

Why did stalin carry out the 'purges' essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

These purges were his method of removing those who had previously opposed him and also those he believed may oppose him in the future.

These alleged criminals against the state were either imprisoned, exiled or shot and ranged from high party officials and members of the military through to ordinary citizens.

The purges began in 1930 with the removal of the kulaks (the more affluent peasant farmers) and progressed to the publicised show trials of high party officials in 1934. Stalin ordered these purges for a number of reasons, foremost was the need to remove his rivals from positions of power. One such rival was Kirov and it's entirely possible, though unproven, that Kirov's murder was actually ordered by Stalin himself. There were many 'old Bolsheviks' within the party who simply knew too much about him, the fact that he had very little to do with the actions of 1917 and also that they knew the truth about his relationship with Lenin, a relationship that was not as close as Stalin led people to believe, indeed in the photograph of him and Lenin together, Stalin can clearly be seen holding a cigarette - Lenin despised smokers and disliked being near them, a fact that alludes to fabrication of the picture. Also there was the possible reason that the purges provided him with cheap labour in the Gulag, the series of labour camps which had been set up in Siberia and the Arctic north where those held there were forced to work on mining projects and construction.

It is suggested that Stalin felt a need to be seen as better than everyone else and was possibly even jealous of his rivals, which would have contributed to his reasons for the purges. They enabled Stalin to remove the Red Army's Commander-in-Chief, Marshall Tukhachevsky, who he saw as a possible

threat to him, seven other Generals of the army were also arrested and shot, and all the Admirals along with half the Red Army's other officers were either executed or put in prison, providing Stalin with total obedience from the military. Another reason could be Stalin's paranoia, some writers suggest that he was suffering a persecution complex and believed that everyone was plotting to have him overthrown. Other possible reasons are that there was a snowball effect, once the purges had begun it had become difficult to put a stop to them, or that they provided him with a way to excuse failures of his Five Year Plans; a failure to meet an output target would not be down to a fault with the plans or that the targets set were too high, but were instead due to sabotage within the industry.

A final reason for the purges could have been that he wanted to induce a fear within the people and by putting the senior figures of the party on trial he was able to show them that no-one was capable of opposing him. The people were encouraged to inform on their neighbours and children were encouraged to inform on their parents of any anti-government sentiment they may know of, as a result of this in 1935, in the cities Moscow and Leningrad, over one million people were executed for crimes or disloyalty to Stalin.