The Soviet Union Under Stalin

Stalin Set Up A Totalitarian State

- Stalin brought all economic activity under the control of the Soviet government
- The government owned all businesses & distributed all resources
- The Soviet Union developed a command economy, in which government officials made all basic economic decisions

- Stalin’s “five-year plans” were aimed at building heavy industry and improving transportation
- The “five-years plans” did increase the production of heavy industry (oil, coal, steel), but the standard of living for workers remained low
- To bring agriculture under his control, Stalin forced all peasants on state-owned farms called collectives
- Kulaks, or wealthy farmers, resisted Stalin’s collective farms & they were killed or sent to work camps

Stalin’s Terror Tactics

- Stalin used terror as a weapon
- Sent critics to the Gulags, a system of brutal labor camps
- In 1934, Stalin launched the Great Purge, which was intended to eliminate anyone Stalin saw as a threat
- At least four million people were purged
- The Great Purge hurt the Soviet Union because it eliminated industrial leaders, engineers, thinkers, & military leaders

Communist Attempts to Control Thought

- Stalin used propaganda as a tool to make himself a godlike figure
- Stalin required artists & writers to create their works in a style called socialist realism, which was intended to show Soviet life in a positive light & promote hope for communism

- Stalin promoted a policy of russification, or making a nationality’s culture more Russian
- The Communist party tried to destroy people’s religious faith by making atheism, or the belief that there is no god, the official state policy

Soviet Foreign Policy

- In 1919, Lenin formed the Comintern, which encouraged world-wide revolution & supported revolutionary groups around the world
- The Comintern’s support of revolutionary groups outside the Soviet Union & its propaganda against capitalism made Western powers suspicious of the Soviet Union

Fascism Compared to Communism

- Communists wanted to spread communism internationally, while fascists were most concerned with strengthening their own nation
- Fascists supported a society with defined classes, while communists supported a classless society
- Fascists won support from business leaders, wealthy landowners & the lower middle class, while communists won support from the workers
- Both drew power from blind devotion to the state
- Both had charismatic leaders as the embodiment of the state
- Both used terror to guard their power
- Both flourished during economic hard times by promoting extreme social change
- Both used propaganda and indoctrination to control the masses
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9

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