

Stalin's Six Steps to Power

Objectives:

1. Identify the six steps Stalin used to rise to power.
2. Explain how Stalin transformed the USSR into a superpower.
3. Identify the human costs paid to bring about the transformation.

Rise of Stalin: Six Steps to Power




Of Trotsky and Stalin, who would you have expected to become the next leader of the USSR following the death of Lenin in 1924?

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A. Stalin tricks Trotsky into not coming to Lenin's funeral.

- People think Trotsky can't be bothered to turn up.
- Stalin, made a speech praising Lenin and saying he was Lenin's disciple (chosen successor).



Why was it so important to be seen at Lenin's funeral?

I. Stalin's six steps to power

B. Stalin convinced communist leaders NOT to publish Lenin's testament

- It implied Trotsky should rule
- It was critical of Stalin
- It also contained criticisms of the communist leadership!



What sorts of criticisms do you think Lenin might have made of Stalin?

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C. In late 1924, some Politburo (Congress) members join forces with Stalin to defeat Trotsky, causing him to lose his job as Commissar for the War – forcing him out of government.

Why was Commissar for War such a powerful post within the Politburo?

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D. In 1926, Stalin turns on Zinoviev & Kamenev, the next most likely candidates to threaten him.

- The pair supported him against Trotsky
- Stalin joined with another man, Bukharin, and his branch of the party to vote the pair out of office.



Stalin played a very clever political game. Why didn't his rivals do the same?

I. Stalin's six steps to power



What were the main risks in expelling these men from the Communist Party?

E. In 1927, Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev were expelled from the Communist Party, not just the Politburo.

I. Stalin's six steps to power

F. In 1929, Stalin turns on Bukharin and forces him out.

- Bukharin was the next most popular leader and a NEP supporter.
- By forcing him and his people out, he cancelled the NEP and made himself the only Politburo member with any real followers.
- By his 50th birthday, Stalin was undisputed leader of the USSR.





What do you think Stalin's next steps would be in further securing his position?

II. Stalin's Vision for the USSR

Unless he forced changes FAST in the USSR...

- The capitalist West would swallow up the fledgling country
- Hungry and unhappy workers and peasants might revolt yet again.
- The original Revolution was not done until all traitors were gone

III. Stalin Transforms the USSR

Over the next decade, Stalin...

- Dismantled the NEP; nationalized industry and agriculture
 - Created a series of **5 Year Plans** in a **command economy**, setting ridiculous production goals in industry with rewards & punishments.
 - Collectivized farmland into **collectives** (government-run farms); all food was centrally collected and redistributed around the country
 - Anyone who opposed the collectivization of their land was labeled an enemy of the state and dealt with harshly.
- Used **ensorship, indoctrination, & propaganda**
 - The government controlled all radio, press, and television
 - All workers received free, but biased, education after hours
 - Artists were forced to create works that glorified the Revolution, & Stalin, tied him to Lenin, & denounced all other ideas, including religion which was viewed as "the opiate of the people"

III. Stalin Transforms the USSR

- Conducted purges of political opponents
 - 90 % of all military officers were killed or imprisoned in **gulags**, replaced by hand-picked choices.
 - Millions of party members and other Russians killed or imprisoned in 1934-38's **Great Purge**.
 - Churches were shut down and clergy persecuted.
 - When the moderately successful peasant farmers of the Republic of Ukraine (called **kulaks**) joined together to refuse collectivization, he burned their crops and took away their stores of food by force – creating a **terror famine**. Millions died.

IV. Life in Soviet Totalitarianism

Economics	Politics	Arts	Religion	Society
-Growth of industry -Growth of military -Low standard of living -Shortage of foods and consumer goods.	-One-party dictatorship -Total government control of citizens -Total government control of industry and agriculture -Use of propaganda to win government support	-Censorship of books, music, and art. -Purpose of all art to praise communism -Observation of artists, writer, an musicians by secret police.	-Government war on religion -Takeover of houses of worship -Secret police control religious worship -Communist ideals replace religious ideals	-Fear of secret police. -An upper class of Communist Party members -Free education and health care -Public transportation and recreation -Jobs for women