

## STALIN

### Rise To Power

- I. First studied revolutionary ideas at a Theological Seminary while studying to be a priest. He was expelled for revolutionary activity
- II. His revolutionary fervor caught the attention of Lenin, who helped him rise in party leadership
- III. Led the July Bolshevik uprising, which failed and caused him to go into hiding. Once Lenin took power, Stalin came back and eventually gained the position of General Secretary
- IV. As General Secretary, Stalin could control promotions and ranks within the communist party. This was key because he filled positions with those loyal to him
- V. Once Lenin was declining in health (Lenin left no heir), Stalin discredited his opponents so that he could secure power
  - a. Trotsky was recently a Menshevik and had recently criticized the party
  - b. Other political opponents were either not Marxist enough or had ties to Trotsky
- VI. Once Lenin learned that Stalin was unfairly discrediting his opponents to maneuver himself to a position where he could take power upon Lenin's death, Lenin criticized Stalin. However, Stalin was able to dismiss Lenin's criticisms because Lenin had been so sick and claimed he was influenced by the women taking care of him

### Consolidation of Power

- I. When collectivizing agriculture, the kulaks were eliminated. This instilled fear in others to collectivize and give up grain, but also adversely affected the Soviet economy
- II. Stalin continued to rise in power and status by:
  - a. Creating a constitution that had an outward appearance of democracy, but truly strengthened the communist party by ignoring democratic principles and making the communist party the only one you could vote for
  - b. Used the secret police (Cheka, later renamed the NKVD) to seek out counter-revolutionaries
  - c. The USSR became a "telling society" where the police encouraged people to inform on others
  - d. Gulags were forced labor camps for counter-revolutionaries and workers who didn't work hard enough
  - e. Propaganda portrayed Stalin as a father figure "Uncle Joe"
  - f. Show Trials of prominent communists were often staged based on forced confessions and ending in hangings or shootings. Many of these people were actually innocent
  - g. Stalin signed execution lists without giving the people a trial or any form of due process

- h. Great Terror (1936-1938) – purges of communist officials, intelligentsia, church members, army officers, kulaks, and counter-revolutionaries. This eliminated opposition so that they could be replaced with people who were loyal to Stalin
- i. Stalin developed a “cult of personality” – meaning that people followed Stalin no matter what
- j. Artists and writers were instructed to paint pictures and write poems which glorified Stalin
- k. Education and film were to glorify hard work/communism
- l. Media was censored

### **Previous Conditions**

- I. Lenin suffered a series of strokes and left no heir

### **Successes**

- I. Gained prestige because of his revolutionary activity, which eventually caught the attention of Lenin
- II. Worked his way up to become General Secretary of the Central Committee, an important position because he controlled promotions and ranks
- III. Used his position as General Secretary to secure people in positions that would be loyal to Stalin
- IV. Built up the “cult of Lenin” to present himself as the real heir to Lenin when he died
- V. Used the Cheka to find information that could discredit his opponents, which he successfully did
- VI. Discredited Lenin’s letters denouncing Stalin (when he found out what Stalin was doing) by claiming that Lenin was too sick and hinting that he was being influenced by the women taking care of him
- VII. Drafted a constitution that consolidated Stalin’s power by eliminating all political parties except his own
- VIII. Gulags successfully used to instill terror, hold political prisoners, and use as a slave labor force
- IX. Propaganda built up Stalin’s “cult of personality” – his face was everywhere and was built up to be “Uncle Joe”. Had total control of media, which propped up Stalin. Art, poems, pictures, etc. to honor Stalin
- X. Eliminated all of his political opponents, such as everyone on the original Central Committee, Trotsky, Kamenev, and Zinoviev
- XI. Literacy rate dropped because education was free
- XII. Show Trials were used to instill fear because you had to admit guilt when there were false charges
- XIII. Got rid of churches in Russia because he felt they could be a source of opposition

- XIV. Great Terror (1936-38) purged intelligentsia, party members, church officials, kulaks, and army members. This helped to secure more loyal people to Stalin, but weakened the Soviet army and led to early defeats in WWII
- XV. Five-Year plans provided enough of an increase in industry to defeat the Germans in WWII
- XVI. Provided a more stable government than what had been under the czar or even Lenin (because there was civil war)
- XVII. The Soviet Union became a superpower and the leader of communism

**Failures**

- I. Brutally suppressed or killed most kulaks, which ended up hurting the economy because these people and their equipment were needed to work on the farms since they were the most skilled
- II. Although unemployment was nonexistent and workers received free education and medical services, overall conditions didn't improve much. Working conditions were poor; standard of life improved, but was still low; lived in one room houses; low wages; few freedoms
- III. Wasn't able to prove that communism was better than capitalism, because whenever there was a crisis, he had to loosen communist ideals (such as in WWII)
- IV. Women had a tough life – country wanted them to both work and raise a family. Often times they also had to wait in long bread lines for food
- V. Many of the most talented and intellectual people in Russia were lost

**Compare Stalin to Mao**

Event	Stalin to Mao
Rise to power	<p>Comparisons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both supported left-wing ideologies</li> <li>• Both successfully discredited their opponents, thereby gaining more power</li> <li>• Both rose up in status within their political parties to gain power</li> <li>• Both developed “cults of personality” with their face posted everywhere</li> <li>• Both used terror (Yenan Terror – Mao; Great Terror – Stalin) to build up/consolidate power</li> <li>• Both were involved in WWII and both fought the Japanese</li> </ul> <p>Contrasts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stalin was involved in a revolution; Mao was involved in a civil war</li> <li>• Mao went on a retreat called the Long March for years</li> <li>• Stalin’s ideology was freed up due to the crisis of defeating Germany in WWII; Mao’s ideology was strengthened during WWII because he recruited people as the Nationalists fought the Japanese</li> <li>• Stalin gave supplies and weapons to Mao so that the CCP could rise to power</li> </ul>

Event	Stalin to Mao
Domestic policies	<p>Comparisons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both had five-year plans that built up industry, but ultimately failed to reach their targets</li> <li>• Both tried collectivization, but it failed miserably – resulted in famine and millions of deaths</li> <li>• Both forcefully took extra crops from the peasants</li> <li>• Both brutally suppressed or killed landlords or kulaks, which ended up hurting the economy because these people were needed to work on the farms since they were the most skilled</li> <li>• Got rid of religion as a source of opposition</li> <li>• Education was free and indoctrinated communist ideology</li> <li>• Art, film, media, etc. was all censored or controlled</li> </ul> <p>Contrasts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conditions for women in Mao’s regime were much better than in Stalin’s</li> </ul>
Foreign policies	<p>Comparisons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were allied with each other; Soviets traded with China and gave technical advisors</li> <li>• Both were opponents of the West, especially the U.S.</li> <li>• China and the Soviets both assisted the North Koreans in the Korean War</li> <li>• China and the Soviets both assisted the Vietnamese in the Vietnam War</li> </ul> <p>Contrasts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soviet Union was more actively trying to spread communism around the world</li> <li>• China was concerned about the Nationalists remaining on Taiwan</li> <li>• Both were ultimately not successful in spreading communism</li> <li>• Stalin dominated over Mao, knowing that Mao needed his aid; Mao acknowledged that the Soviets under Stalin were the leaders of communism</li> </ul>