I. Introduction
   A. Josef Stalin is, in my opinion, the second most evil man of the twentieth century, a
century which is soaked in human blood and which is distinguished by quite a number
of truly evil men possessing the will and the power to inflict untold human suffering
on vast populations.
   B. Stalin is also, without a doubt, one of the most important figures of the century. Under
his rule, the Soviet Union became a world class power and expanded to create a new
Russian empire.
   C. Not surprisingly, Stalin is a controversial figure among historians, (although not, it
appears, for the vast majority of those who actually lived under his rule).
   D. In preparing this lecture, I was surprised at the unanimity among historians of different
perspectives as to many of the facts (a “fact” under Stalin is a somewhat slipperier
thing to catch and hold than it is for any Western democracy). Where such agreement
is apparent, I have not cited my immediate sources. Positions that are interpretive,
however, have of course been cited.
   E. My own interpretation of Stalin is already evident from my first sentence.

II. Conflicting Interpretations of Stalin.
   A. The most fundamental controversy over Stalin is the question of whether Stalin
betrayed Lenin and the Revolution. Is War Communism the norm for the Soviet
socialist state and Stalin therefore the true heir of Lenin (a Cold War interpretation) or
is the New Economic Policy (NEP) the norm, and Stalin an aberration who betrayed
the Revolution, whose true heir is Nikolai Bukharin? (Malia 124)
   1. Any assessment of the Soviet Union (a task now made possible since the
Soviet Union no longer exists) must face this question.
   B. Stalin is Lenin Writ Large
      1. This is basically the Cold War interpretation.
      2. Martin Malia summarizes this interpretation: “October [Revolution 1917] was
not a proletarian revolution, but a coup d’etat carried out by a monolithic and
disciplined Bolshevik Party. The minority regime was made possible only by
the devastating impact of the First World War on the rickety political and
social structures of Imperial Russia. The Revolution was therefore not a
product of the logic of Russia’s historical processes, as Soviet Marxists would
have it, but a brutal interruption of the country’s development towards
constitutional democracy. More devastatingly still, Lenin’s party dictatorship
led logically to Stalinism, with its forced collectivization and institutionalized
terror.” (8)
      a. It seems clear to me that the October Revolution, unlike the February
Revolution, was not a spontaneous, mass uprising of the down trodden.
A rather small number of persons (Bolsheviks, Red Guards, sailors etc.)
seized control of St. Petersburg from the Provisional Government,
which was exercising very little actual authority. Lenin stepped into a
void more than overthrew a functioning government.
b. Lenin deliberately rejected working through the All Russian Congress of Soviets, which was in session, (an approach favored by Gregory Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev) at least in part because “class struggle was literally class warfare.” (Malia 92-93)

(1) Lenin also did not have enough votes to secure unquestioned Bolshevik power. Lenin’s concept of democracy is peculiar. He proclaims the Party as the vanguard of history, alone endowed with a revolutionary consciousness that enables it to foster the class struggle that will lead to a socialist utopia. Any one who does not share his revolutionary consciousness is bourgeois and reactionary, even if they are actually a worker (Lenin came from the lower intelligentsia; he is not a proletarian). Functionally, democracy for Lenin is limited to the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party.

(2) In this view, one cannot speak of a Soviet “society” but only of an ideocratic Soviet regime. (Malia 8)

(3) Martin Malia (who basically agrees with this view, and whose book will be cited a lot here because I basically agree with him!) Notes that the Cheka and the framework of a Party-State were established within three months, before the Bolsheviks faced any significant challenges. He argues that the NEP was an aberration from Marxist doctrine, was adopted by Lenin for pragmatic reasons, and notes that Stalin’s slogan “Socialism in One Country” was used to justify the methods of War Communism. For Malia, for the liberal interpreter, War Communism is Lenin’s real face, the NEP is a mask. (Malia 115, 174-83)

(4) What is Stalinism?

(a) Some crude characterizations will be attempted here.

(b) Stalin, like Hitler, believed that politics determined a nation’s development. (Bullock 293)

(c) This, of course, turns Marx on his head, since Marx believed that economics determined politics. However, this approach is precisely what Lenin did when he established the NEP in order to safeguard Party power. (Cf Russian Revolution handout)

(d) Other characteristics would include:

i) centralized planning

ii) collectivization

iii) a pervasive secret police

iv) glorification of the leader

a) We might pause here to identify other Stalinist regimes using this definition.

(e) Centralized planning and collectivization required the creation of a bureaucratic elite, whose interests became
bound up with the regime. Stalin rewarded these aparatchiks, which included Party and ministry officials, the secret police, and the managerial elite, with differential salaries, bonuses, access to special stores, scarce commodities, privileged housing, vacations, schools, and transportation. These privileges could be and were revoked at Stalin’s will. “Such insecurity created a powerful bond of self-preservation among those who became part of the new Soviet elite.” (Bullock 285) Thus, Stalin suborned the tens of thousands of individuals needed to administer his dictatorship.

(f) Stalin’s secret police grew to massive proportions. One indicator might be a comparison with the size of the KGB compared to that of the Gestapo late in World War II. In 1944, the Gestapo numbered 32,000; in 1991, the KGB numbered 513,000. The East German Stasi seems to have been 10 to 20 times the size of the Gestapo, comparatively. (Laqueur 143-4)

(g) During his 50th birthday, which is when the serious glorification of Stalin began, Stalin began to be called vozhd’, or “leader”: precisely the same title given Mussolini (Duce) and Hitler (Führer)

i) The phenomenon of leader worship in the twentieth is worth extensive study by political scientists. Such states are very hierarchical and dictatorial, if not totalitarian. The leader cannot make mistakes and cannot tolerate independent centers of power. Other states besides Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany would include Mao’s China, Castro’s Cuba, Ceasescu’s Romania, Idi Amin’s Uganda, Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, Kim Il Sung’s North Korea. Consider such states and ask yourself whether any generalizations regarding leader worship may be drawn.

C. Stalin as the Gravedigger of the Revolution

1. Roy Medvedev is the best example of a scholar who retains his socialist principles but who believes that Stalin perverted them. Certainly a strong case can be made for this.
   a. It would be very easy to list the examples of how Stalin broke with the ideas and intentions of Marx and Lenin.
   b. Unfortunately, since Stalin defended his policies to a highly politicized body of revolutionaries, he did so in the language of Marxism. Just as the Puritans of Salem fought out their fears and differences using the language of theology, so the Bolsheviks used the language of ideology.
Like his opponents, Stalin cited book, chapter, and verse of the Marxist scriptures. In fact, he was better at it than his opponents (which is not to say that he was a better theorist; he was not; he just learned how to debate Marxists).

(1) Nevertheless, any fair minded analysis of Stalin must concede that there is a strong case to be made.

2. Medvedev described himself in the preface to *Let History Judge* as follows: “I considered myself on the side of social justice and socialism. But I was never a blind supporter of any political or social doctrine. Reality was too harsh. . . . I understood that socialism as I wished to see it was still a distant ideal, while the actual life of the mass of the people remained full of injustice and suffering. It long ago became my primary aim and the driving motive of my life and work to orient myself in the contradictory reality around me and to find a way of changing it for the better, including changes in the prevailing ideological conceptions.” (Xii) [one persistent problem facing those who live under such a regime is the Through the Looking Glass nature of life, the contradiction between the ideals claimed and the language used and the reality they purport to describe.]

3. Medvedev was alarmed at attempts to rehabilitate Stalin [you may still expect this to happen]. His words remind us how important the discipline of history is [let’s apply this to TOK, how about it?] “The Soviet people have a very poor knowledge of their past; their collective historical memory has been attenuated to a very dangerous degree. It is not surprising therefore that even the limited revelations about Stalin’s crimes made in 1956 at the Twentieth Party Congress of the Soviet Communist Party produced not only confusion and bewilderment but also disillusionment in socialism.” (xv)

4. “Socialism cannot maintain a reputation as a scientific social doctrine if it is unable to explain the socio-historical, economic, and political processes that under specific circumstances led to the degeneration of the socialist state and to tyranny by specific individuals in socialist countries. . . . The lawlessness of the Stalin era struck a terrible blow against both people and the very idea of socialism” (xv)

5. [I recall reading an editorial in Germany reprinted from a Yugoslavian newspaper. The article was written by a Marxist scholar, like Medvedev, who remained dedicated to the original ideals of socialism. He made a critique that I have always thought struck very deep indeed. He complained that the lack of any concept of the law separate from the demands of the moment in the dialectical process was a fundamental cause of injustice in Communist states. Truth is never absolute with dialectical materialism, it is always relative to time and place. His argument was that Communist regimes could not reform themselves unless some absolute concept of law were found. My immediate thought was that it would be impossible, even theoretically, for any genuinely Marxist regime to find a basis for such absolute ideas as law and individual rights. In my view, Stalin’s lawlessness is inherent in the Marxist-Leninist dialectic itself]
6. Medvedev’s criticisms are scathing and encyclopedic, delivered with the passion of a man who personally suffered from Stalin’s persecutions.

