



# Collectivization and Industrialization

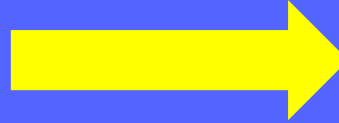
*An economic révolution, the start of Collective Farming and the Great Social Reconstruction*

ЧЕЛОВЕКУ ПУТЬ ОТКРЫТ!

# Economic Aims

- An economical revolution
  - Agricultural and industrial methods were to be changed
- Push for change: 1926, resolution of the Part Congress to transform country from agrarian to industrial
  - Stalin: resolution to reality

- Modernization (two methods)
  - Collectivization
  - Industrialization



In 1934, Russia was 100 years behind Europe in terms of industrialization and technology. Stalin wanted to fix that in 5 years through his Economic Plan.

- A revolution from above: the *second revolution*
  - Selfish, manipulative, careful
  - Wanted this event to propulse him as a revolutionary hero (like Lenin)



# Collectivization

# What is Collectivization

- Begins in 1928
- To raise a nation that could develop soviet industry, LAND needed to be used
- Revolution in the countryside
  - Forced 25 million peasant households into 240 000 collective farms
- Peasants' traditional way of life destroyed
  - No more Orthodox churches, no more village commune
  - Millions died and millions fled into industrial cities
- Setting up two different types of farming
  - KOLKHOZY (Collective Farms)
  - SOVKHOZY (State Farms)



# Collective Farming: Kolkhozy

# KOLKHOZ



***Kolektivnoe*** ***Khoz***yaistvo

***COLLECTIVE***

***FARMING***

## Collective Farms (Kolkhozy)

At a collective farm peasants pooled their resources and shared both the labour and the wages earned

# State Farming: Sovkhozy

# SOVKHOZ



**Sov**etskoye **Khoz**yaistvo

**SOVIET**

**FARMING**

## State Farms (Sovkhozy)

Contained peasants who worked directly for the state for a specific wage



Almost no difference between the two different types of farming as both of them had one ultimate goal: to eliminate private ownership altogether and to benefit the state.

- Between 50 and 100 holdings grouped into one unit
- Large farms: more efficiency
- Encouraged the use of agricultural machinery
- Motorized tractor became the symbol of the mechanizing of Soviet farming
- **EFFICIENT FARMING =**
  - SURPLUS OF FOOD THAT COULD BE SOLD ABROAD
  - DECREASE NUMBER OF RURAL LABOURERS AND INCREASE NUMBER OF FACTORY WORKERS

# Stalin Talking About Collectivization in *Pravda*

**Stalin, in an article entitled ‘*Year of the Great Breakthrough*’, *Pravda*, 7th November 1929**

“From small, backward, individual farming to large-scale, advanced, collective farming. The new and decisive feature of the peasant collective farm movement is that the peasants are joining the collective farms not in separate groups, but in whole villages, whole regions, whole districts, and even whole provinces... We are becoming a country of metal, an automobilised country; a tractorised country. And when we have put the USSR on an automobile, and the muzhik [peasant] on a tractor, let the esteemed capitalists, who boast their ‘civilisation’, try to overtake us.”

“Day of harvest  
and  
collectivization”  
celebration of  
kolkhozes





“Against the kulaks let’s rise as a collective harvesting front”. All peasants increase your sowing, use technology, strengthen your property and establishment.

“In our kolkhoz there is no room for kulaks or popes”



**ХОРОШО ТРУДИТЬСЯ-**



“Work hard all year long and bread will come your way”

Statue: *Worker and Kolkhoz Woman*

{**Rabotnik i Kolkhoznitsa**}

A statue created in 1937 by Vera Mukhina, was awarded the *Stalin Prize* in 1941 and became the symbol of the film production company: Mosfilm, in 1947.



# Kulaks

- Stalin claimed that collectivization was VOLUNTARY (at the choice of the peasants)
  - NOT TRUE
  - It was forced
- Although hard to define, KULAKS were the class of people holding back the revolution
  - According to Stalin they were the ones to monopolize the best land and to employ the cheapest peasants
  - Hoarded farm produce and kept food prices high
  - Made themselves “rich” at the expense of workers and poor peasants
- In reality: a Stalinist myth
  - They were peasants who worked hard and proved to be more efficient



- Meant “rich peasant” as if they were the *bourgeoisie* of peasantry (ironic)
- According to regime, Kulaks were a threat & were oppressive to the lower class
- Not true, average russian peasant lived in poverty
  - Millions of people suddenly found themselves labelled as Kulaks because Stalin needed their land and resources
- Stalinist propaganda described them as a class who exploited landowners
- TRADITION OF LANDLORD OPPRESSION
  - Tsarist times
  - Notion of *Kulak* was very powerful
  - Provided grounds for coercion of peasantry altogether

