

STUDY GUIDE:

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IB Academy History Study Guide

Authoritarian States

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the IB Academy Study Guide for History.

We are proud to present our study guides and hope that you will find them helpful. They are the result of a collaborative undertaking between our tutors, students and teachers from schools across the globe. Our mission is to create the most simple yet comprehensive guides accessible to IB students and teachers worldwide. We are firm believers in the open education movement, which advocates for transparency and accessibility of academic material. As a result, we embarked on this journey to create these study guides that will be continuously reviewed and improved. Should you have any comments, feel free to contact us.

For this History guide, we outlined everything in condensed note-form so that it will be easy for you to grasp the material. In this guide you will find useful information such as key terms, timelines, charts and sample question boxes. Considering the format of the History guide, we also created podcasts (called IB Historicus) for each topic that are meant to be used alongside the study guide. The relevant podcast episodes are marked on the side of the page with a logo



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AUTHORITARIAN STATES

STALIN

Timeline Joseph Stalin (1879–1953)

- 1879--Born December 21 in Gori, Georgia
- 1894--Enters Tiflis Theological Seminary
- 1898--Russian Social Democratic Labour Party established
- 1899--Stalin expelled from Tiflis; joined RSDLP in 1901
- 1902--Stalin involved in illegal political activity; exiled
- 1903--RSDLP split to Bolsheviks and Mensheviks
- 1905--Revolution broke out; Stalin met Lenin in Finland
- 1914--World War I
- 1917--February Revolution, abdication of Tsar Nicholas II; Stalin became editor at *Pravda*. Bolshevik revolution in October; Stalin appointed Commissar for Nationalities
- 1918--Treaty of Brest-Litovsk signed. Civil War in Russia. Stalin commanded Red Army in Tsaritsyn.
- 1921--New Economic Policy introduced
- 1922--USSR founded; Stalin appointed General Secretary
- 1924--Death of Lenin; Stalin proposed 'Socialism in One Country'
- 1925-29--Five Year Plans proposed; collectivisation enacted
- 1930--'Dizzy with Success' speech
- 1932-33--Famine in Soviet Union
- 1934--Kirov murdered
- 1936--Show trial of Zinoviev and Kamenev. Tomsy suicide
- 1937--Stalin's military purge; start of 'Great Terror'
- 1938--Show trial of Bukharin and Rykov
- 1939--Great Terror draws to close; Nazi-Soviet Pact; Start of World War Two

STALIN

1940--Trotsky assassinated

1941--Operation *Barbarossa* began June 22

1943--Germans defeated at Stalingrad

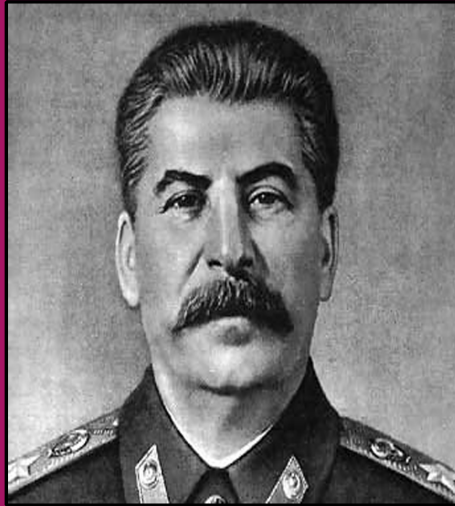
1945--Stalin joined Churchill and Roosevelt at Yalta. War ended in Europe; post-war meeting with Attlee and Truman. Red Army occupation of Central Europe. Pacific War ended after Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

1948--Berlin Blockade

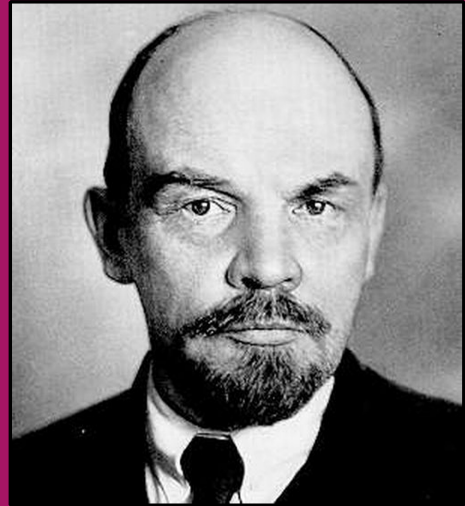
1949--People's Republic of China established

