

JOSEPH STALIN

WAS JOSEPH STALIN A GREAT LEADER?



He led the victory against the Nazis in World War II

Source 1: Extract from 'The Red Army in the Second World War' by A.M. Nikolaieff, Russian Review 7 no. 1, 1947

THE great offensive of the Red Army in 1943–1945 had no parallel in military history. The offensive started in July 1943, after the Germans had made another attempt (which proved to be the last) to break through the Soviet front in the central sector (Orel-Kursk-Belgorod¹). The German offensive began on July 5

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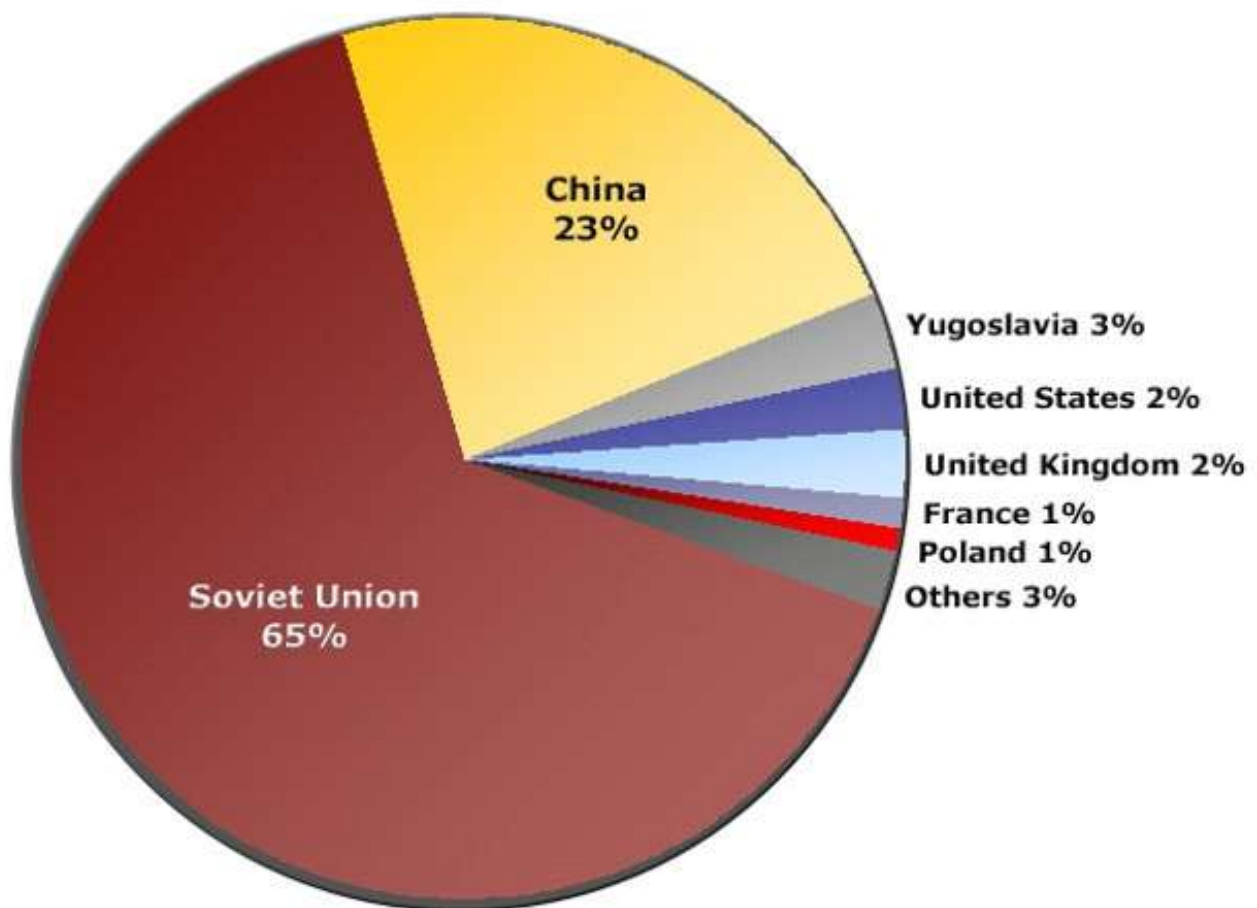
From that time on, the Soviets advanced continuously for some sixteen months, through October 1944, winning victory upon victory. As a result, the front of the Red Army, at the beginning of 1945, extended for over a thousand miles from the Baltic sea (near Memel) around Warsaw and Budapest to the Drava river in Yugoslavia. On January 12, following a brief interval of two months and a half, the Soviet offensive was resumed and, three months later, was completed victoriously in Germany. On April 21 the Soviet troops entered Berlin.