# Stalin while visiting Siberia in January, 1928

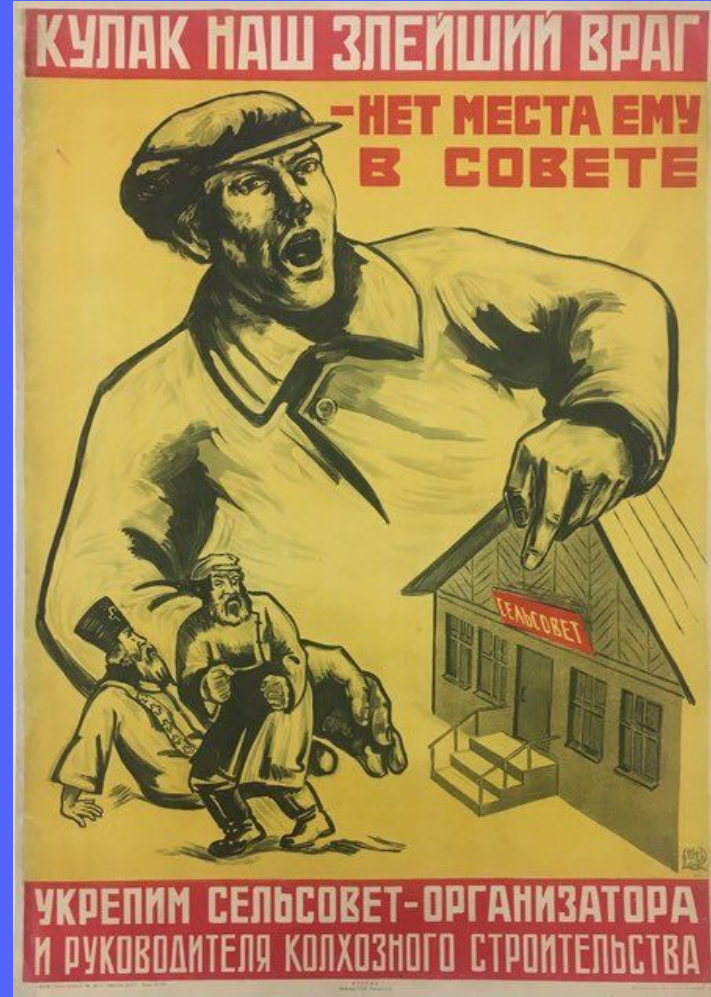
## *Talking to the administrators*

“You have a bumper harvest... Your grain surpluses this year are bigger than ever before. Yet the plan for grain procurement is not being fulfilled. Why? ...Look at the kulak farms: **their barns and sheds are crammed with grain...** You say that the kulaks are unwilling to deliver grain, that they are waiting for prices to rise, and prefer to engage in unbridled speculation. That is true. **But the kulaks... are demanding to increase in prices to three times those fixed by the government...** But there is no guarantee that the kulaks will not again sabotage the grain procurements next year. More, **it may be said with certainty that so long as there are kulaks, so long will there be sabotage of grain procurements.**”

# Anti-Kulak Propaganda

"The kulaks are the most violent, most rude and most beastly exploitators. Wanting to re-establish the power of the landowners, tsars, popes and capitalists. Go! Kulaks must leave the kolkhozes!"

"The kulaks are our worst enemies. There is no space for the in our Soviet! Let's improve the Village Council, the organizer and administrator of the kolkhoz construction!"



# Dekulakization

- Poorer peasants were happy about dekulakization
  - They could finally rat out their neighbors for being wealthier
  - Land and property was to be taken from the better-off peasants
- Wealthier families were physically attacked
- Arrest and deportation came next
- OGPU committed those actions (later will become the NKVD)
  - Modelled gangs that persecuted the peasants during the Civil War
- The RETURN OF TERROR
  - Served as warning
  - Set fear into people

**Served as warning for peasants to not resist to the state. Showed consequences.**

***“Most party officers thought that dekulakization was valued as an administrative measure, speeding up collectivization.”***

# Du'eby, Belarus



# Resistance from the People

- People were tied to their land and their belongings and didn't want to give it up to the government
  - Stalin wanted to bring communist economy back entirely and people were against
  - Peasants were tied like serfs to nobility over centuries
  - Lenin previous Decree on Land heightened this attachment
- Examples
  - Peasants burned their own stock
  - Slaughtered their own livestock
  - Tied themselves to barns when police attempted to drag them away from their land
- Because of that resistance there were millions of deaths
- Needed justification for murder: hence the new term **KULAKS**

Between December 1929 and March 1930, half the peasant farms in USSR were collectivized. Peasants resisted. “Civil war” broke out in the countryside.

- **30 000 arson attacks occurred**
- **Number of organized rural mass disturbances increased from 172 (first half of 1929) to 229 (second half of 1929)**

# Women

In Okhochaya (Ukrainian village) an eyewitness described a vicious scene where women broke into barns where requisition squads left the grain seized from the peasants:

“...they were screaming, wailing and demanding their cows and seed back. Men stood off to the side, silent ... The terrified granary man (guard) ran away: the women tore off the bolts and together with the men began dragging out the bags of seed.”



