

Examine Life in Soviet Russia

A Communist Country





What Will I Learn?

- Examine **life in Soviet Russia**, a communist country
- Explore the Nature of History





Sources for Soviet Russia



Written

Anne Applebaum, *Gulag, A History*
Robert Service, *Stalin, A Biography*



Visual

Propaganda posters for the Stakhanovite movement and of Stalin (p. 272)
Graphs on Russian economy (p. 276)



Aural

Music composed during Stalin's rule by Shostakovich (Skills Book, p. 156)



Oral

Recorded interviews with Russians who lived during World War II (Skills Book, p. 156)



Tactile

Artefacts in the State Historical Museum, Moscow (Skills Book, p. 156)





Key Words

Collective	a farm worked as a unit by a community or village under the supervision of the state as in Soviet Russia
Collectivisation	the process of changing privately owned farms into collective farms run by the local community under state control
Communism	political belief associated with Soviet Russia that the state (or government) should control industry and agriculture (also socialism)
Cult of personality	when propaganda is used to glorify a political leader, to create a god-like image of a political leader
Dictator	a ruler with full power over a country, e.g. Hitler and Stalin
Dictatorship	a country being ruled or governed by a dictator
Gulags	prison or concentration camps in Soviet Russia (USSR) under Stalin
Modernising	changing to modern ideas and ways
Purges	to remove people by lawful or unlawful means from society in order to eliminate opposition

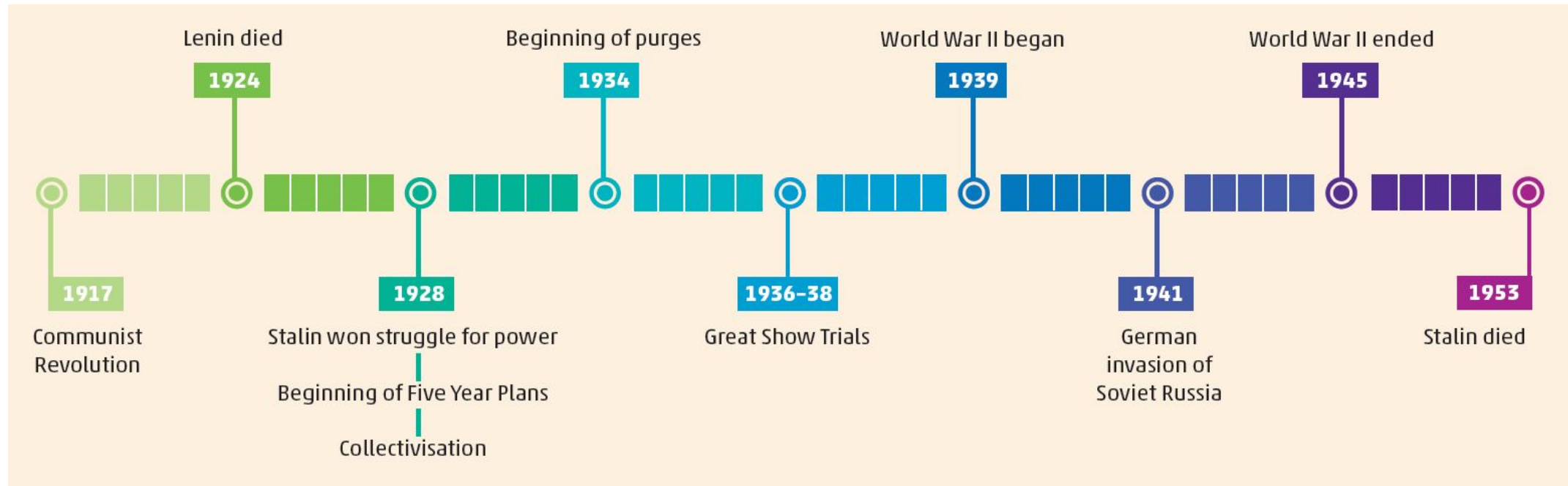


Key Words

Rationing	use of coupons and ration books to control the amount of food, clothes, footwear and petrol given to each person during the Second World War (the Emergency) in Ireland (also in Britain, Germany and the Soviet Union)
Show trials	public trials of opposition figures in Soviet Russia organised by Stalin