1950--Korean War

1953--Death of Stalin on March 5



Joseph Stalin



Vladimir Lenin



3.1 Brief background

3.1.1 Role of the October Revolution 1917: Right conditions for change

1. Social, economic and political change
 - (a) Growing middle class that desired greater political participation
 - (b) Inefficient farming methods and limited land for agricultural use
 - (c) Overcrowded cities and poor living conditions
2. Impact of the First World War
 - (a) Increased socio-economic issues
 - (b) Less food and many factories closed down
 - (c) Inflation during the war went up by almost 400%
3. Weakness of the Provisional Government
 - (a) Not elected by the Russian people → Lacked legitimacy
 - (b) Divisions within the government
 - (c) **Soviets** controlled industries → Government lacked strength

3.1.2 Communist victory in the Russian Civil War (1918–1920)

1. Opposition to **Bolsheviks** increased → Later known as the ‘Whites’ but sides not clearly defined
 - (a) Ex-Tsarists, many army commanders, right-wing groups, noble class etc.
 - (b) Foreign involvement from US, UK, France, Italy and Japan → Afraid of **Communism**; wanted loan payments



Episode 1

October Revolution: A major political event in Russia in 1917 when the Bolshevik party obtained power. Whether it was a classic coup or a movement that culminated from popular support is up for debate.

Soviets: Local councils that organised following the February Revolution to act as a democratic way of rule. Comprised primarily of trade union organisations, the soviets obtained more power when dissatisfaction with the Provisional Government reached a boiling point.

Bolsheviks: The radical faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. They pushed for the October Revolution under Lenin’s leadership and after they obtained power, the Bolsheviks rebranded themselves as the Communist Party from 1918.

Communism: A political ideology that details the next stage of socialism, in which many features of capitalism, including money and class, have been eliminated. According to Karl Marx, it would be the final stage of humanity when a stateless society is formed.

War Communism: The policy during the Civil War of 1918–20 that directed most of the country's economy to support the Red Army.

Bourgeois: According to Marx and Engels, bourgeois society is a social formation in which the relation of buying and selling has spread into every aspect of life. The ruling class, known as the bourgeoisie, owns the means of production.

2. More united and disciplined Reds successfully defeated the Whites
 - (a) However, implementation of **War Communism** weakened the country
 - (b) To maintain power to the communists, a type of dictatorship needed to continue for an indefinite time
3. Establishment of single party state → Enhanced Bolsheviks patriotic force through propaganda
 - (a) Constituent assemblies seen as **bourgeois** expression, therefore unnecessary
 - (b) Vladimir Lenin banned other parties, including Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries
 - (c) Communist Party was the principal organisation of the new Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)
4. Death of Lenin in 1924 left leadership position open

3.2 Quick look at Joseph Stalin



Episode 2



Soviet leaders during the second anniversary celebration of the October Revolution, 1919

1. Background and Bolshevik Revolution

- (a) Influenced by Messame Dassy, revolutionary group that sought independence from Russia
- (b) Joined Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) in 1901
- (c) Unlike Lenin, Stalin stayed within Russia and organised factory strikes; arrested in 1902 but escaped Siberia in 1904
- (d) In 1905, met Lenin in Finland and joined the Bolsheviks
- (e) Arrested again by tsarist police in 1913; remained in Siberia until 1917
- (f) After Romanov dynasty was overthrown, Stalin and others were released

2. Stalin's role in 1917 Revolution

- (a) Returned to Petrograd (St.Petersburg) and re-joined the editorial board of *Pravda* ('The Truth')
- (b) Lenin increased position of the Bolsheviks; opposed collaboration between Petrograd soviet and the Provisional Government
- (c) Stalin's editorials were criticised by Lenin; changed his stance and worked towards revolution

3. After the Bolshevik Revolution

- (a) Stalin now a well-established member of the Communist Party
- (b) While Lenin believed former Russian states would join the revolution, Stalin was more pragmatic and wanted centralised power
- (c) In 1922, Stalin became a senior member of the **Politburo**, **Orgburo** and Secretariat; the Soviet setup of 'collective leadership'. His title was General Secretary of the Communist Party →
 - He could appoint and dismiss ministers
 - He had access to personal information about other ministers
 - Used his position to fill the central committee with sympathisers

Politburo: Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party was the most influential policy-making entity in the Soviet Union. Between 1952 and 1966 it was known as the Presidium.