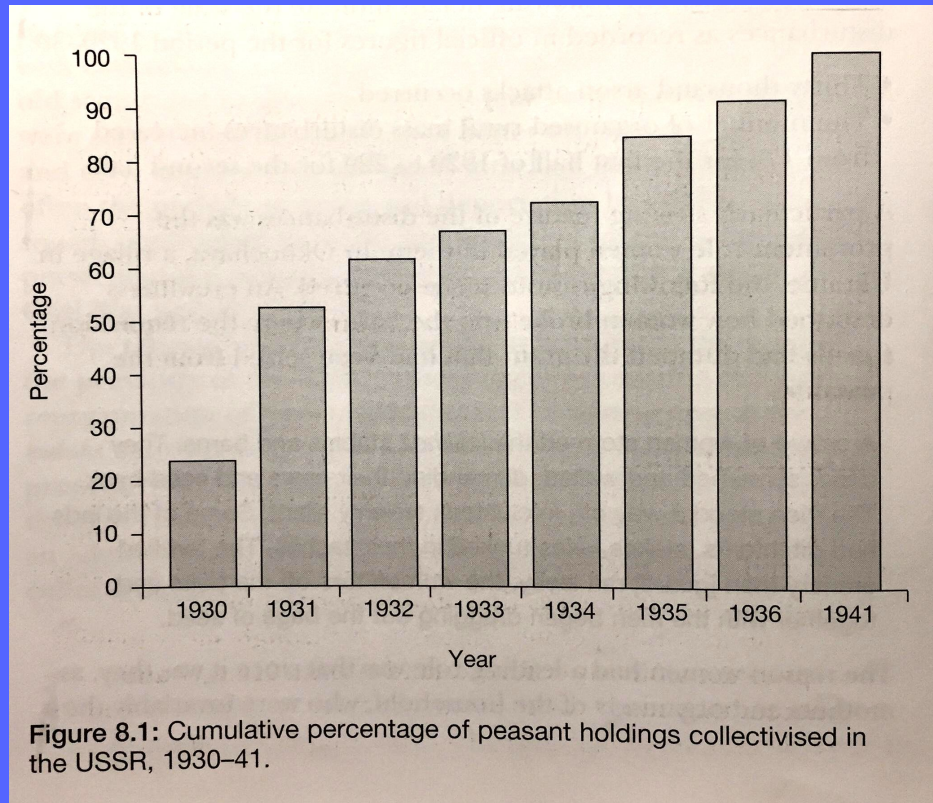


- Anger justified:
  - The women were the organizers of households
  - First to suffer harsh losses
  - So they were the first to take action

***“My wife does not want to socialise our cow”***

- Cases of mothers and children being at the front of demonstrations
- Women lying down in front of tractors and trucks
- Men believed women were less likely to suffer reprisals from authority
  - Court records proved that
- PEASANT RESISTANCE DID NOT STAND A CHANCE IN STOPPING COLLECTIVIZATION
- Officials ***“Dizzy With Success”***

# By the end of 1930s all peasantry was collectivized



# Collectivization Statistics

1. By June 1929: one million peasant households joined 57 000 collectives
2. By the end of 1929: grain requisitioning exceeded previous year by 50%
3. Peasants felt that even in prison they'd get 200g of bread (more than in collective farms)
4. Number of peasants joining kolkhozes went up from 4% to 21% by January of 1930

## Nikolai Bukharin

Bukharin was against collectivization. Stalin's decision to proceed with his method drove the two men apart and Bukharin was then expelled of the Politburo in 1929.

# After Bukharin's expulsion from the Politburo...

*Stalin decided to proceed with war against the kulaks, and the following month he made a speech where he argued:*

"Now we have the opportunity to carry out a resolute offensive against the kulaks, break their resistance, eliminate them as a class and replace their production with the production of kolkhozes and sovkhoses... Now dekulakization is being undertaken by the masses of the poor and middling peasant masses themselves, who are realising total collectivization. Now dekulakization in the areas of total collectivisation is not just a simple administrative measure. Now dekulakization is an integral part of the creation and development of collective farms. ***When the head is cut off, no one wastes tears on the hair.***"

January 1930: Politburo approves liquidation of kulaks as a class (Vyacheslav Molotov was put in charge of the operation)

According to **Simon Sebag Montefiore**, the author of *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar* (2003), the kulaks were divided into three categories:

1. To be eliminated
2. To be imprisoned in camps
3. 150 000 households to be deported

Molotov oversaw death squads, railway carriages, concentration camps.

**5-7 million people fit into the 3 categories.**

Thousands of kulaks were executed and an estimated 5 million were deported to Siberia or Central Asia. Approximately 25% of these died by the time they reached their destination.

# Historical Perspectives: Why Stalin called a sudden end to Collectivization in 1930

**Beginning of 1930:** 55% farmland collectivized but in March Stalin announced that collectivization was voluntary and in *Dizzy With Success* (Pravda) he accused party officials of excessive force.

Most historians interpreted this as cynical ploy to encourage peasants to cooperate so that success of 1930 harvest wouldn't be compromised by upheavals.

Others, such as Lynne Viola, argue that collectivization did get out of control: that Stalin was trying to reassert central gov's control over local activists in order to end the chaotic conditions in countryside.

# Reinstallation of Forced Collectivization

- Beginning of 1931: Party came back to forced requisitioning
- Peasants permitted to retain small private plots of land and some livestock
  - Avg. 0.3 hectares
- 1935: over 90% of farmland was collectivized
- Average of 76 families in each kolkhoz
  - Peasants had to deliver a set amount of produce at prices set by the state
  - Allowed to retain surplus grain
  - Had to pay the Motor Tractor Stations from which they rented tractors



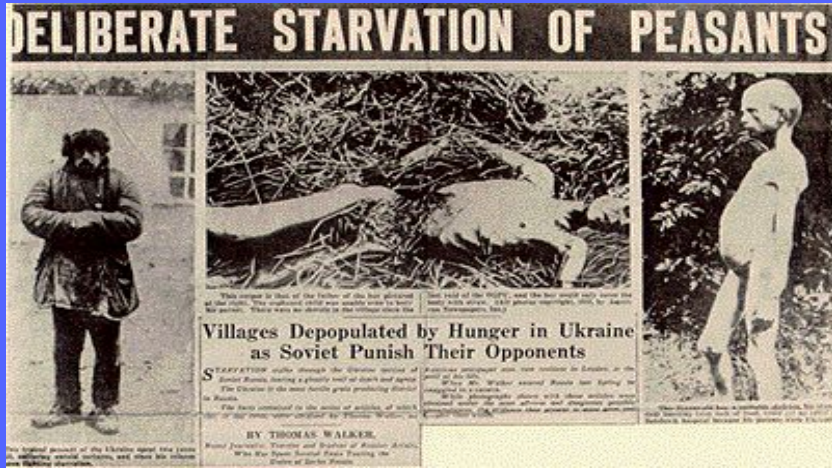
# Upheaval and Starvation

- Peasants either would not or could not cooperate
- Consequences increasingly tragic
- Peasants ate their own seedcorn and slaughtered their own livestock
  - No crops or animals left
- Authorities responded with fiercer coercion
- Imprisonment, deportation, and execution could not make the livestock come back to life
- Troops of party workers were sent to farm on the land themselves but their inability and ignorance only contributed to the chaos



As ironic as it is, even as starvation set in the grain that was being produced was exported as “surplus” to obtain the foreign capital that industry demanded. By 1932 the situation was catastrophic.

