OXFORD JOURNAL
OF STUDENT
SCHOLARSHIP

Ideology and Coercion in Stalin's Soviet Union: Collectivization, Class Violence, and the Consolidation of State Power

Emerson Grace Wise
emersonwise705@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role of Marxist-Leninist ideologies in shaping state violence under Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union from the 1920s to the 1930s. My argument is that Stalin used a Marxist-Leninist ideological framework to justify coercive means solely for the purpose of consolidating authoritarian power. Drawing on historiographical debates among intentionalist, structuralist, and revisionist scholars, this study adopts a rather intentionalist perspective on Stalin's agency in interpreting and applying ideology. Through an analysis of economic and political legislation, the subjectivization and marginalization of the peasantry, the Gulag system, the Five-Year Plan, and political purges, the paper demonstrates how ideological rhetoric was used to legitimize repression and economic transformation. These policies, while presented as necessary for the advancement of socialism, resulted in widespread famine, devastation, and embedded terror within the U.S.S.R. Therefore, my research highlights the extent to which Stalin's interpretation of the ideological framework can be coerced to rationalize state repression, which, in turn, contributes to the broader, intertwined dilemma of how political power, ideology, and violence are intertwined.

INTRODUCTION

While Stalin publicly adhered to Marxist-Leninist doctrine, he employed socialist rhetoric to legitimize the violent expansion of state power. His strategies, including collectivization, class-based violence, and political purges, were initially justified as advancing proletarian emancipation but in practice served to oppress the peasantry, subordinate the proletariat, and entrench authoritarianism. Stalin's interpretation of Marxist-Leninist doctrine ultimately distorted its original intent, triggering subsequent harm to both peasants and urban workers. State control was cohesively consolidated at the unfortunate expense of a socialist society that was achieved, but at a brutal human price.

For the purpose of my argument, beginning in 1917 with the Bolshevik coup d'état, the intensifying class dichotomy, ongoing retaliations, and economic crises left the country ill-prepared for the emergence of authoritarian rule, particularly for a governing system based on improvised ideological frameworks suitable for revolutionary aims but inadequate for sustainable governance. The principal historiographical debates concerning Stalinist ideology can be clarified by distinguishing among three main approaches: intentionalist, structuralist, and revisionist. Intentionalist historians argue that Stalin played a central, active role in directing policy and deliberately used ideology to rationalize coercive practices. Structuralist interpretations, by contrast, emphasize the extent to which Stalinist violence was the product of systemic forces—such as bureaucratic imperatives, institutional conflicts, and deep-seated instability—and suggest that repression emerged as an outcome of these pressures rather than from an individual leader's intent. Revisionist scholars further complicate this landscape by focusing on the nuanced roles of social structures, mass participation, and unintended consequences, often questioning both the strictly top-down model of intentionalists and the deterministic models of structuralists. While this paper adopts an intentionalist position, emphasizing Stalin's agency in interpreting ideology and deploying violence, it remains necessary to acknowledge these alternative perspectives to maintain scholarly rigor. Although justification is closely associated with the intent of Stalin's reign, many analyses inadequately consider the specific ways in which Stalin's ideological interpretation precipitated totalitarian policies. The Stalinist regime's pursuit of a socialist economy—through coercion, purges, famine, and initiatives such as the Five-Year Plan and class elimination—resulted in extensive social devastation, signifying a major departure from the movement's original ideals. Therefore, I argue that Stalin deliberately used Marxist-Leninist ideology to justify and implement policies of violence and coercion, actively shaping the Soviet Union's transformation into a repressive, authoritarian state. This intentionalist framework underpins the analysis that follows.

The means by which Stalin formulated legislation to resemble an applicable political system to assess the need for a movement towards a more industrialized and modern country acted as a centripetal force for the working class. In other words, socialist doctrine, in Stalin's eyes, aimed to unify the agrarian and rural majority into an industrial force that would outpace any neighboring European power. However, this attempt directly harmed all classes, as the policies ostensibly intended to promote collective growth in practice resulted in widespread suffering. Stalin justified the coercion of classes by leveraging socialist ideals to create the appearance of uniting society for industrial advancement; however, the implementation of these measures reveals his intent to subordinate social groups to the interests of state power. While Stalin presented these policies as necessary for socialist progress, the methods used to achieve them were inhumane and unjust—even for the proletariat, whom Stalin claimed to represent. The development of Stalinist legislation, central to my argument regarding intentionality and ideological justification, demonstrates how ideological rhetoric translated into concrete policies that rationalized repression. For instance, the peasant class played a significant role as the scapegoats of Stalin's terror: violent oppression of the peasantry was framed as essential for economic advancement, reducing them to economic tools and enabling their systematic marginalization. Yet, as the Soviet famine of 1930–1933 demonstrates, these policies ultimately devastated both peasants and urban workers. This outcome supports the claim that ideology was manipulated to justify coercion, with Stalin's increasingly radical policies aimed at consolidating authority rather than genuine class emancipation. Consequently, his

entrenched pursuit of complete collectivization led to the imposition of unrealistic grain quotas, prompt rebellions, and widespread devastation among all classes. Not only ordinary civilians but also political officials who facilitated repressive measures were themselves subjected to violence and execution during the 1930s purges. Extensive scholarly examination of Stalinism, through sources such as drafts, decrees, and letters, further substantiates the interpretive link between legislative evidence and intentional justification. Soviet ideology is particularly fascinating not only because of its distinctive political stance but also because of its capacity to impose comprehensive control over an expansive territory and to coerce its population into socialism. By integrating this analysis with the evidence, it becomes clear that Stalin's legislative strategy was less about advancing socialism for its own sake and more about legitimizing state violence as a tool of authoritarian consolidation.

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL COMPARISON: CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARS OF SOVIET HISTORY

Stalin-era Soviet violence has prompted much scholarly debate. Main issues include ideological radicalization (the ties between Marxism, Leninism, and Stalinism), structural coercion, and whether individual agency or systemic pressure drove Stalin's actions, which could simultaneously be both. The core debate concerns inevitability. Structuralists argue that systemic forces and instability led to repression exceeding any leader's intentions. Intentionalists say leaders' choices define outcomes. Revisionists incorporate modern perspectives to challenge older views. These debates cover the essence of Stalin during the 1930s, specifically, scholarly interpretation of the Great Purges, demographic shifts, and mass executions. The role of the peasantry is a notably significant debate as it represents the cohort that Stalin sought to liquidate. A plethora of prominent scholars argue that the peasantry suffered more marginalization than any other social class during Stalin's rule. Hence, the focal point of this debate lies in how contemporary scholars interpret this historical phenomenon. I believe that is more valuable than my own opinion. The following comparative analysis of scholars should be understood as the framework to which I formulated my opinion, as well as the general response to Stalinist ideology.

