

# Evaluating stalin's Rule

**Historical Context:** Joseph Stalin is one of the most controversial leaders in world history. Between 1928 and 1941 he transformed the Soviet Union into a modern superpower. His rule is characterized by collectivized agriculture, rapid industrialization, great purges and the extermination of opposition.

**TASK:** Evaluate the rule of Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union

- **Explain** the **CHANGES** that were made by Stalin
- **Describe** the **METHODS** used by Stalin to make those changes
- **Explain** how these changes were **POSITIVE** or **NEGATIVE** **AND** **EFFECTIVE** or **INEFFECTIVE**

## DOCUMENT 1

*In this excerpt from a 1929 speech delivered by Stalin, he explains the collectivization policy and the need to eliminate the kulaks (wealthy farmers).*

The solution lies in enlarging the agricultural units... and in changing the agricultural base of our national economy... the Socialist way, which is to set up collective farms and state farms which leads to the joining together of the small peasant farms into large collective farms, technically and scientifically equipped, and to the squeezing out of the capitalist elements of agriculture... Now we are able to carry on a determined offensive against the kulaks, to break their resistance, to eliminate them as a class and substitute for their output the output of the collective farms and state

## DOCUMENT 2

*When the first Five Year Plan was announced in 1929, targets for industries were set that began rapid*

<u>INDUSTRY</u>	<u>1927-1928</u>	<u>TARGET for 1933</u>
Electricity	5.05 kWh (kilowatts per hour)	17.0 kWh (kilowatts per hour)
Coal	35.4 million tonnes	68.0 million tonnes
Oil	11.7 million tonnes	19.0 million tonnes
Pig-iron	3.3 million tonnes	8.0 million tonnes
Steel	4.0 million tonnes	8.3 million tonnes

## DOCUMENT 3

*This excerpt, from "Forced Famine in the Ukraine: A Holocaust the West Forgot" by Adrian Karatnycky, was printed in The Wall Street Journal, on July 7, 1983.*

Today, reliable academic estimates place the number of Ukrainian victims of starvation at 4.5 to 7 million... The famine was in part the by-product (result) of Stalin's relentless drive to collectivize agriculture. The famine was a clear result of the fact that between 1931 and 1933, while harvests were precipitously (greatly) declining, Stalin's commissars continued to... confiscate grain. Peasants were shot and deported as rich, landowning "kulaks" ... While the drive to collectivize agriculture was a wide-ranging phenomenon common to the entire USSR, only in the Ukraine did it assume a genocidal character. Indeed there can be no question that Stalin used the forced famine as part of a political strategy whose aim was to crush all vestiges (traces) of Ukrainian nationalism.

#### DOCUMENT 4

*In this excerpt, the French ambassador to the Soviet Union describes the public trials that were part of the “great purges” of Stalin.*

I personally attended the second and third Moscow trials, those of 1937 and 1938... Payatakov, another defendant, arose to confess to a number of crimes. Did these “confessions” carry any share of truth? It is possible that the accused were hostile to Stalin’s regime... But the lessons they recited must have been forced from them... it is more likely that the secret police touched each at it weak point. It is also probable that the accused gave in to some form of pressure... Some would give in to save their families, others in the hope of saving their own lives.