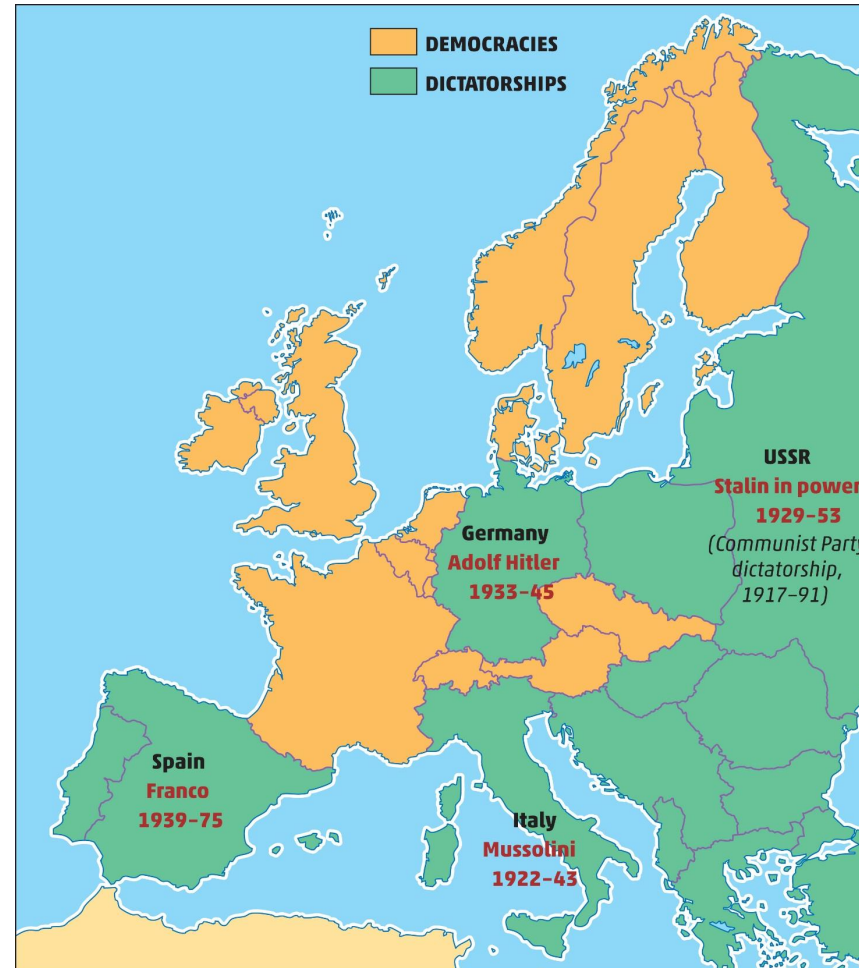
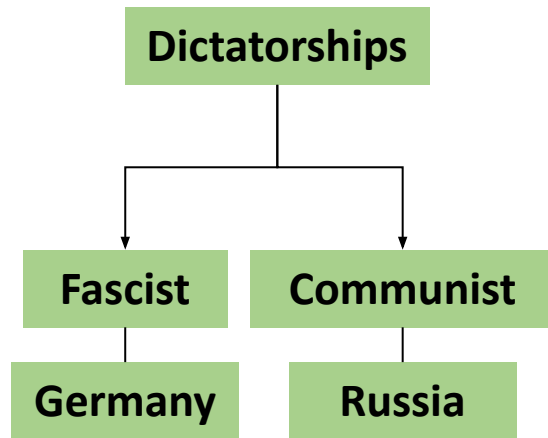


