

How did stalin  
achieve and maintain  
power?



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Josef Stalin-real name Josef Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili – was born in Georgian small city Gori on 9 December 1879. Stalin grew up as an only child, the son of Vissarion(nicknamed Beso) and Yekaterina (Keke) Dzhugashvili. his father was shoemaker, his mother was deeply religious Christian and she was working as a domestic servant. The Dzhugashvili household was usually brutal. Stalin's father was an alcoholic who flew into awful anger when drunk. Josef grew up very cruel and rude person. One of Keke's friend said that ' I never saw him cry, his harsh home life left him embittered.[1]Stalin got his first education in Russian Orthodox Church's Tbilisi Seminary in 1894, life in seminary was tedious. Students were only permitted to study books that were agreed by the school authorities, mostly religious texts. Books about politics, philosophy and nonreligious subjects were firmly prohibited. The despondent situation led many students to rebel against school administration. By second Josef became the leader of the group of the student who read illegal books and argued forbidden subjects. During his time in seminary Stalin rejected Christianity and became an atheist. Much of his rebellion was against Russian government. By that time Georgia was part of Russian empire. Russians defeated Georgia through series of wars during a nineteenth century. Russian empire was an autocracy, meaning that Russian tsar had power over a whole population and the government. While European countries practiced a limited form of democracy, Russian people had a few rights and a little freedom. While Stalin was in Tiflis, Russia was trying to ' Russify' Georgia.[2]

During Stalin's seminary years, he found out an author who amazed him a lot. This author was a German born economist, Karl Marx. His theory seems

fresh, thrilling and threatening. For young Stalin, Marx's ideas, especially his promise about workers glory, were exciting. For many young revolutionaries Marxism became a new religion. Marx's texts became a kind of holy book which many young people sought to control the future.

1899 Stalin's disobedient behaviour made him an unfeasible student and at the age of 21 he was expelled from a seminary. Dismissal from seminary started a new period of uncertainty. Next 18 years he became a revolutionary and joined RSDLP. Stalin was helping strikers, printing illegal broad-sheets and allocating several prison terms. He was arrested several times. He first met Lenin in 1905, prepared bank incursions to boost party funds. With Lenin's approval he temporarily edited Pravda until he was arrested again in 1913. Stalin came back in Petrograd from Siberia in February 1917. After an ordinary role in the October revolution he became a commissar for Narkomnats, a department in charge for republics non Russian people. Later he was appointed several times for high places. By the time Lenin suffered his first stroke a month later, therefore and 10 years after his first appearance on the Bolshevik central committee, Stalin had raised high in the party bureaucracy.[3]He was an only leader who was a member of the Politburo, Orgburo, Secretariat and central committee. Lenin's third stroke made him almost powerless and he died in 1924.

One of the major questions of the soviet political history is why it was Stalin who got an absolute authority at the end of the 1920s. He did it through political frame, mainly throughout the Central Committee, the Secretariat and the Politburi. The power struggle during the 1920s was played out in a way which had much in common with Lenin's manoeuvrings.[4]Lenin was

debilitated at the start of the 1923, at which period the other voting members of the Politburo were Kamenev, Rykov, Stalin, Tolski, Trotsky and Zinoviev; Bukharin, Kalinin and Molotov were non-voting candidate members. By the end of the 1930 only Stalin, Molotov and Kalinin were left. A troika figured within the Politburo to resist Trotsky, Stalin associated with Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev, both close comrades of Lenins in the secretive Bolshevik party. This was much about individuality as about problems. Trotsky was removed from his power base, the war commissariat.[5]in a limited time troika broke up. The leading power in the Politburo became Stalin and Bucharin, with a plan assembled around support for the NEP. By the end of the 1925 Zinoviev had misplaced his power base in Leningrad and in the following year in the Comintern.