He led the victory against the Nazis in World War II

Source 2: Graph of number of deaths of the Allied countries in World War II

World War II Military Deaths (Allies)





He was a mass murderer

Source 3: A drawing and a description of a gulag by Evfrosiniia Kersnovskaia, a former prisoner



First we were made to strip naked and were shoved into some roofless enclosures made out of planks. Above our heads the stars twinkled; below our bare feet lay frozen excrement... the naked people were led across a courtyard "the camp version of a foyer" into a special building where our documents were 'formulated' and our things were "searched."

The goal of the search was to leave us with rags, and to take the good things sweaters, mittens, socks, scarves, vests, and good shoes for themselves. Ten thieves shamelessly fleeced these destitute, barely alive people.

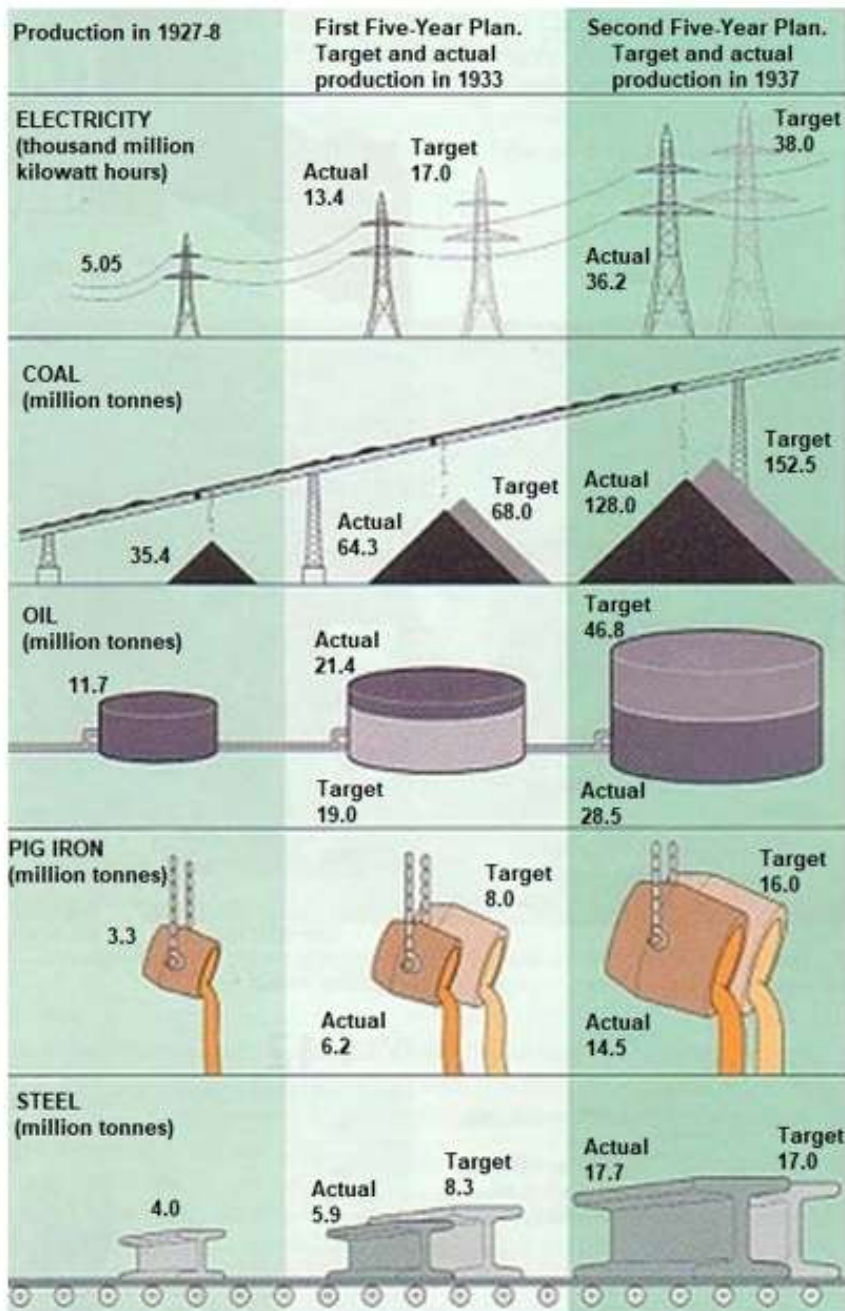
He was a mass murderer

Source 4: Extract from 'FAMINE RULES RUSSIA - The 5-year Plan Has Killed the Bread Supply', by Gareth Jones, The London Evening Standard, 31 March 1933

A father and a son, the father, a Russian skilled worker in a Moscow factory and the son a member of the Young Communist League, stood glaring at one another. The father trembling with excitement, lost control of himself and shouted at his Communist son. It is terrible now. We workers are starving. Look at Chelyabinsk where I once worked. Disease there is carrying away numbers of us workers and the little food there is uneatable. That is what you have done to our Mother Russia. The son cried back: "But look at the giants of industry which we have built. Look at the new tractor works. Look at the Dniepostroy. That construction has been worth suffering for." "Construction indeed!" Was the father's reply: "What's the use of construction when you have destroyed all that's best in Russia?" ...What did the peasants say? There was one cry which resounded everywhere I went and that was: "There is no bread." ...[T]oday the famine is everywhere, in the formerly rich Ukraine, in Russia, in Central Asia, in North Caucasia - everywhere.



He revolutionised the Soviet economy



Source 5:

Diagrams showing industrial development of the USSR under Stalin. Data from 'An economic history of the USSR' by Aled Nove, 1992