# The 1932-1933 Famine



- Man-made famine where millions died (6 million)

*Disruption caused by collectivization + peasant resistance = falling grain output = FAMINE*

- State took higher percentage of harvest
- Collectivization lead to despair (stopped production amongst peasants)
  - Migration into industrialized areas increased dramatically
  - System of internal passports had to be created to control the flow
- Ukraine and other non-Russian areas suffered the most
- Kazakhstan: population fell by 20% in 1930s

# Official Silence

- Official Stalinist line was that there was NO famine
- Conspiracy of silence
  - More than political significance
  - Protected Stalin as a great planner
  - Prevented introduction of measures to get rid of distress

**FAMINE DID NOT OFFICIALLY EXIST = STATE COULD NOT PUBLICLY  
TAKE STEPS TO RELIEVE IT**

- Hence could not appeal for help from outside of the country (as it did during the famine of 1921)

Isaac Deutscher: Former Trotskyist

“The first purely man-made famine in history”  
went unacknowledged in order to avoid  
discrediting Stalin

- Large number of Soviet people sacrificed on the altar of Stalin's reputation

Strong rumour that Stalin's second wife **Nadezhda Alliluyeva** committed suicide because she found out about her husband's sins and mistreatment of the nation

- Alliluyeva and Stalin had a morbid relationship
- She convinced him to let her study at the University of Moscow in 1929, strong character
- Big mistake on Stalin's part
- By communicating with university folks Alliluyeva's eyes were opened to the real situation within the country
- Before that she was only given information through political speeches and what was published in the newspaper
- Now she knew how much the nation suffered
- Her death was covered up
- Rumours: appendicitis, health problems

He was terrible towards his own wife: brought mistresses home to his Dacha, had affairs, called his own wife a fool, disrespected her



Nadezhda Alliluyeva about Stalin

***“You are a tormentor, that’s what you are. You torment your own son. You torment your wife. You torment the whole Russian people.”***

# His Cruelty Confirmed

**LYNNE VIOLA** confirmed the horrific character of Stalin's treatment of peasantry

- Described how between 1930 and 1932, Stalin drove 2 million peasants into exile as slave labourers, a quarter of them dying of hunger
- Her work is built upon the pioneering of **ROBERT CONQUEST** (first Western historian to chart Stalin's brutalities)
- Their work serves as proof against the statements of **PRO-SOVIET** sympathisers who claimed that Stalin was creating a paradise on Earth

# Were Stalin's Collectivization aims achieved?

## YES

1. Party had control over peasants and countryside. Historians refer to collectivization as a new form of "serfdom".
2. State controlled grain supplies. **1928**: state obtained 15% of harvest. **1935**: obtained 40%.
3. State was able to feed industrial workers (only after 1935). More could be exported abroad in order to purchase machinery for factories. Exported 5 million tonnes of grain a year 1931-1932. Famine: 2 million tonnes of grain sold abroad.
4. Collectivization = increase in urban population. Grew by 12 million in first 5 years. Provided workforce for industries.

## NO

1. Grain production and agricultural productivity only increased marginally
  - a. 1913: produced 0.5 tonnes of grain/head
  - b. 1937: produced 0.57 tonnes grain/head
2. Collectives remained inefficient in long term. By 1960s: USSR forced to buy grain from Canada and USA.
3. Livestock levels fell massively. Did not fully recover till 1950s. Early 1930s: peasants had slaughtered 65% of their sheep and 46% of their cattle.



# ***Debate: Did the policies benefit the Soviet Union and its people or were they introduced by Stalin primarily to consolidate his political holds on the USSR?***

**Alec Nove:** Argued that Stalin's collectivization and industrialization policies were bad economics. Caused misery on peasants without bringing the industrial growth that the nation needed. Living standards of factory workers in 1953 were barely higher than in 1928. Farm workers living standards were lower than in 1913.

**Dmitri Volkogonov:** Real purpose of Stalin's policies was incidentally economic: Soviet leader's aim was to remove all opposition by making his economic policies a test of loyalty. To question his plans was to challenge his authority.

**David Hoffman:** Argues that Stalin's use of coercion in seeking economic and social change proved both inhumane and ineffective.

**Terry Martin:** Pointed out paradox in Stalin's attempt to modernize USSR. Stalin's methods did not take the country Soviet Union forward but returned it to *neotraditionalist* ways. His programmes of collectivization and industrialization became heavily dependent on *blat*: just the same way that Tsarist capitalism had been.

**Robert Service:** Economy was disrupted. Ukraine, South Russia and Kazakhstan were starving. The Gulag heaved with prisoners ... Yet the USSR under Stalin was going decisively in the direction of industrialization. The gamble was paying off for him. Stalin's great objective was coming true.