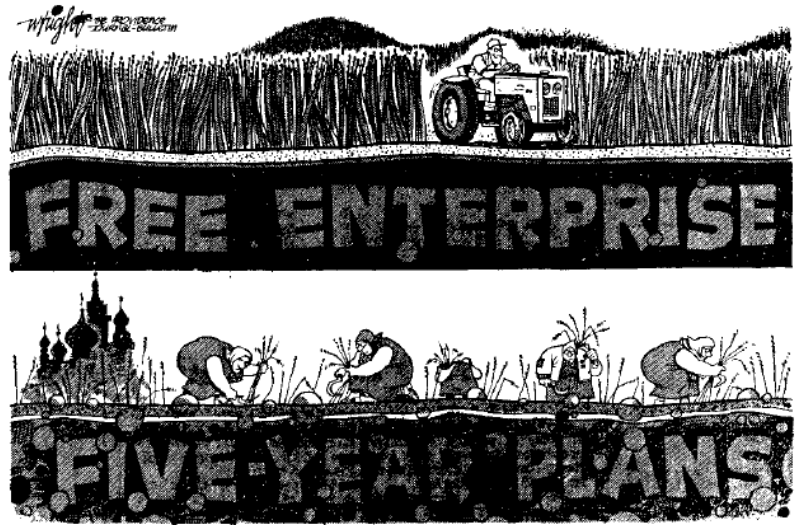
#### DOCUMENT 5

*This excerpt, from “The land of the Soviets,” published in the USSR describes the results of the Five-Year Plans.*

The fulfillment of the first and second Five-Year Plans strengthened the Soviet Union’s economic position and turned it into a powerful industrial state... In 1937 the industrial output of the USSR was 5.8 times larger than in 1913. The rate of industrial growth in the USSR considerably exceeded that of the capitalist countries. By 1937 the Soviet Union was the first country in Europe and the second in the world in the volume of industrial production... Socialist industrialization was accompanied by the rapid growth of the working class, and made it possible to liquidate unemployment. In 1940 there were 9,971,000 industrial workers, which was nearly three times more than in 1928. The working class was also changing; its efficiency, technical and cultural levels were growing rapidly.

#### DOCUMENT 6

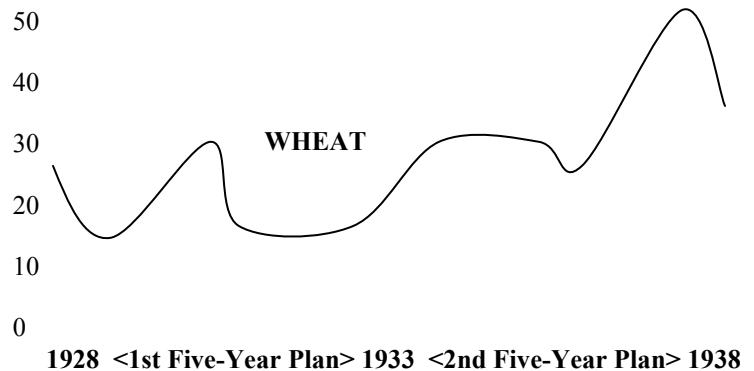
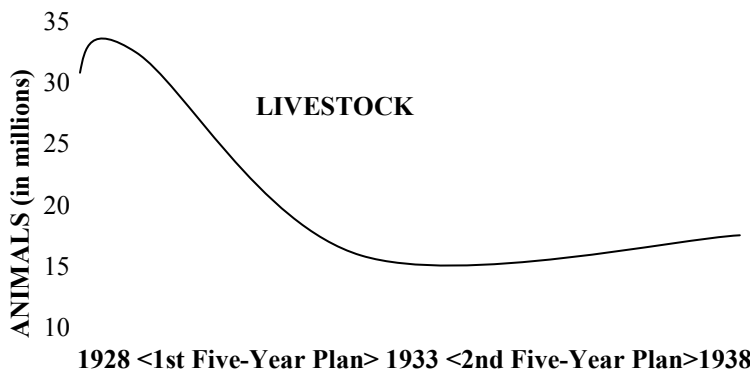
*The following political cartoon shows agricultural life in a free enterprise economic system and under Stalin’s Five-Year Plans and policy of collectivization.*



#### DOCUMENT 7

*The following illustrations show agricultural production during the first and second Five-Year Plans.*

##### The Build up of the Soviet Economy in Agriculture



### DOCUMENT 8

*In contrast to prior documents, this excerpt from “The Land of the Soviets,” published in the USSR gives another perspective of the collectivization.*

The radical step forward by the majority of the peasantry towards a collective way of life was taking place against the backdrop of a bitter struggle between Soviet power and the kulaks. The kulaks stooped to all possible means to wreck the collectivization campaign. They murdered collective farm activists and Party and government officials sent to the villages to help the peasants. They set fire to collective buildings. They poisoned the cattle and destroyed farm machinery... The Soviets had the right to banish them from their villages... The exploiter class—the rural bourgeoisie—was finally abolished...