7. “Socialism, even the ideal conception of it, does not guarantee full equality of material possibilities or an equal position in society to everyone, because people differ individually. Socialism must, however, ensure substantial progress toward equality in the most important sense—equality of rights and obligations, just treatment of all, and equal opportunity for all to discover and develop their talents and abilities. It must reduce the flagrant material inequality that exists under capitalism, eliminating both the excessive wealth and humiliating poverty. Stalin’s bureaucratic socialism was little concerned about the achievement of such goals.” (836)

8. “All remnants of independence were lost by the trade unions, which were originally supposed to be a bulwark of democracy, defending workers against the bureaucratic encroachments of the government apparatus.” (837)

9. “The party also suffered from violations of democracy. . . . Party leaders were in fact appointed ‘from above’ after being hand picked by higher party bodies.” (838)

10. Medvedev attacks the Stalin Cult, and quotes a speech by Władysław Gomułka to the Polish Communist Party in 1956. The passage is quite lengthy, but the insight into the evils of personality cults, which is a widespread phenomenon, is worth noting, especially coming from such a source (the head of state for an Eastern European Soviet satellite: “The cult of personality cannot be reduced merely to the person of Stalin. The cult of personality is a certain system which prevailed in the Soviet Union and which was transplanted to probably all the Communist parties, as well as to the parties of the socialist camp, including Poland. The essence of the system consisted in the fact that a hierarchic ladder of cults was created. In the bloc of socialist states it was Stalin who stood at the top of this hierarchic ladder. All those who stood on lower rungs of the ladder bowed their heads to him. Those who bowed their heads to him were not only other leaders of the CPLSU and leaders of the Soviet Union but also the leaders of the Communist and Workers’ parties of the socialist countries. These leaders occupied the second rung on the ladder of the cult of personality. They in turn donned the robes of infallibility and wisdom. . . . The chief figure of a cult of personality understood everything, knew everything, decided everything, and directed everything in his field of activity. He was the most intelligent person, regardless of his actual knowledge, abilities, and personal qualities. . . . The system of the cult of personality shaped the minds, shaped the mode of thinking of party leaders and members. Some believed . . . that the only infallible interpreter of Marxist science . . . , showing the only correct road to socialism, was Stalin. It followed that everything that did not correspond to his ideas and orders was harmful, was bound to entail an abandonment of Marxism-Leninism, was a heresy. Others, who had their doubts, were also convinced that any attempt to express their thoughts in public not only would change nothing but would end with unpleasant consequences for themselves. Still others were indifferent to
everything except the path that would take them to a soft chair and guarantee that chair. . . . This system violated democratic principles and the rule of law. Under this system the characters and consciences of men were broken, people were trampled underfoot and their honor was besmirched. Slandering, falsehood, lies, even provocation served as instruments in the exercise of power. Terror and democratization were spread far and wide. On the soil of the cult of personality phenomenon arose which violated and even nullified the most profound meaning of peoples’ power.” qtd in 838-40)

11. Medvedev points out that the Soviet state under the Stalin constitution lacked social or political institutions which guarantee the rights of the people against the Party or their own government. (841)

12. Medvedev fiercely attacked the creation of a large bureaucracy, sustained by much higher wages, special privileges, and bribery. “A bureaucrat,” he writes, “is a privileged functionary, cut off from real life, from the people, from the needs and interests of common folk. Bureaucrats are interested in their jobs as positions to be preserved and improved not as tasks to be done. They will knowingly do something unnecessary or even harmful for the people if it will preserve their positions. Careerism and subservience, red tape and protocol are their constant companions. Basic ignorance, especially of cultural achievements, emotional dullness, and a limited intellect are . . . typical characteristics of the bureaucrat.” (844)

13. Medvedev condemns the terrible purges, the condemnation of entire categories of people regardless of individual guilt, and the falsification of the historical record to cover up the Party’s blunders. (848)

14. Medvedev refers to revisionist historians who justify Stalin by arguing that the Soviet Union could not have built socialism without the barbarities and cruelties which took place. In particular, he singled out Isaac Deutscher, who is one of the most important and influential of the Western biographers of Stalin. Medvedev’s response is that the Soviet Union could have achieved modernization faster and at far less social and economic cost without Stalin, that the Soviet Union’s greatest achievements were made despite Stalin, not because of him. As only one illustration, he points out the devastating effects of Stalin’s purge of the military coupled with his foolish refusal to heed warnings of a German attack. (868-72)

15. Medvedev closes his argument by concluding “Therefore we cannot equate Stalinism with socialism, Marxism, or Leninism--no matter how imperfect those doctrines might be in some respects. Stalinism is the sum total of the perversions Stalin introduced into the theory and practice of scientific socialism. It is a phenomenon profoundly alien to Marxism and Leninism.” (872)

D. The Totalitarian Controversy

1. The term “totalitarian state” has become embroiled in controversy since World War II.

2. The term was originally coined by Mussolini to refer to a fascist state. It was first applied to Stalinist Russia by Lev Trotsky. It was later picked up by
Hannah Arendt and applied to the regimes of Hitler, Stalin, and Mao, which, she believed, had a great deal in common. (Malia 9)

3. Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski attempted a definition of a totalitarian state.
   a. A “totalitarian ideology,” one that embraced every aspect of life.
   b. A single, mass State party
   c. The use of secret police and State terror.
   d. A monopoly of communication, with special emphasis on mass communication and the use of technology.
   e. A monopoly of weapons.
   f. A centrally planned economy. (Malia 12, Laqueur 79)

4. Revisionists in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s have attacked this lumping together of Fascist states with Communist ones. Interestingly, revisionist in the study of Nazi Germany and revisionists in the study of Stalinist Russia have used virtually identical arguments to attack the totalitarian model. In particular, they have attempted to water down the scope and utility of mass terror, central planning, and the degree to which ideology dominates life. It is my view that their criticisms reveal a great deal more about their own political agenda than about their subject.

5. One of the leading scholars on Nazi Germany, Karl Dietrich Bracher, has defended this model in recent years. “Even more important [than the Friedrich-Brezinski model] are two basic points that Bracher has emphasized time and again and that have caused offense in some circles. Totalitarianism, he said, is not a typical and exclusive product of the interwar period [hence irrelevant today] that came to an end in 1945. On the contrary, recent technologies offer modern dictatorships even greater possibilities for the mobilization and indoctrination of the masses and the imposition of strict controls over society. Second, the fundamental dividing line in recent history is not between left and right, and not between capitalism and socialism, (despite the differences between them)but between dictatorship, despotism, and freedom.” (Laqueur 83)

E. Communism as Modernization
   1. The view that Communism, or Marxist-Leninism if one prefers, is a rational response to the problems of modernization of technologically backward cultures or societies has been very influential.
   2. Theodore H. von Laue has expressed this idea very well in a book I find to be intriguing and exciting: The World Revolution of Westernization: the Twentieth Century in Global Perspective. He writes in his thesis: “The search for answers among culturally subverted [by Western technology] countries with political potential, so this book argues, led to the totalitarian experiments of communism and fascism in the wake of World War I; from them, after World War II, communist Russia emerged as the most powerful challenger to the Western model. Simultaneously, the totalitarian experiments inspired state-builders among the new states emerging from decolonization. What was wanted, it turned out, was not self-affirmation of the traditional
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Mr. Blackmon

Stalin: The Road to Power 1917-1929

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*Culture* but further Westernization through ‘reculturation.’” (emphasis added)

a. The relevance of this thesis to students in IB History should, I hope, be obvious.

3. Malia summarizes Alexander Gerschenkron’s formulation of this thesis by saying that the farther East in Europe one moves, the more backward the nations, and therefore the faster those nations must go to catch up with the modern West. “The only possible agent for accelerated transformation is the state.” (56) The Soviet regime, like other “authoritarian” or “totalitarian” regimes around the world, was really a means of industrialization, urbanization, and mass education—in other words, for “development.” (9)

4. During the 1960s, a rejection of the orthodox, intensely hostile interpretation of the Soviet regime began to emerge in the US. Their interpretation may be loosely described as the **“Optimistic Perspective.”** These historians asked the following questions:

   a. “What went wrong?”
   b. “When did it go wrong?”
   c. “How might it be sent?”

5. While there is acknowledgment that the Soviet system was a disaster, their questions reveal a belief that that false turn was a historical accident (which fits in with the ideas of Stalin as the **Gravedigger of the Revolution**. In this view, “October was an authentic proletarian revolution, generated by class ‘polarization’ between workers and capitalists, not a minority coup d’etat made possible only by the ‘accident’ of the First World War. The Bolshevik Party in 1917 was not monolithic, but instead undisciplined, diverse, and therefore ‘democratic.’” Lenin’s recourse to terror and to all-out nationalization during the War Communism of 1918-1921 were temporary expedients made necessary by the emergency of civil war; his true legacy was the ‘mixed’ economy of the New Economic Policy or NEP of the 1920s, and Nicholas Bukharin was his legitimate heir.” (Malia 10-11)

6. Malia notes “This historiography ignored the possibility that these might be false questions: that nothing went wrong with the Revolution, but rather that the whole enterprise, quite simply was wrong from the start.” (10)

**F. Revisionism**

1. The generation of historians who began their college work in the Vietnam era reflected the profound revulsion at American society in work which became very influential by the early 1980s (and which remains very powerful today, and are not often subjected to strenously standards of historiography)

2. Do you suspect perhaps that my attitude toward the Revisionists is a bit hostile??????

3. These “Western Sovietologists claimed that the importance of purges and forced labor had been grossly overstated both quantitatively and qualitatively: quantitatively, because the number of those involved had been much smaller than widely thought, qualitatively because there had been no ‘great fear,’ as had been claimed by ‘Cold War historians’ in the West [such as Robert
Conquest].” (Malia 134) [please note the technique of dismissal of the crime by diminution of the crime; the next step then is to equate the crime with someone else’s, argue that there is no moral difference, and then therefore there is no crime at all. This technique is also used by Holocaust Deniers]

4. In this view, “Stalin had more or less stumbled into the terror. A similar interpretation was given out by the German revisionist about Hitler and the Final Solution, except that in the German case the main culprit was said to have been the bureaucracy, whereas in the Soviet Union the terror had been directed against the bureaucracy.” (Malia 134)

5. Walter Laqueur examines the Revisionist figures as to the death toll. The Revisionist, he says, claim “only” 681,000 executed in 1937-8 and 1,053,829 died in gulags 1934-53 (the source for these figures is the KGB, which does not, I think, qualify as a source whose information should be handled uncritically. Official statistics in the Soviet Union sometimes have infinite flexibility.) By contrast, in 1937, the Nazis had 10,000 people in camps and killed less than 100 in the infamous Night of the Long Knives. “In other words, even the ‘low’ estimates are not low by any meaningful standard. Secondly, there is no remotely accurate information about the number of victims of the civil war, the collectivization of agriculture, the deportation (frequently fatal) of nationalities before, during, and after World War II and other crucial events.” (141)

6. The timing of these Sovietologists was unfortunate. Within a few years, new revelations from inside the former Soviet Union provided a wealth of evidence that did not seem to square with their thesis. Their response, Malia notes, has been to reject emotionalism (that is, history is value-free, one is not allowed to call crime a crime) and to subject new information to extraordinary criticism (without, however, applying the same evidentiary standards to their own sources). (Malia 134-5)
   a. It is of course, possible that these historians are deeply convinced of the accuracy of their views. I cannot help, however, cynic that I am (and avowedly hostile to the Revisionists) that salvaging professional careers and reputations may be a more powerful element in their response.