Timeline





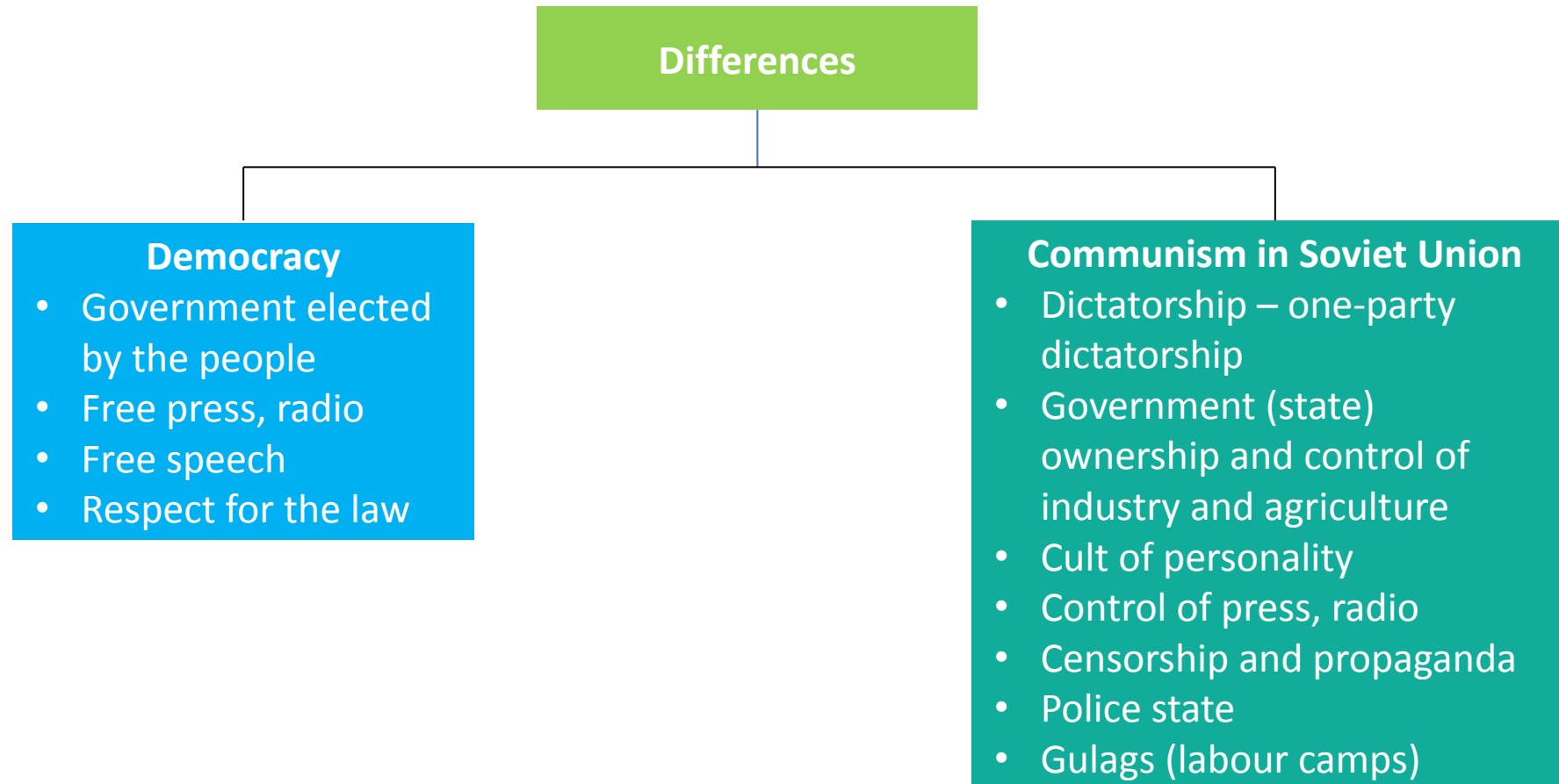
Spread of Dictatorships



The spread of dictatorships in Europe between World War I and World War II



Spread of Dictatorships





Communism in Russia

Background

- ❑ Russian Revolution 1917
- ❑ **Communists**, led by **Lenin**, took control of Russia
- ❑ Communists set up a **communist dictatorship**
- ❑ Russia became known as the **USSR** (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) or **Soviet Union**
- ❑ When Lenin died in 1924, **Stalin** took control of the Communist Party and the Soviet Union





Communism in Russia

What was **communism**?

Communists or socialists believed in the overthrow of factory owners and landowners. They wanted to **abolish private property** (private ownership), which they said caused some people to get richer and some to be poorer. They favoured instead **state** (government) **control** of industry and agriculture.

- **Overthrow** factory owners and landowners
- **Abolish** private property
- **State (government)** **control** of industry and agriculture

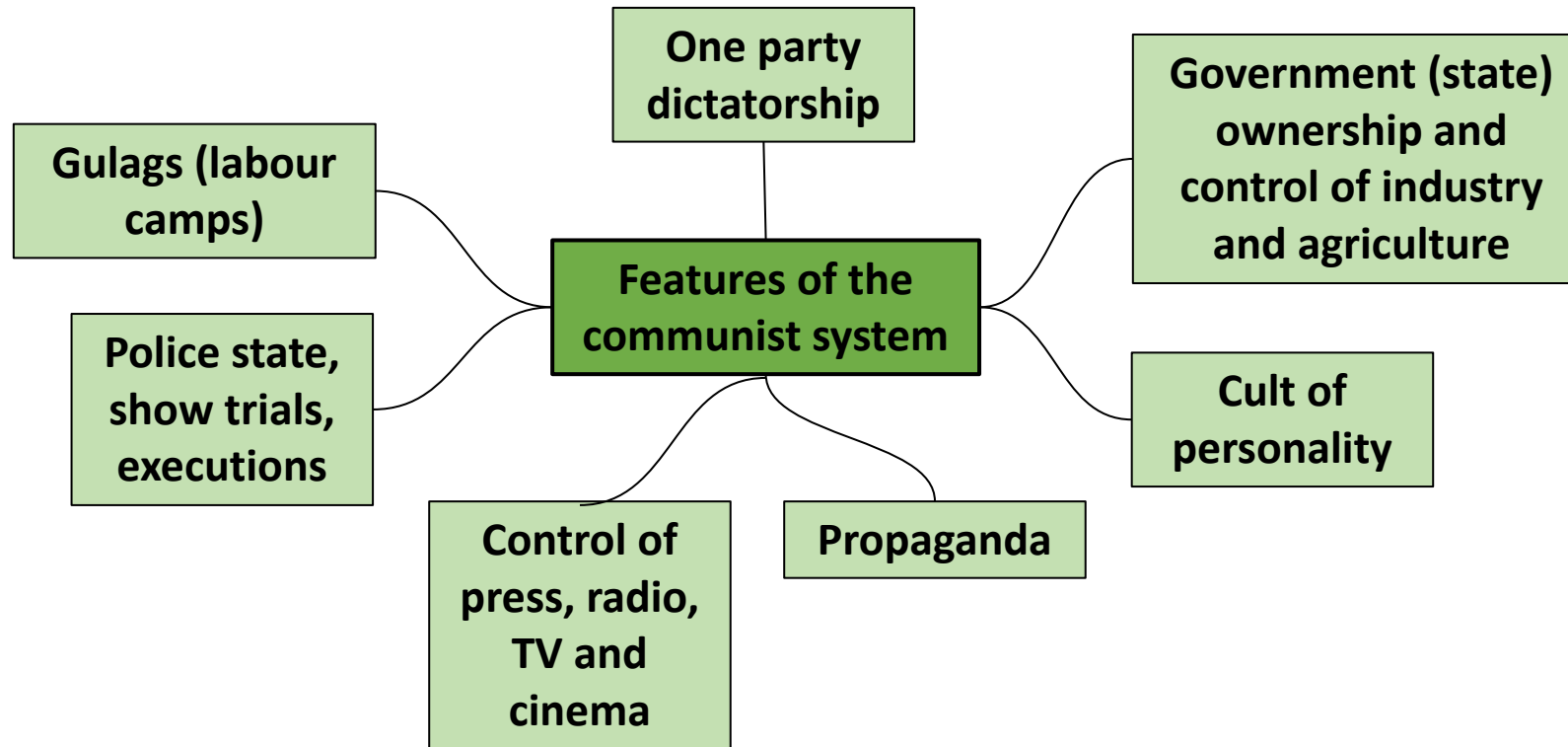


Hammer and sickle



Communism in Russia

Features of the communist system in Russia





Assessing Your Learning

1. What is communism?
2. What are the differences between communism and fascism?
3. What are the similarities between communism and fascism?
4. How do communism and fascism differ from democracy?



