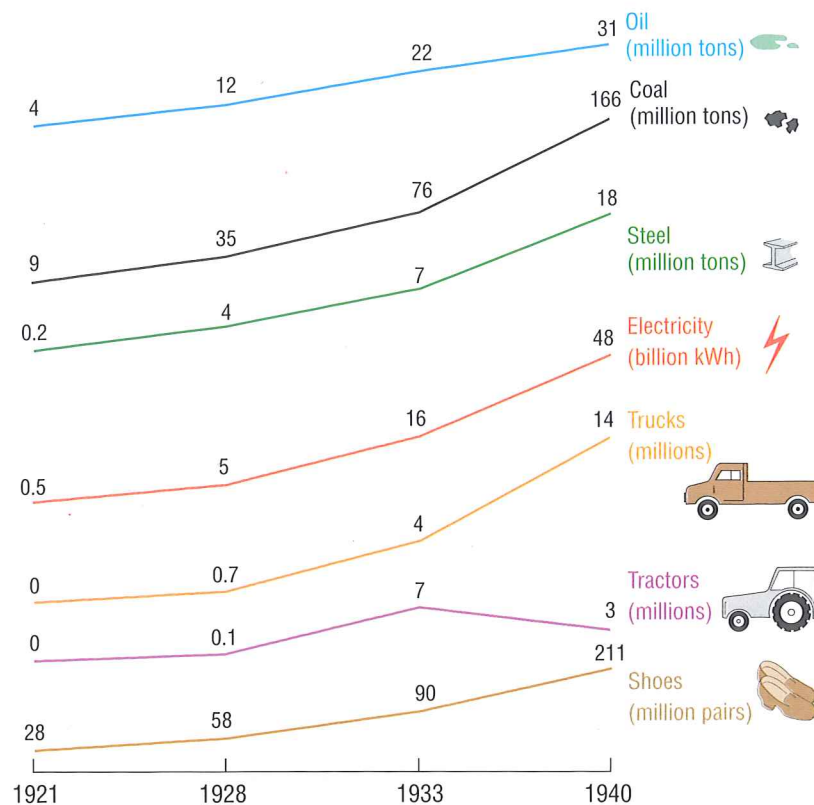


Was industrialisation successful?



SOURCE 1 Industrial production figures, 1921–40, based on data collected by the Soviet government

1. Do the figures in Source 1 prove that Stalin's industrialisation programme was successful?
2. How reliable is Source 2 as evidence of industrial achievement?
3. Do Sources 3 and 4, written by Western historians, support Source 2?
4. What do you think were the 'failings and shortcomings' that Westward refers to in Source 4?

ACTIVITY

Write an assessment of Stalin's industrialisation policy. Include in it:

- the reasons why Stalin wanted to industrialise Russia quickly
- whether the plans achieved his aims
- the sort of achievements that marked the Five-Year Plans
- the problems in the new industries
- the price some workers had to pay for industrialisation.

Write a paragraph summing up the good and the bad points about Stalin's policy.

SOURCE 2 A Soviet view of the achievements of the second Five-Year Plan, from *History of the USSR*, by Y. Kukulshkin, 1981

“While the economies of the capitalist countries were sinking ever deeper into recession, the Soviet economy was booming . . . The second sections of the Magnitogorsk and Kuznetsk iron and steel complexes were completed ahead of schedule. At the start of the Five-Year Plan a major victory was scored on the industrialisation front when the Urals and Novo-Kramatorsk heavy engineering plants went into operation . . .

Good progress was made in constructing new railways and motorways . . . 4,500 new factories, plants, mines and power stations were commissioned, three times as many as in the first Five-Year period . . .

During the second Five-Year Plan period, industrial output went up by 120 per cent. The USSR moved into first place in Europe and second in the world in gross industrial output.”