He revolutionised the Soviet economy

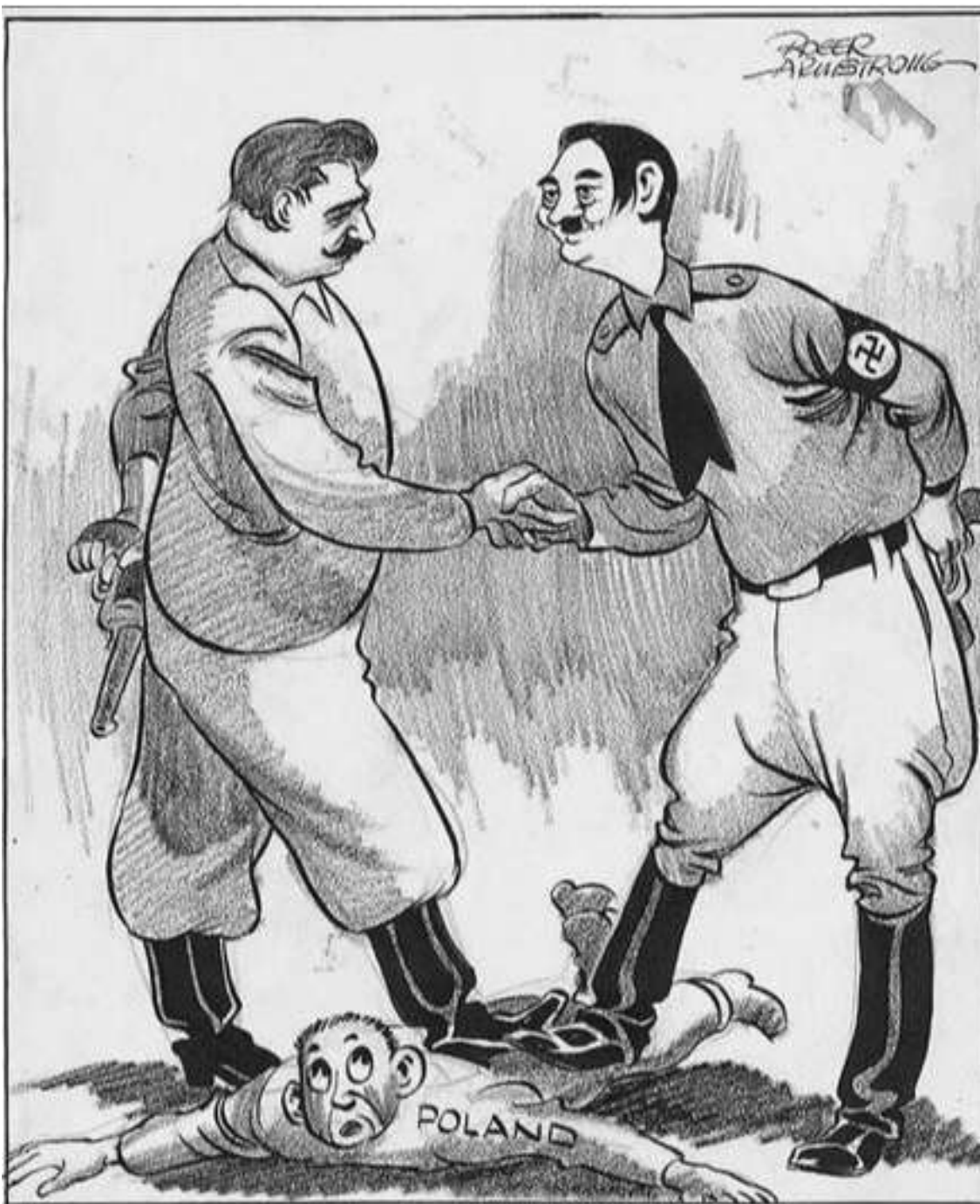
Source 6: Soviet poster showing the introduction of modern farming equipment, 1930. The text reads 'The Day of Harvest and Collectivization'





He reluctantly fought the Nazis and then occupied the countries he freed

Source 7: Cartoon about the Nazi-Soviet Pact, 1939



He reluctantly fought the Nazis and then occupied the countries he freed

Source 8: Photograph and extract from the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, including its secret protocol, signed in Moscow, 23 August 1939