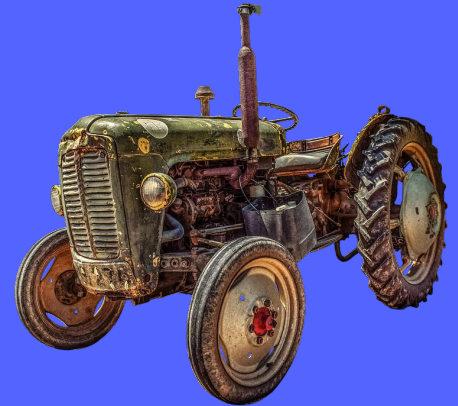
# Industrialisation



# Stalin's views on Rapid industrialization

- **Leon Trotsky, Gregory Zinoviev, Lev Kamenev** and other left-wing members of the Politburo had always been in favour of the rapid industrialisation of the Soviet Union.
  - **Stalin disagreed with this view.** He accused them of going against the ideas of Lenin who had declared that it was vitally important to : "**preserve the alliance between the workers and the peasants.**"

**However that changed:**

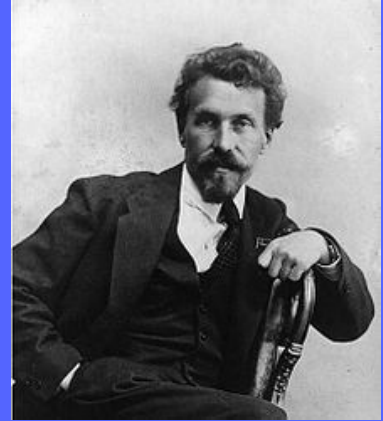


# Why?

1. When Stalin accepted the need for **collectivisation** he also had to reconsider industrialization. His goals of collectivisation, he learned, would require 250,000 tractors. In 1927 they had only 7,000. As well as tractors, there was also a need to develop the oil fields to provide the necessary petrol to drive the machines. Power stations also had to be built to supply the farms with electricity.
2. Kotkin: "In the arguments during the power struggles of the nineteen-twenties, he had used his support for the nep to isolate its left-wing critics, notably Trotsky, but once he'd consolidated his power he became a critic, too. He believed that another European war was coming, and that, in order to survive it, backward Russia would have to industrialize." (How Stalin Became a Stalinist)

# Political Motives:

- **James William Crowl** has argued there were political reasons for the introduction of the Five Year Plan:
  - "Stalin With the defeat of Trotsky and the Left Wing in 1927, Stalin apparently began to look for a way to outmaneuver the final power bloc in the Party: the Right Wing led by Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky. It was not by accident that the economy provided him with the issues he needed to destroy his erstwhile allies"



# Stalin's Rapid Industrialization of Russia:

- Stalin's industrialization was planned as a series of five-year programs for industrial expansion. A five-year plan became the “law” of the life of Soviet society.
  - The transition to centralized directive planning led to the revival of certain characteristics of the war communism era.
  - It entailed the elevation of the role of the **Gosplan**—the state planning authority—that had been in existence since the early 1920s. Gosplan was directly subordinated to the government and charged with drawing up the five-year-plans in accordance with the leadership's political objectives. The plans set targets of output and production to be reached ranging across the whole of Soviet industry.
- Finally, the doctrine of “socialist industrialization” put great emphasis on a massive expansion of heavy industry, particularly the means of production, as a necessary first step on the way to the technological restructuring of the entire economy. **Only after a massive surge in heavy industrial capacity had been achieved would it be possible to embark on a more balanced economic strategy.**





# The beginning of Industrialization: First Five Year Plan

The first Five Year Plan that was introduced in 1928, concentrated on the development of iron and steel, machine-tools, electric power and transport. Stalin set the workers high targets.

**COAL PRODUCTION: +111%**

**IRON PRODUCTION: +200%**

**ELECTRIC POWER: +335%**

# Kotkin on the Goals of the Five Year Plans:

“The five-year plans laying out the targets for the Soviet economy were full of exaggerations and fantasies, but the Soviets really did build a steel industry and an auto industry; they constructed canals and railroads; they mined nickel in the Arctic and gold in the Far East and coal in the Donbass.” (*How Stalin Became a Stalinist*, Keith Gessen)

“No comrades... the pace must not be slackened!  
On the contrary, we must quicken it as much as  
is within our powers and possibilities. (...) Either  
we do it or they crush us.” – Stalin 1931

# Sergo Ordzhonikidze and Yuri Pyatakov

- In 1932 Ordzhonikidze became **Commissar for Heavy Industry**. Yuri Pyatakov, was appointed his deputy. The two men had the important task of making the Five Year Plan a success.
- **Robert Conquest** argues that Ordzhonikidze relied heavily on his deputy for the skill and knowledge needed to create and implement the five year plans.
- This may be because while Ordzhonikidze and Stalin go back to before the Revolution, Pyatakov was actually expelled from the party in 1928 for being a “trotskyite”.
  - He was later reinstated and Stalin assured Ordzhonikidze that Pyatakov would not be assassinated. Regardless, Pyatakov would have been a controversial choice.
- Also, positions in the politburo were generally given based less on qualification and more on other factors.



# The beginning of the First Five Year Plan:

- The first Five-Year Plan did not get off to a successful start in all sectors: For example, the production of pig iron and steel increased by only 600,000 to 800,000 tons in 1929, barely surpassing the 1913-14 level.
- Only 3,300 tractors were produced in 1929. The output of food processing and light industry rose slowly, but in the crucial area of transportation, the railways worked especially poorly.
  - "In June, 1930, Stalin announced sharp increases in the goals - for pig iron, from 10 million to 17 million tons by the last year of the plan; for tractors, from 55,000 to 170,000; for other agricultural machinery and trucks, an increase of more than 100 per cent."



