

WWII

- Nazi-Soviet Pact Aug 1939 divided Poland. USSR and Germany jointly invaded Poland and didn't start fighting until 1941
- Invasion was brutal. Stalin wanted to "decapitate" Polish society.
 - So brutal that some Poles asked to be sent back to Germany. For many Poles their fate was either a concentration camp in Germany or a Gulag in USSR.
- Poles moved into Germany thinking it would be better than living under the Soviets.
- Stalin ignored warnings (up to 84 warnings) that Hitler would invade.

- Hitler invaded in *Operation Barbarossa*, ignoring the warnings of his generals and history (1812 Overture commemorated the defeat of Napoleon). "On a scale of 1 to invading Russia in the winter, how bad of an idea is it"
- Because Russia is so large, factories could be torn down and moved east
- Central planning made industrial mobilization easy.
- Propaganda shaped the struggle into a nationalist cause.
- Once the war started, surrender was punishable by death. Deserters were shot and their families arrested. Officers fired into the backs of troops that refused to go forward.
 - One soldier who got lost in the forest, was stripped of all his insignia, and forced to dig his own grave before being shot in the head.
 - Stalin's son Yakov was captured by the Germans. The Germans offered to trade him for a general. Stalin felt Yakov wasn't valuable enough for a general, that they could more. He died in a concentration camp.
- Named "The Great Patriotic War", the war was made to be about the country instead of communism as a nationalizing force.
- Leningrad
 - Siege lasted 900 days
 - Children burying children
 - 600,000 dead
- Stalingrad =
 - -30 degrees
 - Turning point as the Nazi's stretched their supplies lines and the Soviets encircled and trapped them.
 - 2m soldiers and civilians dead.
 - People ate clay to survive. Cannibalism was common.
 - Rats became a staple of most peoples protein intake
 - Soldiers and citizens alike would go around picking dead horses clean of meat.
 - Fierce door to door combat - Germans in the kitchen, Russians in the living room.
 - Because it was named after Stalin, Stalin would defend it with everything. Hitler on the other hand, wanted to take it as a symbolic victory.

Reasons for Victory

- Because it was a planned economy, its was easy to change to a war economy.
- Propaganda = Church was restored during the "Great Patriotic War", stoking nationalism
- Winter attack and sheer size of USSR - factories dismantled and rebuilt further east
- Support (though not as much as he wanted) from the Allies
- Allied invasion in Sicily

Results

- 27m dead, 20m civilians.
- 2m fought WITH the Germans, mostly nationalists in the republics
- Postwar the country was destroyed. Stalin was angry when the British and Americans declined reparations on Germany because he wanted help rebuilding. Summary executions for Germans.
- Stalin felt that the Allies had left him and, especially the US had withheld supplies, and they had refused to open a front in Eastern Europe and thus felt entitled to Eastern Europe. Tired of fighting the Allies conceded. Stalin didn't have to deal with pleasing his people, the Allies did
- Iron curtain = Stalin wanted a buffer zone