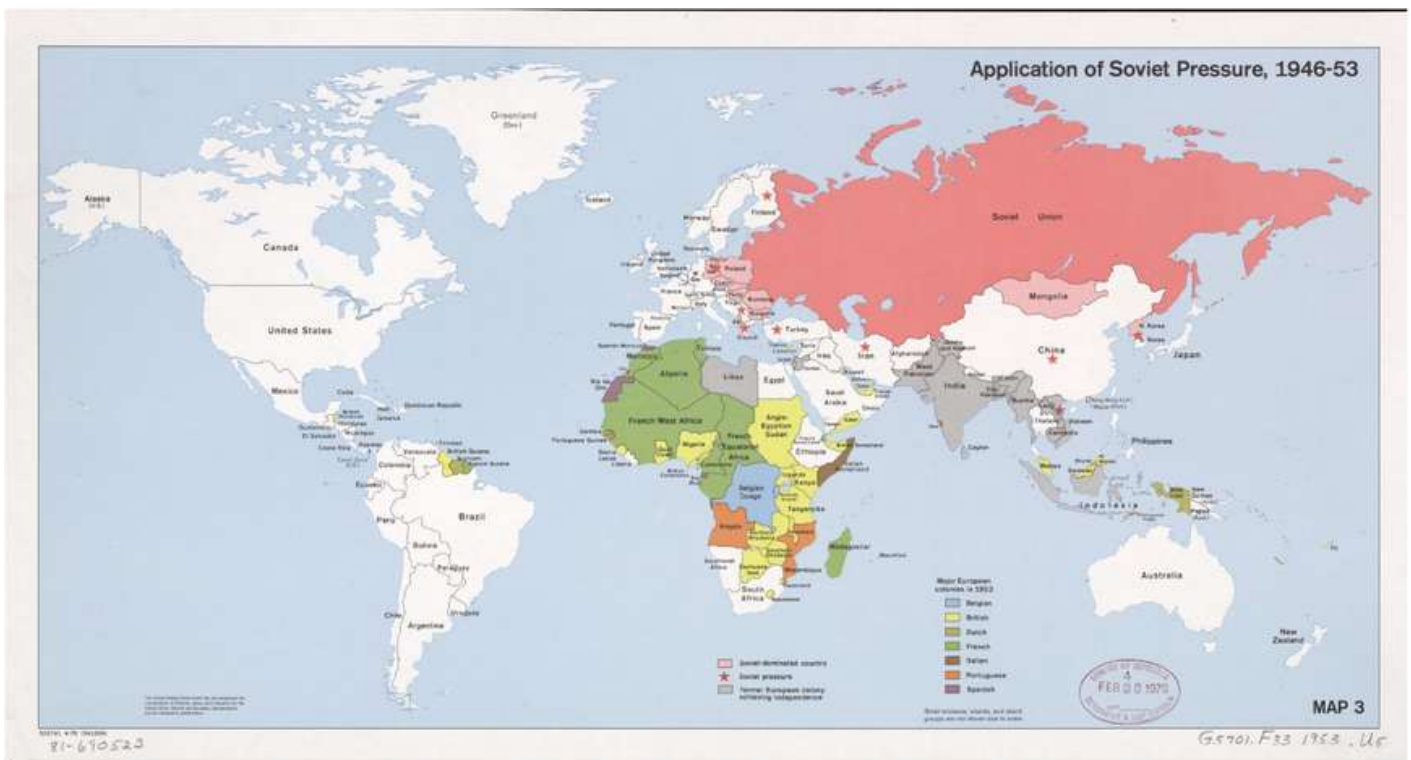


Both High Contracting Parties obligate themselves to desist from any act of violence, any aggressive action, and any attack on each other, either individually or jointly with other Powers...The question of whether the interests of both parties make desirable the maintenance of an independent Polish States and how such a state should be bounded...both Governments will resolve this question by means of a friendly agreement...This protocol shall be treated by both parties as strictly secret.



He turned the USSR into a global superpower

Source 9: Map produced by the US' Central Intelligence Agency (the CIA) showing the USSR's global influence, in 1946-53



He turned the USSR into a global superpower

Source 10: Extract from 'Soviet Union and Egypt' by Rami Ginat, 1991, PhD Thesis, London School of Economics

THE U.S.S.R.'S FIRST STEPS IN THE
EGYPTIAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN ARENA

After the Second World War, Soviet policy towards the Middle East was intended to end British hegemony in the area and to fill the vacuum as soon as conditions would allow... Despite their arguments that the struggle for liberation in the Arab world would succeed only under Communist leadership, the Soviets were in practice willing to support and cooperate with any Arab government who wished to liberate its country of foreign troops. They did not take into account the socio-political nature of these governments, even when such governments as was the case with Egypt had declared the Communist Party illegal.

He ruled through propaganda, censorship and fear

Source 11: Nikolai Yezhov, to the right of Stalin, fell from favour and was removed from this photograph at the Moscow Canal



He ruled through propaganda, censorship and fear

Source 12: Extract from 'The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956' by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Solzhenitsyn was a famous Soviet dissident who was imprisoned and then deported from the USSR due to his writings. He wrote about Soviet repression, especially the Gulag system.

