

Joseph Stalin

Childhood and youth

Both his parents were born serfs.

His mother was a domestic servant.

Her employer gave her an allowance, which paid for Stalin's education
Stalin's mother tongue was Georgian and he never learned Russian properly.
He was short, especially as a boy, which bothered him.

Education

Stalin attended the Gori Church School and did well.

Six years basic education.

Stalin then attended the Tiflis Theological Seminary for five years.

Georgia's leading academic institution since the province had no university.

Western literature and Russian classics were banned.

The student's lockers were searched regularly for forbidden book.

The harsh treatment in the Seminary made him a revolutionary.

Stalin was expelled 1899 for failing on an examination.

The Revolutionary

Stalin worked as an account at the Observatory in Tiflis.

He lost his job due to revolutionary work and became a professional revolutionary.

He was sentenced to exile in the Irkutsk province.

It was easy to escape.

The secret police gave priority to Anarchists and Social Revolutionaries.

The gap between the workers and the bourgeoisie did not expand.

The aim to a society without conflicts was maintained.

The crisis of capitalism was maintained in theory.

The class' analysis of society was still in use.

The sacredness of Marxist prediction was still valid.

The Second Party Congress in Brussels and London

The split Bolsheviks-Mensheviks.

The Mensheviks wanted a revolution as well, but refused to act against the people.

The Fourth Party Congress in Stockholm.

Robbery to finance party activities was condemned.

Still in was done and Stalin took part in organising it.

He was revealed and sent to exile, were he associated with criminals.

1912 Stalin became a member of the Central Committee.

It was staffed with weak person so that Lenin could dominate.

1915 Stalin published his major work Marxism and the National and Colonial Question
Nation's right to self-determination was outspoken.
After the revolution nations were to merge together.
Lenin told Stalin what to write in general.

The Revolution

Stalin approached the Mensheviks and wanted a united Socialist Party.
Lenin rejected this after his return from Switzerland and presented his April Thesis.
Let the army fraternise with the Germans.
No peace is possible if capitalism is not overthrown.
No unity with the Mensheviks.
Stalin soon sided with Lenin.
Stalin played a minor role March to October
He had obvious problems of handling quick changes.
Stalin was made People's Commissar for Nationalities.
The least important Commissar.
Had no connections with former ministries.
Was set up for propaganda reasons.
The sovereignty and self-determination of all peoples were granted in theory.

The Civil War

Stalin was made Director General of Food Supplies in the South of Russia 1918.
He was sent to Tsaritsyn (later Stalingrad).
He acted energetic but self-willing and disobeyed orders openly.
He had a dispute with Trotsky, the People's Commissar for War.
Lenin valued Stalin's firm leadership and oversaw his disobedience.
The Whites drove the Reds back at Omsk.
Lenin supported by Trotsky sent Stalin to restore order.
Stalin blamed the local authorities and succeeded to a degree.
This episode shows Lenin's confidence in Stalin.
The Whites captured two minor forts outside Petrograd. May 1919
Stalin organised their recapture.
He reported a conspiracy among the officers at Kronstedt.
67 were shot.
Stalin's distrust of experts annoyed Lenin and Trotsky.
Stalin was sent to the Polish front
He ordered an attack in the south.
A major contribution to the Russian defeat.
This put an end to Stalin's military career.
Georgia became independent under Menshevik rule
Lenin recognized its sovereignty in a treaty in May 1920.
In January 1921 Stalin suggested an attack by the Red Army.
Georgia was forced to join the Soviet Union.

The Long Death of Lenin

Lenin wanted a federation, Stalin wanted to absorb the nationalities into Soviet Russia.
Stalin got to look after Lenin after his first stroke.
In his political will Lenin choose Trotsky as his successor.
Lenin wanted to get rid of Stalin. He finally saw through him

The Fight for Power

The troika Stalin-Kamenev-Zinoviev soon emerged.

The Politburo was enlarged

27 deputies became 40

Stalin brought in his people.

Divide and rule became easier.

After Lenin's death rude manners was regarded as a sign of contact with the masses.

Intra party discussions became less comradely and aimed at crushing enemies.

Stalin argued by referring to Marxist literature and Lenin.

The party embodied a higher collective wisdom.

The Bolsheviks seized power in a country not coinciding with Marxist theory.

The primary aim was to stay in power.

1924 Petrograd was renamed Leningrad and Tsarisyn was renamed Stalingrad 1925.

The marked the beginning of personality cult.

Towards Supremacy

Lenin divided the peasants into three groups.

The poor class conscious "village-proletariat" – those hardly existed.

The middle peasant was the bulk of the peasants. Were to be converted.

The kulaks. Were to be exterminated.

It was almost impossible to distinguish these groups in real life.

Stalin originally supported the NEP and criticized the Left for being too dogmatic.