SOURCE 3 From *The Russian Century* by Brian Moynahan, 1995

“Huge plants were built in Magnitogorsk, Chelyabinsk, Stalingrad; the giant hydroelectric scheme on the Dnieper, which quintupled Soviet electric power output . . . was for two years the world's largest single construction site . . . New mines were opened in Kazakhstan; heavy industry reached into Georgia. Moscow's cobbled winding lanes were replaced by broad avenues and concrete buildings, beneath which ran a subway system with marbled stations.”

SOURCE 4 From *Endurance and Endeavour*, by N. Westward, 1973

“The failures and shortcomings cannot disguise the fact that by 1941 the main aim of Stalin's policy of rapid industrialisation had been achieved. The USSR . . . was one of the world's great industrial powers.”

Why did Stalin introduce collectivisation?

IN MAY 1929, the new Five-Year Plan for Agriculture announced that five million households were to be put into collective farms by 1932–33.

How were collective farms formed?

Peasants in a particular area were encouraged to put their individual plots of land together to form a collective farm or KOLKHOZ. They had to hand over their animals and tools to the farm, which would be run by a committee. The idea was that they would work together and share everything, including what the farm produced. Some of the produce would be sold to the state at a low price and, in return, the state would provide agricultural

machinery such as tractors, and help the peasants to farm more efficiently.

There were other types of collective farms. In the 'toz' type, the peasants owned their own land but shared machinery. Some, called 'sovkhozes', were owned and run by the state. But the kolkhoz was the type preferred by the Communists.

Many peasants were unhappy about the idea of the kolkhoz, as Source 1 shows.

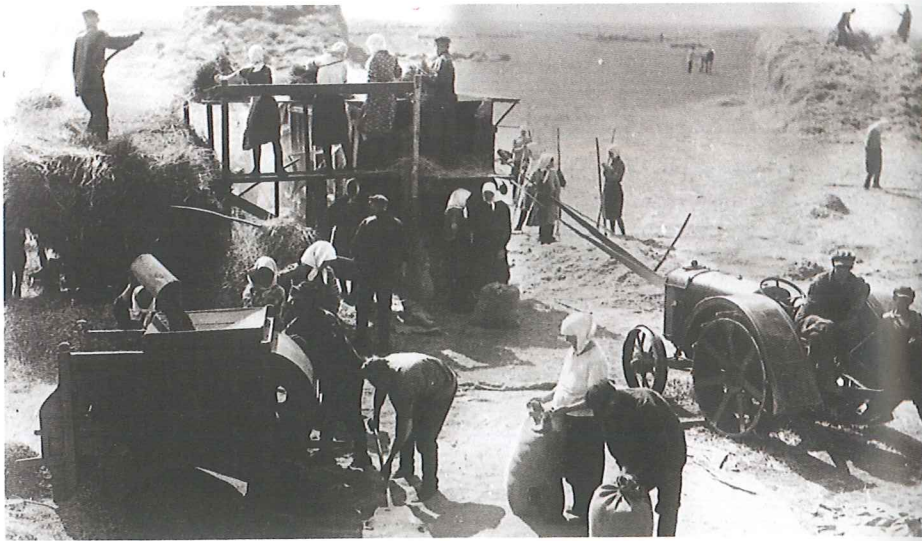
1. The peasants here put forward a number of reasons why they do not think collective farms a good idea. Write down these reasons in your own words.