# Unskilled workers and poor machinery:

“And when we have put the USSR on an automobile, and the muzhik [peasant] on a tractor” – Stalin, in an article entitled ‘*Year of the Great Breakthrough*’, Pravda, 7th November 1929

At the beginning the quality of work was poor, they were inefficient. This is because they were creating the industry from nothing. Meaning, the workers were illiterate peasants (muzhik) and their machines were not of a high quality.

# The First Five Year Plan End (1932)

*“The five-year plan in four years!” (Kind of)*

- At the end of 1932, it was officially announced that the overall objectives of the First Five-Year Plan had been achieved ahead of time.
  - Even now, after seven decades, it is difficult to judge to what extent the triumphant declaration corresponded to reality.
  - The newspapers were allowed to report only “outstanding achievements” of the USSR’s advance toward socialism. Local state agencies were prohibited from publishing any economic data apart from the official figures issued by the Gosplan.
    - According to these, the output of machinery and electric equipment expanded by 157 percent over the 1929 level.



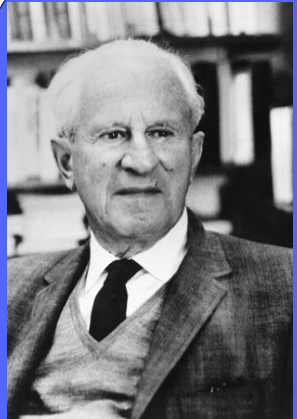
# The First Five Year Plan End (1932) cont.

- Whatever the veracity of the Soviet statistics, in the industrial field the overall achievements of the plan were impressive:
  - Two new important industrial centers were established, one in the **Urals (Magnitogorsk)** and the other in **southern Siberia (Kuznetsk)**.
  - Entirely new branches of industry were developed, such as **aviation, plastics, and synthetic rubber**.

The plan constituted an important milestone in the process of the socioeconomic transformation of Russia.

# Non-Soviet Marxists, from the Mensheviks to Herbert Marcuse:

- Accept that industrialization is needed, BUT:
  - Much of the appeal of the literature inspired by Trotsky came from its identification of an alien stratum (or class) of bureaucrats that exploited the Soviet workers.
  - Here the essentially manipulative and exploitative nature of Stalinist industrialization has been challenged as excessively repressive, unnecessary, and fundamentally anti-Marxist.



# The Second Five Year Plan

- The Second Five-Year Plan—from January 1933 to December 1937—also gave priority to heavy industry.
  - One of the weaknesses revealed during the First Five-Year Plan was that of the Soviet infrastructure, especially roads, railways, and canals.
- Consequently, the second plan also provided for reconstruction and double tracking of the principal lines, starting with the Trans-Siberian Railway.
- The widening of old canals and the construction of new ones (like the Moscow-Volga canal) was another vital task assigned to the new plan.
- By 1933 the altered international position of the USSR resulting from Hitler's seizure of power was reflected in a rapid expansion of armament production. The armed forces were gradually reshaped into an increasingly professional, modern fighting machine, comparable to those of other great powers. Between 1933 and 1936, the size of the Red Army tripled, from 562,000 to 1.5 million, exceeding the size of the imperial army in 1913.

*\*Stalin justified his policies with the fear of war, so this is important.*

# The Second Five Year Plan (cont.)

- As with the First Five-Year Plan, the second was also officially declared completed nine months ahead of time, in 1937. **Again, however, not all of its goals were achieved.**
- Among the items that surpassed their estimated targets **were steel and the automotive industry**, created practically from scratch. Tanks and armored cars were given priority over civilian vehicles. **The most striking failure was consumer goods production.**
- The first two five-year plans increased the industrial capacity of the USSR dramatically in all major fields—**steel, coal, and electric power**—and created new manufacturing sectors indispensable to any great **power—automobiles, aviation, chemicals, and plastics**. Consequently, the first two five-year plans laid the foundation of the industrial might of the Soviet Union, especially in the military field.



### First Five-Year Plan (1928–1932)

- Focused on **heavy industries**, especially iron and steel.
- After some early success, targets were increased and this Five-Year Plan was ordered to be completed in four years instead of five.

### Second Five-Year Plan (1933–1937)

- Set **new targets for heavy industries**.
- But it also gave **more attention to industries that produced goods such as clothing**.
- From 1934 onwards, priority was given to industries related to military production as the Soviet Union anticipated another war.
- **Transport and communication networks** were greatly improved.

### Third Five-Year Plan (1938–1942)

- Emphasis on industries related to **military production**.
- **Disrupted** when the Soviet Union was invaded by Germany in 1941.
- From then on, all resources were focused on military production and defeating the Germans.

# Disagreement

Since both ideology and reality compelled the choice for industrialism the disagreement came from the methods.

# How did Stalin find the resources to industrialize?

1. The revenues from light industry and, in particular, from agriculture were to be used to finance the expansion of the industrial branches of the economy.
2. Hard currency earnings from the state monopoly on foreign trade, including the export of grain, timber, gold, furs, and other goods, were to be used to buy state-of-the-art equipment for the newly constructed industrial enterprises.
3. The surviving Nepmen were to be subjected to heavy taxes. The crippling taxation of private enterprise together with the mounting administrative pressure would stifle private initiative in both industry and commerce by 1933.

...

Additional savings were to be gained by reducing the output of consumer goods and by restricting food consumption of both the urban and rural populations. This was to be achieved by raising retail prices, using goods rationing, and similar measures. Capital was forcibly squeezed out of the reluctant population, mainly the peasantry, through an arbitrary price system.

