

Notes On Stalin:

- 100,000 killed in Belomor Forest
- Prison camps frequent across Russia.
- Stalin was a hero to his people— when he died people wept all over Russia, even in prison camps.
- Born 1879 in Georgia.
- Only changed his name to Stalin later on in life— “man of steel”.
- Parents were peasants.
- Caught smallpox at young age— scarred for life— withered left arm
- Sent 14 to study in seminary by religious mother— strict
 - exposed to forbidden revolutionary books.
 - left seminary at 19 to become revolutionist.
- First task was to preach revolution to railway workers.
- 1902— married— wife died young— according to Stalin he was left with “heart of stone” after her death— all his goodness died with her.
- 1902— imprisoned— associated with illegal activities, eg. robbing banks.
- Exiled to Siberia— escaped in 1904— walked 3000 miles back to Georgia.
- Associated with Lenin— put on Revolutionary Council— preached to factory workers in appalling conditions.
- Lenin aimed to lead factory workers into revolution.
- 1917— over 7 million dead from WW1.
- March 12— Stalin reached Petrograd first after coup.
- October 1917— Bolsheviks seized power.
- 80% of people supported Stalin— all Tsarist rule abolished— more power to people.
- 1918— Government moved to Moscow— troops pulled out of WW1 by Lenin.
- Civil War— Trotsky in charge of Bolshevik forces.
- May 1918— Stalin made director of food supplies in Southern Russia.
- 50,000 executed during civil war— “violence in the name of the workers.”
- Farming and transport devastated by war— famine drove out peasants— some driven to cannibalism
- Peasants rose up— Communists had to restore economic policies— implemented 1921— return to aspects of capitalism.
- Lenin banned splits & factions in Communist Party.
- 1922— Lenin approved Stalin’s appointment as General Secretary of Communist Party.
- 1918— Married again.
- 1922— Lenin sent Stalin back to Georgia— annexed it— brutal handling of situation— repressed.
- Stalin’s actions made Lenin think about choosing Stalin as Secretary when he died.
- Lenin wrote Testament— Stalin was “too rude and intolerant a General Secretary”.
- Secretaries showed Testament to Stalin— he changed it.
- Trotsky did a deal with Stalin— he could present economic policies at 1933 Conference and did not speak about choice of Secretary as Stalin.
- 1924— Lenin died.
- Lenin gave Testament to wife.
- Stalin offered that Lenin’s body should be embalmed.

- Saw that Lenin's death could benefit rise to power— in his first speech, refers to Lenin as a great man as much as possible.
- Stalin omitted last part of Lenin's Testament.
- Stalin survived in Party— remained Secretary through deals.
- Party members accepted all over country, owing allegiance to Stalin.
- 1925— 500,000 members— Party grew at bottom— many members uneducated and ignorant.
- Trotsky & others kicked out by Stalin and Bukharin— Trotsky exiled to Mexico.
- 1926— Country run by Stalin, with Bukharin under him.
- Peasants were free to trade on market— NEP— agricultural cooperatives.
- Dawning of 'new Industrial age'.
- Secret Police (GPU)— discipline rigid— prison camps, cold cell treatment, frequent executions.
- Bukharin's Plan— give economy more time, release pressure.
 - help economy.
 - Stalin however wanted all grain taken— collectivisation— peasants had no choice but to comply— Stalin effectively killed off NEP.
- Rykov, Tomsky, Bukharin— thrown out of office for refusing to agree with Stalin's politics— wanted to return to NEP.
- "2nd Revolution"— brought terror, etc.
 - no one was safe from the law.
 - Prison camps burst at the seams.