Orgburo: From 1919 to 1952, the Organisation Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party managed the work of local party committees.

3.3 Influence of Lenin



Episode 2



For four days, his body was kept in a glass casket in the Grand Kremlin Palace in Moscow for people to see.

1. Leninist Communism/Leninism

- (a) Workers needed to be led by a political party (the ‘Vanguard’) in the revolution
- (b) Vanguard party would not only lead and educate but also run government affairs
- (c) Central planning as opposed to self-governance of workers implied by ‘communism’

2. Introduction of New Economic Policy (NEP) → Attempt to stabilise the country

- (a) State dictated economy
- (b) Allowed limited private businesses and capitalist aspects to foster economy after civil war
- (c) Criticised by many who thought it wasn’t socialist enough







3. Stalin and Lenin

- (a) By 1923, Stalin had fallen out of favour due to his behaviour
- (b) Lenin’s testaments had initially advised to take Stalin out of leadership role
- (c) As Lenin’s health deteriorated, Stalin exerted more influence
- (d) Stalin gave eulogy at Lenin’s funeral and likely gave wrong date to Trotsky as he didn’t make it
- (e) Stalin wrote Foundations of Leninism, published in 1924

3.4 Importance of control over party organisation

1. Other ministers underestimated Stalin
 - (a) Didn't expect him to want or seize power
 - (b) Expected military figures to emerge as leader candidates
 - (c) Disregarded the role of Party General Secretary

2. Stalin's position as Party General Secretary
 - (a) Others saw the role as tedious and unattractive
 - (b) However, it gave access to vital information on other ministers
 - (c) Between 1917-1924, Stalin served as Commissar of Nationalities
 - Position to deal with non ethnic Russians
 - i. It allowed Stalin to develop policies on a more centralised state based in Moscow and on Russian culture
 - ii. All in the name of the class struggle stated in socialist thought

Grigory Zinoviev	Lev Kamenev	Leon Trotsky	Nikolai Bukharin	Alexei Rykov	Mikhail Tomsky
					
Bolshevik since 1903 and close comrade of Lenin. Leader of Leningrad and 1 st Chairman of Comintern in 1919.	Bolshevik since 1903. Member of Politburo and Chairman of Moscow Party.	Bolshevik since 1917. Key leader during October Revolution. Led the Red Army to victory in civil war. Commissar for Foreign and Military Affairs.	Bolshevik since 1906. Co-editor of <i>Pravda</i> and member of Politburo and Comintern.	Bolshevik since 1903. Chairman of Gosplan (State Planning Commission) Moderate and favoured NEP.	Trade union leader that joined Bolsheviks in 1906. Moderate who favoured NEP and was elected into Politburo in 1927.
Fate: Tried and executed in 1936.	Fate: Tried and executed in 1936.	Fate: Assassinated in Mexico, 1940.	Fate: Tried and executed in 1938.	Fate: Tried and executed in 1938.	Fate: Committed suicide in 1936.



Episode 3

3.5 Stalin's methods of consolidating power

3.5.1 Cheeky character

1. Likely misinformed Trotsky regarding Lenin's funeral → Trotsky missed it
2. Took over Lenin's Enrolment Campaign (system of incorporating workers into the party) → Many saw Stalin as the successor to Lenin

3.5.2 Political maneuver

1. Aligned with different factions when it suited him best. For example:
 - (a) Sided with the Right Opposition in 1925 to oppose the Left Opposition (United Opposition in 1926)
 - (b) From 1927, looked to undermine the NEP which the Right Opposition supported
2. Followed Politburo majority on policies he didn't prioritise to avoid making political opponents
3. Stalin was somewhat inarticulate; many underestimated him or didn't find him charismatic
4. Due to the mentioned points above, Stalin had the element of surprise when openly expressing himself
5. He surrounded himself with supporters such as Voroshilov, Mikoyan and Molotov