Martin Malia's book The Soviet Tragedy presents an intentionalist view of Stalin's personal responsibility. Malia highlights individual agency over historical inevitability. This interpretation is now central to intentionalist arguments about Stalin's role. Malia calls Stalin's rule the 'Second Russian Revolution from above.' He contends that socialism was a logical direction for the Bolsheviks in the face of crisis. However, the party's logic alone did not determine Stalin's extreme policies. Stalin deliberately intensified violence, precipitating a rupture with Leninism; Khrushchev later affirmed this break. Malia notes, 'neither Lenin nor Trotsky (both radical Bolsheviks who could have conceivably adopted a coercive policy in 1929) would have deliberately starved the peasants or murdered revolutionary comrades.' By naming these figures, Malia sets Stalin's actions apart from the party, directly charging Stalin with violence. Before delving into Malia's full argument, note how Stalin's ideology marked a break from Lenin's. For example, Malia points out that Lenin's pragmatic policies, such as the New Economic Policy, were more lenient and avoided oppressing the peasantry as a class. Stalin decisively abandoned those policies.

Malia's argument, though more controversial, is that Stalinism represented a return to Russian autocracy and a logical outcome of history. He compares Stalin's motives to those of earlier rulers such as Ivan the Terrible or Peter the Great. These examples of prominent figures show Malia's strength in drawing parallels with past authorities, though they may dilute the unique context of Stalinism. In politics, Stalinism was especially hostile to the peasantry. Stalin's opposition to capitalism guided the Soviet famine of 1930–1933 and the 1st Five-Year Plan. This plan was more than a tool to address backwardness; it aimed to build a new economic order. As a result, hostility was directed at Russian peasants. Malia interprets Marx's term "liquidation" not as a physical extermination but as urbanization, particularly as it affects peasants. Critics challenge this interpretation's implications. This point matters because Marx's view of the peasantry supports Malia's argument about Stalin's collectivization and purges. It offers ideological reasoning for their marginalization. Malia also frames this process as a class war, in which peasants are civilized through economic struggle, ultimately eliminating them as a group. Malia's framework indicates that Stalin's coercion reflected a deliberate pursuit of control.

Historian Norman Naimark specifically blames the Soviet violence on Stalin himself. Naimark challenges the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. He notes that the document focuses on violence against ethnic, national, racial, and religious groups, and excludes—though not explicitly—social and political groups. These social and political groups were predominantly victims of Stalin's political campaigns and purges alike. Naimark reframes the definition of genocide, arguing that protecting ethnic and national groups should not exclude protection for political and social groups. He furthers his claim by contending that genocide should apply to any targeted group and is categorized as a legitimate case of genocidal intent. This contests the UN Convention's categories. Naimark claims that Stalinist violence stands out for its massive scale, including the Ukrainian famine of 1932–1933, which directly marginalized Ukraine triggering intended starvation, hence, justification of genocide. He then acknowledges the comparative line between genocide and mass killing, drawing notable criticism from Western scholars. Still, Naimark's view matters for exposing the scope of political violence by elites.

An extension of his argument states that "as in the case of the Soviet attack against so-called kulaks, social and political categories of victims were categorized into a certain ethnicity, as a way to make the attack on their existence more comprehensible to society and the state." His claim that Stalin positioned dekulakization as an ethnic ordeal supports what Naimark identifies as a key genocidal prerequisite, rendering the violence more comprehensible within the regime's ideological framework. He further argues that there are strong reasons to apply the U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide more broadly and flexibly. The motives of the perpetrators, the centralized line of command from the "boss" (khoziain) or "warrior-leader" to Stalin and onward to the executors of policy, and the attempt to eliminate all or part of these victim groups as groups together constitute genocide in its entirety. Moreover, Naimark argues that while genocidal regimes such as Nazi Germany killed in the name of "otherness," Stalin killed in the name of socialism. In assessing Stalin's motivations for overseeing the mass killing of millions of Soviet citizens in the 1930s, historians can sometimes appear anxious to identify a plausible rationale for his actions. As Naimark suggests, the violence was deemed necessary in the face of perceived internal enemies, prompting mass purges. Before Stalin's dictatorship, however, Naimark contends that the term genocide should not be applied to mass killing during periods

such as the Civil War of 1918–1921, despite its horrific character. Stalin made a decisive difference, and it is his role in mass killing that is essential to understanding the genocidal character of his regime.

Subsequently, Naimark contends as new values emerged, upheavals occurred, and the overthrow of the new political framework triggered a desire for change in social hierarchy regarding the peasantry and political implementation, collectivization. The intent of such measures, such as the Revolution, which prompted radical divergence by Stalin, is significantly attributable to assessing the extent to which the ordinary people suffered. The term "Stalinism", defined by Sheila Fitzpatrick, is a "shorthand for the complex of institutions, structures, and rituals that made up the habitat of Homo Sovieticus in the Stalin era, Communist Party rule, Marxist–Leninist ideology, rampant bureaucracy, leader cults, state control over production and distribution, social engineering, affirmative action on behalf of workers, stigmatization of "class enemies," police surveillance, terror, and the various informal, personalistic arrangements whereby people at every level sought to protect themselves and obtain scarce goods, were all part of the Stalinist habitat." (Everyday Stalinism, pg 2, 1999). Sheila's definition of Stalinism is the violent means to socialism or the authoritarian manner in which power is held. Moreover, her contribution to such a definition illustrates the unambiguous terms in assessing what Stalinism really is, or the means by which it was instilled. Through Shelia, she stresses both what it is and how it was implemented, and the systematic explanation of the habitat of Stalinism. Henceforth, the revolution's ultimate goal was to institutionalize socialism by ending private enterprise and promoting economic development by eliminating class warfare. Though highly ambiguous, the economic plan was poorly thought out, as Sheila puts it, a conquest of hitherto uncontrollable economic forces.

While Naimark stresses the extraordinary genocide of the Soviet Regime, Sheila FitzPatrick encompasses the extent of the ordinary and their relation to the totality of Russia. The comparison between political elites, such as those in the Cheka or the NKVD, and the social classes of the Soviet regime, such as the proletariat, the bourgeoisie, and, briefly mentioned, the peasantry, reveals a significant gap.

Sheila Fitzpatrick, a recognized revisionist scholar in the field of Soviet violence, departed from the ordinary political interpretation of Soviet violence, which tends to focus on the "big picture" political detriment, and instead acknowledged the unprecedented individual experiences. Scholars of everyday life under totalitarian regimes often focus on active or passive resistance to the regime, perpetually ignoring the depth to which the ordinary is left isolated. The prominent aspect of her works has held sustained debate since she first published, as they are an investigation rather than a singular analytical norm, challenging the majority of academia. Everyday Stalinism describes how Soviet citizens tried to live ordinary lives in the extraordinary circumstances of Stalinism. Fitzpatrick includes a plethora of examples that illustrate her specificity: "getting" goods legally and illegally, using patrons and connections, counting living space in square meters, quarreling in communal apartments, "free" marriage, petitioning, denouncing, informing, and complaining about officials, among many others. The specific circumstances listed by Sheila underscore her dedication to the nature of what the unprecedented lived through, such as the lower-middle class, peasants, urban workers, and other cohorts. To grasp the lived reality behind these analyses, one needs to look to the diary of a peasant woman in the early 1930s: "Yesterday, they took our last sack of grain for the quota. "My husband cries with anger, the children are silent, and we queue for bread that never comes. There is nothing left to eat. The neighbor's cow was slaughtered last week for