1928 Stalin changed his mind and wanted to start a war against the kulaks.

1928 Stalin rigged a trial against engineers in Shakhty.

Many of the accused confessed after have being threatened.

Big publicity.

The engineers became scapegoats for the economic failure.

The class hate was increased.

Those who defended the accused were regarded disloyal to the NKVD i.e. the state.

The Shakhty-trial served as a model for later trials.

The collectivization.

Can be compared to the cultural revolution.

A crusade against the old social order.

Aimed at setting up agricultural factories (Kolkhozes).

Tractors, machines and science should create miracles.

The collectivization had no popular support.

15 millions were uprooted.

2 millions out of them were transferred to industrial projects.

Stalin claimed that the policy was correct, but a few individuals made errors.

9 millions left the kolkhozes legally, but were soon forced to return.
Reign of the lie.
Big industrial projects had to keep labour with internal passports and labour books.
To change employment was illegal.
Party officials who criticized this were brought to trial and sentenced.
1932 Stalin launched a blow against the peasants, especially in the Ukraine.
The size of the harvest was set by the authorities and then demanded from the peasants.
The generally produced less and had to give it up all.
Stealing food was punished with death-penalty or ten years imprisonment.
The famine of 1932-33 was officially denied.
In the 30s Stalin got a quasi-unanimous support from the party and the people.

Terror

Moral nihilism is essential to both Communism and Nazism.
Social origin and race/nationality respectively are decisive.
The seventeen Party Congress 1934.
Kirov was suggested to succeed Stalin as General Secretary.
Kirov rejected the proposal.
Stalin had him assassinated and used this as an excuse fore the purges.
Stalin's purges aimed at
Elimination of former or potential political leadership.
Frightening the party and people.
Blaming scapegoats for the mistakes.

Foreign Policy

The Soviet propaganda attacked Nazi-Germany.
Stalin kept in touch with the Germans through the embassy in Berlin.
Germany offered the USSR favourable credits.
Stalin mistrusted the British and the French.
Britain and France could not accept Soviet dominance in Eastern Europe.
After the fall of Poland the demarcation line was changed.
The USSR got Lithuania and the Polish territories not inhabited by ethnic Poles.
The was easier to justify.
When the treaty was closed Soviet propaganda depicted the west as warmongers
The USSR traded with Germany.
The Soviets exported a lot of items to Germany.
The Germans paid with outdated war-material.
Stalin personally took part in the trade negotiations with the Germans.
Stalin sent back German communists to Germany.
All anti-Fascist propaganda was withdrawn and the Germans were depicted as allies.
Hitler congratulated Stain on his birthday,
Stalin congratulated Hitler to the defeat of Denmark and Norway.
France's defeat was a disaster for the Soviet Union.
No military force could counterbalance Hitler.
Britain had not enough ground forces to fight the Germans.
NKVD and Gestapo attended a joint conference on how to handle Polish nationalism.

Stalin was prepared to sign a pact with Germany, Italy and Japan.
Hitler offered him parts of the British Empire.

World War II

Roosevelt believed in Stalin.

Churchill wanted to compensate the Russians for doing much of the fighting.
Without supplies from the West the Red Army would have been incapable of fighting.
Stalin tried to make peace with the Germans in October 1941.

He offered the Baltic states, Western Ukraine, Byelorussia, and other territory.
Stalin wanted the British to recognize the USSR's new borders in Eastern Europe.
The British refused.

Stalin tried to extract as much supplies and assistance as possible from the West.

He treated Western politicians and officials rude.

He never promised anything in return.

He made the most of the Western Powers wish to keep the Soviet Union in the war.

Stalin ordered many attacks doomed to fail.

The envelopment by Stalingrad was ordered by his generals.

After Stalingrad Stalin never interfered in the warfare.

1943-44 a lot of minor nationalities were deported to Siberia.

About two million people.

They were collectively accused of collaboration with the Germans.

The transportations required trucks and railway wagons needed to maintain the army.

The Cold War

The period after WW 2 can be labelled High Stalinism.

The oppression grew.

Returning soldiers were sent to labour camps.

The economic wealth of the West should remain unknown to the Russians.

The persecution of Jews increased 1948.

The warm welcome of Golda Meir as Israel's ambassador triggered this.

Relatives of high ranking party officials were imprisoned and shot.

Stalin acted firmly in Eastern Europe.

The Western powers should give in as easily as they did to Hitler's demands.

This was initially successful but created NATO and American military presence.

Stalin Today

The Stalin-style command economy existed until the 1980s.

Stalin can be described as an outsider with a big ego.

Uncertainty and strong will-power were two of his main traits.

Stalin's philosophy can be summed up as follows

Force the real world to fulfil Stalin's fantasies.

When it fails, try to impose the belief that the fantasy actually has been achieved.

