arbitrary doctors plot and the Leningrad purge where over 200 party officials were tortured and shot, this induced greater fear as anybody could be a risk, and subjected to Stalin's superior domain, even those internal. This meant politically there was no room for manoeuvre, no input or interference in Stalin's ruling.

The social impact and detriment of war, had arguably also not recovered, people were no longer patriotic in that they had no common cause to fight for, and instead they were simply oppressed. There was no investment in the people, no attempt to raise standard of living or reward efforts made, instead Stalin focused on the cold war and military build up. People were subjected to the cruelty of the gulags, even soldiers (Norman Lowe estimated 2.8m) as they were believed to have seen too much of western civilisation and therefore a threat to the state. People were forced into hysterical isolation, completely disconnected from the outside world and subject to constant threat and suspicion from the secret police led by the intimidating Beria.

People had nothing, essentials were in scarce supply. People faced heavy intensive labour, and could not express discontent due to the probability of exile, they face heavy rations due to low grain production and religion was just tolerated, so long as it promoted Stalin. Also Zhdanov's cultural reforms ensured intellectuals that would normally formulate public opinion followed

<https://assignbuster.com/the-great-patriotic-war-1941-1945-essay-sample/>

directives from high, these are known as ' cultural reforms' There was no diversity, ambition, or opportunity, people were just the mechanism to bring economical wealth at the expense of their own standards of living. As expressed by Christopher Read society was ' rigid and cowed' this can be seen evidently in policies such as Russification being reintroduce to strengthen support in the state and Anti-Semitism resurfacing, you had to abide in the national cohesion despite no gain of communism over capitalism.