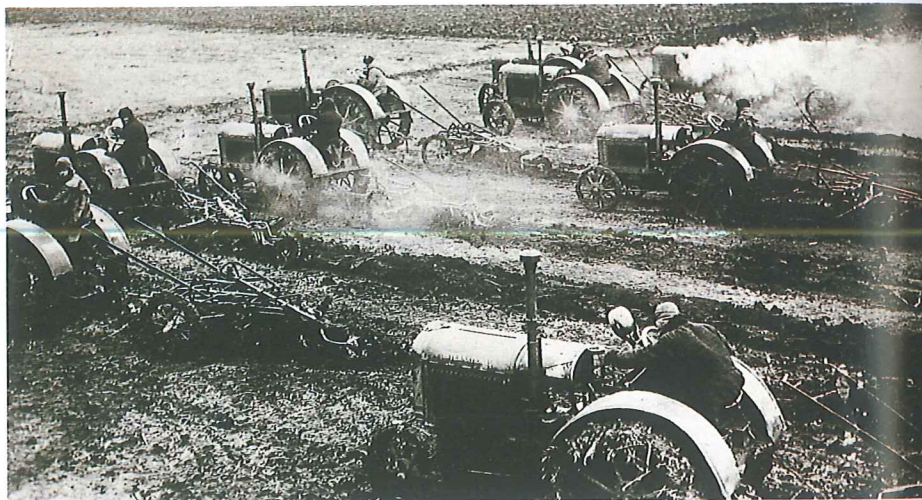
SOURCE 1 From *Red Bread*, by Maurice Hindus, 1931. A lot of peasants had objections to collective farms, as the author discovered when he visited the village where he used to live, in 1929

Why did the Communists support collectivisation?

- Agriculture was still very backward. Most farms were small, because of the way land had been shared out after the Revolution. Old traditional methods – strip farming with wooden ploughs – were still used. Collectives made it easier to introduce modern machinery, especially tractors, and new methods of farming, which would produce more food.
- More efficient mechanised agriculture would require fewer peasants to work the land and release the labour needed for the growing industries.
- It was easier for the state to get grain from collective farms than from individual peasants.
- Collectivisation was the Socialist way to farm the land. How could you build a Socialist state when peasants owned their own land and sold their produce on the private market? Collectivisation would replace capitalist attitudes with Socialist attitudes of co-operation and sharing.



SOURCE 3 Collective farms could afford to buy modern agricultural machinery, such as this harvester



SOURCE 4 Tractors were seen as the key to modern agricultural methods

Why was collectivisation so urgent?

Communist Party members were staggered by Stalin's announcement that he was going to carry out a crash collectivisation programme in four years.

The reason for this urgency lay in the food crisis of the late 1920s. Despite good harvests between 1925 and 1928, the peasants were holding back grain, because the price the state paid for it was low and they could not afford to buy much. In 1928 and 1929, matters were so bad that bread and meat had to be rationed in the cities. Stalin himself and other Party officials went out into the main grain-producing areas to seize grain. Many peasants stopped producing so much and hid supplies.

Stalin blamed the kulaks, or rich peasants, for hoarding grain, and had many arrested and deported. But he was tired of the yearly struggle to get grain which was desperately needed to feed the workers and to help pay for the industrialisation programme. Instead, he decided to break the peasants and their stranglehold on food supplies. The tool he used to do this was collectivisation.

1. Do you think the Communists had a good case for making the peasants go into collectives?
2. Why did Stalin decide to force the peasants into collectives in such a short time?
3. What consequences do you think this might have had?

SOURCE 5 (right) Peasants looking at posters encouraging them to join a collective, 1929



SOURCE 6 (below) Creches were provided for farm workers' babies



SOURCE 7 Soviet women learning to read at a state-run literacy class in the 1930s

4. Which of Sources 3–8 do you think were intended as government propaganda?
5. What benefits of collectivisation do they show?
6. If you were running a Communist Party newspaper, which would you use? Explain your reasons.



SOURCE 8 A poster with the slogan 'Come and join our kolkhoz, comrade!'

IN 1930, bands of Party activists and officials, backed up by the OGPU (state police), were sent into the countryside to organise the peasants into collective farms.

The activists would 'persuade' peasants to sign a register demanding to be collectivised. Then animals, implements and buildings would be taken from the kulaks (rich peasants) and would usually form the basis for the new collective farm. If the peasants refused to join the collective, they would be labelled as kulaks and shot, deported or sent to labour camps. Sometimes, whole villages were deported as a lesson to others.

