

Stalin and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:

1.1 DEFINITION OF TOTALITARIANISM

- A concept
- "It's not always a bad thing"
- *Evaluation of the effectiveness of policies in totalitarian states / formation of totalitarian states*

Characteristics of a totalitarian regime

1. Total control over lives of citizens
 - Control over political, institutional, economic, moral and personal life
 - Personal autonomy not tolerated
2. Absolute leader and cult of personality
 - Deification of leader
 - Leader presented as flawless
 - Only 1 political party allowed to exist
3. Utopian and all-embracing ideology
 - Ideology refers to a system of beliefs
 - Right to absolute control based on reference to ideology
4. Repressive form of control
 - Use of secret and police
 - Systematic use of coercion and terror
 - Legal system becomes an instrument of state control
5. Centralised control of the economy
 - State-owned economy
 - Coordination of economy to achieve objectives of the political regime
6. Centralised control of the media and culture
 - Extensive use of censorship and propaganda
 - Culture and media to conform to state ideology

Points to take note of

- *How much of Stalin's rise to power can be attributed to his ideology?*
- *How many of the policies implemented by Stalin were due to his ideology?*

Definitions

Bourgeoisie The social class who owns the means of production and whose societal concerns are the value of property and the preservation of capital (middle class)

Proletariat The social class in a capitalist society whose only significant possession is their ability to work (lower class)

1.2 COMMUNISM AS AN IDEOLOGY

- “Stalinism - born as a product of an unfinished proletariat revolution amidst a backward society encircled by a hostile capitalist environment - degenerated into a totally oppressive, dehumanising ideology, expressing the interests of a gigantic bureaucratic elite.” - Robert Tucker
- Communism exists as a spectrum - not set in stone
- Vladimir Lenin (Владимир Ленин) was considered the father of the Russian revolution, being the first to successfully carry out a communist revolution
- Capitalist economy = free market economy
- Supply vs. Demand

Comparison of Marxism with Leninism and Stalinism

Marxism	Leninism	Stalinism
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Society was divided into classes and the upper class will be overthrown by the bourgeoisie which will be overthrown by the proletariat.• Creates a classless society• Assumed that revolution would take place in a highly industrialised, capitalist country.• Believed in a spontaneous revolution.• Believed in a stateless society.• Workers would establish dictatorship of the proletariat and a stateless society would eventually emerge.• Nationalisation of economy.• Favoured world revolution.• Abandonment of bourgeois society, culture and values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Similar to Marxism• Argued that the capitalist state was exploitative and Russia could move straight to socialism from feudalism.• Used professional revolutionaries.• Established a strong government.• Established dictatorship of the party instead of the proletariat and favoured collective leadership.• Used dictatorial measures to ensure development of a communist society.• Believed that democracy would become widespread.• Imposed war communism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Created a new elite (the nomenklatura) consisting of the communist party members and enjoyed privileges, ensuring their loyalty• Creates deep social inequality• Established dictatorship of the individual (contrary to Marxist ideals)• Created a system of terror and a climate of fear supplanted by extensive use of censorship and propaganda.• Imposed forcible collectivisation and a centralised and planned economy based on heavy industrialisation.• Intense nationalism, ‘revolution in one country’• Reversion to conservative culture and society, emphasising on cultural conformity and use of censorship.

1.3 THE PRE-RUSSIAN REVOLUTION SITUATION

- Political system:
 - Emphasis on autocracy, the Russian Orthodox Church and Russian nationality
 - Russia has never experienced actual democracy before
 - Link between Russian Orthodox Church and the state
 - Russian ethnic group dominated other ethnicities in the multi-ethnic Russian empire
 - Tsar Nicholas II (Николай Романов) was weak and indecisive
- Economic situation:
 - Soil was infertile
 - Lack of mechanisation
 - Overpopulation
 - Agrarian crisis (too many people, too little land)
 - Working class was easily influenced by revolutionaries
- World War I:
 - Army was badly led, poorly trained and poorly equipped
 - About 7 million Russians died by 1916
 - Russian Revolution in 1917 ended Russia's involvement in the war
- Massive inflationary spiral
- Serious shortages of food
- Disillusionment with the monarchy

1.4 THE RISE OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION: THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONS

