

Rise of the Dictators: Totalitarian Governments

Essential Question:

“What is a Totalitarian Government?”

TOTALITARIAN GOVERNMENTS

- **Totalitarian** – “a system of government that is centralized and dictatorial and requires complete submission to the state.”
 - Totalitarian governments exert total control over a nation.
 - Dominates every aspect of life
 - Uses terror to suppress individual rights
 - Undemocratic (limited civil rights, limited choice)
 - Dictators or single-party control
 - Communism; Socialism; Fascism
 - Hitler and Mussolini governed via *Fascism*
- **Fascism** – “a system of government that is centralized and dictatorial and requires complete submission to the state.”
 - Josef Stalin based his Soviet government on a vicious form of *Communism*
- **Communism** – “political and economic system that replaces private property and profit-based economy with public ownership and control of the means of production (e.g., mines, mills, and factories) and the natural resources of a society”
 - Josef Stalin relied upon a strong, dictatorial government – limited individual rights and freedoms – killed enemies

Rise of the Dictators: Josef Stalin

Essential Questions:

“Who was Josef Stalin?”

“How did Stalin change the government and the economy of the Soviet Union?”

JOSEF STALIN’S CHILDHOOD

- Born Dec. 21, 1879 - Real name: Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili.
- Joseph Stalin was the son of peasants in the village of Gori, Georgia.
- Stalin had a tough childhood:
 - Mother was a washerwoman
 - Deeply religious – wanted Stalin to become a priest
 - Father was a shoe cobbler & bootmaker
 - Alcoholic and very abusive toward Stalin
- He caught smallpox at age 7, which left his face scarred and deformed – later was hit by a cart & horse, left his arm deformed.
- Stalin was described as highly intelligent
 - Earned scholarship to Tiflis Theological Seminary
 - First encountered Marxist (Communist) ideas at the Seminary – was expelled for trying to convert classmates to Communism

EARLY COMMUNIST INVOLVEMENT

- 1898 – Stalin joined the *Messame Dassy*
 - A secret organization pushing for the independence of Russia following the writings of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin.
 - Stayed in Tiflis to support the revolutionary movement against tsarist Nicholas II.
- 1901 – Became a member of the Marxist-leaning *Social Democratic Labor Party*.
 - Arrested because of coordinating labor strikes and was exiled to Siberia.
 - It was during this time, when Joseph adopted the name “Stalin”, which means “steel” in Russian.
 - Stalin escaped prison! Infamous criminal life:
 - Robbery, extortion and kidnapping, bank robbery
- February, 1917 – the Russian Revolution began.
 - March, 1917 – Nicholas II was put under house arrest after he abdicated the throne – Bolshevik Communists take over.
 - April, 1917 – Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin gained control and seized the land of the rich – Josef Stalin is Lenin’s #2.

STALIN AS A COMMUNIST LEADER

- 1922 - Stalin was appointed as the first secretary general of the Communist Party.
 - Gained significant influence by appointing members under his command – picked his people.
- 1924 - Lenin died and Stalin took control of the new leadership.
 - Stalin immediately began removing loyalists from the old regime.

- Lenin's presumed successor, Leon Trotsky, was sent into exile – eventually assassinated by Stalin.

STALIN'S REIGN OF TERROR

- Stalin completed his political domination of the Soviet Union through a series of *purges* – “the process of removing enemies and undesirable individuals from power.”
 - Stalin “purified” the Communist Party by getting rid of his opponents and anyone else he believed to be a threat to his power or to his ideas.
- The Great Purge began in 1934 with a series of “show trials,” in which the only possible verdict was “guilty.”
 - Stalin and his followers “purged” local party offices, collective farms, the secret police, and the Soviet army of anyone whom he considered a threat.
 - Over 700,000 were estimated to have been killed in these purges.
- By 1939, his agents had arrested more than 7 million people from all levels of society.
 - Over 1 million were executed.
 - Millions ended up in forced labor camps (*Gulags*).
 - Nearly all of these people were innocent victims of Stalin's paranoia
- The result: These “purges” successfully eliminated all threats to Stalin's power, real or imagined

STALIN'S ECONOMIC PLANS

- Even under Lenin's leadership, economic failure threatened the Soviet Union
 - “*One great leap forward*” to communism – Stalin launched the first of a series of five-year plans to:
 1. Modernize agriculture into a communist image
 2. Build new industries in Soviet Russia from the ground up

STALIN'S ECONOMIC PLANS: AGRICULTURE

- *Collectivization* - Stalin encouraged Soviet farmers to combine their small family farms into huge collective farms owned and run by the state.
 - Facing widespread resistance, Stalin began forcing peasants off their land in the late 1920s.
- Horrific consequences of *collectivization*:
 - In the Ukraine and other agricultural regions, Stalin punished resistant farmers by confiscating much or all of the food they produced.
 - Millions of people died from starvation, and millions more fled to the cities.
 - Stalin also sent approximately 5 million peasants to labor camps (*Gulags*) in Siberia and northern Russia.
 - In addition to the human cost, the collectivization campaign caused agricultural production to fall dramatically.
 - Food shortages forced Stalin to introduce rationing throughout the country.

STALIN'S ECONOMIC PLANS: INDUSTRIALIZATION

- Stalin pursued rapid industrialization with more success.
 - Assigned millions of laborers from rural areas to build and run new industrial centers where iron, steel, oil, and coal were produced.
- Stalin set high targets for production to “protect” the USSR and to industrialize his farms.
 - He demanded:
 - 111% increase in coal production
 - 200% increase in iron production
 - 335% increase in electric power
- Stalin poured money and labor into these basic industries rather than housing, clothing, and consumer goods
- Result:
 - Severe shortages of essential products.
 - Standard of living fell sharply.
 - Factory workers who did not perform well or were sick were killed or sent to camps in undesirable places to work
 - Skilled workers disappeared and common laborers increased
 - Helpless peasants, farmers, and laborers starved
 - Stalin and his generals lived in luxury and power

***By 1940 Stalin had achieved his goal of turning the Soviet Union into a modern industrial power.