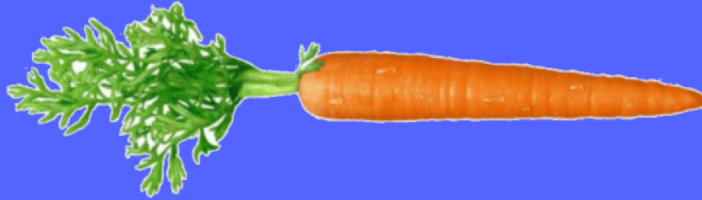


## **British Embassy report (21st June 1932)**

*“A record of over-staffing, overplanning and complete incompetence at the centre; of human misery, starvation, death and disease among the peasantry... the only creatures who have any life at all in the districts visited are boars, pigs and other swine. Men, women, and children, horses and other workers are left to die in order that the Five Year Plan shall at least succeed on paper.”*

# *Carrot* and *Stick* Methods

## Method (Carrot):



- One of the most controversial aspects of the Five Year Plan was Stalin's decision to move away from the principle of equal pay. Under the rule of Lenin, for example, the leaders of the Bolshevik Party could not receive more than the wages of a skilled labourer.
- With the modernization of industry, Stalin argued that it was necessary to pay higher wages to certain workers in order to encourage increased output:
  - His left-wing opponents claimed that this inequality was a betrayal of socialism and would create a new class system in the Soviet Union.

Stalin had his way and during the 1930s, the gap between the wages of the labourers and the skilled workers increased.

# Stakhanovism

- Shock brigades were formed with the best workers on the highest rates.
  - 'Socialist competition' between factories and work brigades was encouraged to raise output, with league tables, medals and rewards for productivity
- Stakhanovism (after the 'model' coalminer Aleksei Stakhanov who broke all records in 1935 by mining 102 tons of coal in less than six hours).



# Propaganda and Popular Support:

- Ultimately, the most crucial resource of Stalin's industrialization was the abundance and inexhaustibility of cheap labor.
  - It was provided by millions of trained workers, by millions of peasants driven to towns by the collectivization, by millions of labor camp inmates, and by 1.5 million of the former unemployed (unemployment disappeared in 1930).
- Many were driven by enthusiasm, prepared to sweat at construction sites around the clock virtually for free.
  - Young people, in particular, were deeply motivated by the idea that it was possible to build a better and fairer society relatively quickly, within their lifetime, by mounting a huge exhausting effort and accepting hardships and self-sacrifice.



ДА ЗДРАВСТВУЕТ ТВОРЕЦ  
КОНСТИТУЦИИ СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКОГО  
ОБЩЕСТВА, ВОЖДЬ СОВЕТСКОГО НАРОДА  
ВЕЛИКИЙ СТАЛИН!



СОВЕТСКИЕ ЛЮДИ ПОЛНЫ БЛАГОДАРНОСТИ  
И ЛЮБВИ К РОДНОМУ СТАЛИНУ.

ЕСЛИ ВОЖДЬ ЗОВЕТ...



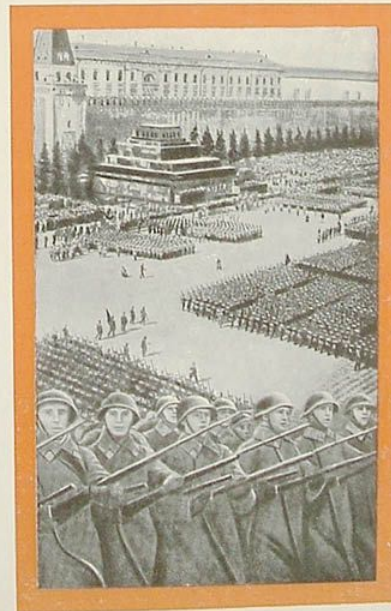
Если вождь зовет,  
рука, на винтовку ляг.  
Вперед, за взводом взвод!  
Громче печать—шаг.

В. МАЙКОВСКИЙ  
„Баранная песня“.

В целях быстрой мобилизации всех сил народов СССР, для проведения отпора врагу, вероломно нападшему на нашу родину,—создан Государственный Комитет Обороны, в руках которого теперь сосредоточена вся полнота власти в государстве. Государственный Комитет Обороны приступил к своей работе и призывает весь народ сплотиться вокруг партии Ленина—Сталина, вокруг Советского правительства для самоотверженной поддержки Красной Армии и Красного Флота, для разгрома врага, для победы.

Все наши силы—на поддержку нашей героической Красной Армии, нашего славного Красного Флота!  
Все силы народа—на разгром врага!  
Вперед, за нашу победу!

И. В. СТАЛИН



# A joke reflecting the Russian mentality:

*A Frenchman, a Brit, and a Russian are admiring a painting of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. The Frenchman says, "they must be French, they're naked and they're eating fruit." The Englishman says, "clearly, they're English; observe how politely the man is offering the woman the fruit." The Russian notes, "they are Russian, of course. They have nothing to wear, nothing to eat, and they think they are in paradise."*



# Methods to increase productivity (Stick):

- Every factory had large display boards erected that showed the output of workers. Those that failed to reach the required targets were publicly criticized and humiliated.
- Some workers could not cope with this pressure and absenteeism increased.

**This led to even more repressive measures being introduced.**

- Records were kept of workers' lateness, absenteeism and bad workmanship. If the worker's record was poor, he was accused of trying to sabotage the Five Year Plan and if found guilty could be shot or sent to work as forced labour on the Baltic Sea Canal or the Siberian Railway.



# THE GULAGS, LABOUR CAMPS AND WORKING CONDITIONS

Some of this work was done by Gulag slave labor; the rest was done by poorly paid workers living in tents and makeshift dormitories.