7. Following the breakup of the Soviet empire, “What Russians and other East Europeans had to say about the character of the old system was in stark contrast to the theories concerning pluralism, participatory and welfare authoritarianism which had been voiced in the West. The old system had been a disaster, Westerners were told in Moscow; the idea that it could reform itself, become more liberal, return to a more democratic Bukharin-style Marxism-Leninism was not only far-fetched, it was utterly fantastic.” (Laqueur 85)

G. My Own View

1. It should be clear to all of you by now that I regard the Bolshevik system as fundamentally perverted in every respect. Marx’ ideal was a humane and just society. But every Communist regime ever established has resulted in a huge lie, an Alice in the Looking Glass world. By the mid-1990s, Communism has been resoundingly rejected by most of those nations who understood the reality
best.

2. I strongly agree with the view of historians such as Robert Conquest, Robert Tucker, Walter Laqueur, and Martin Malia. The chain of argument that follows is taken from Malia, whose book I found to be an eloquent and compelling analysis.

3. The NEP, contrary to the optimists’ view, was not the real Leninist legacy. The NEP lasted only from 1924-26. The Bolshevik state took shape almost as soon as it was established. We have already seen that the Soviet system was present in all of its essentials before any significant opposition to their regime had appeared. “Stalinist socialism is clearly the empirical norm of Soviet history . . . . Further, . . . the institutional impact of Stalinism was enormous and enduring, while that of the NEP was soon obliterated.”

4. When the Bolsheviks first took power, they were confident that the workers of the other warring nations would rise up against their capitalist masters. This was the reason Trotsky did not want to sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. This revolution never happened, however. Once the Bolsheviks realized that they could expect to be isolated for some time (at least), their only acceptable solution was to turn inward to “generate the appropriate industrial base beneath itself. Another solution, of course, would have been to recognize that the basic premises on which the Revolution had been based were false and to give up the whole enterprise of socialism in Russia.” (148-151)

5. Stalin was among the old Bolsheviks, had a very “thorough grounding” (Malia 181) in Marxist theory, and he certainly demonstrated a Marxist Weltanschauung (world-view) throughout his life. To the argument that Stalin was not truly a Marxist, but merely mad for power, one might reply that if he consistently used a Marxist grammar and vocabulary to express his vision, then whether he really believed it or not is completely immaterial. In my view, the evidence that he overwhelmingly believed in Marxism-Leninism is overwhelming. He saw himself as the completer of Lenin’s revolution.

6. Despite its propaganda, the “Soviet system was always a militarized political economy both in its organizational structure and in its products.” (Malia 211)

III. Marxism-Leninism

A. Marxism has its origins in the Enlightenment, which attempted to subject all activities to rational analysis.

1. Philosophes such as Voltaire and Diderot were particularly critical of inherited privilege and organized religion (Marx wrote that religion was the “opiate of the masses.”)

2. The Enlightenment spurred concepts of democracy by attacking arbitrary privilege and stressing the common rights of all men.

3. If “democracy” is ruthlessly applied to the idea of “equality” then socialism is the result, since differences in status lead inevitably to the exploitation and domination of some by others, which does not equal “democracy.” (Malia 33)

B. Marxist View of History

1. Formal tenets of Marxism
   a. “A sociology in which the economic and social base determines the
cultural, political, and ideological superstructure of society.” (36-38)

2. Marxist economic theory “unfold with an implacable logic. Beginning with the principle that all value is created by human labor, this theory traces the inexorable process whereby the ‘surplus value’ of the laborer is confiscated to produce the ‘accumulation of capital.’ This capital is then invested in labor-saving machinery, which represents both a great advance in productivity and riches for the species and the beginning of the end for the ‘bourgeois mode of production.’ For competition generates the ‘law of the falling rate of profit,’ and this produces simultaneously the concentration of capital in fewer and fewer hands and the ‘increasing immiseration’ of the proletariat. The resulting centralization of the means of production and the socialization of labor through the factory system ‘at last reach a point where they became incompatible with their capitalist integument. The integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.’ And socialism emerges from the ruins.” (37)
   a. This process is held to be inexorable. This sequence is regarded as science, not theory. Marxist ideology provides the chief paradigm for looking at the world, the grammar and vocabulary with which Marxists analyze the world and express themselves.

3. The Communist Manifesto declares that “All history has been the history of class struggle.”
   a. This struggle was viewed by Marx as both violent and physical.

C. Building a Socialist Utopia
   1. One of the problems facing the Bolsheviks was the paradox of a “proletarian revolution” taking place in a nation that was overwhelmingly peasant.
      a. Empirically, this is actually the norm for Marxist-governed countries. (Malia 151)

   2. Propaganda and ideology notwithstanding, the Soviet Union was not an instance of a political and cultural superstructure built upon a revolutionary socio-economic base. The reality was precisely the opposite: a political and cultural superstructure which attempted to remake the socio-economic base to suit its purposes. Marx was stood on his head. (Malia 6-8)

D. “Who is the Proletariat?”-- the Vanguard Party
   1. Lenin argued that the elitist Bolshevik Party was the “Vanguard of the Proletariat” (this is the basis of the split between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks). For the Bolsheviks, the October Revolution was a once and for all time transfer of legitimate authority from the workers to the Party, with therefore no need for any form of renewal of legitimation (such as open elections).
2. The problem with this, once one looks at the reality of the Revolution, is that
the workers wanted direct control over their social and economic environment,
which was very different from the Bolshevik program. A very large number of
those killed in the Red Terror during the Civil War (and a major reason for the
Civil War itself, which Lenin precipitated by his refusal to share power in any
way).
   a. To all intents and purposes, Lenin believed that the proletariat was the
      Party. (Malia 106-7)

3. For Lenin, anyone who did not have a “revolutionary consciousness” was
automatically bourgeois and the enemy, regardless of his or her de facto class.
   a. “The Leninist Party thus represented a metaphysical, not an
      empirical, proletariat.” (Malia 100)

E. Attitude Toward Peasants
1. Marx always regarded the peasantry with suspicion, thinking of them as
counter-revolutionary or reactionary. In a sense, he was correct; peasants tend
to be deeply conservative and to view government, all government, with
hostility.

2. Lenin adopted the land policies of the Social Revolutionaries with the **Decree
   of Land of October 25**. However, he made it clear at the time that he had no
choice. He certainly did not intend for the relationship to remain that way. In
February 1918, the Bolsheviks nationalized all land—they could not possibly
implement that policy, but their intention was clear. Lenin retreated in
response to circumstances, but does not give up the Bolshevik program. Stalin
justified his collectivization of agriculture by reference to Lenin; Stalin (we
shall see) gained support for this with the Politburo because so many members
were Old Bolsheviks who regarded the NEP as a clear step backward.

F. Marxists and Violence
1. Marxists condemned capitalists as war-mongers constantly.

2. One notes that Lenin’s revolution, Mao’s revolution, Ho Chi Minh’s
revolution, and all other Marxist revolutions from the First to the Second World
War occurred in economically backward countries and under the impact of
war. This is not an accident. (Malia 50)

3. “Marx made clear his positive altitude toward coercion by copious encomia to
‘revolutions as the locomotive of history’ or ‘violence as the midwife of
history.’” Thus, the main lines of his program for the future are hardly in
doubt: It was an all-embracing project of nationalization, collectivization and
planning, presumably to be realized by the logic of history—and **revolutionary
coercion was also integral to that ‘logic.’” (132) (emphasis added)

4. The Bolsheviks did not create socialism as a product of industrial relations
under capitalism nor by proletarian revolution in 1917, but by the violence,
terror, and chaos of the Civil War. (Malia 135) The Bolshevik revolution is the
result of a coup d’etat.

5. From the beginning, Lenin built his brand of ‘socialism” by using coercion and
violence as his chief instruments.

6. Stalin continued that tradition.
G. Siege Mentality and the Ban on Factionalism

1. An attempt was made to assassinate Lenin in August 1918. Lenin and the Party then proclaimed a **Red Terror** by the **Cheka**. The result was a “dictatorship of the proletariat” which gave the Party “unlimited power above all law.” as Lenin liked to put the matter.” (Malia 118)

2. This is an example of how Marxism and the rule of law (as opposed to the rule of men) are fundamentally incompatible. Marxists states subvert law.

3. Later, Lenin demanded and pushed through a ban on “factionalism” within the Party, that is on any internal disagreement. It was Lenin who created the weapon by which Stalin began his savage purges. Stalin is Lenin writ large.

   a. One could argue that Lenin, as the proponent of **“democratic centralism”** usually worked through the Politburo as “first among equals” in distinction to Stalin, who pulled all power into his own hands.

   b. Lenin virtually always got his way, by threatening to resign if necessary. It is still Lenin who feared divisions within the Party, and Lenin who mercilessly persecuted other brands of socialism. Lenin’s intolerance led to the rule; Stalin institutionalized it.

IV. The Russian Revolution and the Russian Civil War

A. **War Communism**

1. Soon after the October coup, Lenin pushed through the Land Decree of 1917. In this decree, he adopted the land program of the Srs, over the objections of his fellow Bolsheviks. He was quite pragmatic and open in his intentions. He recognized that in a nation where 80% of the actual population was peasant, he needed their support, or at least, acquiescence, to secure Bolshevik power. He also made it clear that collectivization was inevitable.

2. He then began imposing **War Communism**, which he modeled after Germany’s **War Socialism** (Kriegssozialismus) or **state capitalism**.

   a. Obviously, this required the imposition of strict state control and careful central planning. In such circumstances, it is difficult to see where one would achieve Marx’ withering of the state.

   b. Lenin expected that the proletariat in Europe, and especially Germany, would--inspired by the Bolsheviks--overthrow the bourgeois governments.

3. Lenin had numerous problems with which to deal, among them the continuance of the war with Germany (until Brest-Litovsk) and divisions within the ranks of Socialists. The SRs were the strongest group in the Constituent Assembly, and strong in the country, but they also were divided into Left SRs and Right SRs. The Left SRs were sufficiently close to Lenin to have 4 of them included in the government until their resignation over the Treat of Brest-Litovsk. The vast bulk of the population were peasants, whose interests in politics was limited to seizing the land and holding it for themselves. Even the Politburo was divided, with **Nikolai Bukharin** and **Leon Trotsky** urging guerrilla war against the Germans until the world revolution would save them.
4. Food production declined precipitously. There are numerous reasons for this: most of the surplus food grown in Imperial Russia had come from large landowners and communal property. This land was divided up among the peasants. Most peasants remained with or went to subsistence farming. In addition, the richest agricultural region, the Ukraine, was beyond Bolshevik control. Furthermore, the revolt of the Czech POWs and their seizure of the Trans-Siberian railway denied the Bolsheviks supplies from the east and severely damaged internal transportation. Lastly, the severe inflation, which the Bolsheviks deliberately fostered, wiped out the value of fixed prices.