- By 50th Birthday, Stalin was in control of entire S.U.
- All his own men were in office— all 'opposition' were thrown out.
- Massive industrialisation program.
 - collecting food— collectivisation
 - peasants worked directly for state.
- Kulak class eliminated— 10,000,000 men, women & children forced off land or shot— were blamed for all disasters in the S.U.— they were good farmers.
 - severe shortage of food as result of extermination of Kulaks.
 - requisition squads sent into country.
- Famine began in 1932 in Ukraine— spread to area of over 40 million people.
- Squads sent to everyone.
- Carts were in every village to haul dead away— very ill people taken off to die too.
- Stalin kept putting on pressure— didn't care about famine.
- Some people pushed to the edge— eg. man killed child and ate him— disappeared.
- Famine kept secret to rest of world— man-made by Stalin.
- 5–7 million died from famine.
- Famine was Stalin's 'payback' for peasants refusing to comply with collectivisation.
- Russian Church destroyed— no support for peasants.
- Russia became officially atheist— priests put in camps or shot— churches turned into grain stores— icons, relics destroyed.
- Industrialisation became new 'religion'— peasants brought in— ill-equipped.
- Show trials— fictitious conspiracies for engineers / managers.
- Stalin's camp network— gulag— in 1931 held 2 million men / women.
- Great Purge— expelled and arrested unreliable members, eg. 'Trotskyites' and 'counter-revolutionaries':

- ‘On June 22, 1936, a portrait of Trotsky was discovered in the living quarters of ... Afanasiya Uromova... in Pluskovsky village soviet. Uromova, according to information, is a corrupt member of the kolkhoz who carries on subversive work in the kolkhoz. According to the report of Vasili Ulyanov, Uromova assaulted Ulyanov’s father. I request that measures be taken to investigate and bring Uromova to trial.’
- Arrest quotas increased.
- Belomor Canal— 250,000 prisoners— no equipment— all built by hand— even pile drivers driven by humans— lots of injuries.
 - escapees shot
 - food rationed— many died— bodies thrown in ditches
 - 60-70,000 dead from one project.
- Prisoners promised freedom but were not given it.— Stalin was not pleased with building of Canal.
- Stalin’s second wife shot herself after argument with him
 - Stalin pushed her coffin away at her funeral.
- Kirov— possible rival to Stalin
- 1934— 17th Party Conference— Kirov approached and asked if he would like to become Secretary— Kirov said no.
 - in vote between Stalin & Kirov for Secretary, 3 voted against Kirov, and 292 voted against Stalin.
 - votes rigged so Stalin got right number of votes to help him.
- 1st December 1934— Kirov shot dead— given full state funeral.
 - Stalin announced immediate death penalty for acts of terrorism.
 - New evidence shows that Kirov’s death was arranged by Stalin himself.
 - NKPD detained Kirov’s bodyguard so Nikolaev (assassin) could get clear access to Kirov.
- All 2000 delegates in Conference were wiped out to clear evidence:
 - Kirov’s bodyguard clubbed to death.
 - Nikolaev sentenced to death and executed.
- Stalin cracked down on his old defeated rivals— all main old rivals shot.— Show Trials again— ridiculous crimes, eg. measures of spreading plague among pigs, and outbreak of anaemia in Byelorussia in 1936.— defendants forced to confess through different ways, and were then shot the next day.
- Great Terror— 1937-1939:
 - by 1939 every admiral, three out of five Red Army Marshals, and half the officers in the armed forces had been shot.
 - People ‘dobbed’ others in— children to parents, workers to bosses etc.
 - People even arrested for not ‘dobbing in’ suspicious people.
 - 1938: population in terror; no one knows who to talk to.
- Suspicious of foreigners— Comintern agents rounded them up.
- Stalin showed as a ‘god’— revered and loved.
 - propaganda showed Stalin as the greatest.
 - cult of Stalin— every detail of his life celebrated, audiences applauded whenever his name was mentioned.
 - worship of Stalin encouraged.
- Education— very strict— reports & test marks reintroduced, school uniforms— history important— 20 behaviour rules.
 - disappearance of illiteracy.

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Notes by James Robertson 2001

- Censorship— strict watch on writers, painters, composers, etc. to see if they supported Party and Government.
 - books already written by non-Party supporters had to be destroyed.
- Family life— 1920 laws free— 1936 laws strict— family benefits.