'Dekulakisation' was central to the collectivisation process. It was important to have a class enemy –

The Soviet version



SOURCE 1 Peasants protesting against the kulaks

SOURCE 3 The official view given in the Party history published in 1960

“[The peasants] saw that the Party and the government, overcoming difficulties, were building factories to make tractors and new farm machines. Numerous groups of peasants visited the new factories, attended workers’ meetings, and were inspired by their enthusiasm. Upon returning to their villages, the working peasantry took the initiative in setting up new collective farms.”

the kulaks – to blame for everything that went wrong. But the term ‘kulak’ actually meant very little by the 1930s. There were few rich peasants left: the people referred to were usually the most efficient farmers, who owned a few animals and some machinery.

However, even where kulaks did not exist, the Communists still insisted that they had to be found and cleaned out. Stalin said, ‘We must liquidate the kulaks as a class.’ He used class hatred to whip up hysteria. The district authorities told local Soviets how many kulaks they had to find and lists of names were drawn up. Peasants denounced others as kulaks, some to settle old scores with neighbours. Children were encouraged to inform on anybody, even their own parents.



SOURCE 4 A peasant signing up for a collective farm

SOURCE 2 From *The History of the Communist Party (Short Course)*, a Soviet textbook in use in the USSR during the Stalin period

“The peasants chased the kulaks from the land, dekulakised them, took away their livestock and machinery, and requested the Soviet power to arrest and deport the kulaks.”

How others saw it



SOURCE 5 A collective farm meeting

SOURCE 6 Vasily Grossman, a Jewish Soviet writer, quoted in *The Harvest of Sorrow* by Robert Conquest

“They would threaten people with guns, as if they were under a spell, calling small children ‘kulak bastards’, screaming ‘bloodsuckers!’ . . . They had sold themselves on the idea that the so-called ‘kulaks’ were pariahs, untouchables, vermin. They would not sit down at a ‘parasite’s’ table; the ‘kulak’ child was loathsome, the young ‘kulak’ girl was lower than a louse. They looked on the so-called ‘kulaks’ as cattle, swine, loathsome, repulsive: they had no souls; they stank; they all had venereal diseases; they were enemies of the people and exploited the labour of others . . . and there was no pity for them.”



SOURCE 7 A photograph of a girl informing on her parents

SOURCE 8 A kulak’s description of collectivisation to John Scott, an American volunteer, quoted in *The Russian Century* by Brian Moynahan

“The poor peasants of the village get together in a meeting and decide: ‘So-and-so has six horses; we couldn’t get along without those in the collective farm; besides, he hired a man to help him in the harvest.’ They notify the OGPU, and there you are. So-and-so gets five years. They confiscate his property and give it to the new collective farm. Sometimes they ship the whole family out.”

SOURCE 9 From Victor Kravchenko’s book *I Chose Freedom*. Victor Kravchenko, a Communist eye-witness, arrived in a village to find a commotion

“‘What’s happening?’ I asked the constable. ‘Another round-up of kulaks,’ he replied. ‘Seems the dirty business will never end. The OGPU and District Committee people came this morning.’ A large crowd was gathered outside the building . . . A number of women were weeping hysterically and calling the names of husbands and fathers . . . In the background, guarded by the OGPU soldiers with drawn revolvers, stood about twenty peasants, young and old, with bundles on their backs. A few were weeping. The others stood there sullen, resigned, helpless. So this was ‘Liquidation of the kulaks as a class’! A lot of simple peasants being torn from their native soil, stripped of all their worldly goods and shipped to some distant labour camps. For some reason, on this occasion, most of the families were being left behind.”

1. Sources 1–4 give the Soviet version of how collectivisation was carried out. How do these sources suggest it was done?
2. How does this compare with the version in Sources 5–9?
3. In what ways do the two versions agree with each other?
4. Which version do you think is more reliable? Consider the sources individually.
5. a) How can you explain the attitudes towards the kulaks described in Source 6?
b) Have you come across this type of abuse in other periods of history? If so, where?
6. a) How were kulaks identified?
b) Why do you think it was so important for Stalin to present the kulaks as the enemy?