By the exercise of ruthless dictatorial power, Stalin succeeded in diverting a huge percentage of the national income to industrial investment and defense purposes.

# Bukharin and The Right

- Bukharin wrote an article, *Notes of an Economist*:
  - He criticised what he called the Five Year Plan as "super-industrialisation". According to Bukharin, this policy was "Trotskyist and anti-Leninist".
  - He argued that only a "balanced, steady relationship between the interests of industry and agriculture would secure healthy economic development".

Stalin disagreed with Bukharin. He believed that fast industrial progress would provide military security. Stalin felt so strongly about this that he was willing to crush anyone who stood in the way of the policy.



# Contradictions (Ideology?):

Stalin originally called **Leon Trotsky, Gregory Zinoviev, Lev Kamenev anti-Lenin**, because industrialism would destroy “**the alliance between the workers and the peasants.**”

Stalin's harsh (cruel) policies, which destroyed said alliance, and his decision to abolish equal pay was inherently anti-marxist and anti-leninist.

As a part of collectivisation Stalin made it imperative to abolish the “kulaks” as they were richer than the others, thus oppressive to the lower class. However, as a tool to increase productivity, Stalin introduced higher pay for more productive workers. Creating socio-economic division, and a new class.

# Societal Effects

Industrial expansion and often forcible relocation involved a massive shift of sometimes unwilling citizens, mostly from the countryside to the cities. Between 1926 and 1939 the overall percentage of urban dwellers nearly doubled, from 18 to 33 percent. **During the first two five-year plans nearly twelve million people moved from the countryside to the cities.** History had rarely seen migrations on such a scale. **Most of the migrants left the countryside during the first five-year plan as a result of the collectivization and the policy of “liquidation of the kulak as a class.”** The dramatic increase in the number of city dwellers represented in itself a major aspect of the Stalin revolution, leading to rapid urbanization of Soviet society.



## Societal effects cont.:

- As a result, living standards of blue- and white-collar workers plummeted two- or threefold.
- Consumer goods production all but ceased, and every available resource was pressed into the program of rapid industrial expansion in capital-intensive heavy industry, such as steel, coal, and machinery.



*Magnitogorsk, a new industrial city in the 1930s*

**How successful were the  
Five Year plans?**

# Traditional Perspective:

- The first three Five-Year Plans succeeded in developing heavy industry to the point where it was ultimately responsible for the survival of the Soviet Union during the Second World War.
- It managed to do this without having to resort to any sort of dependence on outside investment; success was achieved by exploitation of the Soviet population.
  - Peasants were obliged to subsidise industrial growth through the sacrifice of their profits in agriculture, while peasants and workers alike had to give up any hopes of acquiring consumer goods as heavy industry took priority over light industry.

In other words, Stalin's economic policy was ruthless but arrived at an effective industrial outcome.



# Eugene Lyons (Assignment in Utopia):

- “
- Was the first Five Year Plan a "success"? For whom and for what?
    - Certainly not for the socialist dream, which had been emptied of human meaning in the process, reduced to a mechanical formula of the state as a super-trust and the population as its helpless serfs.
    - Certainly not for the individual worker, whose trade union had been absorbed by the state-employer, who was terrorized by medieval decrees, who had lost even the illusion of a share in regulating his own life. Certainly not for the revolutionary movement of the world, which was splintered, harassed by the growing strength of fascism, weaker and less hopeful than at the launching of the Plan. Certainly not for the human spirit, mired and outraged by sadistic cruelties on a scale new in modern history, shamed by meekness and sycophancy and systematized hypocrisy.
  - If industrialization were an end in itself, unrelated to larger human ends, the U.S.S.R. had an astounding amount of physical property to show for its sacrifices.

”

**Soviet commentators:** view the industrial revolution carried out by the Stalinist party/state as an enormous achievement (dostizheniye) essential both to the economic and social modernization.

# SOVIET PERSPECTIVE: GORBACHEV

*"when the feeling of the threat of imperialist aggression was growing rapidly the Party strengthened its conviction that it was necessary not just to cover but to literally race across, in the shortest possible historical span, the distance from the sledgehammer and the peasant's wooden plow to a developed industry, without which the entire cause of the Revolution would have inevitably perished."*

– GORBACHEV



Successes	Failures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Within the first five years Russian industry at least <u>doubled</u> its output. The successes were truly enormous, and achieved at <u>great speed</u> at the time that Europe was suffering from the <u>Depression</u>.</li><li>• For example:</li><li>• The <b>Dnieper Dam</b> made possible a vast <u>hydroelectric</u> station.</li><li>• <b>Magnitogorsk</b>, on the eastern slopes of the Urals, was created as a great industrial centre specializing in <u>steelworks</u>.</li><li>• The <b>Trans-Siberian railway</b>, hitherto a single track, was <u>double-tracked</u>, and new railways were laid to serve the new industrial centres.</li><li>• The industrial plants of the Urals and in Siberia were developed far from Russia's frontiers, allowing Russia to <u>survive the German invasion</u> of 1941.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In the early years the programme was carried through with great haste – machinery was of a poor quality due to a lack of precision instruments.</li><li>• All the emphasis was on capital, consumer goods – living standards declined.</li><li>• The <b>methods</b> used were<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) <b>harsh</b> – e.g. labour camps, deportation, forced labour - 100,000 workers died building the Belomor Canal;</li><li>(b) <b>unprincipled</b> - A new elite was created, compromising communist ideology.</li></ul></li></ul>

# **PEOPLE VERSUS PROGRESS**

Key question:

**Could the USSR have closed the economical gap with the West without Stalin's methods?**