Assessing Your Learning

1. Name one country that was democratic at the end of World War I.
2. Name one country that became a dictatorship after World War I.
3. List one difference between democracy and dictatorship.
4. Who took over Russia in a revolution in November 1917?
5. Who led Soviet Russia after the death of Lenin?
6. What was the attitude of Communists to (i) private property (ii) state control of industry?



Life in a Communist Dictatorship

1 Stalin's dictatorship

- **Communist Party control**
- **Controlled** civil service, the army, industries
- **Controlled** press, radio, cinema
- News censored
- Use of **propaganda**
- **Secret police**
- **Labour camps** (gulags)





2 Propaganda and the Cult of Personality

- **History books** rewritten
- **Posters** and **statues** of Stalin
- Poetry and music **praised Stalin**
- Stalin treated like a **god**

Cult of personality: in politics, when propaganda is used to create the image of a great, all-powerful leader.

Stalin was like a god to us. We just believed he was an absolutely perfect individual, and he lived somewhere in the Kremlin, a light always in his window, and he was always thinking about us, about each of us. That was how we felt.

(Memories from childhood, quoted in J. Lewis and P. Whitehead, *Stalin: A Time for Judgement*)



How is Stalin portrayed in this source?



Analysing Sources – Posters Using Stalin's Cult of Personality

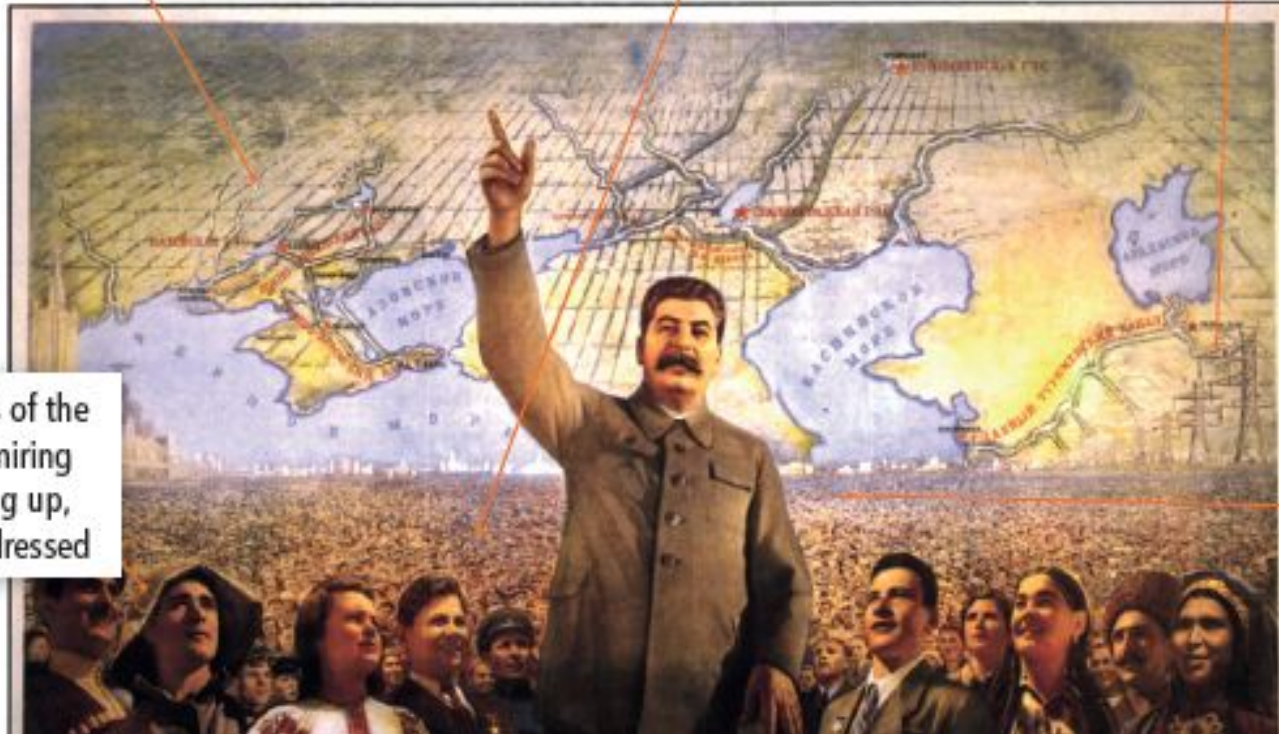
- Images
- Words
- Symbols

Map of Soviet Union in background.
Great cities being built

All the people behind
Stalin as he leads

Large pylons – symbols of
electrification and industrialisation

Note the faces of the
people – admiring
Stalin, looking up,
healthy, well dressed



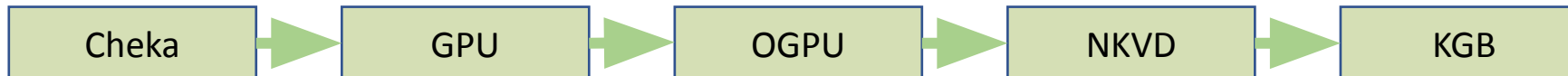
Note position of
Stalin – prominent,
above everybody
else, leading,
pointing forward,
a plain uniform
signifying a
humble person



