
Analyze the methods used by Joseph Stalin to obtain power and to what extent did Stalin follow the aims of his declared ideology?

Tarik Onalan

SCHOOL

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The early 20th century was a period of upheaval in Russia: the first world war had just ended, leaving in its aftermath millions of dead Russians and the Russian national pride scarred in defeat; the second industrial revolution left behind a large industrial capacity, but the devastating defeat of Russia during world war 1 had left Russia's manufacturing sector in a shambles (Daniels 39); the people of Russia, most of whom were peasantry, were expressing their disdain of the Romanov dynasty, the family that was at the head of Russia's Tsarist government. The peasant class was angry at the government's ignorance and abuse of the peasantry. The state practiced progressive terrorization and enserfment of the peasantry, ignoring their conditions, with shortages rampant and growing unrest. Vladimir Lenin, the leader of the Bolshevik Party, spoke of creating a new socialist state and removing the incompetent government: a call for revolution. The October Revolution in November of 1917—also known as the Bolshevik Revolution—was the culmination of the frustrations of the people of Russia, and thrust Stalin into the political scene as Lenin's protégé. Stalin used his influence as Lenin's direct subordinate to slowly build his network of political allies, all the while weeding out his enemies, until he was able to consolidate political power. After gaining power, Stalin only followed his declared ideology — Marxism-Leninism—to a moderate extent: while he did nationalize industry and implement some level of redistribution, he never created a socialist state, instead heading a centralized government.

I Origins

The origins of Stalin's single-party state stem to the period two decades before the Bolshevik revolution. While there is no single universally accepted cause of the Bolshevik Revolution, it is generally agreed upon that the Bolshevik Revolution was a product of previous trends; it was not a spontaneous event (Daniels 331). The rapid industrialization of Russia's economy through the late 19th and into the early 20th century showcased the corresponding stagnancy of the Russian political system. Mistreatment of the growing permanent working class—composed primarily of extorted, abused serfs— incited more and more strikes and mutinies, paralyzing the government (**“The Bolshevik Revolution”**). The Russian Empire was composed of institutions that were increasingly obsolete in the new century, and was ill-suited to deal with a changing political and economic climate. (**“The Bolshevik Revolution”**).

Lenin led the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, a Marxist group that was among the many entities disillusioned with the current government. The creation of the Bolshevik Party came around 1903, when Lenin's party fractured into the Bolsheviks—those who wanted revolution immediately—and the Mensheviks—those who wanted to wait longer before the revolution (**“The Bolshevik Revolution”**). Stalin, attracted by Lenin's call for revolution and vision of a Marxist state, joined the Bolsheviks (Service 54). Stalin became known for his crude, simple and yet pragmatic approach to politics, recognizing, like Lenin, the importance of propaganda and organization, and though he and Lenin did not agree on everything, Lenin promoted the still

obscure Stalin in the Bolshevik Party, taking him under his patronage and promoting his career (77,124).

After world war I, the resentment harbored by the people began to boil over. Bloody Sunday, the humiliation of the Russo-Japanese war, and now, the destruction of world war I all contributed to a common feeling that the Romanov government was inadequate (**“The Bolshevik Revolution”**). The government’s credibility was further compromised with the Rasputin scandal, disintegrating the government from the inside, causing the State Duma—the legislative assembly of the Russian Empire—to create a provisional government controlled by the Bolsheviks’ rivals, the Mensheviks (**“The Bolshevik Revolution”**). The State Duma was already viewed as a travesty of an institution by the people; the provisional government it created was not viewed any better, and was seen as an incompetent institution (Daniels 338; Kuromiya 32). Lenin played upon the mood of the masses to further antagonize the people, not afraid of inciting violence in the revolution (Daniels 335).

II Establishment

Hello, world!

III Rule

Hello, world!

Works Cited

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