

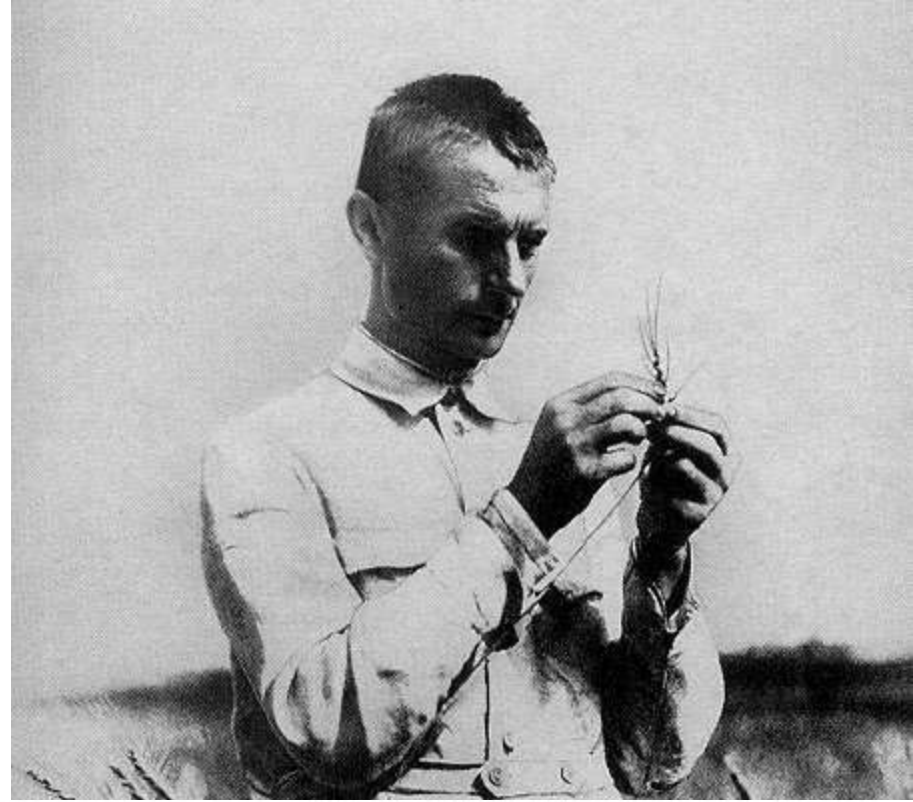
Post-War Period and the Death of Stalin

Post-War Victims

- **Russian prisoners of war.** Stalin had hundreds of thousands of the soldiers that had survived and returned home from German prisoner of war camps executed or sent off to Siberia. From his perspective, they were traitors. Moreover, they had endured too much exposure to the “bourgeois” west and therefore could not be relied upon as loyal to the Soviet state.
- **Ukrainians.** Ukrainians, too, suffered terribly from the executioners hand. Not surprisingly, given the way Stalin had treated the country, large numbers of Ukrainians had welcomed and collaborated with the Germans. Stalin’s secret police employed a wide lens in determining who needed to be eliminated or imprisoned. The exact numbers are unknown, but conservative estimates extend into the hundreds of thousands.
- **Germans.** For the thousands of German prisoners of war interned in Russian camps, the war never ended. Of the 110,000 soldiers of the German Sixth Army captured at Stalingrad, for instance, only 5,000 ever made it home—and not until the mid 1950s, after Stalin’s death.

Trofim Lysenko (1898-1976)