At the end of the 1926 Zinoviev and then Trotsky were moved from the Central Committee and then from the Communist party altogether. Later Stalin broke with Bukharin. Only three of the nine members of the Politburo who could vote were honestly critical of the way things were happening, while, and the right, hostility was increasingly edged out of their positions: Tolskii from the trade unions, Bukharin from the party newspaper Pravda and from the Comintern and Rykov from the position of prime minister. By the end of the 1920s most of Stalin's party contemporaries, the men who had been leader of the tiny pre-1917 Leninist party, had been removed from the top leadership. With Rykov's removal in December 1930 the politburo consisted of Stalin and nine other voting members.[6]These men were almost all five to ten years younger than Stalin; they were short of the prestige which came from having worked closely with Lenin. By that time,

Central Committee consisted of the people who had never conflicted with Stalin. They accepted Stalin's control and they maintained his programmes of quick industrialisation and collectivisation. Historians debate the extent to which Stalin was challenged in the early 1930s as a result of the social chaos caused by the 1st Five-year-plan, if not by members of the Politburo then the 'barons' of the party Central Committee.[7] Of the ten voting members of the Politburo selected in the 1934 only one was a straight purge sufferer; while other members stayed the power in the land until 1957. What they had in general was a close individual contact with Stalin.

### **End of NEP and beginning of Five-year-plan.**

Catch up and overtake (dogmat' i peregnat') was a main point of the Stalin period. He assumed in 'Socialism in one country' – the USSR would be powerful enough to carry on, then would defeat the rest of the world. In 1927 Stalin's advisers stated him that in order to modernise farming, the Soviet Union would need an extra 250, 000 tractors. As well as tractors, there was also a need to expand the oil fields to give the necessary petrol to use the equipment. Power stations also had to be constructed to provide the farms with energy. After the October Revolution in 1917, industrial growth had been slow. The production had reached the same stage that was before the start of the First World War. Stalin made a decision to use his power over the country to raise production. There were two Five Year Plans – first from 1928 to 1933 and the second from 1932 to 1937. The first Five Year Plan launched in 1928, focused on the growth of iron and steel, electric power, machine-tools and transport. Stalin put the workers high targets. He required an 1115 increase in coal production, 200% increase in iron production and 335%

increase in electric power.[8]He justified himself by stating that if quick industrialization did not happen, the Soviet Union would not be able to protect itself against an attack from capitalist countries. In a small period USSR turned into modern state which was able to resist any invasion. There were vast successes in the hydroelectric power, farm machinery, Moscow underground, coal, steel, plastic, education and medicine, there was no unemployment. While all of this progression caused appalling consequences: discipline (sacked if late), secret police, labour camps (for those who made mistakes), accidents and deaths (100, 000 workers died building the Belomor Canal), no human rights and wages fell. With the high investment that was put into heavy industry, lack of consumer goods took place and inflation rose. To gratify the state's need for food supplies, the First Five-Year Plan called peasantry to collectivize themselves that the authorities could simply manage. This collectivization program involved compounding the peasants' animals and lands into collective farms. This program was intended to affect all peasants; while in particular, Stalin sought to remove the wealthiest peasants, kulaks. About 1mln kulak households were deported and never heard again. Forced collectivization of the peasants, affected in a devastating distraction of agricultural production and a famine in 1932-33. Collectivization helped to get Stalin's goal of quick industrialization, but the human costs were immeasurable.

## **Purges**

The major characteristic of Stalin's Russia was the Terror. The First Purges was from 1930-33 Including anybody who opposed industrialisation, and the kulaks who opposed collectivisation.[9]Second was a Great Purges, 1934-39

of the Political rivals. . In 1932 Stalin became mindful that resistance to his plans were rising. This increased from his paranoia and his wish to be complete autocrat. By that time, Kirov started to argue against this policy. When the vote was counted, the majority of the Politburo maintained Kirov against Stalin. Two years later, Sergey Kirov was murdered by a party member, Leonid Nikolayev . Stalin claimed that Nikolayev was part of a huge plan led by Leon Trotsky against the Soviet government. This ended in the arrest and trial in 1936 of Kamenev, Zinoviev, Smirnov and thirteen other party members who had been crucial of Stalin. All were named guilty and executed. In September, 1936 Yezhov selected as head of the NKVD. Yezhov quickly arranged to seize of all the top political figures in the Soviet Union who disliked Stalin. Also NKVD seized and executed prisoner's family members if they did not declare. The last step of the terror was the purging of the NKVD. Stalin did that in order to remove all traces and he stated that "fascist elements" had taken over the NKVD that had resulted with the execution of innocent people. Beria became new head of the secret police. The result of these purges was that 20mln arrested – perhaps half died, pupation lived in fear of the Secret Police, industry – rose (the Terror offered free slave labour), but technology and science were held back by loss of best engineers. Purges also affected navy and military as leading officers were killed.

## Conclusion

How did Stalin achieve and maintain power? By fear. He was removing everyone who was against him. He came to give a freedom to people, but what he had done history will never forget.

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