A district Party conference was under way in Moscow Province. It was presided over by a new secretary of the District Party Committee, replacing one recently arrested. At the conclusion of the conference, a tribute to Comrade Stalin was called for...The small hall echoed with "stormy applause, rising to an ovation." For three minutes, four minutes, five minutes...palms were getting sore and raised arms were already aching. And the older people were panting from exhaustion. It was becoming insufferably silly even to those who really adored Stalin. However, who would dare be the first to stop? The secretary of the District Party Committee could have done it...But he was a newcomer. He had taken the place of a man who'd been arrested. He was afraid! After all, NKVD men were standing in the hall applauding and watching to see who quit first!... Then, after eleven minutes, the director of the paper factory assumed a business like expression and sat down in his seat...To a man, everyone else stopped dead and sat down...That, however, was how they discovered who the independent people were. And that was how they went about eliminating them. That same night the factory director was arrested. They easily pasted ten years on him on the pretext of something quite different.

He greatly strengthened the rights of ordinary workers

Source 13: Extract from 'Times are changing: working time in 14 industrialised countries', Institute of International Labour Studies, 1994

The working population of pre-revolutionary Russia worked 10 to 12 hours per day, six days a week...By the end of 1926, the national economy was restored to its pre-revolutionary level and it was decided that there should be a gradual transition from an 8- to a 7-hour working day. The first 5-year plan (1928-1932) was formulated on the basis of a 7-hour working day. The transition of the economy to a 7-hour day was effected between 1927-1933.

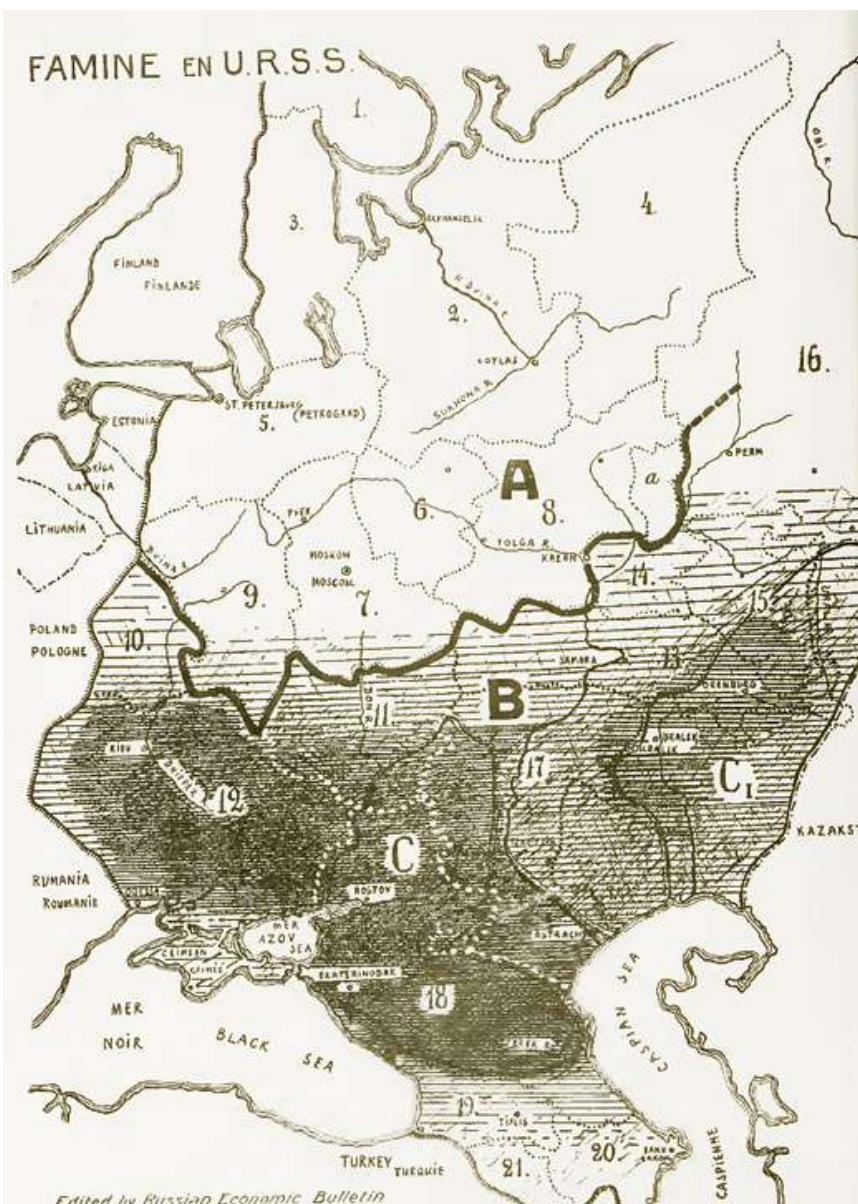
He greatly strengthened the rights of ordinary workers