### DOCUMENT 9

#### The percentage of the Soviet Union’s population that was literate by year:

<u>YEAR</u>		<u>Literacy Rate</u>
1897	—	26.3 %
1926	—	56.6 %
1939	—	89.1 %
1959	—	98.5 %
1979	—	99.9 %

### DOCUMENT 10

#### POPULATION CHANGES IN THE SOVIET UNION

	<u>Population</u> <u>(millions)</u>	<u>Urban</u> <u>(millions)</u>	<u>Rural</u> <u>(millions)</u>	<u>Urban</u> <u>(percent)</u>
1913	159.2*	28	131.1	18
1926	147	26.3	120.7	18
1939	170.6	56.1	114.4	33
1950	208.8	99.8	109.0	48

*\* Includes areas that became independent of the Russian Empire after 1917*

### DOCUMENT 11

*IFAMINE IN RUSSIA—Malcolm Muggeridge—The British journalist’s report to The Manchester Guardian newspaper in March 1933.*

A little market town in the Kuban district of the North Caucasus suggested a military occupation; worse, active war. There were soldiers everywhere—in the railway station, in the streets, everywhere... all differing notably from the civilian population in one respect. They were well fed, and the civilian population was obviously starving. I mean starving in its absolute sense; not undernourished... but having had for weeks next to nothing to eat.

Later I found out that there had been no bread at all in the place for three months, and such food as there was I saw for myself in the market... There was sausage at fifteen rubles per kilo; there was black cooked meat which worked out, I calculated, at a ruble for three bites; there was miserable fragments of cheese and some cooked potatoes, half rotten. A crowd wandered backwards and forwards eyeing these things wistfully, too poor to buy. The few who bought gobbled up their purchases right then and there.

“How are things with you?” I asked one man. He looked around anxiously to see that no soldiers were nearby. “We have nothing, absolutely nothing. They have taken everything away,” he said and hurried on. This is what I heard again and again and again... They had nothing. It was also true that everything had been taken away. This famine is an organized one. Some of the food that has been taken away from them—and the peasants know quite well—is being exported to foreign countries.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

# Evaluating Stalin's Rule

# **DBQ ANSWER SHEET**

## DOCUMENT 1

1. According to Stalin, why and how must agricultural production be increased?

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2. Why must the kulaks be eliminated?

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## DOCUMENT 2

1. What is the goal of this Five-Year Plan?

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2. For what specific areas were goals set?

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## DOCUMENT 3

1. According to the author, what were 2 explanations for the elimination of between 4.5 and 7 million Ukrainians from 1931-1933?

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## DOCUMENT 4

1. According to the French ambassador, what happened at the public trials regarding Stalin's "great purges?"

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## DOCUMENT 5

1. According to the author, what were the results of the Five-Year Plans?

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**DOCUMENT 6**

1. Which economic system is associated with Stalin's Five-Year Plans? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which economic system does the cartoon suggest is more successful at meeting the agricultural needs of the people? \_\_\_\_\_

**WHY?**

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**DOCUMENT 7**

1. What do the charts show about livestock numbers and grain production?

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**DOCUMENT 8**

1. How does the Soviet author explain the actions taken against the kulaks?

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**DOCUMENT 9**

1. According to the chart, what is the trend in literacy in the Soviet Union? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why would this trend have taken place? (Consider the leadership and goals of the Soviet Union!)

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**DOCUMENT 10**

1. What change in the population of the Soviet Union is illustrated in the chart?

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**DOCUMENT 11**

1. What were the results of famine in the Soviet Union?

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