5. The Provisional Government had established a state monopoly on all grain sales, which Lenin continued. He stated that he would rather die than give up that monopoly. The reason is political, not economic. The cities needed the grain to survive, and Lenin would not grant the peasants the ability to strangle his revolution.
   a. Lenin tried to extract grain by fixed prices at ludicrous rates. Considering the inflation, the rates were little more than theft. This was also quite deliberate on Lenin’s part. The peasants simply refused to sell to the government at those prices, and either sold on the black market (which was ubiquitous since it was indispensable) or by refusing to plant more than they could eat themselves.

6. In response Lenin declared “class warfare in the village” (which meant the incitement of “poor peasants” to seize “surplus” grain from “petty bourgeois kulaks,” (Malia 117) an indication of Lenin’s hostility to the peasantry as well as his complete lack of understanding of the peasants; this is also a forerunner of Stalin’s dekulakizaton—Stalin is Lenin Writ Large.)
   a. Again, although the ostensible purpose was to seize “surplus” grain (anything above starvation diet figures for the peasants), his real reason was to secure Bolshevik control of the villages. He deliberately tried to incite one segment of the peasantry to viciously attack the rest in order to secure political gain. He invested the term “kulak” with a definition so flexible as to include anyone judged to be an enemy of the Revolution, either objectively or subjectively. There was in fact never any objective definition of a Kulak; Lenin’s idea (of grasping wealthy peasant exploiters) existed in his own imagination only.
   b. The “class war in the village” was a disaster. The peasants refused to rend their own. Whatever stresses existed within a mir, they closed ranks against any outsider.
   c. Lenin organized thugs to attack villages and seize “surplus” grain and execute the “kulaks.” The thugs were rewarded by part of the surplus—in other words, theft and loot. The peasants resisted violently and desperately.
   d. The resulting civil war is still not well known, since it has been carefully suppressed by the Communists. They are very high. In 1920-21, the Red Army suffered 237,908 casualties in battles against the peasants. Peasants losses were almost certainly much higher. (Pipes
Russia 373) It is the greatest peasant uprising in peasant history

(1) This should not surprise anyone. Even in serfdom, the peasant was not subject to arbitrary confiscation of his crops.

(2) What should surprise everyone is that the Bolsheviks confiscated so much that they even confiscated the food peasants needed to survive and the seed crops from the next harvest. Food production dropped to half the pre-war levels.

e. In the meantime, famine stalked the land in 1921. Famine led to the intense discontent of the proletariat in the cities, and to the revolt of the Kronstadt sailors (14,000 sailors who were massacred by Trotsky and 50,000 Red Guards.) (Pipes Russia 385)

f. Lenin’s response was to pretend that it wasn’t happening. Literally. The official policy is that famine did not exist. This is in sharp contrast to the Tsarist government’s response to the 1891-2, where 374-400,000 persons died. (Pipes Russia 413) At least 5.1 million persons died in the famine of 1921, the worst such disaster to strike Europe (“other than those caused by war since the Black Death.”) (Pipes Revolution 419).

(1) Communist propaganda likes to portray the West as hopelessly hostile. Nonsense. Herbert Hoover’s American Relief Administration spent $61,600,000 in food aid, and fed 11,000,000 persons a day. The ARA also supplied the seed for the bumper crops of 1922 and 1923.

(2) In the meantime, Lenin sold jewels to the West worth $100,000,000 and bought rifles, machine guns, and ammunition. (Pipes Russia 419-20)

g. I have taken this huge digression to review Lenin to emphasize that Lenin established the policies which Stalin carried out. Stalin is Lenin Writ Large. A very complete discussion of this war is in Richard Pipes’ The Russian Revolution, 714-744.

7. He also created the Cheka in December 1917, placing Felix Dzerzhinsky in charge, and declaring a Red Terror in 1918.

a. Before and all during the Revolution, Lenin insisted that terror was essential. Pipes writes “The Red Terror constituted from the outset an essential element of the regime, which now intensified, now abated, abut never disappeared, hanging like a permanent dark cloud over Soviet Russia. . . . The evidence shows that Lenin, its most determined instigator, regarded terror as an indispensable instrument of revolutionary government. He was quite prepared to resort to it preventively—that is, in the absence of active opposition to his rule.” (Pipes Revolution 789-90)

(1) Lenin used the language of vermin towards his “enemies”: “bloodsuckers,” “leeches,” “spiders,” and “vampires.” This language of violence is similar to the techniques used by Hitler. (Pipes Revolution 790)
(2) Isaac Steinberg, Lenin’s Commissar of Justice, noted that, although the Civil War ended in 1920, the Terror continued because it was intrinsic to the regime. Steinberg wrote: “Terror is a system . . . a legalized plan of the regime for the purpose of mass intimidation, mass compulsion, mass extermination. Terror is a calculated register of punishments, reprisals, and threats by means of which the government intimidates, entices, and compels the fulfillment of its imperative will. . . . Terror exists precisely because the minority, ruling on its own, regards an ever-growing number of persons, groups, and strata as its enemy . . . .” (Pipes Revolution 793)

b. The Cheka answered directly to Lenin, and was a law unto itself. Stalin’s purges is the Cheka on an even larger scale. The Cheka purged non-Bolsheviks (socialists as well as capitalists and those condemned as capitalists, such as school teachers or self employed peasants); Stalin’s NKVD purged Bolsheviks, chiefly by condemning them as “factionalists” and “Trotskyites.” *Stalin is Lenin Writ Large.*

c. One element in Lenin’s institutionalization of terror was to liquidate virtually the entire Russian legal system, to (in effect) “outlaw law.” (Pipes Revolution 796) He substituted Revolutionary Tribunals where “revolutionary consciousness” replaced rules of evidence or laws defining criminal conduct. The Tribunals, for instance, could refuse the defendant the right to appear and plead. (1) The Cheka was empowered to execute persons without trial.

d. The Cheka murdered people on a scale dwarfing all earlier terrors. In July 1918 alone, the Cheka executed 1,115 persons. (Pipes Revolution 816) Hostages were taken and forced to fulfill Bolshevik requirements or were executed (Hitler adopted this technique with the Jews) (1) Zinoviev personally ordered the execution of 512 hostages. This is the same man who wrote “We must carry along with us 90 million of the 100 million of Soviet Russia’s inhabitants. As for the rest, we have nothing to say to them. They must be annihilated.” (Pipes Revolution 819-20) I wonder if he remembered that when Stalin had him shot after a show trial.

(2) The Chekist Nikolai Krylenko (who later prosecuted the first show trial under Lenin and went on to be Stalin’s prosecutor) said “We must execute not only the guilty. Execution of the innocent will impress the masses even more.” (Pipes Revolution 822)

(a) The first show trial was the trial of the SRS in February 1922. One of the participants in this travesty of justice was Nikolai Bukharin, who would be the subject of just such a show trial in 1938--after which he would be legally shot as a traitor to the Revolution. (Pipes Russia 406-8)
(b) Show trials are one of the more characteristic features of Stalinism. *Stalin is Lenin Writ Large.*

8. The Bolsheviks set out to instantly socialize the country industrially. (Here, interestingly, Lenin was over ruled, at least initially)
   a. **War Communism** was intended to
      1. seize the banks
      2. nationalize commerce
      3. eliminate the free market
      4. liquidate the retail trade
      5. introduce compulsory labor
         (a) This of course really means that the workers become slaves of the state, which strikes me as a remarkable step forward from the shackles of capitalism. Of course, trade unions were broken and strikes were banned.
   
   b. The theorists for this included
      1. N. Osinskii
      2. **Nikolai Bukharin**
      3. Iurii Larin
      4. **Aleksei Rykov** (Pipes *Revolution* 684)
   
   c. The Bolsheviks set out to destroy their currency. They did this by printing money as fast as they could. The result was devastating: the real value of Russian money in circulation went from 1 trillion, 919 billion in November 1917 to 29 billion in July 1921; prices rose from a base of 1.0 in October 1913 to 648,230,000 in October 1923.

9. In 1918, Lenin organized the Council of the National Economy (VSNKh or *Vesenkhi*, which was renamed in 1921 the **State Planning Commission** or *Gosplan*.
   a. The Vesenkhi’s task was to centrally control the economy. Rykov and Larin were placed in charge.
      1. Pipes writes of Larin, “certainly no one has a better claim to having wrecked a great power’s national economy in the incredibly short span of thirty months.” (Pipes *Revolution* 690)
   
   b. Vesenkhi promptly began the nationalization of industry. This resulted in chaotic bureaucracy. Productivity plummeted

   c. **Overall large-scale industrial production**
      1. 1913 100
      2. 1917 77
      3. 1919 26
      4. 1920 18

d. **Output of selected industrial goods in 1920 (1913 = 100)**
   1. Coal 27.0
   2. Iron 2.4
   3. Cotton yarn 5.1
   4. Petroleum 42.7

   e. Productivity (in constant rubles) of the Russian Worker
10. The result of all this, is that “in 1920-21, except for its own cadres, the Bolshevik regime had the whole country against it, and even the cadres were rebelling. . . . They survived this national revolt by a combination of repression, enforced with unrestrained brutality, and concessions embodied in the New Economic Policy. . . . This was the essence of the NEP: to purchase political survival with economic handouts that could be taken back once the population had been pacified. Bukharin put it bluntly: ‘We are making economic concessions to avoid political concessions.’” (Pipes Russia 373-4) (emphasis added)

11. Note: ALL essential Soviet institutions are in place by 1921:
   a. A Party-State with monopoly power
   b. “Dual administration of the soviets and the apparat.”
   c. The secret police
   d. A central economic plan
   e. Agricultural collectives (Malia 138)

B. The New Economic Policy
1. The New Economic Policy was not a carefully thought out response to the virtual collapse in the country. It evolved in a series of reactions, and was only later enunciated into a “rational” policy. The NEP was never regarded by the Central Committee (Lenin or the others) as a permanent policy; it was a temporary retreat from War Communism.
2. By the Tenth Party Congress in 1921, the Bolshevik regime was in dire straits. The Mensheviks noted ironically, that there now existed, not a dictatorship of the proletariat, but a dictatorship without the proletariat. (Malia 143)
3. “Bukharin put it bluntly: ‘We are making economic concessions to avoid political concessions.’” (Pipes Russia 373-4) (emphasis added)
   a. One notes that this turns Marxism upside down. For Marx, political and social institutions are the superstructure set upon economic relationships. The reality in this Communist regime (and I believe in every Communist regime) is that political relationships are primary, and economic and social the superstructure.
   b. Bukharin has just, in effect, confessed that the regime’s real purpose is to maintain power.
4. In 1920, Alexander Antonov led a peasant revolt in Tambov region that worried the Bolsheviks very much. Although publicly described as a
conspiracy of the SR’s, they admitted privately that the Antonov revolt was spontaneous.