Source 14: Extract from 'Reassessing the Standard of Living in the Soviet Union: An Analysis using Archival and Anthropometric Data' by E. Brainerd, The Journal of Economic History, 2010

Three different measures of population health show a consistent and large improvement between approximately 1945 and 1969: child height, adult height and infant mortality all improved significantly during this period...The significant improvements in population wellbeing before 1970 may in part be related to the expansion of the national health care system, public education, and improved caloric and protein supply during this period. While the Soviet experiment of the twentieth century clearly failed and in countless ways harmed the lives of Soviet citizens, the record of Soviet health achievement prior to 1970 remains impressive.



Living standards in the USSR were low



Source 15: Map of the famine in the USSR in 1933. Areas of most disastrous famine marked with black. Ukraine was particularly affected, note Kiev, Odessa, Crimea on the map

Living standards in the USSR were low

Source 16: Extract from 'The Hazards of Urban Life in Late Stalinist Russia: Health, Hygiene, and Living Standards, 1943-1953', by D. Filtzer, 2010

The large cities had limited sewerage systems, but they did not extend to the majority of the population. Most smaller industrial towns had virtually no sewerage at all...The main stumbling block was lack of investment in sanitary infrastructure. Millions of new workers and their families poured into towns and cities, but the state made almost no effort to erect the housing, sanitary facilities, or water supply that such population shifts demanded

Very few people lived in buildings with indoor plumbing. People had to fetch water from street pumps and then haul it in buckets back to their flats. Supplies were also unreliable.

Given the difficulties most urban residents had in accessing clean water and the general dirtiness of the environment, people relied heavily on the traditional Russian bathhouse to keep themselves clean. Here, too, however, facilities could meet only a small fraction of overall need. Most people could bathe just once or twice a month.

He rapidly increased levels of literacy and education, especially among women

Source 17: 1925 Soviet propaganda poster, the text reads: 'If you don't read books, you'll soon forget your grammar'





He rapidly increased levels of literacy and education, especially among women

Source 18: Percentage of men and women with higher education in the USSR from 1925 to 1969