Russian Revolution

- Duma = Russian Parliament
- Communist Bolshevik party (Коммунистическая Партия Советского Союза or КПСС) led by Lenin
- Extensive use of police and military to put down unrest
- Duma wanted a representative government but did not call for a republic
- General public wanted to overthrow the Tsar, deeply influenced by the Bolsheviks
- Use of executions and exile to Siberia

February Revolution

- 23rd February 1917 - Revolution takes place at Petrograd
- Bolsheviks claim credit despite not being involved
- Formation of soviets (self-governing representative bodies) by the proletariat
- Formation of Provisional Government by the Duma in March 1917
- Uneasy relationship between soviets and the Provisional Government (Временное Правительство России)
- Dismantling of the Tsarist system by the Provisional Government
- Lenin introduced April these: 'peace, land, bread and all power to the soviets'
- Spread Bolshevik propaganda through mass media, infiltrated and took over soviets
- Kornilov (Корнилов) affair - attempted military coup

October Revolution

- 24th October 1917 - Collapse of Provisional Government as the military refused to support it
- Bolsheviks claimed that October Revolution was a popular uprising (legitimises their actions)
- Stalin did not play an important role here - ambition caused him to feel a need to match Lenin's revolution with his own

- Bolsheviks believed in violence - 'win at all costs' mentality

Russian Civil War

- Communist Russia was attacked by the White Army (Tsarist loyalists) and Allied intervention Forces in 1919
- Communism was an ideology which opposed Western ideology and involved overthrowing capitalist governments - seen as a threat to Western countries
- Communists claimed that they were not to blame - their ideology actually embraced the war as part of their revolution
- Creation of the Red Army (Рабоче крестьянская Красная Армия / КА) by Trotsky
- 10 million deaths
- Bolsheviks came out of the Russian Civil War paranoid, thinking that the rest of the world was against them - Stalin's ideology

The Expansion of Communism Into Europe

- Lenin tried to expand communism to the West
- Wanted to get more external allies after Russian Civil War
- Invaded Poland in 1920 but was defeated
- Marxist internationalism vs. Socialism in one country

1.5 THE LEGACY OF LENIN

The Authoritarian Nature of the Communist Party

- Consolidation of power within the Bolshevik party
- Bolshevik party became increasingly less democratic
- Lost most of its workers in the Russian Civil War and replaced them with soldiers, who were more authoritarian and would not question orders
- Ban on factions decree introduced by Lenin in 1921 - stifled debate and democracy in the party

The Party's Centralisation of Power over the Soviet Union

- The strong centralised rule over the Soviet Union meant that Stalin only had to gain control of the Bolshevik Party to take over Russia
- Lenin believed that a strong and repressive government was necessary to destroy capitalism and the bourgeoisie
- The Politburo was the main decision-maker for the party
- The state structure was paralleled by the communist party structure and was controlled by the latter
- Those from the Tsarist system were merged and replaced with communist party loyalists - poor quality but obedient bureaucracy
- Banned all other political parties
- Took over leadership of all the soviets
- Undermined the soviets and Orthodox Church, curbing their influence greatly
- Used ballot rigging to win elections
- Took over the press and education system

Imposition of Coercion over the Soviet Union

- Terror was an integral part of the Bolshevik regime
- The Cheka (secret police) carried out the Red Terror
- At least 300,000 people died

- Legitimisation of terror by the law
- Targeted opponents of the Bolsheviks but was often influenced by personal vendettas
- Took place during 1918 - 1921

Communist Economic Policies - War Communism

- A massive failure
- Failure of agricultural and industrial production due to World War I
- Imposed state planning and control of economy
- Beginning of a totalitarian state
- Nationalised all industries and undermined workers' rights
- Caused drop in industrial production
- Forced peasants into collectives (state-owned farms) to produce food for urban areas
- Peasants destroyed their crops and animals - causing a massive famine which killed 5 million people
- Brain drain - skilled workers and professionals fled overseas

The New Economic Policy

- 1921 - Soviet economy in collapse, frequent peasant revolts and worker strikes
- Abandonment of collectivisation
- Peasants allowed to sell surplus giving their quota to the state
- Steady rise in agricultural production
- Allowed industries to operate along capitalistic lines
- Limited restoration of workers' rights
- International trade revived
- Small-time trading allowed
- Opposed by many communists as a betrayal of the revolution
- 'New Exploitation of Proletariat'
- Formation of a new social class: the nomenklatura
- Strong public resentment towards the nomenklatura and NEPmen (a new class of businessmen who thrived from private trade)
- *Stalin had to choose between returning to communism or continuing with the NEP*