a. The peasants wanted two things:
   (1) an end to food requisitions
   (2) the freedom to sell their surpluses (Pipes Russia 377)

5. In February 1921, a mass peasant rebellion broke out in western Siberia
6. In late February 1921, there were mass strikes in Petrograd.
7. On February 28, the mutiny at Kronstadt broke out.
   a. The mutineers stated their position clearly: “In carrying out the October Revolution, the working class hoped to achieve its liberation. The outcome has been even greater enslavement of human beings. . . . The bayonets, the bullets, the coarse shouts of the oprichniki from the Cheka [the oprichniki were the men of Ivan the Terrible’s secret police] -- this is the fruit of the long struggles and sufferings of Soviet Russia’s toilers . . . But basest and most criminal of all is the moral slavery introduced by the Communists: they have also laid their hands on the inner world of the working people, compelling them to think only as they do. . . . the workers have been chained to . . . a new serfdom . . . . It has become ever more clear, and by now it is self-evident, that the Russian Communist Party is not the protector of the working people that it claims to be, that the interests of the working people are foreign to it, and that, having gained power, its only fear is of losing it, and hence that all means [to that end] are permissible: slander, violence, deception, murder, revenge on the families of those who have revolted [Trotsky had seized the families of the sailors as hostages, and threatened to execute them]”’ (Pipes Russia 383-4)

8. By May, Trotsky had taken Kronstadt and massacred the sailors there and Tukhachevsky had “pacified” Tambov.
9. Summer and Fall of 1921 was the height of the famine induced by Lenin’s “class war in the village.” It was at this time that the American Relief Association began to intervene.
10. On March 23, 1921, Lenin announced an end to forcible grain requisitions. It was replaced by a “tax in kind” or a tax of fixed amounts of grain.
   a. “Lenin justified it as ‘an economic breathing spell’ and Bukharin . . . spoke of a ‘peasant Brest [-Litovsk]’” (Pipes Russia 391)
11. “The tax in kind ‘necessarily implied the restoration for the peasantry of the right to trade in that part of the surplus produce which remained at their disposal . . . This in turn implied the revival of a market in agricultural produce, the re-creation of market relations as an essential link between agriculture and industry, and a restored sphere of circulation of money.’ . . . this barely fifteen months after Lenin had sworn that he would rather have everyone die than relinquish the state monopoly on the grain trade. . . . In this
manner, an emergency measure designed to quell a nationwide uprising against them led the Communists into uncharted waters that could end in the restoration of capitalism and its corollary, ‘bourgeois democracy.’” (Pipes Russia 3392-3)

12. In order to induce the farmers to grown enough to sell to the city population, it was necessary to allow a revival of the production of goods and services.

13. Lenin maintained strict control over the “commanding heights” of the economy: heavy industry, transportation, utilities, etc.


15. Lenin also invited foreign capital to invest in Russia.
   a. One conclusion is that socialism is not capable of producing the surpluses necessary for large scale investment. Third World nations in the post war era found the same problems. This led gradually to a shift in orientation towards the West.
   b. Stalin will demonstrate that the investment can be made if one is sufficiently willing to oppress one’s own population.

16. Internal Debate over the NEP
   a. Such a step backwards was not taken without dissent. Much of the Bolshevik rank and file never really accepted it. Even those who did certainly never saw the NEP as more than a passing phase on the way to collectivization.
   b. In 1922-23, Trotsky warned that concessions to the peasantry meant a threat to Soviet power. He called for a new “socialist offensive” of planned industrial development, which came to be known as “permanent revolution.” (Malia 156) (which is pretty much what Stalin ended up with).
   c. Nikolai Bukharin reconciled himself with the NEP with the only general theory proposed to support it. He argued that “industrial growth and thus progress towards socialism, depended on an expanding consumer market that, in turn, led to private peasant accumulation. In this way the capital for industrial expansion would be generated, and the two sectors of the economy, agriculture and industry would move forward in tandem, in a process of ‘growing into socialism through exchange.’” (Malia 162)
      (1) Bukharin is not advocating a form of “mixed economy.” Rather, he expects to achieve an orthodox socialism: the abolition of private property, profit, and the market; a planned economy; and fully collectivized agriculture. The difference between Bukharin and Stalin is one of pace, not goal.
   d. In 1934, Evgeny Preobrazhensky went a bit further with his theory of “primitive socialist accumulation of capital.” Since foreign capitalists were reluctant to invest in Soviet industrialization (for the odd reason of Soviet hostility, the repudiation of foreign debts, nationalization of foreign property, and hostility to the free market), then Russia could only industrialize by use of an “internal colony” of the peasants. [!!!!!!
Holding colonies = imperialism = capitalism = Preobrazhensky = capitalist !!!! The capital for investment would be achieved by forcing agricultural prices down and raising industrial prices, thus squeezing blood out of the peasants’ turnip. (Malia 157)

1. This is Stalin’s ultimate strategy
2. Here we see the development of **Left Communists** (Trotsky and Preobrazhensky at the moment) and **Right Communists** (Bukharin, and for the moment Stalin)

17. Economic concessions were accompanied by increased political repression.
   a. The Russian Orthodox Church was severely persecuted
   b. Rival socialist parties crushed
   c. Repression of the intelligentsia via imposition of cultural orthodoxy
   d. Intensified censorship
   e. Harsher criminal laws (Pipes *Russia* 398)

18. The Cheka was dissolved in 1922 and the **GPU** (renamed **OGPU** in 1924) formed. Felix Dzerzhinsky was named as head, and the Chekists remained in office. OGPU is a bureaucratic instrument of oppression and terror, modeled along the lines of the tsarist Okhrana.
   a. Dzerzhinsky called for the combination of exile with forced labor, and so the NEP saw the development of concentration camps, the infamous **gulags**. There were 3145 by October 1923 (Pipes *Russia* 400)
   (1) Hitler admired this, and modeled his concentration camps after them.

19. The criminal code was rewritten so flexibly as to permit the government to convict anyone of any activities which the government did not like, even if the activity was not illegal at the time. For that matter, it was not necessary to even be guilty of any overt act.
   a. Defense lawyers were instructed to take their client’s guilt for granted. (Pipes *Russia* 401)
   b. Lenin’s Russia was essentially devoid of law in the sense that the Judaeo-Christian tradition understands it.

20. With the Civil War over, Lenin now crushes the Mensheviks and SRS
   a. Zinoviev wrote of this: ‘At the present time, all criticism of the party line, even the so-called ‘left’ kind, is, objectively speaking, Menshevik criticism’” (Pipes *Russia* 404)
   (1) Note “at the present time” Truth for a Marxist is relative. Note also that dissent cannot be tolerated. Zinoviev is implicitly defending the basis of his own execution by Stalin.
   b. April and July saw show-trials of clergy, and June-August 1922 the first show-trials of fellow socialists.
   (1) The socialists were sentenced to death. Trotsky proposed holding them hostage against any SR resistance. Stalin later executed them.

C. Measures to Support NEP
1. Subordination of all foreign Communist Parties to Moscow
a. Lenin needed to encourage foreign nations to invest in Russia, so he needed to control all other members of the Comintern.  
(1) Lenin did not, however, abandon his attempts at subversion; he just tried to pick his spots.

b. In December 1922, The Comintern passed Lenin’s proposals:  
(1) No foreign Communist Party had any right to independent positions  
(2) Whenever the interests of a foreign Communist Party and the Soviet state clashed, the Soviet state took precedence.

c. Richard Pipes notes that, although this is often attributed to Stalin, it was accomplished under Lenin. (Russia 420-2) Stalin is Lenin Writ Large.

2. The Treaty of Rapallo  
a. April 1922 saw the signing of the Treaty of Rapallo between Germany and Russia.

b. Germany had two motives in signing the treaty.  
(1) Trade: Germany had previously been Russia’s leading trade partner. Walter Rathenau wanted to rebuild Germany economically, and this would certainly help a great deal.  
(2) Military: General Hans von Seeckt was determined to evade the Treaty of Versailles and rebuild German military strength. He wanted to use Russia to manufacture modern weapons and to test ideas.

c. Lenin had the same motives as the Germans  
(1) Economic: He wanted to lure German capital to invest in Russia  
(2) Military: The defeat of the Red Army by the Poles drove home the need for modernization of the Red Army. He wanted German technical assistance and staff training.

d. The military assistance was significant. The Germans built plants in Russia to manufacture artillery and shells, submarines, and airplanes. The core cadres of the future Luftwaffe were trained on Russian soil. In their turn, the Germans accepted picked Russian soldiers into their Army War College, taught by such men as future Defense minister for Hitler Walter Blomberg, future Army C-in-C for Hitler Walter von Brauchitsch, future Field Marshal Walter Model and future Field Marshal Heinz Guderian. Among those who attended were Georgi Zhukov, the greatest general of World War II, and possibly even Tukhachevsky himself. (Pipes Russia 423-435)  
(1) The two men who best understood mechanized warfare prior to World War II were Heinz Guderian and Mikhail Tukhachevsky. Guderian is most responsible for the creation of the German panzer forces and also of their proper use. In my opinion, Tukhachevsky had an even better grasp of the principles of Blitzkrieg than Guderian, with adaptations for Russia’s particular circumstances. I would really like to know how much
3. "Democratic Centralism" and "Factionalism"
   a. Once dissent from outside the Party had been crushed, now the Party had to face the possibility of dissent within the Party itself. Either Lenin had to accept opposition within the Party to policies decided upon by the Central Committee, or to crush all dissent even at the risk of stifling the Party’s connection to the rank and file. Lenin chose the latter.
   b. Massive growth of the bureaucracy
      (1) By the end of his life, Lenin was obsessed with the growth of a bureaucracy that was a dead weight on the country. He never understood why it developed.
         (a) The Bolsheviks now had power--and expanded that power constantly--but power involved responsibility, and that required a huge bureaucracy to administer their decrees. This in turn required large numbers of bureaucrats.
         (b) Marxism regarded government as purely an instrument of the ruling class, and Lenin was unable to perceive that civil servants could develop a set of interests different from that of the ruling class (or that they could become themselves a ruling class).
         (c) Lenin’s consistent solution to the problem of too much bureaucracy was to increase control from the top: IE. More bureaucracy. (Pipes Russia 436-38)
   c. "Democratic centralism" was the traditional method of operation within the Party. A controlling body made decisions by vote (the Central Committee, for instance). At that level, and until the vote, debate was to be free and fierce. Lenin was the dominant member of
the Central Committee, but he was *primus inter pares*, or first among equals. He did not always prevail, and when he did prevail, he did so by force of personality. Once the decision was made, everyone was to follow orders blindly. (Pipes *Russia* 438, Malia 167)

d. The Central Committee began creating administrative bodies within itself in 1919.

