

The Purge

- **Reason:** Murder of Kirov -> 1st of December Law
 - **Decree against Terrorist Acts (1st December Decree)** This gave the NKVD limitless powers in pursuing enemies of the state and the Party.
- **Procedure**
 - **Population Perspective:** 17 Million killed between **1934** to **1953**
 - Stalin killed people for their "potential crime"
 - 1 • In 1934, one million people were arrested and executed in the first major purge, mainly in Moscow and Leningrad.
 - 4 • By 1937, seven to eight million had been transported to labour camps; four million of these died.
 - 2 • By 1939, another five to seven million had been 'repressed', one million of these being shot, another one to two million dying in the camps.
 - 2 • In 1940, the occupation of the Baltic states (Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia), Bukovina and Bessarabia resulted in two million being deported, most of whom died.
 - 1.5 • In 1941, the deportation to Siberia of various national groups, including Germans, Kalmyks, Ukrainians, Chechens and Crimean Tatars, led to the deaths of one-third of the four million involved.
 - 1.5 • Between 1944 and 1946, the 'screening' of returned prisoners of war and those who had been under German occupation resulted in 10 million being transported to labour camps of the gulag; five to six million of these died in captivity.
 - 1 • Between 1947 and 1953, one million died in the various purges and repressions during the last six years of Stalin's life.
 - **Army Perspective:** 11 War Commissars were removed from office & Removal of most army officers
 - **Political Opponents:** All of the old Politburo members were killed
 1. Rykov was murdered
 2. Stalin blamed *Zinoviev* and *Kamenev*
 - **Stalin's means**
 - Blame them for nonsense reasons
 - such as "Plotting to overthrow the Soviet state"
 - Physical and mental torture
 - Members losing hope
 - they see how they are treated by the Party which they have committed to for decades (BETRAYAL)
 - Zinoviev & Kamenev -> prominent members (Politburo)

- the manifestation and murder of them create a psychological effects on ordinary Party members -> Cuz even them can be killed and manifested for nonsense
 - help to Stalin to remove the others cuz the latters are desperate
- **Motivation**
 - **Remove potential political threat**
 - all old Poliburo member being killed
 - **Create atmosphere of terror**
 - 17 million killed between 1934 to 1953
 - 11 war commissars were removed
- **Tools**
 - **The public trials**
 - trialing the Prominent members
 - **NKVD**
 - Stalin merged all the law enforcement agencies, such as the secret police, to form NKVD
 - 1st December Decree -> limitless power
 - a special court is set up outside of the legal system to deal with any "serious crime" -> an **ambiguous term** so any one can be charged

Cult of Personality

- Stalin's picture began to appear everywhere
- All of the USSR's achivements were attributed to Stalin
- Stalin himself became an icon to be worshiped
 - all planes flying past the Red Square on May Day trailed the huge portraits of Stalin, and troops, tanks, dancing children, and applauding workers were all presided over by a huge Stalin's portrait when they were marching through the Red Square
 - Stalin builds a kind of **Tsar worship**
- Krushchecv -> Marxism-Leninsm-Stalinism
 - Worship Stalinism

Propoganda

- **Education**
 - Children
 - Children learnt that Stalin was the provider of all good things
 - They were taught continusouly in all subjects that Stalin was their guide and protector
 - Textbooks were rewritten to exclude Stalin's former political opponents and their photos
 - Academia

- Stalin controlled the academia -> academicians would henceforth produce work wholly in keeping with Stalinist values
 - since their reputation and acceptance as scholars depended on their presenting history shaped and interpreted as Stalin wanted

Art and Culture

- According to Stalin, the art had to have the same driving purpose that his economic policies had -> art should be a social mean but not a self-expression of himself
- **Literature**
 - To begin with, official art and culture had a great effect on the Soviet people due to the impact of literature. In 1932, Stalin declared to a gathering of Soviet writers that their tasks were a "social" but not a "artistic" one, meaning that they should, in their writings, try to reshape the thinking and behaviour of the Soviet people. Therefore, as the Soviet Union of Writers was established in 1934, it aimed to convince all writers to write works, regardless of the genre, including themes that uplifted the Party and Socialism and language that could be easily understood by the workers - those who did not conform were even under the danger of losing lives. Writings were always the tool in which people gained knowledge and information and found echo with their souls, and thus the Soviet people were greatly impacted as all the writings they obtained were about the themes and presentations that the Party wanted them to perceive, and their thoughts were fully occupied with the socialist optimism.
- **Film and Theater**
 - In addition, official art and culture had a great effect on the Soviet people also thanks to the impact of theater and film. According to Stalin, the art had to have the same driving purpose that his economic policies had, and hence it had to conform to the standards set by him. Films and performances that weren't aligned to the Party's ideology were repressed: in 1936-1937, 10 out of 19 plays and ballets were ordered to be withdrawn, and in 1937-1938, 60 plays were banned from performance and 20 theaters were closed in Moscow and Leningrad. Therefore, the art form of theater and film no longer was free and self-expressive; those that weren't repressed were all expressing Stalin's ideology. Hence, people would be bombarded by Stalinism whenever they wanted to watch a performance or a film for enjoy - they lost enjoyment from those real artistic works that could indeed make emotional contacts - which definitely had a great effect on them.

The New Constitution

- **Content**
 - the establishment of Socialism in the Soviet Union, a social system with no classes
 - the basic civil rights, including freedom of expression, assembly, and worship
- **Reasons**
 - **Domestic:** Soviet citizens were particularly drawn to the promise of basic civil rights, which had been severely restricted under Stalin's regime. The Constitution also guaranteed equality before the law and the right to a fair trial, which was a significant development in a country where arbitrary arrests and executions were common. the Constitution's emphasis on the establishment of socialism and a classless society resonated with many Soviet citizens, who had

been promised a utopian future under communism. This vision of a society without classes, where everyone had equal opportunities and rights, was particularly appealing to the working class and peasants who had previously been oppressed and exploited.

- **Internationally:** By presenting itself as democratic, the Soviet Union allowed sympathetic Westerners to contrast it with Hitler's Germany. Stalin even regarded the constitution as "the most democratic constitution in the world" when people criticized the antidemocratic nature of the Soviet state. These helped Stalin to justify his ruling to the world and appeal to the West, particularly after the Great Purge when there was a internationally negative perception towards the Soviet Union. Indeed, Stalin didn't necessarily need to pay any costs to build such a democratic and progressive image. Hardly anywhere was the role of the Party mentioned in the Constitution; and therefore its powers were not defined and, therefore, were not restricted. Stalin could still be a totalitarian ruler of the Soviet Union.

Women Better Status

- **increasing demand on female workers**

- The tremendous demand for workers under Stalin's industrialization policy required that women became vital members of the workforce; the demand even surged during wartime - Women became essential because of the horrific number of men killed at the front and the pressing necessity to keep the arms manufacturers operating. The number of women in the industrial workforce grew from approximately 3 millions to 15 millions from 1928 to 1945.

- **better healthcare**

- Factories and plants were required to offer creches so that mothers with young children could be employed; clinics were also set up, and there was a general improvement in the standards of midwifery and gynaecology. The provision of these services meant that women had better access to healthcare services. This was especially important for mothers with young children who could now work outside of the home without worrying about the care of their children.