How were the peasants affected by collectivisation?

THERE WAS FIERCE resistance to collectivisation. Peasants refused to hand over their animals, preferring to slaughter them and eat or sell the meat. They burnt crops, tools and houses rather than hand them over to the state. There were also riots and armed resistance. One riot lasted five days and armoured cars were needed to put it down.

So fierce was this reaction that in March of 1930 Stalin called a temporary halt. He was worried that there would be no crop to harvest in the summer. He blamed the activists and local officials for going too far. But as soon as the harvest was gathered in, the process was begun again, a little more slowly but with just as much violence.

So much disruption was caused to agriculture that there were severe food shortages. When, added to this, there was a disastrous harvest in 1932, the result was a famine of unimaginable severity in the years 1932–33. Yet the state never admitted that a famine was taking place and did not ask for, or get, international aid. Indeed, food was still being exported from the USSR to other countries. To make matters worse, Stalin sent out requisitioning gangs to take what little grain there was. Grain was held in stores that were ‘almost bursting’, and even left to rot in the open while people nearby starved to death.

It has been estimated that at least thirteen million peasants, and possibly many more, died as a result of collectivisation – a human tragedy on a gigantic scale. But Stalin had succeeded in breaking the peasants and obtaining the grain he needed for industrialisation.

SOURCE 1 From Victor Serge's *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*

“The women came to deliver the cattle confiscated by the kolkhoz, but made a rampart of their own bodies around the beasts: ‘Go on, bandits, shoot!’”

In a Kuban market town whose entire population was deported, the women undressed in their houses, thinking that no one would dare make them go out naked; they were driven out as they were to the cattle trucks, beaten with rifle butts . . .

Trainloads of deported peasants left for the icy north, the forests, the steppes, the deserts. These were whole populations, denuded of everything; the old folk starved to death in mid-journey, newborn babies were buried on the banks of the roadside, and each wilderness had its crop of little crosses. ”

SOURCE 2 In the 1930s a novel, *Virgin Soil Uplturned*, was published in Russia. It was written by Mikhail Sholokhov, who was a Communist and took part in collectivisation as a Party activist. Here he writes about how the peasants reacted

“Stock was slaughtered every night in Gremyachy Log. Hardly had dusk fallen than the muffled, short bleats of sheep, the death squeals of pigs, or the lowing of calves could be heard. Both those who had joined the kolkhoz and individual farmers killed their stock. Bulls, sheep, pigs, even cows were slaughtered, as well as cattle for breeding . . .

‘Kill, it’s not ours any more . . . Kill, they’ll take it for meat anyway . . . Kill, you won’t get meat on the collective farm . . .’

And they killed. They ate until they could eat no more. Young and old suffered from stomach ache. At dinner-time tables groaned under boiled and roasted meat. At dinner-time everyone had a greasy mouth, everyone hiccupped as if at a wake. Everyone blinked like an owl, as if drunk from eating. ”

Here, Andrei Razmiotnov, an activist, is speaking about the brutal treatment of the peasants

“What am I? An executioner? Or is my heart of stone? And he again began to shout:

‘Gayev’s got eleven children. How they howled when we arrived! It made my hair stand on end. We began to drive them out of the kitchen . . . I screwed up my eyes, and stopped my ears, and ran into the yard. The women were all in a dead fright . . . The children – Oh, by God, you . . .’

But the other chief activist would not have it: ‘Snake!’ he gasped in a penetrating whisper, clenching his fists. ‘How are you serving the Revolution? Having pity on them? Yes . . . You could line up the thousands of old men, women and children and tell me they’d got to be crushed into the dust for the sake of the Revolution, and I’d shoot them all down with a machine gun.’ ”

1. Use Sources 1 and 2 to explain:
 - the ways in which the peasants resisted collectivisation
 - what happened to those who resisted.
2. Why do you think this was such a bitter struggle?
3. What do Sources 2 and 5 tell you about the activists who carried out collectivisation and why they did it?
4. Source 2 is from a novel. How useful do you think it is to historians of this period?
5. a) How does Kopelev’s evidence in Source 5 support the novel?
b) Do you think that the fact that he went into exile means that his account is less reliable?