1) The **Politburo**—originally Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Kamenev, and Nikolai Krestinsky.

2) The **Orgburo** — to control personnel appointments.

e. Corruption in the Party and Bureaucracy

1) Party membership included many very important advantages:

   a) Additional food rations and access to special shops
   b) cash allowances
   c) immunity from arrest and prosecution
   d) the opportunity for bribes

2) It does not take a genius to realize the potential for corruption here.

3) Since the civil servants were not responsible to the mss of the population and were immune from prosecution, should one wonder that they became a conscious, “self-contained, self-perpetuating, and self gratifying body.” (Pipes *Russia* 441)

   a) Lenin was the first to acquire a *dacha*. Other party leaders followed suit.

4) The Orgburo and the Secretariat had the right to confirm all Party and government nominations. This meant complete centralized Party control and complete Party control over the government.

   a) Josef Stalin headed both after 1924. (Pipes *Russia* 441-42)

      i) Should one wonder at how Stalin gained total power in the end? He controlled the bureaucracy. Key players were personally beholden to him.

      ii) Stalin was a bureaucrat. Lenin was not. Lenin was glad to let Stalin handle the drudge work. When Lenin began to see the monster, it was too late.

5) Growing control by bureaucrats coupled with the advantages offered by civil service led to “massive featherbedding.” (Pipes *Russia* 445)

   a) By 1921, the country had twice as many bureaucrats as workers.!

   b) A large percentage of the civil servants were former Tsarist civil servants.

   c) The civil servants served the state, not the nation. (Pipes
f. The “Workers’ Opposition”
   (1) In 1920, a Workers Opposition formed under the leadership of
       Alexander Shliapnikov, head of the Metal Workers’ Union,
       and the highest Bolshevik who was actually a worker.
       (a) Most leading Bolsheviks were from the intelligentsia,
           and most of those had never actually held a job.
   (2) Shliapnikov introduced independent resolutions at the Tenth
       Party Congress in 1921 attacking Lenin’s practices (but not his
       goals)
   (3) Lenin, Trotsky, and Bukharin replied that, in effect, the
       “proletariat” was an abstraction. The Party by definition was
       the “people.” (And non-Party are non-people?)
       (a) As early as 1902 in *What Is To Be Done?*, Lenin had
           rationalized Bernstein and the Revisionist Socialists as
           “mere trade unionism” and argued that the proletarian
           workers were too ‘spontaneous’ and had to be told my
           an elite of what their ‘revolutionary’ or ‘scientific’
           consciousness should be. (Malia 74-5)
   (4) Trotsky attacked Shliapnikov for his “democracy”--”’The
       principle of elections within the labor movement is, as it were,
       placed above the Party, as if the Party did not have the right to
       assert its dictatorship even in the event that this dictatorship
       temporarily clashed with the transient mood within the worker
       democracy.”’ (Pipes Russia 451)
   (5) Bukharin wrote, “‘To maintain the dictatorship of the
       proletariat, we must support the dictatorship of the party.”
       (Pipes Russia 454)

g. The Tenth Party Congress
   (1) Lenin asserts dictatorial control over the Party as well as the
       proletariat.
       (a) Does one detect a whiff of Schopenhaurian Will here?
           The Romantic visionary who will conform the world to
           his own colossal Ego? An artist who manipulates
           actual human beings to achieve his masterpiece on a
           canvas of flesh and blood?
   (2) A ban against “factions” was passed.
       (a) A “faction” was defined as “organized groupings with
           their own platforms”
       (b) “‘In order to maintain strict discipline within the party
           and in all soviet activities, [in order] to attain the
           greatest unity by eliminating all factionalism, the
           Congress authorizes the Central Committee in instances
           of violations of discipline, or the revival or tolerance of
           factionalism, to apply all measures of party accounting
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up to exclusion from the party.” (Pipes Russia 55)

(c) Lenin created the position of General Secretary in 1922 to enforce this ban, and named Josef Stalin to head it.

i) *Lenin created the instrument by which Stalin launched his Great Terror.*

D. Lenin’s Health

1. The decline in Lenin’s health abruptly faced the Bolsheviks with his mortality, and also raised the issue of succession.
   a. Lenin suffered his first stroke in May 1922
   b. Lenin suffered a second stroke on December 15, 1922
   c. Lenin suffered a third stroke on December 22, 1922.
   d. Lenin suffered a fourth stroke in March 1923
   e. Lenin died on January 21, 1924

2. The Politburo in 1922 included
   a. Lenin (died of natural causes)
   b. Stalin (died of natural causes)
   c. Kamenev (executed by Stalin)
   d. Zinoviev (executed by Stalin)
   e. Trotsky (assassinated on Stalin’s orders)
   f. Bukharin (executed by Stalin)
   g. Michael Tomsky (committed suicide while on trial on charges brought by Stalin)

E. Lenin’s Rupture with Stalin

1. Lenin first clashed with Stalin on the issue of the foreign trade monopoly. Lenin was in favor of it, Stalin opposed to it. Stalin had ignored Lenin’s wishes, which angered Lenin. Since Lenin was too ill to fight it out in person, he used Trotsky as his spokesman, and won the argument.
   a. The selection of Trotsky seemed to indicate Lenin’s view that Trotsky should be his successor.
   b. This alarmed Stalin, Kamenev, and Zinoviev. This “troika” was united in their hatred of Trotsky; each saw themselves as Lenin’s successor.
   c. Their response was to appoint Stalin the keeper of Lenin’s health, including his “isolation” from other Communists and from correspondence. A process begins in which Lenin is systematically isolated from events, even to the extent of printing a single, special edition of *Pravda* just for him.
   d. This was decreed the day before his second stroke. When Lenin’s wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya, took a letter from dictation from Lenin to Trotsky, Stalin phoned her and berated her so crudely that Krupskaya fell into hysterics (she was a hardened revolutionary; makes me wonder what Stalin said) Before Lenin could find out this, he suffered a third stroke. Stalin then placed Lenin under what amounted to house arrest.

2. The second issue was over nationalities. Stalin was the Commissar of Nationalities, which dealt with all non-Russians, which was about half the total population (including Stalin, who was Georgian). Stalin held to a policy of
brutal russification for his entire life. He insisted upon reorganizing Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan so that they would be directly ruled from Moscow. The local parties wished to retain their autonomy. Lenin favored this, and was struggling with Stalin over the issue before his third stroke. (McCauley 12-13)

a. Stalin’s policy was no different than the Tsar’s policies. The breakup of the Soviet Union demonstrates that the nationalities issue has never died out.

3. Lenin dictated his “Testament” to Krupskaya at this time, and then hid the document until his death.

4. While this struggle was going on, Lenin began attacking the bureaucracy, and he attempted to put Trotsky into a powerful position to counter Stalin. Trotsky, who had no political sense whatever, refused repeatedly.

5. Lenin’s Testament criticized the potential for a split within the Party, and laid most of the blame on Stalin. In addition to proposing a solution to the problem of bureaucracy—which was to increase the Central Committee from 24 to 100—he added: “Comrade Stalin, having become general secretary, has concentrated limitless power in his hands, and I am not sure he will always use this power with sufficient caution. . . . Stalin is too rude [grubolst, evidently quite a strong word], . . . intolerable in the office of general secretary.” Lenin then recommended Stalin’s transfer to another post. (Bullock 120-1)

6. In March, the break was irreparable when Lenin first heard about Stalin’s insult to Krupskaya. He wrote Stalin, “You had the rudeness to call my wife to the telephone to abuse her. . . . I do not wish to forget so easily what was done against me, and there is no need to point out that was is done against my wife I consider to be against me also.” (Bullock 123)

7. At the XIII Party Congress, Stalin accepted Lenin’s plan to increase the size of the Central Committee. He then fills the new positions with his creatures.

   a. Lenin’s Testament was not read to the XIII Congress.

8. Shortly after the Congress, Lenin suffered his third stroke in March of 1923, which fully incapacitated him, and died, January 24, 1924.

9. After Lenin’s death, at the XIV Party Congress, the “Testament” was read to the Politburo. It was, actually, critical of everyone, not just Stalin. The Politburo agreed to suppress the “Testament” altogether.

F. Lenin’s Funeral

1. Stalin, Kamenev, and Zinoviev decided to hold a grand funeral, and begin a Cult of Personality about Lenin.

   a. Such a cult had already formed, following Lenin’s survival of the assassination attempt.

   b. Lenin disapproved of this, and discouraged it as much as he could.

   c. Krupskaya was outraged at Stalin’s plans

2. There is an important reason for the Cult of Personality, which is one of the most salient characteristics of Communist regimes (despite the fact that Marxism regards individuals as of little importance; it is the masses that count), or indeed most Single Party States in the twentieth century.

   a. Deifying the Leader is a means of legitimizing a rule that otherwise
lacks legitimate support. It is especially useful in multi-national empires (look at the example of Alexander the Great and the Roman emperors.)

3. It was Stalin’s idea to embalm the body and display it (rather like saints’ relics in the Middle Ages). Stalin was careful to be prominent near the bier, so that almost any photograph would have him next to the body. He contributed a carefully thought out eulogy. He was, in effect, maneuvering himself to appear symbolically and the second Lenin. He was also preparing the ground for his own cult.

4. Trotsky failed to attend the funeral—a terrible, but typical error.
   a. He was on vacation in the Crimea (in itself a mistake, considering Lenin’s health) and claimed later that he was deliberately misinformed of the date of the funeral. This is certainly possible, but I would not take Trotsky’s word for it.