'hidden grain.' We survive on bark soup and hope." (Peasant diary, 1932) Such vignettes reveal how policies justified in distant party doctrine descended into relentless hardship at the most personal level. Moreover, the manner in which Fitzpatrick acknowledged the consistent hardships of the categorized "ordinary people" under Stalin signified the conceptual and systematic disregard the USSR showed in implementing destructive policies. Moreover, she argues that the ordinary person attempted to live a normal life, which was a luxury, but the presence of extraordinary measures or Stalin's "habitate" made it increasingly difficult. Fitzpatrick contends that it "presents a portrait of an emerging social species, Homo Sovieticus, for which Stalinism was the native habitat"(Everyday Stalinism, pg 1-2, 1999). This quote is relevant to the reality of Stalinism, as it puts into perspective the idea that normality was rare and that Stalin's "habitat" served as the variable that ended the possibility of living an ordinary life without hardship. Further, "Homo Sovieticus" should be understood as a new system in which Stalinism serves as the structure or framework of the environment.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: LENIN TO STALIN

Retrospectively, the Russian Revolution of 1917 was an ongoing retreat from old ideals that owed to Russia's initial backwardness. Authoritarian ideologies took root in Russian realities, prompting internal dissatisfaction within urban and rural sectors and Stalin's own acquaintances within the parties. Past foreshadowing of Russia's growing dissatisfaction and resentment of its current economic and political instability had predicted what the Russian Revolution would resemble. Between 1917 and 1924, revolution and violence dominated Russia. By 1924, the unfortunate successor to Lenin precipitated future terror, often called a 2nd Revolution from above. Joseph Stalin emerged as the central figure responsible for the terror embedded within the Soviet Union's ideological framework.

The Civil War under Lenin: How it sketched Stalin's reign

The Civil War did not yet settle the question of who ruled Russia; it triggered a prolonged and brutal Civil War that fundamentally shaped the Soviet state." (Russian Revolution, Sheila Fitzpatrick) The civil war itself led to a considerable increase in Party membership: from 115,000 in January 1918 to 576,000 and 775,000 in March 1921, depending on which count one believes; this averages out to a roughly sixfold increase in three years. (Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, 3rd ed.) Even as the Red Army was gaining influence among the people, between 1918 and 1921, the Bolsheviks fought multiple internal and external enemies, including White counterrevolutionaries, foreign interventionists, and peasant resistance, while simultaneously attempting to govern a collapsing economy and society. Not only had Lenin felt threatened by the persistent counterrevolutionaries and his own, but the Russian economy itself was suffering from this costly civil war. The new creation of a volunteer Army on the Don in alliance with Kaledin's Cossacks set off alarms in the Bolshevik headquarters at Smolnyi, which furthered tense paranoia within the party. Consequently, the infamous and tragic "Ice March" from February to May 1918 by the White Army, formerly known as the Volunteer Army, became a pivotal event for revolutionaries, marking a period of clear Bolshevik dominance. The Bolsheviks' potential loss of the Don Territory,

followed by the counter-revolutionaries' threat to the centralization of the Soviet party during the civil war, ultimately gave rise to the paranoia Stalin experienced during his term. Although the Red Guards were significantly geographically and systematically disadvantaged, this gave the Bolsheviks confidence in responding to retaliation. The White Armies operated largely independently of each other, without central direction or coordination, and the Whites' control over their territorial bases was even more tenuous than the Bolsheviks'. The core of the ammunition industry was under the control of the Red Guards, whilst counterrevolutionaries commonly relied on ex-tsarist resources. Hence, the Bolshevik victory was largely achieved through military force and terror that was embedded on thier necessary retaliation that threatened centralization.

It should have been assumed that the Bolsheviks would most likely claim victory; ironically, that would mean the tension of opposition would be more lenient, but the opposite did happen. Stalin used his entrenched paranoia about opposition as the explanation, rather than the intent, for the extraordinary policies he carried out. Supporting my initial claim that he used ideology to instill terror as a means of achieving socialism. Thus, the use of terror and retaliation to counter the ceaseless objections to Bolshevik rule enabled the broader environment in which Stalin emerged, as persistent resistance to Bolshevik authority accelerated the Party's reliance on coercion and repression.

Moreover, Lenin's growing dichotomy of classes gave rise to the entrenched tension between revolutionary groups that evidently prompted immediate revolutionary action, specifically Lenin, who served as a precursor to Stalin's reign. From the Bolshevik coup de etat of the provisional government (1917) in Petrograd to the rise of Stalinism, Russia had been amid devastation. Leveraging war and famine, the Bolsheviks had been amongst ceaseless retaliation. Among the plethora of counter-revolutionary groups, the Volunteer Army should be understood as a trigger for the radical measures sketched by the Bolsheviks, which, in turn, precipitated Stalin's even more radical mobilization. General Alekseev and Kornilov, arguably the most pivotal figures in the group, led it under dire conditions, such as the Ice March, which proved detrimental to the counterrevolution in itself but also signified the specific events that fueled political paranoia within the party. Further, the constant counter-revolutions mobilized the Soviet State as a whole, which, in turn, forced the Bolsheviks to develop an entrenched awareness of potential counter-revolutions. Although the Bolsheviks were notably advantageous, which was predominantly why they were aware of their advantage and somewhat confident in defending themselves, they still had to take into account opposition that could strip them of resources and get in the way of the futuristic metropolitan socialist state they desired.

War Communism

As a direct result of the Civil War, war communism was instilled. The Bolsheviks took over a war economy in a state of near-collapse, and their first and overriding problem was to keep it running. Sheila FitzPatrick illustrates the element, " the problem being that policies like nationalization and state distribution can plausibly be explained either as a practical response to the exigencies of war or as an ideological imperative of communism". Essentially, that could be applied to any pragmatic policy by

Lenin, because it doesn't necessarily limit itself to political means; ideology served as a justification for Lenin's reign and Stalin's radicalization. In 1920, when the Bolsheviks had just "settled" the Civil War, an economic disaster struck, shifting their philosophy from "barely trying to put back together the economy back together" to a euphoric, imminent change bound to be upheld.

The contingencies that gave way to Stalin's mere "intent" of class enemies and paranoia was subsequently drawn from War Communism installed by Lenin. Following the Bolshevik Revolution and the tumultuous period of the Civil War, 1918-1921 was marked by dire conditions that prompted a "temporary" mobilization order to assess the state of the economy. It's important to note that although Lenin introduced the NEP as a more lenient reprisal of his policy, it nonetheless shaped how Stalin would later exercise control over the state. However, War Communism in itself is not simply a response to prior military extremism; it was also the means by which socialism would be achieved. War Communism should be understood in the light of the key Marxist principle of the "unity of theory and practice": Ideology and action are two facets of the same process. There can be no practical action without an instructive concept, and ideology is always applicable to political life itself.

