Stalin’s economic policies 1928-41

Reasons / Objectives

Military - fear of foreign enemies (Hitler rose in 1927 - massacre of Chinese communists / assassination of Soviet ambassador to Poland)

Economic - failure of NEP: stagnation in 1927-8

Political - analyser of the revolution - need for growth in size of proletariat / need to break the power of the bourgeoisie

Personal - to strengthen his position in Party (by attacking the Right who supported NEP)

Pressure - from Bolshevik Party rank and file - who wanted removal of ‘enemies’ / removal of bourgeois sympathisers

Georgian Stalin Planning Commission was set up to coordinate and amalgamate

First 5 Year Plan (1928-32) - emphasis on heavy industry e.g. coal, iron, steel

Second 5 Year Plan (1933-37) - more emphasis on consumer industries

Job 5 Year Plan (1938+) - guaranteed some production to meet demand

Industrialisation dependent on modernisation of agriculture - the two policies were inter-dependent

Transformed USSR from a major agrarian power into a major industrial power

Expansion of Soviet Russia’s older industrial areas e.g. Moscow, Leningrad, Don Basin and Baku and new industrial centres created e.g. Magnitogorsk, Gorki

1939 power stations, factories and metal-working companies were built during the 1st Plan

Coal: 1928 36m tonnes / 1937 130m tonnes

Oil: 1928 1.7m tonnes / 29m tonnes

Steel: 4m tonnes / 18m tonnes

Iron ore: 1928 1.8m tonnes / 22m tonnes

Some aspects of industry saw major growth e.g. coal production, chemical industry, energy industry, iron ore production

1500 power-stations, factories and metal-working companies were built during the 1st Five Year Plan

Thousand miles of railways and canals were built

100 new towns were built

Transformed the USSR into a major industrial power

By 1937 80% of industrial output came from heavy industry (coal, iron, steel)

1939 steel output 8m tonnes / 17m tonnes

3rd Five Year Plan (1938+) - geared to arms production to meet Nazi threat

2nd Five Year Plan (1933-37) - more emphasis on consumer industries

High targets led to obsession with quantity over quality

Passport system introduced 1932 to stop workers leaving

Military - fear of foreign invasion (War scare in 1927 - massacre of Chinese communists / assassination of Soviet ambassador to Poland)

Economic - failure of NEP / grain crisis in 1927-8

Political - survival of the revolution - need for growth in size of proletariat / need to break the power of the bourgeoisie

Pressures - from Bolshevik Party rank and file - who wanted removal of ‘enemies’ / removal of bourgeois sympathisers

Nepmen / bourgeois experts

Military - fear of foreign invasion (War scare in 1927 - massacre of Chinese communists / assassination of Soviet ambassador to Poland)

Pressures - from Bolshevik Party rank and file - who wanted removal of ‘enemies’ / removal of bourgeois sympathisers

Cultural - deliberate attempt to wipe out former Tsarist institutions and culture

Provided funding for rapid industrialisation (though requisitioning led to famine in countryside)

High targets led to obsession with quantity over quality

Poor living and working conditions / poor safety, limited training / low pay

High targets led to obsession with quantity over quality

Trading industry divided / lack of commitment and sabotage

Use of forced labour from labour camps

Failure

De-Kulakisation squads were sent in to force through collectivisation / assisted by OGPU and Red Army

By 1937 90% of peasant households had been collectivised

Requisitioning led to famine in countryside

Decline in livestock led to drop in meat and milk production

Famine in Ukraine and Volga regions

Shaping Ten 1928: 33 engineers were accused of denouncing industrial equipment. 6 were executed

Methodical 1933: Before working in Russia were among those accused of sabotage

METROVICK TRIAL 1933: Britons working in Russia of some tinkering with machines to improve output. This could cause machines to break down and accidents

High targets led to obsession with quantity over quality

Trading industry divided / lack of commitment and sabotage

Use of forced labour from labour camps

The Stakhanov Movement also caused tensions as the drive to succeed could cause divisions. There is evidence of some bickering with machines to improve output. This could cause machines to break down and accidents

The transformation of Soviet agriculture and industry in the period 1928-41 was achieved at too great a cost to the people of the Soviet Union. How far would you agree with this statement?

Typical questions

What were the aims of Stalin’s economic policies between 1928 and 1932?

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