V. The Struggle for Power
   A. Stages in the Struggle
      1. 1923: Lenin still alive but incapacitated
      2. 1922-24: Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Stalin (the “troika”) combine to get rid of Trotsky
      3. 1925-26: Zinoviev and Kamenev form the “Left Opposition” and are crushed by Stalin and Bukharin
      4. 1926-7: Zinoviev, Kamenev and Trotsky form the “United Opposition” and are crushed by Stalin and Bukharin
      5. 1928-9: Stalin crushes Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky as the “Right Deviation” (Malia 145, Bullock 187
   B. The immediate issue facing the Politburo is the “scissors crisis”
      1. By spring 1923, there had developed a “scissors crisis” in Trotsky’s phrase:
         a. Falling agricultural prices
         b. Rising industrial prices
      2. The question was how to solve it.
   C. Composition of the Politburo
      1. Lenin (ill and inactive)
      2. Stalin, General Secretary, controlled the Secretariat, which meant he controlled all personnel appointments.
      3. Zinoviev, head of the Comintern and the Petrograd Party
      4. Kamenev, head of the Moscow Party
      5. Trotsky: Commissar of War
      6. Bukharin, editor of Pravda
      7. Tomsky, head of the Trade Unions
         a. Alexei Rykov was a up and comer, the head of the Orgburo
   D. Political Currents
      1. Trotsky was hated by Zinoviev and Kamenev, and was never fully accepted by the other Old Bolsheviks since he had been a Menshevik. Trotsky was an intellectual, with great abilities as a revolutionary, but none as a politician. He was arrogant and overbearing.
2. Trotsky, Kamenev, and Zinoviev were all Jews, and anti-Semitism was still a force in Russia, and may have hurt them with other members of the Central Committee.

3. Stalin was a masterful bureaucrat. He was deeply duplicitous, a master of tactics with no moral scruples whatsoever, and no sense of loyalty to old comrades whatever. It is hard to understand what Stalin was actually thinking at any one time since he was so very profoundly deceptive, even to his closest associates.

4. Since Communism is an ideology, the language of the power struggle was that of ideology, of Marxist Scripture, and the struggle was fought out entirely within the Central Committee, largely behind the scenes. It never occurred to anyone to appeal to the nation.

5. Since Stalin controlled the party machinery, he was eventually able to successively brand his opponents as “factionalists” and then have them expelled from the Party.

6. “Trotsky reports Zinoviev telling he members of his Leningrad faction, ‘You must understand that it was a struggle for power. The trick was to string together old disagreements with new issues. For this purpose, “Trotskyism” was invented”” (Bullock 190)

E. The “Left” and “Right” Solution to the Scissors Crisis

1. The Left solution was led by Trotsky and Evgeny Preobrazhenksy, and “sought to give priority to the development of industry and the interests of the industrial workers which, it was argued, must be the heart of any socialist program. Trotsky . . . declared, ‘Only the development of industry creates an unshakable foundation for the proletarian dictatorship.’ With Lenin’s support, Trotsky called for expansion of the authority of Gosplan, the State Planning Commission, and a comprehensive plan, with the subsidization of industry, particularly heavy industry, using the state’s allocation of capital to achieve the plan’s long-term objectives.” (Bullock 125) Trotsky also called for an aggressive foreign policy of calling for and supporting revolutions abroad.

2. The Right solution was held by a majority of the politburo, including the troika Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Stalin.

   a. This “gave priority to the recovery of the peasant sector of the economy, financing the growth of industry from the peasants’ growing prosperity and purchases. These, it was argued, would produce a market-led expansion of small-scale and consumer-goods industries, and that in turn would stimulate the expansion of the heavy, capital-goods industry. As part of the extension of the NEP, a more lenient tax system was designed to conciliate the peasantry, while a tight control of credit would stabilize the currency and force industry to concentrate production in the most efficient enterprises even if this meant a rise in unemployment.” (Bullock 125) The Right also advocated a more cautious foreign policy (I assume to attract investment)

   b. At this time, other defenders of the Right were Alexei Rykov, who coined the idea “Socialism in One Country” and Bukharin, at that
time editor of *Pravda*.

(1) Please note that Stalin is on the Right. He will use Kamenev and Zinoviev and Bukharin and Rykov to help him get rid of Trotsky. Then he will adopt Trotsky’s program, and use that to liquidate Kamenev, Zinoviev, Bukharin, and Rykov (labeling them Trotskyites to boot!)

3. “The gulf between the left and the right, in fact was never wide; it was only Stalin’s skillful manoeuvring that made it appear so. All Bolsheviks agreed that socialism entailed industrialisation. The argument between the left and the right was about the pace at which this should go ahead. The left wanted rapid growth—by which they simply meant growth rates above those being achieved at the time—while the right would have with moderate growth. The money for this would have found by squeezing the peasants through heavy taxation, and anything which aided the fulfillment of the plan was regarded as legitimate. The right, on the other hand, looked at the economy as something that should organically, with industry and agriculture in tandem. Both factions regarded socialist or cooperative agriculture as the goal, but whereas the left was unwilling to allow the peasant to dictate the speed of economic growth (four out of five persons lived in the countryside) right thought that coercion would force the peasant into resistance and would be economically disastrous.”

(Mccauley 21)

F. **Socialism In One Country**

1. The debate over the Left or Right Solution led to the slogan “Socialism in One Country.”

2. Evgeny Preobrazhensky published his theory of “primitive socialist accumulation” in July 1924.

3. Bukharin attacked Preobrazhensky in an article in which he even encouraged the peasants to become rich.

4. Bukharin also attacked Trotsky’s concept of a permanent revolution as a contradiction of Lenin’s theories of a proletarian revolution.

5. Stalin elaborated on Bukharin, claiming that Lenin believed that socialism could be built in the Soviet Union without world wide revolution, but that final victory would only come with a socialist revolution in the other developed nations.

   a. Stalin implicitly appeals to Russian nationalism here.

G. The Troika versus Trotsky

1. The **Declaration of Forty Six** 1923

   a. Trotsky came out against Central Committee policies in a quarrel over whether to support a KPD rising in Hamburg, and Thuringia (the ostensible cause of the Beer Hall Putsch) and over attempts to reduce Trotsky’s hold on the Red Army.

   b. The Declaration of Forty Six was a written critique of the Central Committee signed by 46 prominent Bolsheviks, accusing the CC of disastrous economic policies and of destroying freedom of discussion among the Party members by use of the Secretariat.
2. The Central Committee condemned Trotsky for “factionalism” at the XIII Party Congress in 1924.
   a. Zinoviev argued “‘The good of the revolution--this is the highest law. Every revolutionary says: To the devil with the “sacred” principles of “pure democracy.’”” (Bullock 130)
      (1) I hope he remembered that when Stalin had him expelled from the Party.
   b. Trotsky failed to appear in person, pleading illness. (Bullock 130)
      (1) Trotsky will be absent at many crucial meetings and occasions, due to illness. One begins to wonder if there were a psychosomatic basis for his illnesses.
   c. Trotsky is forced to give up all political offices.
   d. Trotsky in exile is useful to Stalin, since he can use Trotsky to emphasize the danger from internal dissent. (Tucker 127)
   e. Trotsky remained on the Politburo but took no part in the opposition during 1925.

H. Stalin, Rykov, and Bukharin versus Zinoviev and Kamenev
1. Stalin first moves against Zinoviev.
   a. Stalin found members of the Comintern whom he could suborn in one way or another. During the course of 1925, he effectively stripped Zinoviev of control of the Comintern.
   b. Stalin then set out to undermine Zinoviev’s position as head of the Leningrad Party. Here he is only partially successful.

2. Zinoviev attempts to counter-attack by abruptly reversing his position on the peasants, and adopted the views of Evgeny Preobrazhensky; IE. He switched from the Right to the Left.
   a. Bullock believes that Zinoviev’s chief purpose was to obtain political power, not economic initiative (Bullock 195)
      (1) Most of the Old Bolsheviks had never liked the NEP in the first place.


4. Stalin joined Bukharin (who was the chief defender of the NEP), Rykov, and Tomsky to outvote them (Trotzky seems to have abstained).
   a. At about this time, Russia’s most important soldier, Mikhail Frunze, died during a Politburo-ordered surgery (against Frunze’s judgement). His successor as Commissar of War was Stalin’s creature, Kliment Voroshilov. (Bullock 196)

5. The showdown came at the XIV Party Congress in 1925.
   a. Zinoviev and Kamenev accused Stalin of
      (1) favoring the kulaks at the expense of the proletariat
      (2) pursuing state capitalism, not socialism
      (3) abandoning Lenin’s internationalism for Socialism in one Country
      (4) damaging intra party democracy
      (5) turning the dictatorship of the proletariat into a dictatorship over
the proletariat

(6) Kamenev also complained that he did not want to make a vozhd’ (a leader). Lenin had already been given that title in some contexts; it would become a common descriptor for Stalin—after Mussolini became il Duce and before Hitler became der Führer
(a) coming from Zinoviev and Kamenev, I find these charges to be pretty funny.

b. Stalin crushed them in the Central Committee, 559 to 65. (Bullock 196-7)
c.

At the end of 1925, Stalin appeared firmly in control.

I. The United Opposition
1. Belatedly, Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev realized that they had a common enemy in Stalin, and they agree to cooperate. In 1926, they form the United Opposition
2. The thrust of their attack on Stalin was essentially the Left solution: drastically faster industrialization and a revolutionary foreign policy.
   a. Trotsky at least remained consistent.
3. Pressure from the Politburo forced a public repudiation, which deflated rank and file opposition.
4. Stalin put even more pressure on them, and forced a showdown in October after Trotsky (presumably) leaked Lenin’s “Testament” to the world press.
5. Trotsky told Stalin to his face, “The first secretary [Stalin] poses His candidature for the post of grave digger of the revolution!” (Bullock 201) (emphasis added)

J. Stalin stripped Trotsky and Kamenev of their seat on the Politburo, and took the formal leadership of the Comintern from Zinoviev and gave it to Bukharin.
1. Bukharin rubbed salt into the wound by demanding that the United Opposition to publicly recant.

K. In January 1928, Trotsky was taken from his apartment and sent to Alma Ata (a pretty desolate spot in the farthest corner of Soviet Central Asia; in 1929, he was exiled to Turkey. In 1940, Stalin ordered the NKVD (descendant of the Cheka) to assassinate Trotsky in Mexico. He was killed with a pickax.