- Lysenkoism.** With the chaos that accompanied the end of the war, famine returned to large swathes of the U.S.S.R. Although the famines were not nearly as severe as the famines of the early 1930s, there was an effort to make sure they never happened again by opening new lands to farming. The leader in this movement was Trofim Lysenko. Since the 1920s, Lysenko had been the favored “scientist” within the party, and he was especially beloved by Stalin. He was credited with achieving “results” rather than simply doing research. Hundreds of legitimate—and much more capable—scientists were fired and even killed to make way for Lysenko’s ideas, which were supposed to make obsolete once and for all the food shortages. According to Lysenko, vast lands in the Asian steppe of southern central Russia—across countries such as Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan—could be opened to wheat farming using new methods developed by him. Known as the “Virgin Lands,” the project went forward in the years after World War II. In the first season, the crops came in as planned. Thereafter, however, the soil—which was not appropriate for wheat farming—dried up and began to blow away. In the end, Lysenko’s theories turned large parts of these regions into giant dustbowls. In the 1960s, Lysenko and his ideas, which relied on the flawed Lamarckian conception of inheritance (as opposed to accurate Mendelian genetics), were discredited. He spent the last years of his life in disgrace. His work nonetheless produced environmental scars that are still evident today.



На заседании передовиков урожайности по зерну, трактористов и машинистов молотилок с руководителями партии и правительства Товарищи Сталин, Андреев, Микоян и Косыгин слушают речь академика Т. Д. Лысенко.
Слева направо: И. Сталин, 29 декабря 1955 года. Фото: Н. Калинин и Н. Устинов

- Large parts of the U.S.S.R.'s European cities lay in ruins. The rebuilding typically produced long rows of cookie-cutter apartment complexes. The construction materials were invariably substandard, and these structures soon began to crumble after their completion. When visited in the former Soviet Union in the early 1990s, I found that the concrete that composed these structures was so weak that it was possible to carve one's initials into it with one's fingers.

The Rebuilding of Russia's European Cities



The “Seven Sisters”

- In 1946, Stalin determined that Moscow, like New York City, should have a significant number of skyscrapers. Work, therefore, began in 1947 on the “Seven Sisters”—neo-Gothic skyscrapers modeled, in part, after the Empire State building and other architectural gems in Manhattan. Only six of the sisters were ever built, and the slides that follow exhibit them.

Kotyelnicheskaya Nabyerezhnaya Apartment Building, Moscow. The next slide shows Moscow State University.





- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Moscow



- Hotel
Leningradskaya,
Moscow



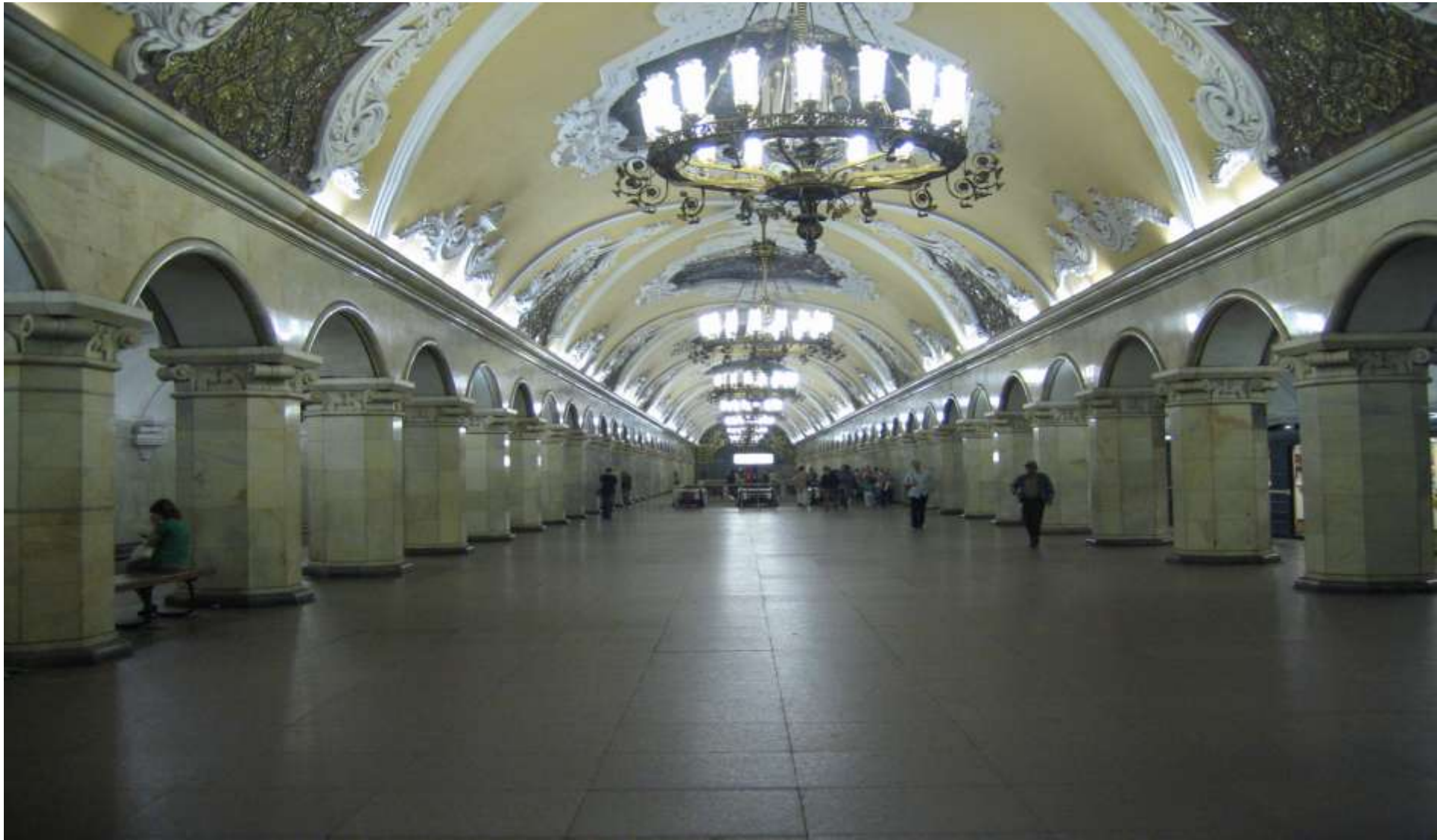
- Red Gates
Administrative
Building,
Moscow



