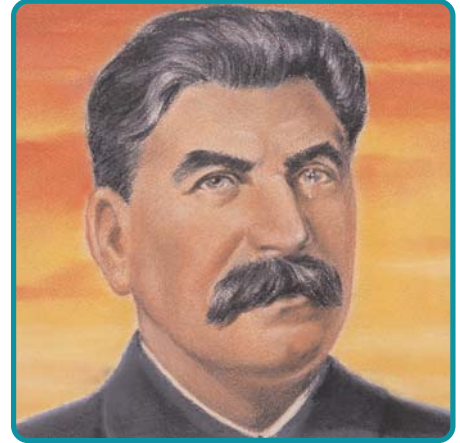




Joseph Stalin and the industrialisation of the USSR

When Joseph Stalin came to power in the mid-1920s, the Soviet Union was a vast but under-developed country, mostly agricultural with little industry. Russians had been through World War 1, two revolutions in 1917, civil war and famine. These events had left their impact on the state of the economy.

From 1928 Stalin began a state-run programme of rapid industrialisation. Factories were built, transport networks developed and workers encouraged, even forced, to work harder. Stalin intended to turn the economy around and make the USSR competitive with capitalist countries. To bring about this huge change, he acted ruthlessly.



Whether as a result of his direct orders or as a result of his policies, it is possible that 20 million people died during Stalin's reign. He was hated and feared as a dictator. He was also adored. During his lifetime he was glorified in newspapers and films, cities and streets were named after him, and statues of him were put up around the USSR. He was seen as the man who turned an undeveloped and divided nation into an industrial super-power.

The USSR became strong enough to help defeat Germany during World War 2 and after the war was one of the most powerful nations in the world. Stalin's policy of industrialisation helped achieve this, but at the cost of many Russian lives. Did the ends justify the means?

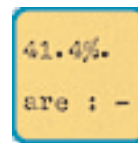
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Why did Stalin want to industrialise the USSR?



How did Stalin industrialise the USSR?



Was industrialisation a success?