

SUBJECT: History

UNIT: Y9: What was it like to live in Communist Russia?



The Russian Revolution:

The Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution of 1917, in overthrowing Tsar Nicholas II, ended over 300 years of autocratic tsarist rule.

The Russian Revolution lasted from March 8, 1917, to June 16, 1923.

Causes of the Revolution included: Lost wars and the failures of Russia during WW1, The Tsar- autocratic rule, poor living and working conditions and the spread of new ideas.



Lenin: After the war and a takeover of the government The Tsar was forced to give up his throne and abdicate.

Vladimir Lenin seized control of the country in the name of the workers in the confusion that followed and **the world's first communist state was born. Communism:**

Communism is a type of government as well as an economic system (a way of creating and sharing wealth). In a Communist system, individual people do not own land, factories, or machinery. Instead, the government or the whole community owns these things..



Changes included: Gender equality, workers taking control of factories and peasants splitting land between them, the government taking control of the banks, wealth and houses taken from the rich and shared among workers, titles and ranks dropped, no political parties are allowed, except the Communist Party and all newspapers, except communist ones, were banned.



Stalin's Russia: Stalin became leader of the Soviet Union (now Russia) from 1929 until his death in 1953. Ironically, His regime of terror caused the death and suffering of tens of millions of ordinary people.

Effects of Stalin's rule:

- **The Secret Police-** Cheka used to investigate any suspected threat. Developed into the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, or NKVD. **Used against the whole country during the Great Terror.**
- **Cult of Personality-** making himself out to be a hero or Godlike figure by creating tributes of himself and history rewritten.
- **The Purges-** 'The Great Terror'- the sudden and violent removal people who were against the Communist party. Key party members executed starting with Sergei Kirov, a prominent Bolshevik leader. People were also sent to Gulags- labour camps before being executed (750,000 minimum).
- **Culture & Censorship-** Only Communist ideas e.g. Writers, artists, film makers and even composers, had to support the government by the following the policy of 'Social Realism'.
- **Education-** Children were taught that Stalin was the 'Great Leader'. They learned Stalin's version of history. Stalin chose the subjects and information that children should learn.
- **Religion-** Christian leaders were imprisoned and churches closed down. Mosques closed and pilgrimages to Mecca were banned.

How does Stalin and Hitler compare?

Similarities:

- Similar backgrounds and raised by religious parents.
- Promoted better lives for their people
- Both rejected democracy.
- Used education and censorship to control people
- Mass execution of 'enemies' –those who threatened their rule

Differences:

- Stalin had no issue with race- main focus on threat to Communism
- Politically different
- Gender- Hitler 3K's V Stalin who wanted gender equality
- Nazi regime approx. 11-17 million overall V Communist victims estimate up to 20 million