SOURCE 3 Collecting the dead during the 1932 famine, probably in the Ukraine

SOURCE 5 By Lev Kopelev, a party activist who later went into exile

“With the rest of my generation, I firmly believed that the ends justified the means. Our great goal was the universal triumph of Communism . . .

I saw what ‘total collectivisation’ meant – how they mercilessly stripped the peasants in the winter of 1932–33. I took part in this myself, scouring the countryside . . . testing the earth with an iron rod for loose spots that might lead to buried grain. With the others, I emptied out the old folk’s storage chests, stopping my ears to the children’s crying and the women’s wails. For I was convinced that I was accomplishing the great and necessary transformation of the countryside; that in the days to come the people who lived there would be better off . . .

In the terrible spring of 1933 I saw people dying of hunger. I saw women and children with distended bellies, turning blue, still breathing but with vacant lifeless eyes. And corpses – corpses in ragged sheepskin coats and cheap felt boots; corpses in the peasant huts . . . I saw all this and did not go out of my mind or commit suicide . . . Nor did I lose my faith. As before, I believed because I wanted to believe. ”

SOURCE 4 An eyewitness account by a survivor from Viknyna (in the Kiev/Odessa region)

“The poor widow Darylul and her sons had a very tragic end. Her dead body was eaten by maggots and the two sons, Pavlo and Oleska, fell dead begging for food . . .

Oleska Voitsyskhovskiy saved his and his family’s lives by consuming the meat of horses which had died in the collective of glanders and other diseases. He dug them up at night and brought the meat home in a sack. ”

6. Why has the famine of 1932–33 been described as man-made?
7. What reason could Stalin have for not taking action to relieve the suffering of the famine?

ACTIVITY

It is 1930.

Either

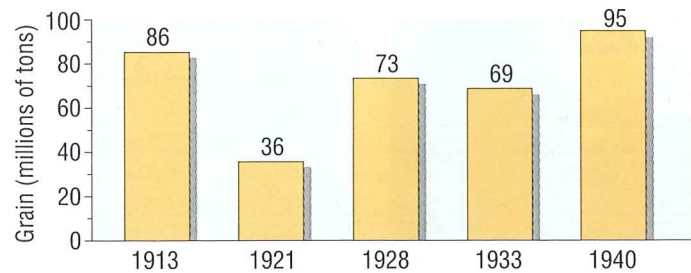
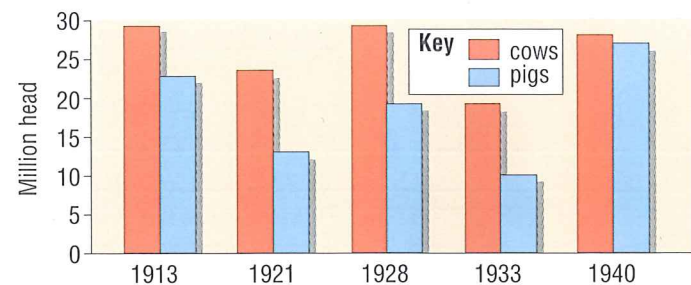
You are a Communist activist, who has been involved in ‘persuading’ peasants to join collective farms. You are talking to a friend of yours who works in a rural Soviet who is having doubts. Convince your friend of the importance of the success of collectivisation. Explain why it has been necessary. Mention:

- the problems of persuading the peasants to give up their grain in the late 1920s
- the need to deal with the capitalist kulaks
- the benefits of collective farms
- the importance of collectivisation to industrialisation and the Revolution.