3 Purges, Show Trials and Gulags

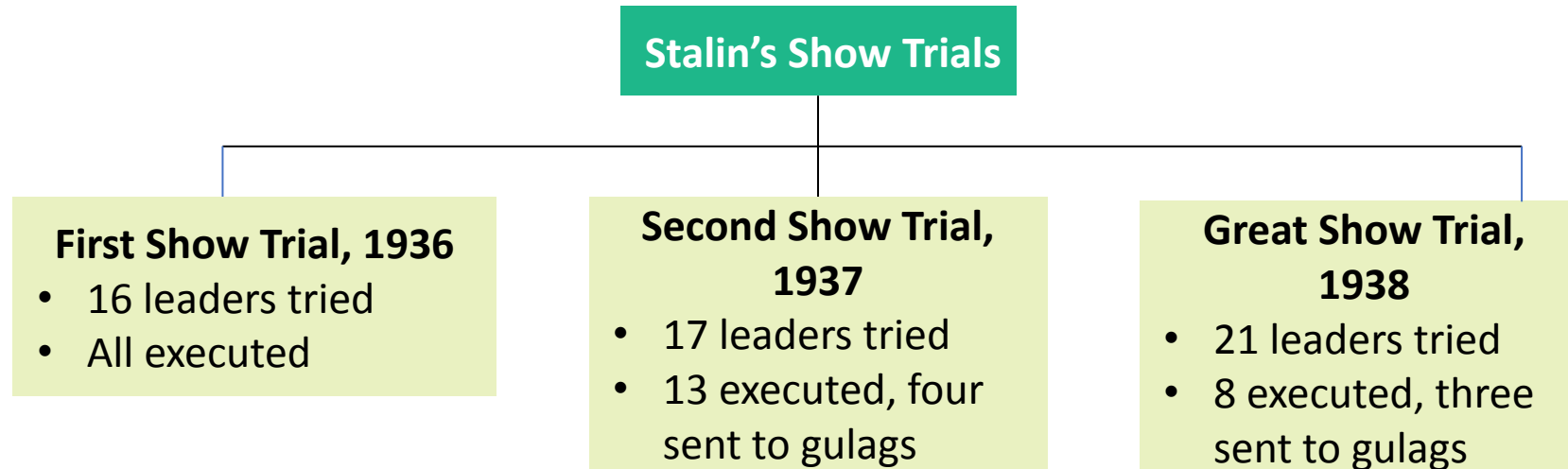


Changing names of the Secret Police





Purges, Show Trials and Gulags



What was the purpose of the Show Trials?



What were the effects of the Show Trials?



Assessing Your Learning

1. What aspects of Soviet society were controlled by the Communist Party?
2. Why was propaganda used in the Soviet Union?
3. Explain 'cult of personality'.
4. Explain one reason why Stalin used purges.
5. What event did Stalin use to begin purges and show trials?
6. What were gulags?
7. List two groups of people in Soviet Russia who were purged.
8. What were show trials?
9. List two effects of the show trials.



Life in the Gulags

- Labour camps
- Mainly in **Siberia**
- **Prisoners worked** in mining, chopping down trees, farming, factories
- **18 million** sent to gulags between 1929 and 1953
- Between **1 and 2 million** died





Life in the Gulags



A drawing by a gulag prisoner of other prisoners chopping down trees

It is impossible to describe the need, grief, pain and humiliation which we are suffering here. Everyone is forced to work, from the age of 12 to 70 and over, in fact everyone who is still able to stand on his feet; some of them are even taken from their sick beds.

Many die of hunger in the woods and are simply buried in the snow without clothing. Try to work day and night on 300 grams of bread a day, without rest!

(Letters smuggled from a gulag)

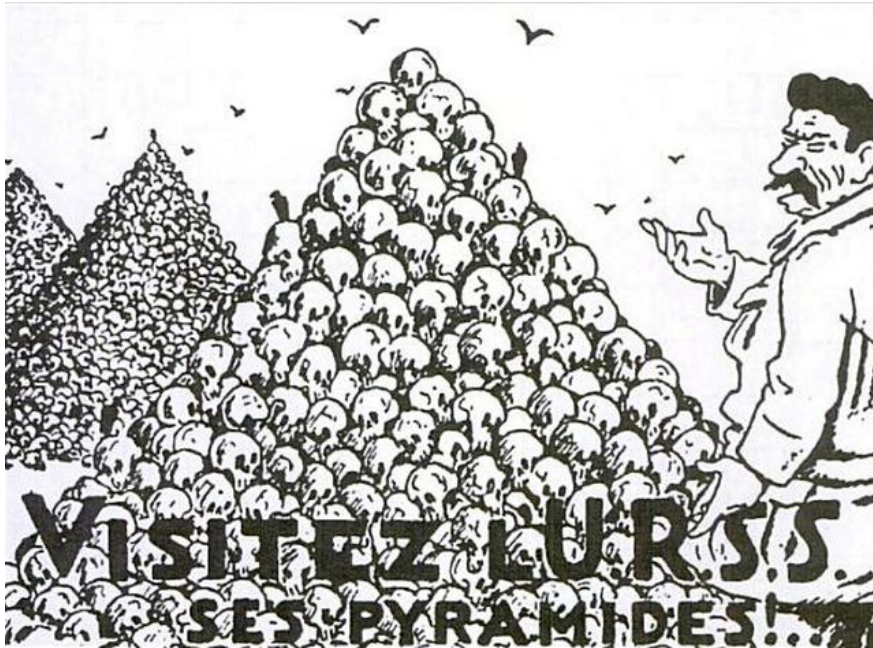


Based on these sources, what was life like in the gulags?



Life in the Gulags

A cartoon published in France in the 1930s: *Visit the pyramids of the USSR!*



Life and Death in Stalin's Russia

- 18 million people passed through the gulags between 1929 and 1953
- At least 1.6 million people died in the gulags
- 29 million people carried out forced labour between 1929 and 1953
- 786,000 political executions by secret police between 1934 and 1953
- Six to eight million died by starvation in famine of early 1930s



How is Stalin portrayed in this cartoon?