L. The Right Deviation
1. 1926 and 1927 saw a series of setback in Soviet foreign policy.
   a. In May 1926, a call in Britain for a general strike failed miserably.
   b. In April 1927, Jiang Jiesih massacred Communists in Shanghai
   c. In May 1927, the British raid the Soviet trade office, discovering evidence of Soviet subversion, leading to a break in diplomatic relations.
      (1) Against this backdrop, Stalin will manufacture a “war scare” in order to rally his forces against external and internal enemies. (Tucker 74-75, Bullock 202-3, McCauley 19)
2. The Grain Collections Crisis
   a. The harvest of 1927 was average, but collections were well below
normal, which resulted in virtually no grain exports, which in turn was the means by which industrialization was to be paid for. Tucker notes that the reason is unclear, but there are now indications that Stalin may have contrived it. (80)

b. Stalin’s response was to demand the resumption of forcible requisitions.

(1) Note that Stalin has just reversed his policy! He has adopted at least a part of the Left Opposition platform. He could not do this until Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev were disposed of. This policy will certainly lead to problems with Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky. Stalin will label them Deviationists, pretending as if there had never been any alteration of official policy. This became a common technique: the Party is always right, and reality will be distorted to support the current interpretation of Party policy. (Tucker 80-81, McCauley 19, Bullock 206-7)

c. Most of the grain seized came from the middle peasants, or the vast majority of all peasants. From the peasants’ point of view, this was a return to War Communism, and they responded as before, by refusing to sow any more than they needed themselves.

(1) By early 1929, food rationing had to be introduced. Seizures led to sharply increased tension in the countryside, and the murder of procurement officers.

d. Bukharin and others proposed an economic solution to the problem: increase the prices paid for grain in order to induce peasants to raise more food. (Gasp! A market incentive from a Marxist?!!)

e. Stalin rejected this solution on two grounds:

(1) maximum government profits were needed for industrialization. Raising government prices for grain would cut into the available for capital investment. Stalin’s intention to squeeze the peasants in order to pay for industrialization (IE. Deliberately to lower the standard of living for 80% of his population)

(2) Stalin blamed the problem on political opposition rather than an economic problem (which is contrary to Marxist assumptions, but the Soviet Union ( and other Communist regimes) will consistently make decisions for political, rather than economic reasons.

(3) Stalin blamed the “kulaks” (Tucker 82-83)

(4) At this time, there were only 3.9% of all peasants who could be reasonably classified as a Kulak (this is by Soviet definitions, and computations by Soviet historians) This compares to 15% prior to 1917.

(5) A kulak was anyone who farmed from between 25 to forty sown acres.

(6) 62.7% of all peasants (up from 20% prior to 1917) were middle
peasants, farming 5 to 25 sown acres. (Bullock 208)

(7) “Stalin now advanced the proposition, henceforth central to his ideology, that class war must intensify with progress toward socialism.” (Tucker 83)
(a) Stalin postulated that increased progress towards socialism would lead to increased resistance, which would aggravates the class-struggle--IE. Provide the justification for the continuous acceleration of repressive measures.

f. Bukharin is so alarmed that he approached Kamenev for help. Kamenev was noncommittal.
(a) Tucker makes an interesting point in Stalin’s use of a word--“tribute” for the difference between the price for manufactured goods and grain prices--which had profound and grim connotations for Russians. He argues that this use of vocabulary helped Bukharin see that Stalin was looking to Tsarist Russia for models (especially Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great): the Muscovite state employed military exploitation of the population to achieve state goals, with external threats to the existence of the state as an important spur to exploitation of the people. (84)

3. The First Five Year Plan
a. Stalin now pushed through the first Five Year Plan, which called for accelerated industrialization. He was opposed by Bukharin, but had the support on this issue by a number of individuals who became important: Sergei Kirov, Vyacheslev Molotov, Kliment Voroshilov, and Anastas Mikoyan
b. The plan called for 17.5% of sown areas should be collective.
c. The plan would be accelerated, and would call for 230% increase in capital goods production in 4 years. (Bullock 213-4)

4. The Central Committee Plenum of 1929
a. The Plenum censured Bukharin and Tomsky, and stripped them of their offices with Pravda, the Comintern, and the trade unions.
b. “Right deviation” was declared to be the chief danger to the state, and Bukharin and Tomsky both endorsed this statement.
c. Late in 1929, the Plenum required Bukharin and Tomsky to confess their error. Bukharin was then expelled from the Politburo.

M. The Shakhty Show Trial
1. In 1928, Stalin ordered the fabrication of a case against 53 industrial technicians, accusing them of conspiracy--in cahoots with Polish, German, and French agents and provocateurs--to wreck the coal industry.
2. Torture was used to obtain confessions.
3. A public “show trial” was conducted.
a. A show trial was a means of propaganda as well as a quasi-legal device
to execute alleged enemies of the state. Western rules of evidence were often ignored, and the verdict and sentence were decided in advance.

b. The prosecutor was **Andrei Vyshinski**

4. The point of the Shakhty Show Trial was that the threat was not only external (remember the war scare going on? Cf. Above) but internal as well. This required greater control at home. (Tucker 78-9)

5. Stalin declared, “‘We have internal enemies. We have external enemies. This, comrades, must not be forgotten for a single moment.’” (Bullock 210)

N. Stalin’s Program on the Eve of the 1930s

1. Stalin’s program was
   a. **Convert NEP Russia into Socialist Russia**
   b. **The agent of change would be the power of the State**
   c. **The prime purpose of this use of State power would be the augmentation of State power.**
   d. **Russia must move swiftly to prepare for the coming war.** (Tucker 44-45)

2. He reclassified Trotsky and his followers from a defeated intra-party faction to a subversive anti-state movement, which provided the justification for extreme police repression and also for the destruction of any future intra-party dissent. (Tucker 126)

3. **There is an integral and causal relationship between the desperate increase of tempo in industrialization and savage repression.** Tucker explains it this way: “In general, Stalin’s commitment to a second revolution made the official image of dangerously active external and internal enemies necessary for justifying the sacrifices that this revolution was exacting from the population. To the extent, his need for enemies was political.” (166)

4. It is always questionable to determine Stalin’s real thinking at any one time, since he was so devious, deceptive and secretive. However, if one assumes that his policies reflect his most important convictions, then a speech he gave in 1926 provides an essential guide to his career.

5. **To think that the capitalist world can look with indifference on our successes on the economic front, successes that revolutionize the working class of the whole world, is to succumb to an illusion. Therefore, so long as we remain in the capitalist encirclement, so long as the proletariat has not been victorious at least in a number of countries, we cannot consider our victory final. Accordingly, no matter what our successes in construction, we cannot consider the land of the proletarian dictatorship guaranteed against dangers from without. So in order to win conclusively, we must bring it about that the present capitalist encirclement is replaced by a socialist encirclement, that the proletariat is victorious in at least several more countries. Only**
then can our victory be considered final.” (Tucker 46)

VI. Stalin’s program--collectivization, the Five Year Plans, and the Purges--will be the subject of the next unit on him.

A. Stalin celebrated his fiftieth birthday in December 1929. It was at this time that Stalin began to orchestrate his own Cult of Personality.
Works Cited


Works Consulted


Stalin: The Road to Power 1917-1929 Essay Questions

You will asked to choose ONE of SEVEN of the following essays.

1. Analyze the significance of the slogan “Socialism in One Country.”

2. What is Stalinism and what is its relationship to Leninism?

3. “Therefore we cannot equate Stalinism with socialism, Marxism, or Leninism--no matter how imperfect those doctrines might be in some respects. Stalinism is the sum total of the perversions Stalin introduced into the theory and practice of scientific socialism. It is a phenomenon profoundly alien to Marxism and Leninism.” Roy Medvedev

Assess the validity of the above generalization.

4. Describe the definition of a totalitarian state by Friedrich-Brzezinski and apply that definition to Russia from 1917-1929.

5. “October was an authentic proletarian revolution, generated by class ‘polarization’ between workers and capitalists, not a minority coup d’état made possible only by the ‘accident’ of the First World War. The Bolshevik Party in 1917 was not monolithic, but instead undisciplined, diverse, and therefore ‘democratic.’ Lenin’s recourse to terror and to all-out nationalization during the War Communism of 1918-1921 were temporary expedients made necessary by the emergency of civil war; his true legacy was the ‘mixed’ economy of the New Economic Policy or NEP of the 1920s, and Nicholas Bukharin was his legitimate heir.”

Assess the validity of the above generalization.

6. What is and to what extent did Lenin and Stalin practice it?

7. What was meant by Lenin’s “class warfare in the village” and what were its consequences?

8. “Stalin is Lenin writ large.”

Assess the validity of the above generalization.

9. “Terror is a system . . . a legalized plan of the regime for the purpose of mass intimidation, mass compulsion, mass extermination. Terror is a calculated register of punishments, reprisals, and threats by means of which the government intimidates, entices, and compels the fulfillment of its imperative will . . . Terror exists precisely because the minority, ruling on its own, regards an ever-growing number of persons, groups, and strata as its enemy . . . “ Isaac Steinberg
Assess the validity of the above generalization.

10 Why did Lenin adopt the New Economic Policy?

11 “It has become ever more clear, and by now it is self-evident, that the Russian Communist Party is not the protector of the working people that it claims to be, that the interests of the working people are foreign to it, and that, having gained power, its only fear is of losing it, and hence that all means [to that end] are permissible.” Kronstadt Naval Base mutineers, 1921

Assess the validity of the above generalization.

12 Distinguish between the “Left Communists” and the “Right Communists.” What stance did Stalin take in this debate?

13 Does Lenin’s “Testament” amount to a repudiation of Stalin by Lenin? Why or why not?

14 “The first secretary [Stalin] poses His candidature for the post of grave digger of the revolution!” Leon Trotsky 1926

Explain the meaning of Trotsky’s accusation and assess the validity of that charge.

15 “To think that the capitalist world can look with indifference on our successes on the economic front, successes that revolutionize the working class of the whole world, is to succumb to an illusion. Therefore, so long as we remain in the capitalist encirclement, so long as the proletariat has not been victorious at least in a number of countries, we cannot consider our victory final. Accordingly, no matter what our successes in construction, we cannot consider the land of the proletarian dictatorship guaranteed against dangers from without. So in order to win conclusively, we must bring about that the present capitalist encirclement is replaced by a socialist encirclement, that the proletariat is victorious in at least several more countries. Only then can our victory be considered final.” Josef Stalin 1926

Analyze the implications of this speech.