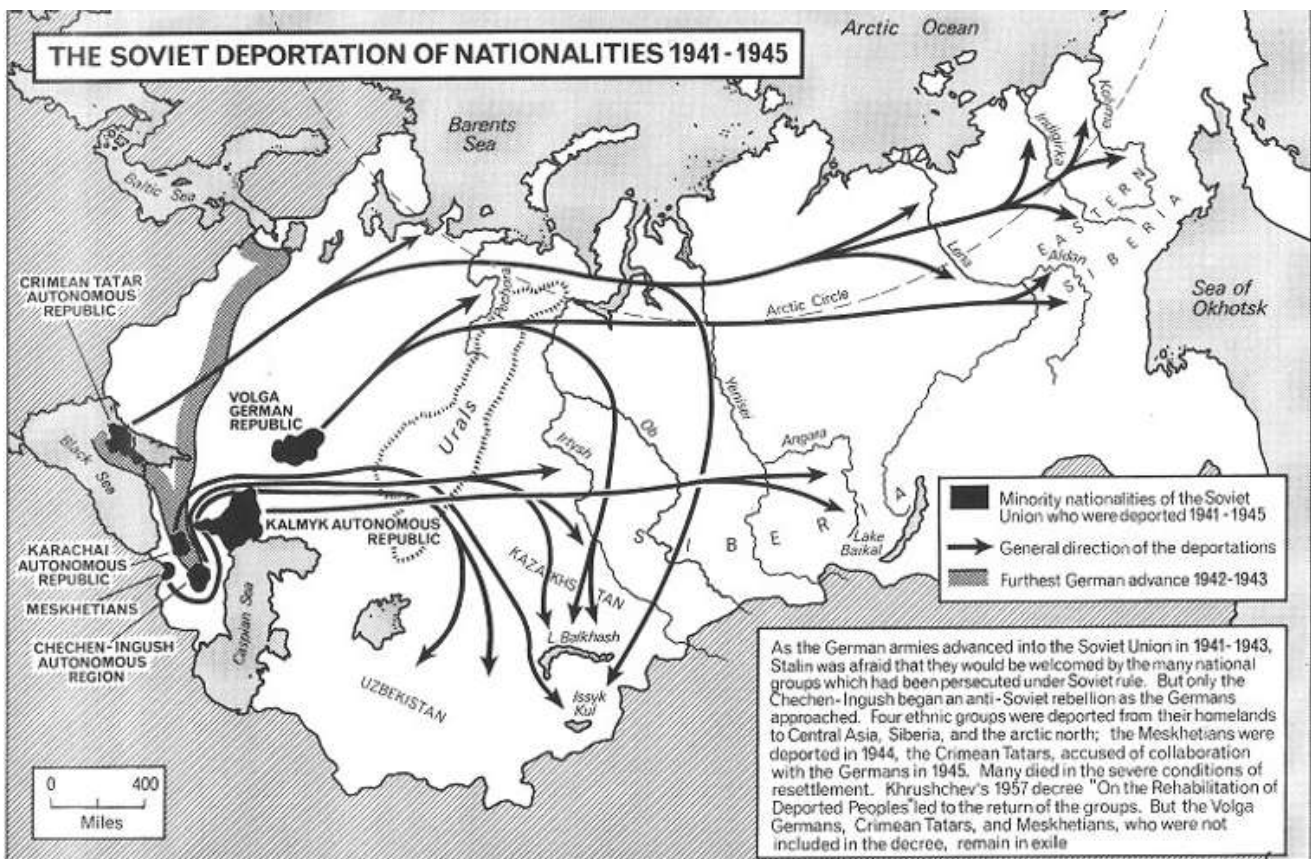
Percentage of Men and Women with higher Education by Birth Cohort		
Birth Cohort	Higher Education	
	Men	Women
1925- 1929	10.6	6.8
1930- 1934	11.1	9.0
1935- 1939	17.4	13.0
1940- 1944	19.2	16.2
1945- 1949	23.0	23.0
1950- 1954	19.9	20.4
1955- 1959	18.6	21.2
1960- 1964	19.1	22.6
1965- 1969	18.9	23.9

Source: Osnovnye itogi microperepisi naselenia 1994 (The main results of the microcensus 1994). Moscow, Goscomstat, 1994, p. 71.



His USSR was Russian-dominated and marginalised other nationalities

Source 19: Map of Stalin's deportations of some ethnic minority non-Russians, such as Crimean Tartars, 1941-45



His USSR was Russian-dominated and marginalised other nationalities

Source 20: Extract from 'For the study of the Russian language', an article from Polaron Collectivist, the official state newspaper of the Finnish national district of the Murmansk region, 1 February 1938



The Finnish language does not allow our Finns to grow culturally together with all the Soviet people and take part in the development of the socialist culture. On the contrary, it paves the way for the development of a bourgeois culture in the spirit of nationalism. Ignorance of the Russian language puts Finns below Russians... The Russian language is the language of Lenin and Stalin, the language of Revolution that opens a wide road for our youth.