What do the statistics above tell you about life in the Soviet Union?



Assessing Your Learning

1. What were the gulags?
2. Where were the gulags to be found?
3. What did the prisoners work at?
4. How were the prisoners treated?



How did Industrialisation Affect People's Lives?

Stalin said in 1931:

*We must create in our country an industry which would be capable of re-equipping and organising not only the whole of our industry but also our transport and our agriculture. The history of Russia shows that because of her backwardness she was constantly being defeated. **We are 50 or 100 years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this lag in ten years. Either we do it or we will go under.***

GOSPLAN (state planning)
set targets for all industries



Each region set targets
for factories, mines



Each manager set targets
for foremen and workers



How did Industrialisation Affect People’s Lives?

- Emphasis on developing **heavy industry** – coal and iron, gas, oil, electricity
- **Railway system**
- Moscow Underground
- **Consumer goods** later

Five Year Plans	
First	1928–32
Second	1933–37
Third	1938–41 (WWII)
Fourth and Fifth Plans	1945–55
Later Plans	Plans continue until 1991



Stakhanov, Hero of Socialist Labour

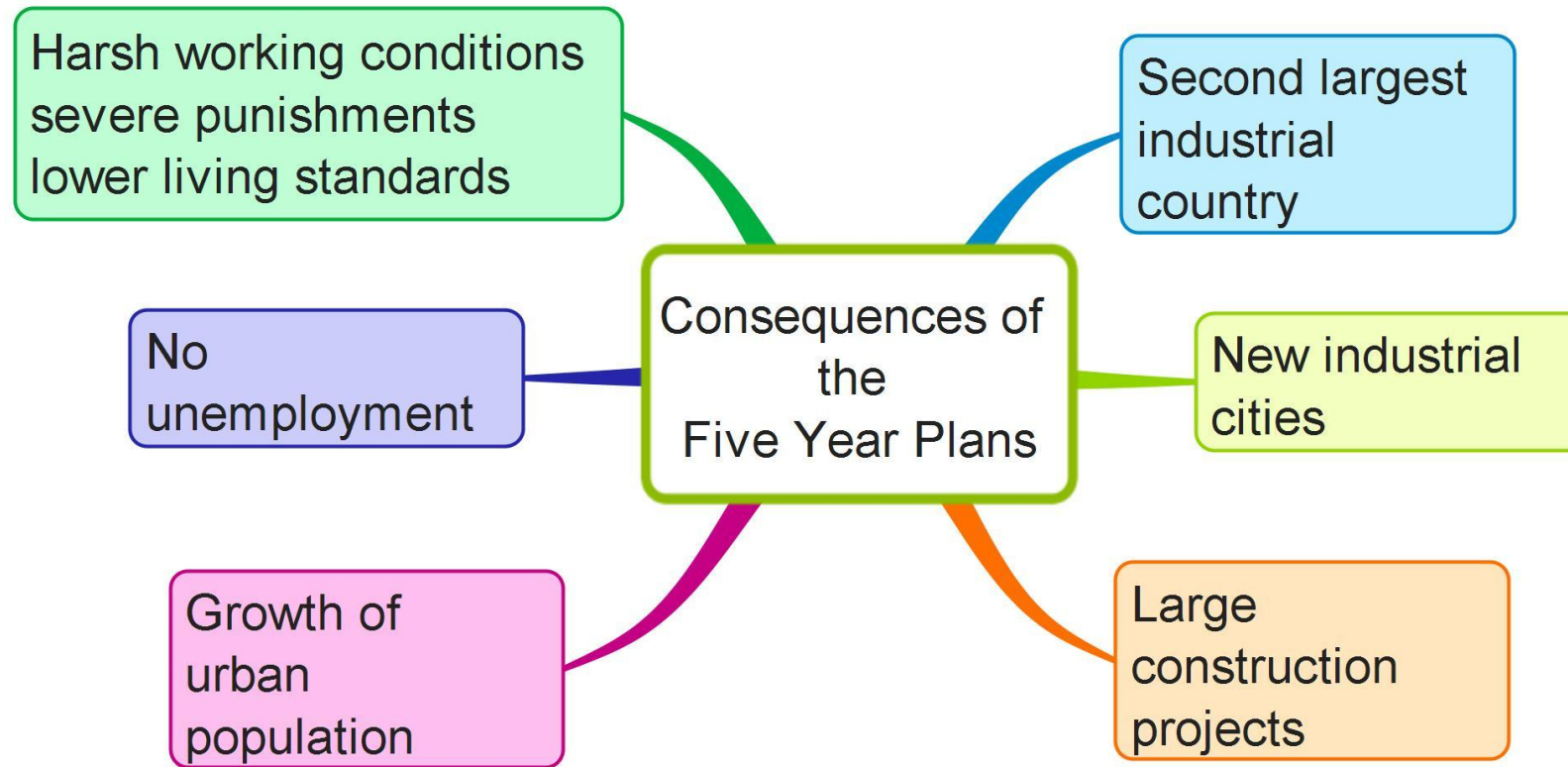
- **Stakhanov, coal miner**
- **102 tons** mined in one shift
- **Stakhanovite Movement** –
his work used as an example
so that workers would be
encouraged to work for their
country
- **Propaganda** – two other
workers helped Stakhanov



Why was Stakhanov portrayed as a hero?