Zinoviev+Kamenev

(The Left Opposition or the Left Deviationist)

- Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin formed Troika → Three leading Party members following Lenin's death
- Eventually the three fall out: Zinoviev+Kamenev joined by Trotsky to form United Opposition
- Stalin branded them 'factionists' and had them expelled

Bukharin, Rykov+Tomskey

(The Right Opposition or the Right Deviationist)

- 1927: Stalin critical of NEP and called for harsher policies against the peasants
- He wanted more central control, which Bukharin etc. didn't follow
- 1928: Stalin began requisitioning → Bukharin & co. are voted off in 1929 by Central Committee (pro Stalin)
- Collectivisation pursued to undermine NEP

3.6 Fortunate circumstances

1. Lenin's Testament
 - (a) Members of the Politburo didn't want to publish as it was critical of Trotsky and Kamenev
 - (b) Blessing for Stalin as it was especially critical of him; a fact very few knew
2. Deaths of Lenin and Felix Dzerzhinsky
 - (a) Dzerzhinsky was the leader of **Cheka** and close comrade of Lenin. Despite denouncing the United Opposition, he also disliked Stalin



Episode 3

Cheka: Created under Lenin in 1917, it was the Bolshevik's political police to maintain order. It continued to conduct oppression campaigns until 1922.

3.6.1 Weakness of opposition

1. Trotsky
 - (a) Led the Red Army, played an important role in the October Revolution and a great orator. He was also seen as Lenin's right hand man
 - (b) Wasn't in best condition. Former Menshevik and Jewish → Not always popular
 - (c) Failed to attend Lenin's funeral
2. Other political opponents
 - (a) Other ministers happy to leave secretary position for Stalin as they sought more prestigious roles
 - (b) They underestimated Stalin but anyone who forcefully looked to gain more power or to overthrow Stalin would've been seen as the big threat

3.6.2 Legal or illegal?

1. 'Essentially legal'
 - (a) Elected member of and exercised his powers
 - (b) Against his enemies, used resolutions proposed by Lenin in 1921
 - (c) When expelled rivals from Politburo, it was a majority vote
2. Perhaps responded to popular opinion? → Stalin had the ability to gauge public opinion; 'cult of personality'

3.7 Historiography

1. Intentional: Stalin rose to power due to his abilities to exploit weaknesses of rivals
2. Mainly luck: Mistakes of rivals contributed to Stalin's rise to power and was most important factor
3. Party structure: Organisation of the party and Stalin's position allowed him to rise to power

3.8 Maintenance of power



Episode 4



Boris Efimov: Ezhov's Iron Glove (1937) Nikolai Ezhov was a leading secret police official.

1. Popular decisions/policies
 - (a) Rejection of NEP
 - (b) Power of language and cult of personality
 - i. From early 1930s, cult focus on Stalin to promote his image and boost confidence in his leadership
 - ii. Stalin presented as: omnipotent leader, heir to Lenin, sole mastermind of communism and achievements were emphasised

- iii. Paintings, radio, film, opera, novels, newspapers etc. used to further cult movement
 - iv. Youth groups idolised Stalin and anyone that created work out of line were denounced or warned
2. Constitution of 1936
 - (a) On paper appeared very democratic but was merely for show
 - (b) Rights maintained in the ‘interests of workers’
 3. Great Terror of 1937–39
 - (a) Use of fear to make the populace more obedient
 - (b) Eradicate of imprison opposition
 - (c) Secret police used to purge opponents or frighten citizens
 4. Foreign policy: Protection of the USSR → End diplomatic isolation; strong leader for strong state
 - (a) 1932–33: Non-aggression treaties with France, Italy and Poland
 - (b) 1934: USSR joined League of Nations
 - (c) 1935: Symbolic treaties with France and Czechoslovakia
 - (d) Weak show for the ‘global revolution’? → Collective security more important; propaganda helped Stalin
 - Stalin focused on USSR
 - Stalin purged many prominent Comintern members
 - Limited aid to Spanish Left during the civil war in 1936; equally limited aid to Chinese Communists
 - (e) Pre-WW2: Stalin left out of Munich talks; failure of potential alliance with UK+France led to pact with Germany in 1939