- Kudrinskaya Square Building, Moscow



Subway Station in Moscow, built in the immediate post-war years, also according to Stalin's orders.



The Doctors' Plot (1953)

- Hundreds of Jewish doctors were arrested. Stalin believed that all Jews in the U.S.S.R. were a “fifth column” allied with the U.S. and “international Jewish interests” tied to Israel.
- Soviet Embassy in Israel was closed.
- Sister of first president of Israel was arrested.
- Even Stalin’s personal physician, Mirion Vosvi, was arrested.
- After Stalin’s death, all of the prisoners were released.
- Had Stalin lived, however, the purges might have been very extensive.

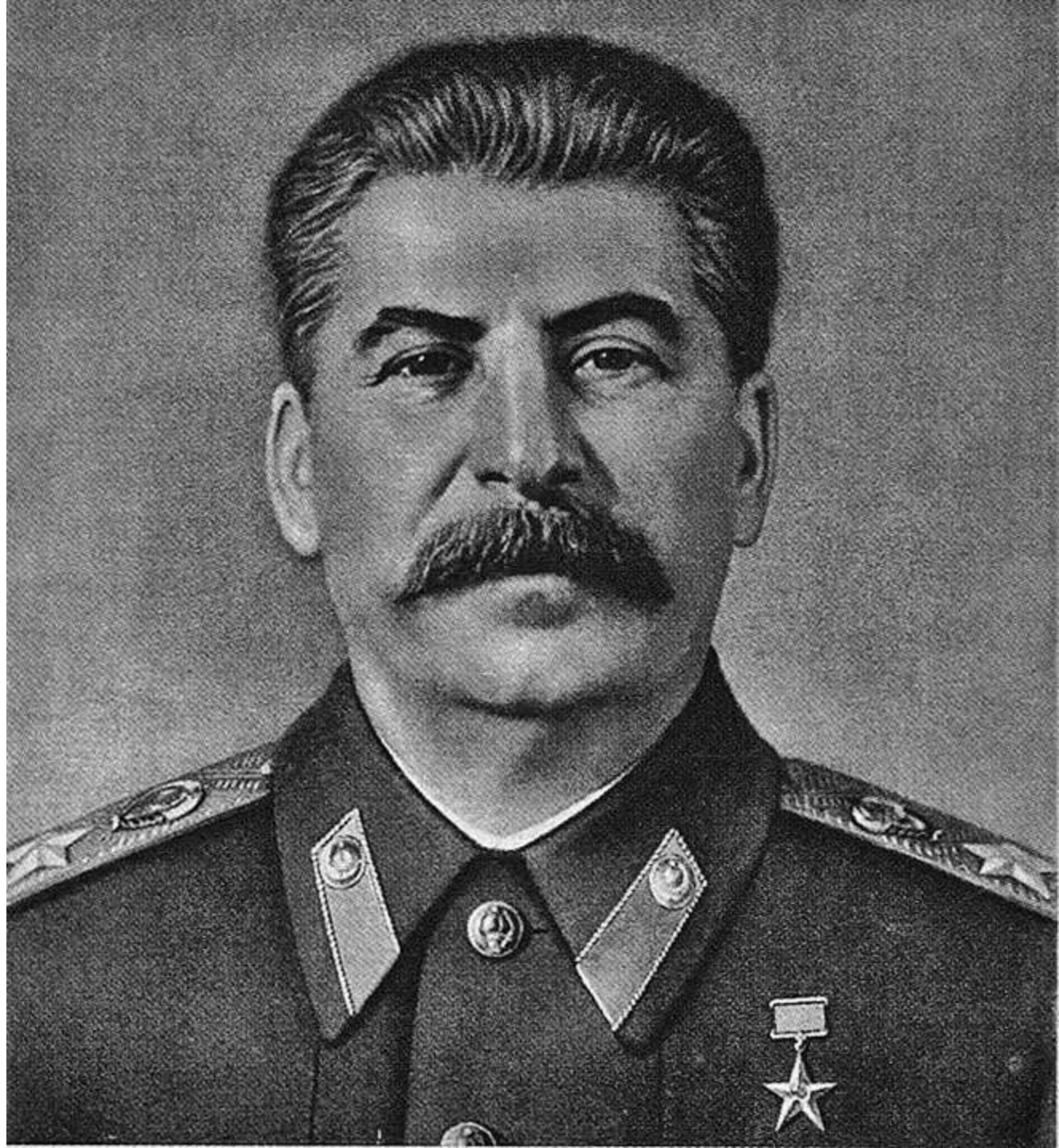


- "Every Jewish nationalist is the agent of the American intelligence service. Jewish nationalists think that their nation was saved by the USA (there you can become rich, bourgeois, etc.). They think they're indebted to the Americans. Among doctors, there are many Jewish nationalists." --Stalin, December 1, 1952

Stalin's Death

- Through the night of February 28th to March 1st, 1953, Stalin dined and drank with some of his highest functionaries, including Lavrenty Beria. In the early morning hours, he retired to his private rooms and did not emerge the next day. This was not that unusual—Stalin tended to sleep in, and he hated to be disturbed. As a result, it was not until late in the day on the 1st that anyone went in to check on him. They found Stalin on the floor, having suffered a stroke that paralyzed the right side of his body. Doctor's were called in only in the early morning hours of March 2nd, leaving some historians to suspect that Stalin's associates were hoping that he would die. Indeed, he did—on March 5th. The demonic dictator was dead.

- Official picture of Stalin released upon his death.



The Secret Speech, February 25, 1956

- In speech that he gave in the middle of the night at the 20th Party Congress in 1956, Nikita Khrushchev, who succeeded Stalin, acknowledged the despot's crimes: "We have to consider seriously and analyze correctly this matter in order that we may preclude any possibility of a repetition in any form whatever of what took place during the life of Stalin, ... who practiced brutal violence, not only toward everything which opposed him, but also toward that which seemed, to his capricious and despotic character, contrary to his concepts. Stalin acted not through persuasion, explanation and patient cooperation with people, but by imposing his concepts and demanding absolute submission to his opinion. Whoever opposed these concepts or tried to prove his [own] viewpoint and the correctness of his [own] position was doomed to removal from the leadership collective and to subsequent moral and physical annihilation."