Consequences of Five-Year Plans



Complete a mind map on **the Consequences of the Five Year Plans** using the above features



Analysing Sources – Production Figures

Note date – 1927 –
before the Five Year
Plans began in 1928

Note dates – 1932 and
1937 – **end** of the First and
Second Five Year Plans

Production in the Soviet Russia (millions of tons) *(targets of First and Second Five Year Plans in brackets)			
	1927	1932	1937
Coal	35	64 (75)*	128 (152)
Oil	12	21 (22)	29 (47)
Steel	4	6 (10)	18 (17)
Electricity	5 (m. Kw)		36 (m. Kw)

Do the figures suggest
that the First and Second
Five Year Plans were
successful?



Look at the difference
between the figures in
1927 and 1932. Was the
First Plan successful?

Look at the difference
between the figures in
1932 and 1937. Was the
Second Plan successful?

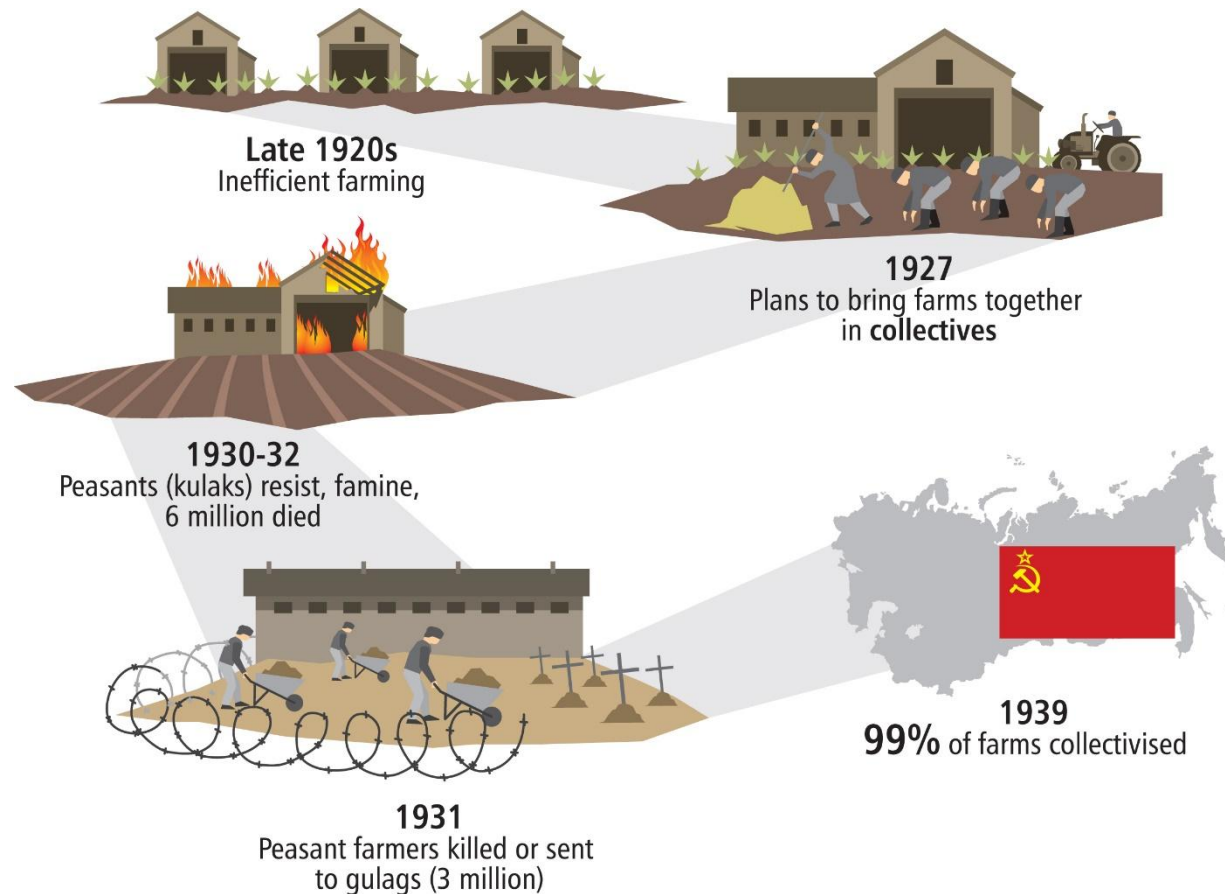


**What do these
statistics (figures)
tell you about the
success or failure of
the Five Year Plans?**



How did Collectivisation Affect People's Lives?

- **Government took over all land**
 - Aim to increase mechanisation and food supply
- **Collective farms** formed
- **Kulaks** killed or sent to gulags
- **Famine** killed millions
- Millions forced to move to **cities** to work in factories





How did Collectivisation Affect People’s Lives?

Grain production, 1913–40 (million tons)	
1913	86
1921	36
1928	73
1933	69
1940	95

Cattle and sheep numbers (millions)		
	Cattle	Sheep
1928	33	115
1941	28	92



Did collectivisation improve people’s lives?



How did Collectivisation Affect People's Lives?



How do these accounts (sources) show that people suffered during collectivisation?

The poor peasants of the village get together in a meeting and decide: 'So-and-so has 6 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 secret police, and there you are. So-and-so gets 5 years [in the gulag]. They confiscate [take over] his property and give it to the new collective farm. Sometimes they ship the whole family out.

Oleska Voitsyskhovsky saved his and his family's lives by consuming the meat of horses which had died of diseases. He dug them up at night and brought the meat home in a sack.