3.9 The Five Year Plans (1928–1937)

- Aimed for rapid industrialisation and increased agricultural production
- Communist Party authority would be extended to countryside
- Surplus labour would lead them to work in factories or cities
- State would control food → However, great famines between 1932–33
- Execution:
 - Labour discipline: Harsh laws to keep workers in line
 - Slave labour (**Gulags** built)
 - Enthusiasm: Roles important for the state
 - Rewards: Top performers glorified and promotions made available
 - Propaganda: Mass media emphasised supposed successes and ideologically indoctrinated people



Episode 5

Gulags: Harsh labour camps established under Stalin where political enemies, dissidents of the state and opponents of his policies were sent to work.

October 1923–December 1932

- Emphasis on heavy industry (e.g. coal)
- 80% of investment; roughly 1500 enterprises opened

Successes

- Electricity production trebled
- Steel production increased by about 1/3
- Increased output of machine tools and equipment
- New industrial complexes built
- Huge tractor works built for mechanised agriculture

Weaknesses

- Little growth or decline in textile, housing and food processing industries
- Small businesses dismantled due to move against NEP figures
- Lack of skilled workers due to constant job changes
- Many targets not met → Global market crash drove grain prices down; USSR couldn't earn enough to invest

January 1933–December 1937

- Emphasis on transportation, communication and industrial projects
- Over 4000 new enterprises and projects% (e.g. Dnieprostroi Dam)

Successes

- Improved metallurgy
- Growth of chemical industries
- Growth of transport and communication
- Expansion of electricity production

Weaknesses

- Consumer sector still lacked goods
- Oil production did not meet targets
- Did Stalin push/expect too much?

Results

1. Ambitious plans couldn't meet unrealistic targets; not fulfilling was a sign of lacking commitment
2. Nevertheless, USSR transformed into major industrial power
3. Industry behind Urals spurred growth in the eastern region
4. By 1937, USSR was achieving many targets
 - At the expense of working conditions
 - Restricted free labour movement
 - Rewards for top performers, however, wages were very low in general
 - Growth of proletariat, therefore, more support for the party
 - Expansion of state power over the economy → Party figures oversaw projects
5. Economic changes:
 - Emphasis on heavy industry
 - 6x increase in coal production
 - 4x increase in steel production
 - Increased corruption due to messy implementation
 - Decline of textile industry and consumer goods
6. Political
 - Party control strengthened through organisation of industrial workers
 - Government control expanded through planned economy policies
 - Capitalist classes largely removed
 - Position of Stalin increased as plan opponents removed

3.10 Collectivisation



Episode 5



A Soviet collective farm in the Ukraine

1. State of Soviet agriculture in late 1920s
 - (a) Limited machinery
 - (b) Private peasant ownership (**Kulaks**)
 - (c) Inefficient system
 - (d) Lack of surplus
2. Purpose of collectivisation?
 - (a) Stalin wanted to abandon NEP policies
 - (b) To industrialise, enough food had to be made available
 - (c) Mechanised agriculture would help handle peasant movement to cities for work
 - (d) Extend socialism to the countryside
 - (e) Get rid of kulaks
 - (f) Stalin wanted to extend power with pro-collectivise camp at the expense of Tomsky, Rykov and Bukharin

Kulaks: Farmers who were independent and generally successful. First deemed to be any peasant who hired labour, the term was then used against anyone who opposed collectivisation.

