



as a rival to his party within the Soviet Union. Again, there is no proof of significant plots against him by officers. The most important result of the military purges was that Soviet defences were weakened in the early years of the war against Hitler.

There were also other reasons why Stalin consolidated his power. He ended the New Economic Policy (NEP) of Lenin which allowed a limited amount of private enterprise. Therefore, all aspects of the economy as well as of government came under Stalin's control. It has been said that 'virtually every citizen became an employee of the State' and therefore directly or indirectly an employee of Stalin.

Collectivisation of agriculture and reforms of industry in the Five Year Plans were important economically but they also had a political importance because they made sure that Stalin remained in power.

The extermination of the kulaks might be seen as an economic purge. It could be argued that Lenin's NEP had been unsuccessful because agricultural production was low. Famine was frequent and agricultural methods were backward. But Stalin's decision to collectivise farming and the industrial changes in the Five Year Plans resulted in considerable hardship to workers. Hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of people were executed or sent to gulags as forced labour. There was some increase in production, although it is difficult to be exact about the extent because of unreliable figures, but the brutality of the methods also emphasised Stalin's power to control so many people and to impose such extreme policies.

Education and propaganda were used to enhance Stalin's importance. His responsibility for the terror and purges was hidden and the government conveyed the idea that Stalin was kind and fatherly. He was said to be concerned only for the best interests of citizens. He was praised as being responsible for all of the gains that were published in official but unreliable statistics. When government figures showed that production increased, they seemed to justify the leadership of Stalin. Workers were encouraged to claim that they were inspired by Stalin, and their claims were widely reported in the only official newspapers that were available. History books for children and adults were rewritten to exaggerate Stalin's importance in the 1917 Revolution. Stalinist ideas were conveyed on the radio and in newspapers. The arts were firmly controlled. Many of these methods were also used by Hitler in Germany

but one difference is that, unlike Hitler, Stalin rarely appeared in public and he was not an effective orator. It has been claimed that Stalin's control has been exaggerated and that apathy, inefficiency and waste, expectably in the regions that were farthest from Moscow, undermined the practical extent of his power. This might be true but these limitations never threatened the consolidation of his power.

Nobody shared power with Stalin, nor could he be deterred from the most extreme actions. Therefore, the purges of the 1930s were the most important reason for Stalin's consolidation of his power to 1939.

#### Examiner's comments

Emma's answer was given 70 marks out of 90 (Band B).

#### Good points:

- ◆ Almost all of the argument is directly relevant.
- ◆ Most of the answer focuses on the key period.
- ◆ The answer explains issues rather than tells a story.
- ◆ There is a sound variety of points, most of which are linked to the question.
- ◆ The answer considers alternative explanations such as education and propaganda.
- ◆ The brief comparison with Hitler is effective. Comparisons can be useful but make sure that they are short.

#### The ways that the answer could be improved:

- ◆ The introduction is accurate but is not linked directly to the question. Does it matter that Stalin first trained for the priesthood? The end of the first paragraph is closer to the question. Can you write a better introduction that avoids unnecessary background?
- ◆ The question asks whether the purges were the most important reason for Stalin's power. The end of the answer asserts that this was true but it would have been improved if it had explained why they were most important. Why were they more important than the alternative reasons? Explain your priorities clearly.
- ◆ The paragraph that explains the reasons for the purges is generally relevant but could have been linked directly to the question. Check your plan!

Russell Williams, latterly Lecturer, University of Gloucestershire, is an AS/A Level Chief Examiner.



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