War Communism was one of the most pivotal legislations that prompted Stalin's disastrous behavior. The doctrine that underpinned such policies sketched the future of the Soviet State, including the complete nationalization of the social order. Lenin advocated for the abolition of private ownership and private markets, which would evidently prove detrimental to the flow of capital. By 1918, the peasants were already seen as hopeless burdens, the antithesis of what the Bolsheviks desired. But that did not stop the extraordinary mobilization intended to provoke disorder among the peasantry: the countryside would have to be urbanized by turning peasants into laborers in agricultural factories or collective farms. Cohesively, when Lenin forced the redistribution of a vast majority of the peasants to work in collective farms and abolished private ownership, severely limiting their capability to make a livable income, it not only brought about a 40% drop in agricultural production, but the grain harvest fell from 80 million tons in 1913 to 46 million by 1920. (Droughts and famines in Russia and the Soviet Union, 2024) Therefore, the ideology that induced famine was the same one that led Stalin to radicalize. As noted above, it sketched the future's "inevitable" famine. Furthermore, social classes ceased to exist in accordance with Lenin's Marxist "utopia" of socialism. After 1917, however, the extraordinary fact is that all social groups above the "simple people," or the "toiling masses," were eliminated as cohesive bodies. The gentry, the clergy, the liberal professionals, the middle classes, or the "bourgeoisie" were no longer considered organized groups. (Class Struggles in the USSR: First Period 1917–1923, 2022) The removal of classes prepared the ground for Stalin's execution of "class enemies" and played a significant part in strengthening my prior argument that Stalin was a radical intensification, while Lenin had more pragmatic reasons for this specific mobilisation.

Deviation of Intent between Lenin and Stalin

On a more favorable note, Lenin had established a new economic order. During War Communism, it is understood that the government issued a plethora of decrees essentially nationalizing all large-scale industry, and by the autumn of 1919, it was estimated that over 80% of such enterprises had in fact been

nationalized (Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Although hope was still present. But Lenin acknowledged that more lenient legislation was needed to rebuild the shattered economy the Civil War left behind. Following the outbreak of the Civil War, Lenin issued the NEP (New Economic Policy), which was more pragmatic toward free trade and private ownership. The shift from nationalistic rigidity to lenient private ownership created a period of temporary peace among the working class and the peasants alike. Henceforth, Lenin's pragmatic policy should be understood as the framework that Stalin sought to eradicate and replace with radical measures of nationalization and accelerated industrialization. Though notably debatable, the NEP reveals an ideological break in the continuity between Lenin and Stalin, as it explicitly emphasizes the more pragmatic lens that Lenin adopted rather than Stalin's ruthless approach to socialism. The discontinuity is viable to argue that Stalin was, in fact, a particular example regarding the extent of terror embedded within the Soviet Union. His ruthlessness shows it. Hence, rather than representing a logical continuation of Leninism, Stalin's emerged from distinct political and economic pressures. Therefore, Stalinism should not be seen as an inevitable outcome of Lenin's rule, but rather as a product of specific circumstances that reshaped socialist and Marxist ideologies in a coerced manner. Moreover, the NEP signifies deviation from Lenin's intent of political pragmatism. He served as an extraordinary example, setting him apart from prior radical revolutionaries. In terms of the Albeit on significantly worse terms, owing to his obsession with Marxist socialist ideologies. Furthermore, the transition from groundwork to coercion shifted the Soviet Union's role entirely under Stalin's authority. The following analysis examines the role of the peasants in Stalin's nationalization and how they served as scapegoats for Russia's backwardness.

1. Scapegoats of Stalin: class favoritism and its relation to collectivization and the peasantry

The tentative decisiveness depicted by Stalin was far from cohesive, nor logical, because the main cohort that the Soviet party proclaimed unfaltering support for became one of the "misguided" victimized social classes. Except that Stalin didn't necessarily target them specifically, they acted as an indirect bystander to the systematic coercion from the 1920s to the 1930s. Whilst the proletariat had notable favoritism from Stalin, mostly because they conformed to the standard of a socialist economy, anyone who was depicted as the reason for Russia's irrevocable backwardness was in tragic circumstances. Ironically, it is viable to contend that Soviet violence was enacted neither despite nor on behalf of the working class; instead, it was for the sake of the party, whereas the working class was merely a means of propaganda to exalt the populace with its falsification. Initially, the working class was indirectly represented as the justification for the means of his order.

To assess the role of the proletariat and the evident intent behind why the proletariat (working class) was deceitfully used as a "cover up," it's necessary to dissect its cause. First and foremost, socialism was presumably built to foster proletarian internationalism. Though Stalin's means of contention were his

obsessive "fantasy" of a classless society, which reveals why he thought coercion was necessary. Stalin, himself, writes -"To create the economic basis of socialism means welding agriculture and socialist industry into one integral economy, subordinating agriculture to the leadership of socialist industry, regulating relations between town and country on the basis of an exchange of the products of agriculture and industry, closing and eliminating all the channels that enable the birth of classes and, above all, of capital, and, in the long run, establishing such conditions of production and distribution as will lead directly and immediately to the abolition of classes." (Stalin, Selected Works, Vol. 9, page 23-4). One could assume the intrinsic division between peasant and urban worker, the line that connects the two in an inevitable, yet catastrophic endeavor. Results lie very differently between them. Stalin's justification, the proletariat, was used to implement a complete dictatorship, a dictatorship of the working class, which developed the Soviet economic system at a tremendous pace. However, the usage of the working class only made the peasantry scapegoats, the ones whom Stalin blamed as the reason for their "invertebrate backwardness". A socialist dictatorship meant the whole requisitioning of the agrarian class, who constituted the majority of the population. Indeed, by 1926, 80% of the country was peasant. (The Soviet Union: Facts, Descriptions, Statistics — Ch 4, n.d.) Moreover, Stalin's implementation of a proletarian dictatorship argues the logical coercion of the relation between the peasantry and the urban worker, or the "soviet".

Whilst ideological doctrine justified Stalin's policy in terms of collectivization, grain procurement, and expropriation, these specific statutory measures perpetuated unintended structural consequences for both classes. Stalin had attempted to implement a policy targeting one class to alleviate the other in the name of the party. Cruel and unusual policies led to extraordinary times when coercion against the peasantry was deemed necessary to advance the economy. The complete and total collectivization of grain was one of the most colossal national policies, acting as a 2nd civil war (Orlando Figes, A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891–1924). When the Communist Party first introduced forced grain requisitioning, Stalin justified this systematic coercion of the rural community as the means by which the nation was on the verge of a great transformation. Conceptually, "great transformation" meant eliminating the dichotomy between the urban and the rural. (Reaping the Whirlwind: Soviet Economics and Politics, 1928-1932, 1982) In 1917, when the Bolsheviks championed peasant revolutionary goals as their own, Lenin claimed that "there is no radical divergence of interests between the wage-workers and the working and exploited peasantry."