1.6 THE MAJOR POLITICAL FACTIONS AFTER LENIN'S DEATH

- Left wing: Trotsky (Лев Троцкий), Zinoviev (Григорий Зиновьев) and Kamenev (Лев Каменев)
- Right wing: Bukharin (Николай Бухарин)
- Zinoviev and Kamenev were close friends and disliked Trotsky despite sharing the same views
- *Would the Bolsheviks have ever come to power if the Tsarist government had remained strong?*
- *Bolsheviks' external opponents were eliminated by the Russian Civil War and Russian Revolution - paving the way for Stalin's rise*

Stalin's Background

- Born in Georgia to a peasant family
- Changed his name to Иосиф Сталин
- Influenced by Georgian culture of violence and revenge
- Considered an outsider in the Bolshevik party - rise to power was unexpected
- Was a natural revolutionary
- Recognised by Lenin and gained Lenin's support
- Had a low profile during the Russian Revolution

- Master of dissimulation - concealed his feelings well, described as 'grey blur' but very opportunistic
- Rough social origins appealed to the lower classes

1.7 STALIN'S RISE TO POWER (1924 - 1929)

- Struggle for power was entirely within the Bolshevik party, public not involved
- Flexible about means and opportunistic
- Backed by the majority of the Bolshevik party
- Many wanted a collective leadership and regarded Trotsky as the main threat
- Zinoviev and Kamev suppressed the publishing of Lenin's 1922 Testament as they wanted Stalin's support to remove Trotsky
- The Bolsheviks wanted industrialisation but disagreed over the pace and methods
- Left wing wanted to end the NEP and force the peasants to provide financing
- Right wing wanted the NEP to continue and to appease the peasants to generate capital
- Lenin and Trotsky supported a permanent revolution while Stalin supported socialism in one country
- Sought to gain from Lenin's prestige
- Misled Trotsky about Lenin's funeral
- Presented himself as Lenin's disciple
- Took Lenin's quotes out of context to support and justify his own actions

Stalin's Control of the Administrative Machinery

- Controlled party membership
- Turned administration into political power
- Put his supporters in key positions
- Controlled the Politburo's agenda

Divide And Rule

- Used the Lenin enrolment and nomenklatura system to gain support
- Packed the Central Committee with his own supporters
- Eliminated Trotsky's support and had him exiled before having him assassinated in 1940
- Accused Zinoviev and Kamev of breaking the factionalism ban of 1921 which was introduced by Lenin
- Removed Zinoviev and Kamev from the Politburo in 1926, forcing them to recant and destroying their credibility before readmitting them in 1928
- Attacked Bukharin and had him eliminated in 1929

1.8 STALIN'S MAINTENANCE OF POWER (1929 - 1941): DOMESTIC POLICIES - POLITICAL

- *How did Stalin maintain his power?*
- *How totalitarian was his rule?*
- *How successful were Stalin's policies?*
- *How much of Stalin's policies were based on communist ideology?*
- *How did Stalin deal with opponents?*
- Took in young people from the lower social classes into the Bolshevik party - they were submissive, unlike the old Bolsheviks
- Hardly relied on the Politburo and instead worked with ministers individually - easier to deal with
- Interfered in his ministers' private lives and tapped their phones
- Control by fear - even at the top
- Used the Red Army to ensure domestic security
- Imposed a dual control system on the army to ensure their loyalty - commanders could not carry out orders unless approved by a political commissar (usually a Bolshevik party member) resulting in an inefficient, confusing chain of command
- The NKVD (later renamed as the KGB) replaced the Cheka
- Executed many NKVD leaders in the 1930s to prevent any threat to Stalin
- Role of informers to the NKVD - usually motivated by selfish reasons, not loyalty to the Bolsheviks
- Establishment of the Gulag (forced labour) system in remote areas such as Kolyma in Siberia, which was rich in minerals
- The Gulags contributed to 15% of the Soviets' Gross National Product (GNP) by 1939
- Cut off access to the rest of the world (until World War 2)
- Any contact with foreigners was considered as treason
- Difficult to evaluate the extent of Stalin's control - 'a deathly silence'