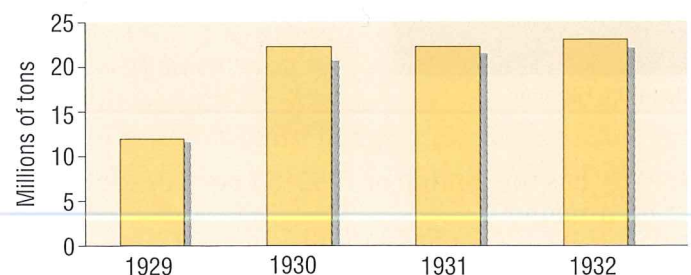
Or

You are the friend. Explain your reservations about the way collectivisation is being carried out, especially the way in which kulaks are identified.

Did collectivisation succeed?



SOURCE 1 Agricultural production, based on figures produced by the Soviet government



SOURCE 2 Grain procurements (grain taken by the state)

- What does the chart in Source 1 show happened to agricultural production between 1928 and 1940?
 - How can you explain this?
 - How does this compare with what was being produced in 1913 before the Communists came to power?
- What does Source 2 show about the amount of grain that the state was able to get from the peasants even in the bad year of 1932?
 - What did this mean for the aims of Stalin's policy?
- How useful as evidence is Source 3 about the success of collectivisation?
- Do you agree with the assessment of collectivisation by the two historians in Sources 4 and 5? Use evidence from this page and pages 95–103 to support your views.

ACTIVITY

In class, debate the statement: 'Collectivisation was a terrible disaster for the Russian people.'

SOURCE 3 Bertha Malnick visited the USSR several times during the 1930s, collecting material for her book *Everyday Life in Russia*, 1938. This extract is from a speech by the brigadier of a collective farm

“We have more than 600 hectares; of these 123 are sown with cotton, 225 planted with wheat. Our vineyards cover 45 hectares. Our three lorries can hardly cope with the work. Our farmers have built 70 new houses for themselves during the last few years . . . Look inside these houses. You will find rich carpets and musical instruments . . .

Four times [this year] the whole farm went to the opera in Erevan, to the theatre, to concerts, to the cinema . . . Look at our happy children. They all go to school. We have two schools . . . We, the older generation, dared not dream of such things . . . In our club dozens of farmers are learning to read and write, joining literary, agricultural and political classes . . .

I could say much more about the life of our collective farm, but the young wine is bubbling impatiently in your glasses. Drink to the good Stalin, who brought us to this life. ”