Consequently, from the very beginning of the coup d'etat of the provisional government, ideological doctrine has had ceaseless resentment towards the anti-thesis of themselves, hence, the peasantry. The subsequent economic recession caused by World War I only underscored the reality that peasants were scapegoats. (Soviet grain procurement crisis of 1928, 1991) As a result of unstabilized networks of supply and distribution, the party would soon resort to the forced requisitioning of grain in order to feed the cities and the army. Though collectivization initiated by Lenin was not as extensive as the economic

fragmentation imposed by Stalin in the mid-1920s. Moreover, as early as 1926, Stalin told a gathering of Leningrad Communists that "we do not defend just any kind of union of workers and peasants. We stand for that union, in which the leading role belongs to the working class." (Joseph Stalin, The Foundations of Leninism- Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1924) Cohesively, the communist favoritism towards the working class led to a greater divide between the two, which is notably contradictory to the authentic plan of Socialism itself, which united both the rural and urban classes. Furthermore, it's ironic that, instead of uniting the classes, he worsened the divisiveness, blaming one side while elevating the other. Therefore, as a result of Stalin's entrenched opposition to the rural community, he justified his desire to implement socialism in the countryside as "helping" the proletariat.

Urban impact and famine

For Stalin, the peasantry served as an ally only when and to the extent that it furthered the interests of the dictatorship of the proletariat, on 7 November 1929. In his article "Year of the Great Turn," Stalin announced that more middle-class peasants were flocking to collective farms. (Joseph Stalin, "The Year of the Great Turn," Pravda, November 7, 1929.) Once collectivization was fully instilled, "The year of 'Great Turn" was immediate proof that the peasants were deemed necessary to take the blame for "holding back socialism from its full extent". However, the war further intensified the divide between the collective farms and the maximalist and industrial workers, with the peasants as their hell-bent obstacle. (Belov, 2005, pp. 149-170) As a result of this marginalized subjugation, thousands of communist workers poured into the countryside and set up roadblocks to ferret out private traders, and made widespread use of Article 107 of the criminal code against speculation and hoarding. (RSFSR Criminal Code, 1956 Edition and Supplementary Material, n.d.) Consequently, since the peasants were evidently blamed for Russia's economic backwardness, Stalin forcefully implemented extraordinary measures to extract as much grain as possible from the peasants for the urban class. (The Politics Of Soviet Famines Under Lenin And Stalin, 2023) Unfortunately, on top of the tragic string of events, Holodomor occurred. This tragic event was purely artificial; combined with forced collectivization and grain quotas, it resulted in the death of 5.7+ million in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and the North Caucasus. The notably high numbers of deaths in regions such as Ukraine and Kazakhstan prove how forced requisitioning of grain in major regions devastated both the proletariat and the peasantry with severe famine and deaths. Collectivization was merely justified as a means of "uniting" the proletariat through the brutal means of forced grain requisitioning and industrialization. However, the preceding events of famine and shortages proved unviable, as this legislature inflicted harm not only on the rural community but also on the working class itself, whom Stalin intended to support.

As a result of these extraordinary policies of collectivization, the urban population was directly hit. One could assume that it is merely logical to know that forced requisitioning and nationalization of the peasants would inevitably cause utter starvation and famine within the cities. Under Stalin's Five-Year Plan, implemented in 1928, the plan aimed to modernize agriculture by consolidating individual farms into collective enterprises, but it often received harsh resistance from peasants. During the 1930s, when collectivization disrupted distribution, an astounding 40 million people were affected, especially in the

Don and Kuban regions known as Holodomor. (Conquest, 1986) Moreover, the 1932-1934 famine in Soviet Ukraine is estimated to have resulted in 4.5 million deaths, including 3.9 million direct deaths, accounting for 13% of the population in 1933. (Total Direct Famine Losses in Ukraine by Region, 1932-1934) The countryside was so famished, in fact, that many fled to the cities in an urgent act of hunger. However, the cities were also substantially affected by the catastrophic shortages. The most serious and widespread breadline recurrence occurred in the winter and spring of 1936–37, following the harvest failure of 1936. In the Voronezh region, urban bread shortages were reported as early as November, reportedly caused by peasants coming into towns to buy bread because there was no grain in the villages. The indescribable horror of food shortages was anything but calm; terror and chaos broke out in the cities. From Vologda, a wife wrote to her husband: "Mama and I stood from 4 in the morning and didn't even get any black bread because they didn't bring any at all to the store, and that happened in almost all the stores of the town." Hence, the consequences that ultimately caused this disorder were the rapid collectivization of individual farms, which, in turn, directly affected the urban population, notable civilians in Ukraine, and the entirety of Soviet Russia.

The complete requisitioning of grain prompted rapid, forceful coercion to deliver the "necessary" output demanded by the Soviet Regime, viewed as crucial due to the growing urban population. Though the peasants had taken the hit as collectivization replaced a vast majority of private ownership and evidently forced rural communities to join collective farms, which, unfortunately, took a large share of the commission. Although the peasants strongly resisted such measures, they were used as economic tools to increase grain production. The shortages that arose from such grain quotas led to tragic bread shortages in the cities. Peasant rebellions exclusively deepened the divide between peasants and the proletariat, as each group grew more resentful of the party and increasingly hostile to nationalization. Peasants often fought back against the OGPU (Soviet Police). For instance, while the Tambov rebellion (1920-1921) was more notable under Lenin, it was a precursor to the growing rebellions that followed. In an act of retaliation, peasants commonly hid grain, committed arson, or burned additional grain appreciations along with widespread murder of livestock (horses, cattle, goats, sheep, etc). Continuous anti-government protests ensued, approximately 1,300 in 1929 alone. The inevitable peasant rebellions led to widespread famine in the cities and to a devastating agricultural collapse. It's logical to assume that agricultural discontent in the agrarian community indirectly harmed the proletariat, even though the policies were not instituted to cause famine to the working class directly. The agricultural collapse of 1931-1933 is a proven consequence of such policies, as agricultural shortages in the collective farms subsequently led to starvation in the cities, harming both parties and, arguably, the entire Soviet economy.

1. **Stalin's reign of terror**

Role of the Gulag: how it portrayed Stalin's justification for class enemies

It was only under Stalin that the term "Gulag" was coined. The Soviet Gulag system constituted 476 separate camp networks spanning vast land, from the rigid conditions of the Northern Arctic to eastern Siberia. The Gulag system gradually emerged from the Cheka under Feliks Dzherzhinsky, then the OGPU in 1922, and was later merged into the NKVD in 1934. The Marxist doctrine that triggered the following actions was the pure desire for "unity" and the elimination of classes that would inevitably centralize authority through the means of fear. Essentially, anyone who was not of that desired class of the proletariat or did not fit the standard of the desired profile was subsequently labeled an enemy of the state. The significance of the Gulags, which were labor-intensive camps prisoners were sent to for the purpose of labor in Soviet Russian society, perfectly captured Stalin's paranoia of class enemies. Following the death of Stalin, the use of the Gulags was extensively dismantled. Nonetheless, the brutality of the camps still signifies how doctrine turned into radicalization through the means of deep-seated paranoia and desire for a communist, socialist government. The labor forcefully contributed from these camps gave way to a speculation that "class enemies" may have been mere economic tools, though it has validity, the intent behind exile to Gulags constitutes both doctrine and economic tools. Lenin's style of Gulags was no less economically useful than Stalin's, but it nonetheless had horrid conditions, though the majority of "prisoners" were, in fact, used for economic prosperity in the metropolitan areas rather than infringing on the law. Hence, Stalin had radically expanded the use of Gulags, which should be understood as an indicator of the political ideology of socialism and the means by which it was achieved. The gulags were a bottlenecked method of extracting as many resources as possible. Regions like Kolyma were used for coal mining, or Norilsk, where prisoners extracted nickel and copper, and broader regions such as Kazakhstan.