Stalin's Personality Cult

- Communist ideology was too complex for the masses
- Projected Stalin as detached and superior - superior to even Lenin
- Publishing of the Short Course - 'official history of the Bolshevik party'
- Amending of photos
- Switch in focus of propaganda implies that the 1930s propaganda was ineffective

1.9 STALIN'S MAINTENANCE OF POWER (1929 - 1941): DOMESTIC POLICIES - ECONOMIC

- 1923 Scissors Crisis: widening gap between rising industrial prices and agricultural prices
- Little incentive for peasants to increase productivity as they could not afford the consumer goods
- *Stalin wanted to industrialise Russia and boost the economy in preparation for war against the capitalists*

Consequences of Scissors Crisis

- USSR unable to generate sufficient capital for industrialisation
- Unable to borrow money from capitalist countries
- Growing unrest and strikes became common
- Bolsheviks became unpopular with the peasants
- The peasants were seen as being capitalistic and were possible class enemies - political and economic reasons to wipe them out as a class

Reasons for Industrialisation

- Stalin thought that heavy industrialisation was the key to economic prosperity

- However by this time the Western countries were moving towards consumer industries as they were far more profitable
- Russia was backward - even in economic theory
- *Stalin believed that war against the capitalists was inevitable*
- Stalin wanted to have a revolution orchestrated by him - emulating Lenin

The Five Year Plans: Agricultural Sector

- Bolshevik party members, Komsomol (the Bolshevik youth wing) activists and the NKVD were sent to the rural areas to end individual land ownership and force peasants into collectives
- 90% of Russian households were collectivised in between 1929 to 1936 - a massive social engineering project
- Opposition was crushed through the use of torture and confiscation of property
- Confiscation of grain was more efficient in the collectives - up to 40% of grain was confiscated from peasants
- Closed markets to prevent peasants from selling grain
- Elimination of the kulaks

Problems facing the Collectives

- Not enough resources i.e. machinery, agricultural experts, fertiliser
- Excessive governmental interference
- Little incentive for farmers to work hard
- Incompetent leaders who were chosen due to their loyalty to the party and not their ability
- Peasants intentionally destroyed their own crops and killed their livestock
- Rural unrest
- Coercion had to be used to collect harvests
- The Great Depression limited Russia's profits
- The NKVD and the Red Army were deployed to suppress the unrest

The Five Year Plans: Industrial Sector

- The concept of central planning
- Under the Central Planning Committee Gosplan
- Economy too complex
- Inefficient due to multiple levels of bureaucracy
- Plan not based on realistic data and extremely overambitious

1st Five Year Plan: 1928 to 1932	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial growth at 20% annually • Hugely unrealistic • Focused on heavy industries
2nd Five Year Plan: 1933 to 1937	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial growth at 14% annually • Increase in consumer goods production • Emphasis on developing new resources i.e. lead, tin etc.
3rd Five Year Plan: 1938 to 1941	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy industries dominated again • Neglected consumer production • Planning affected by purges

Evaluation of the Five Year Plans

Achievements	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public was genuinely enthusiastic as they saw they were building a communist utopia • Stakhanovite movement (propaganda to boost productivity) • Slave labour i.e. Baltic-White Sea canal • People who failed to meet targets were accused of being wreckers and saboteurs; they were put on trial and executed • New iron and steel centres at new cities like Magnitogorsk • New industrial centres were established east of the Ural mountains so they were less vulnerable to attacks - became vital during World War 2 • The number of peasants dropped from 86% of the population in 1900 to 50% in 1939 • Saw the rise of a proletarian intelligentsia with highly developed technical skills • Party members experienced upward social mobility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffered from gigantomania • Substantial growth in heavy industry led to an imbalanced economy • Consumer industries were starved of supplies • Companies hoarded supplies • The new cities were unable to cope with the influx of workers and living standards dropped, leading to rampant spread of disease and an increase in crime • Strikes broke out in industrial areas, affecting productivity • Ex-peasants, who formed a major part of the labour force, had to keep moving from job to job • Caused the formation of a quicksand society. This led to other social problems, aggravated by factors such as the lack of proper housing • The proletarian intelligentsia's knowledge of Marxist-Leninist ideology was shallow, and were promoted based on their willingness to conform

Were the 5 Year Plans really necessary?

Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NEP could not work in the long term due to Russia's technological backwardness• Economy had stagnated by the late 1920s• Bukharin's policies was ideologically and politically unacceptable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NEP had the potential to sustain long-term economic development• NEP seemed capable of generating moderate growth in the years ahead• It would have ensured political and social stability• Stalinist industrialisation was a mistake

1.10 STALIN'S MAINTENANCE OF POWER (1929 - 1941): DOMESTIC POLICIES - SOCIAL

- Compare the Pre-Stalin policies with that of Stalin
- Bolsheviks sought to destroy bourgeois values - introduced social experiments which Stalin reversed
- Based on the belief that people could be programmed through conditioning and sought to create an ideal person imbued with communist values
- Strong centralised control over education led by the People's Commissariat for Enlightenment

Comparison of Educational Systems

Pre-Stalin	Stalinist
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong emphasis on practical learning over academics• Reduced the authority of teachers as teachers were considered "oppressive"• Advancement was based on class	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong emphasis on technical skills and academics to train peasants into workers (for industrialisation)• Restored the authority of teachers and reintroduced discipline• Advancement based on academics

Achievements	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Great efforts to eradicate illiteracy - millions were given illiteracy courses• Greater emphasis on technical education for the 5 Year Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plagued by a lack of facilities and resources e.g. lack of textbooks• Not evenly spread: Russians, Ukrainians and Jews accounted for 80% of higher education

Achievements and Limitations of Stalin's educational policy

Stalin's Youth Policies

- To impose social control and inculcate communist values
- The youth were naive and easily influenced - responded enthusiastically to the communist revolution
- The Pioneers were for those under 15 while the Komosol was for those aged 15-20
- Reached a level of 10 million people by 1940
- The youth cited Soviet power as the new authority - neglected old authority such as the Russian Orthodox Church
- Many of them informed on their parents and spied on the collectives
- Soviet propaganda played on the story of Pavlik Morozov - a Pioneer who reported his father to the NKVD but was murdered by his family
- Pavlik Morozov was turned into a cult figure - story actually fabricated

Stalin's Women Policy

Pre-Stalin	Stalin
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free love, easy divorce and legalised abortions were promoted• Traditional values were seen as being bourgeois• Sharp decline in birth rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Falling birth rate• Increasing juvenile crime rate• Increasing number of homeless children• Glamourised marriage• Made divorce harder and imposed fines• Family Code of 1936

Stalin's Family Policy

Pre-Stalin	Stalin
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sought to undermine the family institution to promote loyalty to the state• Created a system of state nurseries, laundries and canteens where all adults would jointly care for all children in creches• Wanted a family based on the cooperative principle, with the state providing domestic services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growing juvenile delinquency led to the restoration of the family• Made homosexuality and prostitution illegal• Birth rate increased• Parents were made responsible for the behaviour of their children• Juvenile crimes were punished using adult guidelines• The government was unable to provide sufficient social services

Stalin's Religious Policy

- Separated the Orthodox Church from the state in January 1918, breaking their political influence
- Destroyed many churches and monasteries
- Priests were persecuted and executed
- Bolshevised Christian festivals and activities
- Policies were reversed during World War II
- Pre-war political controls on religious activities were lifted in exchange for the church's moral support for the war

Stalin's Racial Policies

- In 1939, more than 50% of Soviet citizens were not of Russian ethnicity

- Various ethnic groups had limited autonomy under Lenin
- Russian nationalism was favoured by Stalin
- Growing emphasis on Russification
- Russian was made the USSR's official language in 1938
- In the state administration, Russians were favoured even in the non-Russian republics
- Entire ethnic groups were deported during World War II as they were regarded as threats