3. Implementation

- (a) Grain procurement; de-kulakisation; collectivisation
- (b) Use of force, terror and propaganda
- (c) Kulaks viewed as class enemy → 1929 Stalin announced their liquidation
- (d) Many peasants were reluctant to identify kulaks → Stalin used activists to weed kulaks out, whether or not those identified were kulaks
- (e) From 1930s, many kulaks were killed or deported
- (f) Many peasants resisted, especially in the Ukraine → 1930 Stalin claimed many officials were too gung ho
- (g) 1932–34: Many died in famine caused by lack of efficient harvesting

4. Summary of impact

- (a) Economic disaster as grain production dropped dramatically
- (b) Loss of livestock
- (c) Grain still sold abroad despite domestic starvation
- (d) Lowered prices abroad due to Great Depression
- (e) Millions of deaths due to famine, forced implementations or gulags
- (f) Agriculture under control of the state

3.11 Social changes under Stalin

1. Role of women

- (a) Before Stalin:
 - Post-revolution: More opportunities in sectors such as medicine and engineering
 - No high political ranks
 - More rights such as abortion and divorce
- (b) Stalin's conservative turn from 1930; 'Great Retreat' to 'restore family values'
 - Divorce made illegal in 1936
 - Important role in collectivisation; discouraged from taking higher jobs
 - Combat duties during WW2 → Affected birth rate

2. Religion → Orthodox Church traditional national religion of Russia; since Lenin religion was frowned upon

- (a) Stalin further demonised religion and destroyed many churches
- (b) Underground practice continued as role of religion was important for many
- (c) Stalin later used religion to fuel nationalism → Inconsistent or flexible?

3. Art and culture

- (a) Robert Service: Music underwent a renaissance in 1930s



Episode 6

(b) All arts had to be optimistic towards Soviet ideals and Soviet realism

4. Education and social mobility

(a) Education aimed to be accessible for everyone, yet non-party teachers were dismissed → High demand for teachers

(b) Urbanisation contributed to some social mobility → Humble class background beneficial, especially on the eve of the purges

3.12 Stalin and authoritarianism

1. Was Stalin an authoritarian ruler?

(a) Getty & Naumov: Stalin needed tacit support or cooperation from society to carry out purges and/or terrors

(b) Stalin was distrustful → Possibly had inferiority complex?

2. Form of government and ideology → Formed by 1922; constitution in 1936

3.13 Stalin after 1939 and the Second World War



Episode 7

1. Cooperation with anti-fascist governments

(a) Popular Front with Spain & France

(b) Second United Front with China

(c) Unrealistic alliance with France or UK after Munich snub

2. Nazi-Soviet Pact (1939)

(a) No aggression between Germany and USSR

(b) Poland to be partitioned

(c) Soviet expansion into the Baltics

3. Victory in the Great Patriotic War

(a) Smooth transition to total war conditions

(b) Five Year Plans helped to a degree

(c) Nazi racial treatment in Eastern Europe → German troops faced resistance

(d) 'General Winter' helped Soviet cause

(e) US Lend-Lease Act

(f) Crucial victories at Stalingrad and Kursk

4. USSR after 1945
 - (a) Stalin emerged as undisputed leader (vozhd)
 - (b) USSR made territorial gains
 - (c) Economic recovery; re-armament key for Cold War
 - (d) Continued 'Russification' and purges
 - (e) Cominform 1947 → Revival of Comintern
 - (f) Comecon 1949 → Trade organisation

3.14 Stalin and the Cold War

1. Main points of influence?
 - (a) Expansion into central and Eastern Europe
 - (b) No longer met with Western leaders after Potsdam
 - (c) 1946 speech: anti-Western rhetoric
 - (d) 1949: Atomic bomb achieved
 - (e) Influenced communist takeover in Czechoslovakia
 - (f) Berlin blockade 1948–49
 - (g) 1950 Korean War: Stalin was asked for support from Kim Il Sung

3.15 End of Stalin

1. Death in 1953
2. Created Soviet system of government
3. Legacies:
 - (a) Limited political freedom
 - (b) Strict command of the economy
 - (c) Secret police
 - (d) Brought USSR onto the world stage

1. With reference to Stalin, to what extent do you agree with this statement: “To maintain power, a successful foreign policy was vital.”
2. Compare and contrast the social changes in Russia under Stalin with the changes of one authoritarian ruler from another country.
3. How successful was Stalin (1924–1953) in solving the problems he faced?
4. Assess the successes and failures of Stalin’s domestic policies.

3.16 Sources and Further Reading

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