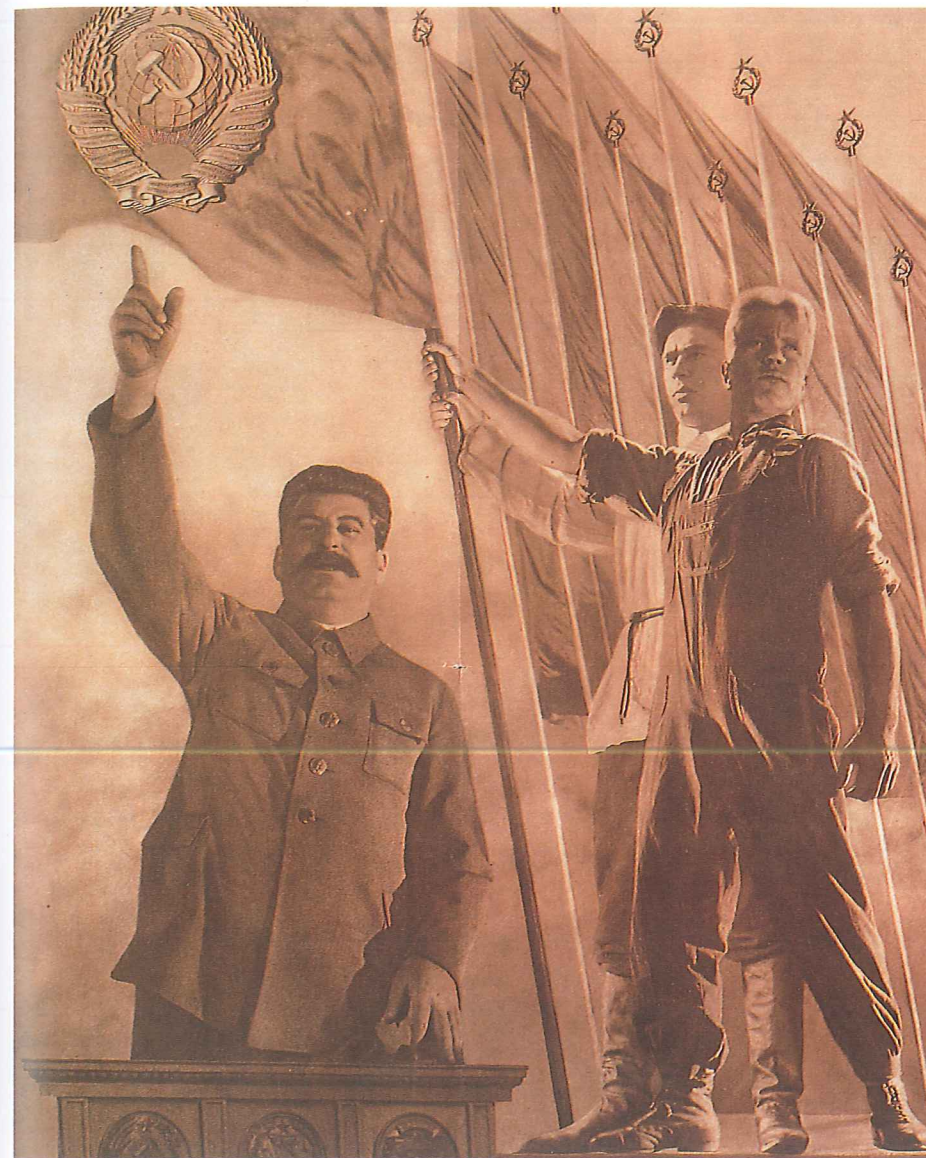
SOURCE 4 From *European History 1848–1945* by T.A. Morris

“Destruction by rebellious peasants, the loss of kulak expertise, and the inexperience of collective farm managers resulted in a sharp decline in many areas of production. Between 1928 and 1934 the cattle population of the USSR declined from 66.8 million to 35.5 million, the number of sheep and goats fell from 114.6 million to 36.5 and the number of horses from 34 million to 16.5 million. Grain shortages, combined with continued forced procurements, led to rural famine . . .

Not until 1940 did figures for grain production reach those of 1914. ”

SOURCE 5 From *A History of Soviet Russia*, by Adam Ulam, 1976

“Collectivisation accomplished its main aims. In the first place, the regime could now commandeer food from the peasants at incredibly low prices . . . Then it acquired the additional working force for industrialisation . . . mechanisation, especially after tractors began to be produced in quantity, released millions of rural youth for industries in the cities. ”



IN THE 1930s, Stalin consolidated his position as supreme **dictator** of the Soviet Union. Stalin's USSR developed into a **TOTALITARIAN** state, like Adolf Hitler's Germany. A totalitarian state is one in which those in power have total control – every aspect of people's lives is controlled and monitored. The Soviet Union in the 1930s had many features in common with Nazi Germany:

- authoritarian control through terror
- secret police
- labour camps
- cult of the leader
- education controlled by the state
- propaganda and censorship
- state control of arts and sciences
- only one political party.

In other words, Stalin maintained his powerful position in the USSR by two main methods:

- control by terror
- control of ideas.

SOURCE 1 (left) A poster celebrating Stalin's constitution, 1937

Stalin established control over the Party and the people by a series of Purges

1934
Murder of Kirov; Stalin launches the Purges – some against ordinary people

1937
Second show trial: senior Party members executed. Purge of the army

1936
First show trial: Zinoviev and Kamenev executed

1938
Third and last show trial: Bukharin and Rykov executed. Purge of the NKVD