Stalin's Cultural Policies

- Stalin subjected art to much tighter control, ending the artistic experimentation of the 1920s
- Led to the adoption of socialist realism
- Topic had to be easily understood by the masses
- Had to have optimistic and uplifting messages
- Literature
 - In 1932, the Union of Soviet Writers was formed to control Soviet writers
 - Books like *Cement* by F. Gladkov and *How The Steel Was Tempered* by N. Ostrovsky were published
 - Tolstoy's works were promoted to counteract 'foreign works'
- Architecture
 - Socialist construction of Moscow
 - Red Square was cleared to allow march pasts near the Lenin mausoleum - show off Soviet power and gain the support of the public
 - Construction of the Moscow Metro
 - Demolished the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour to build the Palace of the Soviets, which was supposed to be the tallest building in the world
- Paintings
 - Rejected modernist art forms in favour of classicism
 - Artworks were about the public life of ordinary people
- Cinema
 - Sergei Eisenstein was a significant director
 - Made movies like *October* and *Battleship Potemkin* (1925)
 - After Stalin came to power, Eisenstein made the patriotic epic *Aleksandr Nevsky* (1938) followed by *Ivan The Terrible* (1944)
 - These movies were made for political purposes
 - Propaganda to raise morale
 - Link great leaders to Stalin
- Music
 - Stalin favoured classical music
 - Condemned Western music and blamed it for various vices
 - Dmitri Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth* was well received until Stalin condemned it, causing the opera to be banned
 - Shostakovich's 5th Symphony marked him as a true 'Soviet artist'
 - Shostakovich wrote the patriotic 7th Symphony during World War II, which represented the resistance of Leningrad against the Germans

1.11 STALIN AND THE GREAT PURGES

- *What was the nature of the opposition and how did Stalin deal with them?*
- Before Stalin, purges had occurred but were non-violent (Red Terror) and party members were merely expelled, not arrested
- NKVD reports were often fabricated due to personal vendettas or connections, or because quotas had to be met
- Stalin became more paranoid after his wife's suicide in 1932
- People created false accusations to get rid of personal enemies or their superiors
- Were the purges to fill a need for slave labour?
- Purges were intrinsic in Soviet Communism

Intentionalist View	Decisionist View
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stalin planned the purges and his paranoid personality was the key • Stalin wanted to maintain control over the masses and eliminate the Old Bolsheviks • Stalin believed war was imminent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stalin did not have a master plan • The purges were a reaction to a crisis where the regime's power was compromised (failing of the Five Year Plans) • Stalin was unable to control the NKVD

Opposition	Analysis
The Bolshevik Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martemyan Ryutin tried to have Stalin removed in 1932, was expelled • Trotsky sent secret letters to his followers to forge an opposition coalition • 17th Party Congress in January 1934 (Congress of Victors) - Sergei Kirov emerged as a threat to Stalin • Kirov's assassination in December 1934 marked the start of the Great Purges • NKVD suspected to be responsible for the assassination of Kirov
The Red Army	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red Army was dissatisfied because of its involvement in the forced collectivisation • Red Army officers were accused of collaborating with Nazi Germany
The Peasants and Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep opposition to the forced collectivisation and Five Year Plans • Peasant revolts and worker strikes took place • Led to the elimination of the kulaks
Potential 5th Column	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stalin feared an approaching war • Feared that Soviet citizens of non-Russian ethnicity were spies and would turn against the Soviet Union

Historiography and Stalin's Purges

- *Stalin ultimately was still the mastermind behind the purges*
- People were paralysed by fear of the NKVD
- Passiveness of the people - people simply waited to be arrested

- Victims labelled as 'spies'
- Quota for number of arrests
- False confessions implicating other innocents were common
- Most evidence was faked

The Great Show Trials

- Andrei Vyshinsky (Андрей Вышинский) was the main prosecutor
- Majority of Soviet citizens believed those arrested were real enemies
- Stalin personally checked the execution lists

The End of the Purges

- Reign of terror over the Soviet Union
- Stalin could have deliberately let the NKVD go out of control so that he would not have to take the blame after the Purges
- Stalin also could have deliberately let the NKVD go out of control to show that he is very much in control

The Impact of the Purges

- Undermining of the Party's autonomy
 - This was the peak of Stalin's power
 - The Soviet Union was now no longer a single-party state, but a single-person dictatorship
 - Stalin was the only one left from Lenin's Politburo
 - Creation of the nomenklatura, who were Stalin's supporters
- Loss of administrative experience
- Increased military vulnerability
 - Many of the Red Army officers were killed and replaced
 - Their replacements were loyal to Stalin but incompetent
 - Proved deadly in the 1940 invasion of Finland and the Eastern Front of World War II