(Based on accounts from villagers in the 1930s)



Assessing Your Learning

1. Why did Stalin plan to industrialise the Soviet Union?
2. What were the Five Year Plans?
3. List two changes made to the Soviet Union as a result of the Five Year Plans.
4. What was collectivisation?
5. How were kulaks treated during collectivisation?
6. Explain one effect of collectivisation.



How did Women's Lives Change in Soviet Russia?

- **Women** got **more equal footing** with men
- **50%** – proportion of women in workforce
- Crèches, kindergartens
- **Child allowances**
- Divorce more difficult to obtain
- **Encouragement** for larger families **after WWII**
- **Mother-Heroines**

You are now a free woman. Help build socialism!

We defeated the enemy with weapons. We will earn our bread with work, Comrades, roll up your sleeves for work!



Assessing Your Learning

1. How did jobs that women worked at change under the communist system?
2. What was the difference between women working outside the home in the Soviet Union and western countries?
3. How were large families encouraged in Soviet Russia?



Health, Education and Housing

- **Health care free**
- **Hospitals** built
- **Doctors** trained
- Free and compulsory education
- Huge **literacy** campaign
- Education for **propaganda**
 - **Stalin** the Great Leader
 - Stalin's role in history exaggerated
- **Youth organisations**
- **Housing** – shortage
- Small apartments





Assessing Your Learning

1. How was health care improved in Soviet Russia?
2. What changes were made to education?
3. How were young people treated in the Soviet Union?



What was Life Like in Soviet Russia During World War II?

- Russian people living in **conquered lands** and in **cities** of Leningrad, Moscow and Stalingrad suffered greatly
- **Starvation** in siege of Leningrad
- **Nazi SS and police units** carried out **mass murders**
- **Rationing system** for food and clothes



Operation Barbarossa – the German invasion of the Soviet Union – was a three-pronged attack using blitzkrieg tactics



What was Life Like in Soviet Russia During World War II?



Russian peasants leaving their village ahead of the German Army

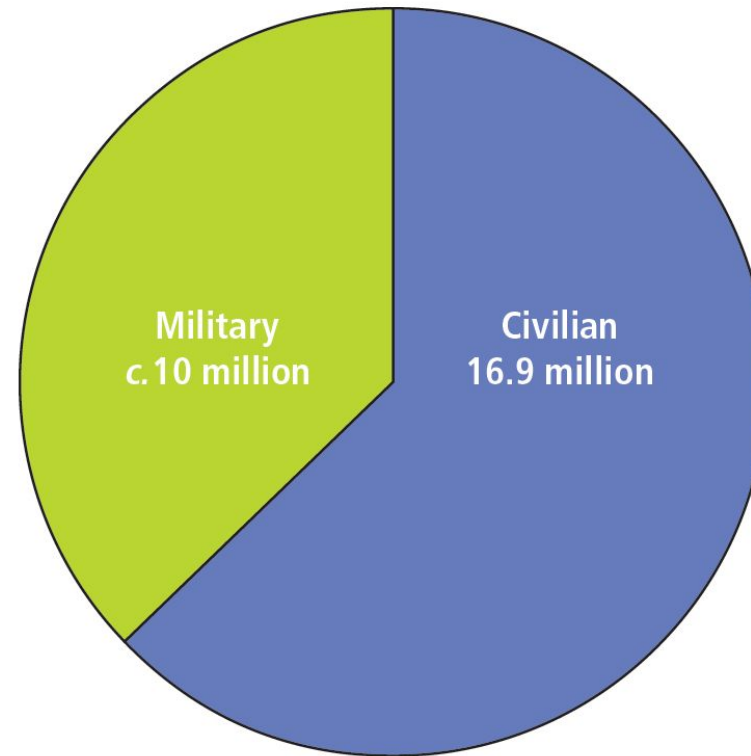
I watched my mother and father die. I knew perfectly well that they were starving. But I wanted their bread more than I wanted them to stay alive. And they knew that. That's what I remember about the blockade: that feeling that you wanted your parents to die because you wanted their bread.

(A survivor of the siege of Leningrad)



What was Life Like in Soviet Russia During World War II?

Estimated Total USSR Deaths in World War II



How do these sources show that life was very difficult for people in the Soviet Union during World War II?



Complete a mind map on **Life in Soviet Russia – a Communist Country** using the above features



Assessing Your Learning

Match up the Key Words with these definitions:

1. Communism	A. Farms work as a unit by a community or village
2. Dictatorship	B. Propaganda used to glorify a political leader
3. Gulag	C. Historical judgement not influenced by a person's feelings or opinions
4. Propaganda	D. Process of changing private farms to state owned and controlled farms
5. Cult of personality	E. Plans to industrialise the Soviet Union
6. Purges	F. Use of information to influence opinions and ensure power
7. Show trials	G. Country ruled by one man or woman or party
8. Five Year Plans	H. Favours state control and ownership of agriculture and industry
9. Collectivisation	I. Labour camps
10. Objective	J. Public trials of opposition leaders
11. Collectives	K. Eliminating opposition by lawful or unlawful means



Assessing Your Learning

1. How did people suffer in Soviet cities during World War II?
2. How were people treated in German-controlled territory?



Preparing for CBA 2

Preparing for CBA 2

A project on the life and experiences of a person of historical interest

Persons of interest in Soviet Russia

Lenin

Joseph Stalin

Lavrentiy Beria

Nikita Khrushchev

Leon Trotsky

Dora Kaplan

Lyudmila Pavlichenko

Trofim Lyenko

****Note your choices****