18 million Soviet citizens passed through the Gulag camps between 1929 and 1953. (Gulag: Understanding the Magnitude of What Happened, 2003) Prisoners taken advantage of for unpaid labor often faced severe conditions and hazardous diseases that left a traumatic mark on the Soviet regime. For instance, under Stalin, prisoners represented the state's "human raw material."(Alexopoulos, Golfo. Illness and Inhumanity in Stalin's Gulag. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017) The tragic reality of this cruel statement was that most prisoners were there out of pure necessity and treated as if they had committed a horrendous and forsaken crime, which was made unaware at times. Conceptually, the initiation of resource extraction instilled by Stalin with radical measures of vile conditions was justified as mere punishment for suspected class enemies. (Siegelbaum, 2008) Furthermore, in 1938 alone, 1714 were shot in 10 major regions of Russia: Moscow City, Krasnoyarsk krai, Ordzhonikidzevsk, Novosibirskaya oblast, Stalingrad, Chelyabinsk, Bashkiriia ASSR, North Ossetia ASSR, Azerbaidzhan SSR, and Armenia SSR. (The Great Terror, 1937-1938, 2009) Furthermore, the persistent shooting and brutal treatment by the NKVD and those in charge of initiating Stalin's punishment of the Gulag signify that even those in the urban region and those who fit the standard of Stalin's Marxist ideologies of socialism were still considered class enemies suspected of opposition to the party. Therefore, the Gulag system functioned not

only as punishment for "class enemies," but as a mechanism of economic extraction that subordinated labor to state planning priorities.

Stalin's First-Five-Year Plan: Economic centralization

In accordance with Marxist doctrine, Stalin sought to eradicate agrarian backwardness in its entirety and to industrialize and nationalize Russia from that specific "backwardness" into a centralized economic utopia where the means of production are controlled by Stalin himself and the party in general. Officially implemented on October 1, 1928, a Marxist decree on "Works, Vol. 13" from 1930 to January 1934 essentially conveyed how astonishingly significant the Five-Year-Plan was, which, in turn, was implemented to pull Russia out of Stalin's perceived backwardness. Now, not to obviate from how realistically backward it was, Stalin's perception of the reason it was weak and unstable was derived from the subsequent desire to, as Stalin himself puts it himself, in that specific decree of January 1934: "To convert the U.S.S.R. into an industrial country, to completely oust the capitalist elements, to widen the front of socialist forms of economy, and to create the economic basis for the abolition of classes in the U.S.S.R., for the building of a socialist society. The subject that represented the antithesis of socialism was the peasantry, or the entirety of the agrarian society of those who owned private farms or enterprises. The peasants desired private ownership of farmland, where they had the opportunity of independence rather than forced collectivization that tragically contended with the murder of 30,000 kulaks through the process of dekulkization for the mere reason of being labeled a "rich peasant". ("Brutal Crime against Rural Life: Collectivisation in the Soviet Union" 2021) Stalin integrated the ideology of socialism as an end goal, derived from Marxist views, to contend with mass repression of classes through policies such as collectivization, accelerated industrialization, the abolition of classes, and rigid means of modernization, all under the Five-Year-Plan. Thus, the category of "kulak" served as a flexible political designation rather than a fixed economic class, enabling the regime to criminalize resistance under the guise of class struggle.

Stalin's plan to submerge almost the entire peasantry in collective farming posed a moral dilemma. Economically, the drastic changes outlined in the Five-Year Plan led to famine and distress. In theory, collective farm participation was purely voluntary; however, only the poorest peasants sought them out of necessity. Albeit those who rejected such measures were categorized into class enemies, for instance, "kulaks" or "wealthy peasants" who were deemed too prosperous for the Party, but, in reality, this group consisted of anyone who objected to collectivization.

Ideology of a socialist state through rapid means of collectivization meant brutal and coercive repercussions for anyone who rejected the plan to "unite" the classes. (Viola, 1996) Stalin argued in the sense of Marxist principle, "the kulak stratum was growing in size, that class struggle was worsening in the countryside, and that the peasantry was divided into poor peasants, middle peasants, and kulaks. And, officially, it was the kulak who was "wrecking" and "intriguing" against Soviet economic policy." The blatant blame that was put upon the peasant classes, or, "class enemies responsible for wrecking the economic system", applies to Stalin's plan for how his utopian ideology of socialism, "dictatorship of the

proletariat", would inevitably radicalize any prior industrialization. Moreover, Stalin's rapid conversion of the country from an agrarian to an industrial economy through the Five-Year Plan reveals how policy was intensified under Stalin to fit his interpretation of Marxist-Leninist doctrine.

At the 16th Party conference in April 1927, the central committee had projected that 9.6% of the peasant population in 1932-1933 would be involved in collective farms (Class Struggles in the USSR: 1923-1930, 1977). This projection reveals just how confident the Soviet Party was in the success of collective farms. By 1929, these ambitions expanded when the Gosplan (State Planning Commission) called for the collectivization of 2.5 million peasant households, in addition to the figures announced at the 1927 Party conference. Consequently, collectivization rose dramatically in the first few years of the plan. It is crucial to note that Stalin's policy, and the gradual implementation of collectivization, placed the primary burden on the agrarian community, which, in turn, contributed to the brutalization and terror amongst any peasant who opposed or failed to comply with state quotas. In particular, this policy was especially oppressive because it targeted peasants directly. Further illustrating this escalation, the Politburo Commission published its legislation on 5 January 1930, stipulating that the Lower Volga, Middle Volga, and North Caucasus regions were to complete collectivization by fall 1930 or, at the latest, by spring 1931. This legislation marked a push for the rapid and coercive transformation of farms. As a result, legislation aimed at eradicating perceived backwardness among peasants inflicted harm not only on the entire peasant class but also on the proletariat themselves. This is evidenced by the 2.5 million deaths in Ukraine, a direct result of food shortages (Rudnytskyi et al., 2015, pp. 1-32). Overall, Stalin's unpragmatic plan to fully coerce the peasantry gave rise to widespread shortages and famine in both urban centers and rural communities, as a consequence of forced collective farms.

