



STALIN'S SOCIAL POLICY

1929-53 – how did he
consolidate power?

THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN SOVIET RUSSIA DEVELOPED IN A MANNER TO CREATE LOYAL SOVIET WORKERS/CITIZENS WHO WOULD PUT STALIN AND COUNTRY BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE.

Methods of discipline were increased and the schools became stricter with mandatory uniforms

- Discipline matched that of what they would receive in factories as a worker.

The aim of this new type of education was to create a loyal, hardworking Soviet citizen

Pushed the literacy rates to 86% and this allowed for propaganda to be used successfully to more people

It is the duty of each school child to acquire knowledge persistently so as to become an educated and cultured citizen and to be of the greatest possible service to his country.'

Exams, banned under [Lenin](#), were reintroduced and the way subjects were taught was laid down by the government

For example, History where [Stalin's](#) part in the [1917 Revolution](#) and his relationship with Lenin was overplayed;

Books were strictly censored by the state

Outside of school, children were expected to join youth organisations to practice practical skills, create solidarity, teach values

- the Octobrists for 8 to 10 year olds.
- the Pioneers for the 10 to 16 year olds.
- the Komsomol from 16 to early 20s

HYMM TO STALIN, TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS 1929 ON

“Thank you, Stalin.

Thank you because I am joyful.

Thank you because I am well.

No matter how old I become, I shall never forget how we received Stalin two days ago.

Centuries will pass, and the generations still to come will regard us as the happiest of mortals, as the most fortunate of men, because we lived in the century of centuries, because we were privileged to see Stalin...

Everything belongs to thee, chief of our great country.

And when the woman I love presents me with a child the first word it shall utter will be Stalin...”

STALIN USED PROPAGANDA TO ENFORCE THE IDEA OF HIS SUPERIORITY AND POWER AS HE CULTIVATED THE PERSONALITY CULT HE WISHED FOR.

Stalin entered into an intense campaign to have the people recognize him called Stalinism.

- Huge portraits of Stalin were placed all over the country, upon walls, private and public buildings
- Every store had a small statue of him on display,
- Movies were made about his life, poems, and books even plays were written to celebrate his great leadership.
- His presence was everywhere, but the truths about his atrocities were well hidden.
 - Had history rewritten so he was the hero of the Russian Revolution while continuing to alienating [Trotsky](#) (“Short History of the USSR”)
 - He also used [Lenin](#) to further his fame by associating himself with him.

Newspaper’s referred to him as “Man of Steel”, “Universal Genius”, “Shining Sun of Humanity”.

[Stalin](#) developed what became known as a “personality cult”.

Artists painted pictures glorifying Stalin and he dominated many pictures.

It was not unusual for Stalin to be in a white suit so that he stood out from the crowd.

Peasants and workers always happy, always gazing adoring at Stalin

This was all called “Social Realism”.

Those who wrote poems and novels had to do the same – critics/perceived critics attacked, banished, exiled.

LIVING STANDARDS

Rose in the 1930's despite the obvious problems with food production and shortages.

Some people did very well out of the system especially party officials and skilled factory workers.

Health care was greatly expanded.

In the past, the poorer people of Russia could not have expected qualified medical help in times of illness.

Now that facility was available though demand for it was extremely high.

The number of doctors rose greatly but there is evidence that they were so scared of doing wrong, that they had to go by the rule book and make appointments for operations which people did not require!!

Housing remained a great problem for [Stalin's](#) Russia.

In Moscow, only 6% of households had more than one room.

Those apartments that were put up quickly, were shoddy by western standards.

It was not unusual for flat complexes to be built without electric sockets despite electricity being available

Leisure for the average Russian person was based around fitness and sport.

Every Russian was entitled to have a holiday each year – this had been unheard of in the tsar's days.

Clubs, sports facilities etc. were provided by the state.

RELIGION

There was a marked increase in the attacks on the churches of the USSR throughout the 1930's.

Communism had taught people that religion was “the opiate of the masses” ([Karl Marx](#))

Church leaders were arrested and churches physically shut down.

The Russian orthodox church had for centuries been a strong nationalistic force of Russian society.

During Lenin's reign it had been frowned upon to attend church with many closed or put to other uses

Under Stalin however, destruction of Orthodox religion was accelerated

Important for collectivization as religious belief was still very significant for peasants.

Churches were destroyed, priests driven out along with the kulaks.

People instead formed "underground" churches and met secretly.

The official prohibition did not drive out religious belief but instead drove it underground.

ROLE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY + GREAT RETREAT

For a short time under [Lenin](#), women had enjoyed a much freer status in life

Divorce was made a lot more easy under Lenin and rates soon rose to be the highest in the world

Stalin changed all this. He put the emphasis on the family – The Great Retreat....

Many children had been born out of marriage and Moscow 1930 was awash with homeless children

Seen as a stain on the perfect communist society that Stalin was trying to create.

The state paid families a child allowance if their were a married couple.

Abortion threatened to halt population growth and in 1936, abortion was made illegal and divorce discouraged.

Women rewarded with medals for giving birth to ten or more children...but no real increase in birth rate resulted

Women also had to play a role in the expansion of the Russian economy

In the collective farms they were expected to work on fields and in factories (especially during WW2) expected to do work of the men.

In the work place, women maintained their status and there was effective equality with men. In theory, all jobs were open to women.

Women were trained as pilots during the war and unlike in the western countries, saw combat duties.

POLICING STALIN'S SOCIALISM: REPRESSION AND SOCIAL ORDER IN THE SOVIET UNION, 1924-1953 (D SHEARER)

Unprecedented access to party and other archives in Russia since the last years of the Gorbachev era has shed light on many hidden chapters of state suppression. The most recent category of the Soviet population to come under scholarly scrutiny as victims of Stalinist repression are the "marginals", or those who were perceived by the state to be a danger to social rather than political order.

Shearer demonstrates this point by underlining the fact that in 1930 the civil police were subordinated to the political police (known under Lenin as the Cheka, and later the OGPU, the NKVD and finally the KGB), and were ultimately renamed the Militia. Centralisation, improved pay and militarisation of the civil police gradually brought them under the supervision of the political police, making them into an all-embracing state apparatus - a "Soviet gendarmerie".

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Stalin and his henchman Genrikh Yagoda, who was head of the OGPU in the early 1930s, redefined the role of their "gendarmes" as preventive and prophylactic: in addition to cracking down on society's enemies after the fact, the forces were required to be on constant guard, gathering information on subversives before they committed their destructive acts. Given this approach, it is easy to understand how the Soviet Union came to be perceived as a society immersed in suspicion, supervision and spying, and why the penal system grew to such unprecedented size, as camp after camp had to be built to accommodate vast numbers of suspects, as well as actual miscreants.

The "socially harmful elements" who were the targets of this system included, Shearer notes, "indigents and itinerants, criminals, ex-convicts, members of religious sects, unemployed and orphaned youth, gypsies, the politically disenfranchised" and any other groups that the turbulent and disruptive policies of the regime had turned into misfits and socially useless outcasts. "Repression" meant imprisonment, deportation to penal settlements in the frozen wastes of the huge country, or execution with or without trial or even investigation.