

## How did Stalin get control of the USSR 1929-1941?

There are six different ways that Stalin got control of the USSR:

- A. He made people afraid to go against him.
- B. He improved living conditions.
- C. He controlled the mass media and used propaganda, creating a 'Cult of Personality'.
- D. He controlled education.
- E. He controlled the economy.
- F. He eliminated all potential sources of opposition.

### Task

Read the statements below.

- In the first column categorise Stalin's actions according to the methods above (A-F). Some actions may involve two methods of control.
- In the second column draw a carrot or a stick to show what approach you think the action suggests.

| Stalin's actions  | Method of control | Carrot or Stick? |
|---|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. In great show trials loyal Bolsheviks such as Kamenev (1936), Bukharin (1938), and Zinoviev (1936) confessed to being traitors to the state.   |                   |                  |
| 2. The history of the USSR was rewritten to make Lenin and Stalin the heroes of the story.  |                   |                  |
| 3. Kulaks (rich peasants) were arrested and sent by the thousand to labour camps or were forced to live on poor-quality land. By 1934 there were no kulaks.   |                   |                  |
| 4. To escape the hard work and discipline, some workers tried to move to other jobs, so the secret police introduced internal passports which prevented free movement of workers inside the USSR.   |                   |                  |
| 5. Soviet people were deluged with portraits and photographs of Stalin.   |                   |                  |
| 6. If you were ambitious, you could become part of the new class of skilled workmen or a foreman, supervisor or technician. There was an army of managers and bureaucrats, and they created jobs for the secretaries who handled their paperwork. |                   |                  |
| 7. All music and other arts were carefully monitored by the NKVD (secret police). Poets and playwrights praised Stalin either directly or indirectly. Composers wrote music praising Stalin and all that he had achieved.                         |                   |                  |

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| 8. In 1940 the USSR had more doctors per head of population than Britain.   |  |  |
| 9. In 1931 a number of former Mensheviks were put on trial on charges that were obviously made up.  |  |  |
| 10. The First Five Year Plan (1928-1933) set targets for industry and although many of the targets were not met the achievements were still staggering.   |  |  |
| 11. Textbooks were changed. Disgraced party leaders removed (literally pasted over) to eliminate even the memory of those who had been arrested.  |  |  |
| 12. The 'Terror' started in 1928, when a number of engineers in the Donbas mining region were accused of sabotage without real evidence.  |  |  |
| 13. Unemployment was virtually non-existent.  |  |  |
| 14. Production targets gave Stalin control of factory managers and others who might possibly develop their own ideas.   |  |  |
| 15. The Purges began in 1934 when Kirov (the leader of Leningrad Communist Party) was murdered.   |  |  |
| 16. A new law in 1935 allowed the NKVD to deal harshly with youth crime. Death sentences were introduced even for young criminals. Parents could be fined if their children caused trouble. The children could be taken to orphanages and their parents forced to pay their upkeep. |  |  |
| 17. In 1935 a worker called Alexei Stakhanov managed to cut 102 tons of coal in one shift. The propaganda machine encouraged all workers to be like 'Stakhanovites'.  |  |  |
| 18. School children were expected to join the 'Young Pioneers'.   |  |  |
| 19. In 1936 Stalin created a new constitution for the USSR. It gave freedom of speech and free elections to the Russian people. However, only Communist party candidates were allowed to stand in elections.  |  |  |

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| 20. The First Five Year Plan showed that there was a shortage of workers so women were drafted into industries. Thousands of new crèches and day care centres opened so women could work.  |  |  |
| 21. Most towns had statues of Stalin and streets named after him.  |  |  |
| 22. The armed forces were purged - 81 of the 103 generals and admirals were executed, including the Supreme Commander of the Red Army, Marshal Tukhachevsky. Approximately 25,000 army officers were removed (around one in five). |  |  |
| 23. By the late 1930s many Soviet workers had improved their conditions by acquiring well paid skilled jobs and earning bonuses for meeting targets.   |  |  |
| 24. In towns and cities most housing was provided by the state but there was lots of overcrowding. Most families lived in flats and were crowded into rooms which were used for living, sleeping and eating.                       |  |  |
| 25. Only approved magazines and newspapers could be published.   |  |  |
| 26. Workers were constantly bombarded with propaganda, posters, slogans and radio broadcasts.  |  |  |
| 27. In the Third Five Year Plan (1938-1941) there was a switch to the production of consumer goods.  |  |  |
| 28. The Communist Party was purged - about a third of its 3 million members were killed.   |  |  |
| 29. Religious worship was banned. Many churches were closed, priests deported, and church buildings pulled down. By 1939 only one in 40 churches were holding regular services and only seven bishops were active in the USSR.     |  |  |
| 30. By 1937 an estimated 18 million people had been transported to labour camps. Ten million died.   |  |  |
| 31. Workers had strict targets and were fined if they did not meet them. Lateness or absences were punished by sacking, and that often meant losing your flat or house as well.  |  |  |

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| <p>32. Many great engineering projects were built by prisoners who had been sentenced to hard labour for being political opponents of Stalin, or for being kulaks or Jews. Other prisoners were workers who had had accidents or made mistakes in their work but had been found guilty of sabotage.</p>     |  |  |
| <p>33. Many kulaks refused to hand over their land and produce under the collectivization programme. Therefore, requisition parties came and took their food required by the government, often leaving the kulaks to starve.</p>  |  |  |
| <p>34. During the purges, people were arrested in the middle of the night. Victims were rarely told what they were accused of. Days of physical and psychological torture would gradually break them and they would confess to anything. If the torture failed, the NKVD would threaten their families.</p> |  |  |
| <p>35. Education became free and compulsory for all and Stalin invested huge sums in training schemes based in colleges and in the workplace</p>  |  |  |
| <p>36. In central Asia Islam was repressed. Many Muslim leaders were imprisoned or deported. Mosques were closed and pilgrimages to Mecca were forbidden.</p>   |  |  |
| <p>37. Soviet artists and writers developed a style of art which became known as Socialist Realism. The aim of this art was to praise Stalin's rule. It usually involved heroic figures working hard in fields or factories to make the USSR a better place to live.</p>                                    |  |  |
| <p>38. Divorced fathers had to pay maintenance for their children and mothers received cash payments of 2000 roubles per year for each child up to the age of five.</p>   |  |  |

### Conclusion

*The main way that Stalin got control of the USSR was ...*

*I think that overall he used the carrot/stick (delete as appropriate) approach most because ...*