The Great Purges: Its relation to paranoia, and its results

In December 1927, a leading Russian neuropathologist, Professor Vladimir Bekhterev from Leningrad, met Stalin at a conference and had a private meeting with him. After the visit, Bekterev told his assistant Mnukhin that Stalin was a typical case of severe paranoia. However, Bekhterev's analysis raises an alarming question of whether this paranoia was the justification for his sheer terror. Or, if it was merely an inconvenient factor perpetuated in his obsession with a socialist, totalitarian, communist society. Now, it's important to understand that his paranoia was not the sole reason for his terror; instead, ideology allowed paranoia to be interpreted as an existential threat. This perplexity about the significance of his paranoia is especially evident during the Great Purges, which perfectly capture Stalin's specific insanity, without obviating the obnoxious policies implemented, such as de-kulakization, the Five-Year-Plan, and the "genocidal," as Robert Conquest deems it, acts of his reign. Instead, I intend to illustrate Stalin's ideological allegiance to class struggle and how it allowed him to interpret opposition as an existential threat, consequently justifying purges as necessary for socialist consolidation. Violence is Stalin's justification for his paranoia. Vice versa, they both stand as a dependent variable, where, without his paranoia of potential class threats, he would not have deemed it necessary for the advancement of the party. Whilst he thought this violence would be "necessary", it created significant tension, weakening the USSR as a whole. The Great Purges, beginning in December 1934, represented a vile and upsetting time

period of the ruthless executions, exiles, and purges merely because of the possibility of assumed threats. However, the Communist Party's Central Committee plenum in February-March 1937 was significant in intensifying the Purges.

On January 18, 1935, the Central Committee of the CPSU solidified the goal of the purges. Moreover, it initially set the stage for who, specifically, should be categorized as enemies of the people. The letter stated, " It is not the business of the Bolsheviks to rest on their laurels and act out. We do not need complacency, but vigilance, real Bolshevik revolutionary vigilance. It must be remembered that the more hopeless the position of the enemies, the more willingly they will seize on extreme means as the only means of the doomed in their struggle against Soviet power. We must remember this and be vigilant", this contends Stalin's persuasion in publicly announcing how class enemies are becoming increasingly harmless against the Soviets, which may lead them to lash out in extreme means. Moreover, in his closed letter of July 29, 1936, regarding the terrorist activity of the Trotskyite-Zinoviev bloc within the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, he ordered the Soviets to be extremely vigilant and to recognize any class enemies, no matter how disguised they may be. Not only did this include the Trotskyite-Zinoviev "enemy," but also categorized Kulaks, bourgeois, writers, journalists, and other figures who could be deemed potential opposition. Furthermore, Stalin's intrinsic paranoia regarding the enemies of the state was continuously built on the prior counter-revolutionaries. He incorporated the socialist ideology as the means by which all of this was done. In fact, it is logical to assume that the Purges were not in any sense necessary, but Stalin had leveraged this "end goal" to centralize authority within the State. In other words, paranoia resulted from Stalin's paranoia and thirst for violence and an attempt to centralize authority.

The total number of victims, including those in detention, is estimated to be as high as 950,000 to 1.2 million between 1937 and 1938. Additionally, 24,000 officers of all ranks were discharged and never reinstated in 1937-1938, and in the Transcaucasian military district alone, 1,183 officers were arrested for political reasons. The army high command was especially targeted merely because they were one of the only figures who had the potential to prompt opposition, which gave way to ceaseless purges and brutal mass arrests. By the end of 1939, at least 780 or 41.8% were executed, while 28 or 1.2% died while awaiting trial. (Khlevniuk, Oleg V. Stalin: New Biography of a Dictator, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015) Moreover, the killing and torture of high command did nothing but weaken the Soviet Party, whilst it, ironically, intended to protect any possible opposition; the paranoia was a contributing factor to the detrimental governmental coercion of internal militia. The significance of the purges reveals how Stalin's internal psychological mentality of severe paranoia was not only the factor that prompted intensification within the purges of class enemies but also resulted in a great deal of tension within the party. Therefore, while Stalin intended to solidify control within the Soviet state to achieve the goal of socialism, he first deemed it necessary to eliminate potential opponents, but the process of doing so was detrimental to the Soviet Union as a whole.

CONCLUSION

It's clear that Stalin's adherence to Marxist-Leninist ideals primarily served as a justification for policies that extended and intensified earlier Bolshevik legislation, including forced requisitioning, collectivization, and purges of so-called "enemies." These measures directly targeted the peasantry and indirectly harmed the proletariat, ultimately facilitating Soviet state consolidation. This analysis has demonstrated that Marxist-Leninist ideology served as an end goal, with socialism and the elimination of class distinctions employed as flexible tools of political coercion to advance party interests, as articulated in Stalin's concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat."The policies implemented under Stalin illustrate how the radicalization of doctrine led to extraordinary measures deemed "necessary" for party advancement, rather than for the benefit of the proletariat, whom the regime claimed to represent and unite. For instance, collectivization was presented as essential for rapid industrialization and the systematic subjugation of the peasantry, transforming Russia from an agrarian society into an industrial power. The ideology of socialism provided the framework for these radical modernization efforts, thereby legitimizing the entrenched oppression of various classes, with peasants serving as scapegoats. The famine resulting from collective farms exposed the structural consequences of forced grain requisitioning, including bread shortages and the famine of 1931–1933, both direct outcomes of grain deficits. Collective agrarian requisitioning represented only one aspect of the broader plan for a socialist, classless society. Ultimately, the promised "utopian" society, predicated on the elimination of classes and the unification of workers, failed to materialize. The rapid industrialization intended to transform Russia into a modern superpower instead reflected Stalin's attempt to radicalize the party's objectives and consolidate personal authority, rather than benefit the population.

Through the implementation of a socialist economy by coercive and unjust means, Stalin played a pivotal yet tragic role in establishing the "dictatorship of the proletariat." His coercion of the Soviet economy ultimately served to strengthen centralized authority, resulting in a cascade of atrocities: collectivization in agriculture, famine in urban centers, and the elimination of classes and "ethnicized" groups, all justified by the objective of consolidating control over production. The legacy of Stalin's rule remains a central topic of intellectual debate due to its profound impact on Russia. Although the precise endpoint of the revolution and the cessation of terror for Soviet citizens remain uncertain, it is clear that the historical consequences of Stalin's actions continue to shape contemporary perspectives. Stalin's reign is comparable to France's Reign of Terror; nevertheless, it holds significant importance in the Western world and continues to have a lasting impact on Soviet scholarly research.

REFERENCES

Alexopoulos, Golfo. Illness and Inhumanity in Stalin's Gulag. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017.

Breslauer, George W. "Building Socialism: Stalin's Revolution from Above."

https://academic.oup.com/book/40007/chapter/340342588

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. The Russian Revolution. 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Gorshkov, Boris B. Peasants in Russia from Serfdom to Stalin: Accommodation, Survival, Resistance. Bloomsbury Academic.

https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/peasants-in-russia-from-serfdom-to-stalin-9781350126381/

Gregory, Paul R., and Valery Lazarev, eds. The Economics of Forced Labor: The Soviet Gulag. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2003.

Khlevniuk, Oleg V. Stalin: New Biography of a Dictator. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015.

Khrushchev, Nikita. "Stalin: Conversations with Ideologists." Political Affairs 35, no. 8 (1956): 5–30.

https://www.marxists.org/history/usa/pubs/political-affairs/1956-08-35-8-political-affairs.pdf

Accessed March 5, 2026.

Malia, Martin E. The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917–1991. New York: Free Press, 1994.

Naimark, Norman M. Stalin's Genocides. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Pisch, Anita. The Personality Cult of Stalin in Soviet Posters, 1929–1953. ANU Press.

https://press.anu.edu.au/publications/personality-cult-stalin-soviet-posters-1929–1953

Rudnytskyi, Omelian, Nataliia Levchuk, Oleh Wolowyna, Pavlo Shevchuk, and Alla Kovbasiuk. "Demography of a Man-Made Human Catastrophe: The Case of Massive Famine in Ukraine 1932–1933." Canadian Studies in Population 42, no. 1–2 (2015): 1–32.

https://doi.org/10.25336/P6FC7G

Accessed March 5, 2026.

"Total Direct Famine Losses in Ukraine by Region, 1932–1934." MAPA Digital Atlas of Ukraine.

https://www.gis.huri.harvard.edu/media-gallery/detail/1381000/1082125

Accessed March 5, 2026.

"Gulag | Definition, History, Prison, & Facts." Encyclopaedia Britannica. 2026.

https://www.britannica.com/place/Gulag

Accessed March 5, 2026.

Werth, Nicolas. "The Great Terror, 1937–1938." (2009).

https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2009.10590035

Accessed March 5, 2026.

Viola, Lynne. Peasant Rebels Under Stalin: Collectivization and the Culture of Peasant Resistance. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Suny, Ronald Grigor. The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

O'Hara, Abbie. "Motivations of Russian Collectivization and Examinations of Stalin's Reign of Terror," n.d.

Richard Pipes, Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime (New York: Knopf, 1994)

Tucker, Robert C. Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above, 1928–1941. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990.

Suny, Ronald Grigor. The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993

Arsene, Alexandra-Ioana. "Political Discourse and Oppression – Influences on the Mentality and Culture of the Soviet Man." Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Philologica 15, no. 3 (2023): 41–54.

"Collectivization | Definition & Facts." Encyclopaedia Britannica. 2021. https://www.britannica.com/topic/collectivization Accessed March 14, 2026

"Droughts and famines in Russia and the Soviet Union." Wikipedia. 2024. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Droughts_and_famines_in_Russia_and_the_Soviet_Union Accessed March 14, 2026

Class Struggles in the USSR: First Period 1917–1923. Michael Harrison. https://michaelharrison.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Class-Struggles-in-the-USSR-First-Period-1917-1923.pdf

"The Soviet Union: Facts, Descriptions, Statistics — Ch 4." Marxists.org. https://www.marxists.org/history/ussr/government/1928/sufds/ch04.htm Accessed March 14, 2026

Daniel, Aleksander. "Brutal Crime against Rural Life: Collectivisation in the Soviet Union." Communist Crimes. 2020. https://communistcrimes.org/en/brutal-crime-against-rural-life-collectivisation-soviet-union Accessed March 14, 2026

Editors, HISTORY.com. "Gulag." HISTORY.com. 2018. https://www.history.com/topics/gulag Accessed March 14, 2026

"Gulag: Understanding the Magnitude of What Happened." The Heritage Foundation. 2003. https://www.heritage.org/europe/report/gulag-understanding-the-magnitude-what-happened Accessed March 14, 2026

Class Struggles in the USSR: 1923-1930. pp. 77-78. https://marx2mao.redspark.nu/Other/CSSUii.77vi.html

END NOTES

Holquist, Peter. Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis, 1914–1921. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002, p. 282.

Stalin, Joseph. Selected Works, Vol. 9. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, pp. 23–24.

Stalin, Joseph. "The Year of the Great Turn." Pravda, November 7, 1929.

Stalin, Joseph. Works, Vol. 13. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1930–1934. Decree of January 1934.

Stalin, Joseph. The Foundations of Leninism. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1924.

Lenin, Vladimir. April Theses. April 1917.

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. The Russian Revolution. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 1–2.

Malia, Martin E. The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917–1991. New York: Free Press, 1994.

Naimark, Norman M. Stalin's Genocides. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Alexopoulos, Golfo. Illness and Inhumanity in Stalin's Gulag. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017.

Khlevniuk, Oleg V. Stalin: New Biography of a Dictator. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015.

Conquest, Robert. The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Rudnytskyi, Omelian, Nataliia Levchuk, Oleh Wolowyna, Pavlo Shevchuk, and Alla Kovbasiuk. "Demography of a Man-Made Human Catastrophe: The Case of Massive Famine in Ukraine 1932–1933." Canadian Studies in Population 42, no. 1–2 (2015): 1–32. https://doi.org/10.25336/P6FC7GOpens a new window

Werth, Nicolas. "The Great Terror, 1937–1938." (2009). https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2009.10590035Opens a new window

Viola, Lynne. Peasant Rebels Under Stalin: Collectivization and the Culture of Peasant Resistance. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Figes, Orlando. A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891–1924. New York: Viking, 1997.

Belov, Yuri. "Collectivization and Peasant Resistance." In Studies in Soviet History, 2005, pp. 149–170.

RSFSR Criminal Code, 1956 Edition and Supplementary Material. Article 107.

Daniel, Aleksander. "Brutal Crime against Rural Life: Collectivisation in the Soviet Union." Communist Crimes. 2020. https://communistcrimes.org/en/brutal-crime-against-rural-life-collectivisation-soviet-unionOpens a new window

Gregory, Paul R., and Valery Lazarev, eds. The Economics of Forced Labor: The Soviet Gulag. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2003.

"Gulag | Definition, History, Prison, & Facts." Encyclopaedia Britannica. 2026. https://www.britannica.com/place/GulagOpens a new window

Editors, HISTORY.com. "Gulag." HISTORY.com. 2018. https://www.history.com/topics/gulagOpens a new window

Siegelbaum, Lewis. "Gulag." Seventeen Moments in Soviet History. 2008.

"Droughts and Famines in Russia and the Soviet Union." Wikipedia. 2024. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Droughts_and_famines_in_Russia_and_the_Soviet_UnionOpens a new window

Class Struggles in the USSR: First Period 1917–1923. Michael Harrison. https://michaelharrison.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Class-Struggles-in-the-USSR-First-Period-1917-1923.pdfOpens a new window

"The Soviet Union: Facts, Descriptions, Statistics — Ch 4." Marxists.org. https://www.marxists.org/history/ussr/government/1928/sufds/ch04.htmOpens a new window

Class Struggles in the USSR: 1923–1930, pp. 77–78. https://marx2mao.redspark.nu/Other/CSSUii.77vi.htmlOpens a new window

"Collectivization | Definition & Facts." Encyclopaedia Britannica. 2021. https://www.britannica.com/topic/collectivizationOpens a new window

"Total Direct Famine Losses in Ukraine by Region, 1932–1934." MAPA Digital Atlas of Ukraine. https://www.gis.huri.harvard.edu/media-gallery/detail/1381000/1082125Opens a new window

Peasant diary, 1932. Cited in Fitzpatrick, Sheila. Everyday Stalinism, 1999.

Central Committee of the CPSU. Closed Letter, January 18, 1935.

Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks. Closed Letter of July 29, 1936, regarding the terrorist activity of the Trotskyite-Zinoviev bloc.