How did Stalin Maintain Power?

1. Purges and the Great Terror
   1. Beginning in 1933, political opposition was dealt with - purge of dissident party member
   2. 1934 Kirov murder – pretext to continue purges
   3. From 1936-38 known as “The Great Terror” – over 3 million executed and sent to labor camps between 37-38
   4. Show trials
      1. Important officials arrested, tortured, confessions (Zinoiev, and Kamenev)
      2. Old Bolshevik party broken/eliminated
      3. Many of the most competent government officials and about half of the military officers were executed or jailed;
   5. Purges successful in eliminating alternative leaders and into terrorizing masses into obedience - Stalin therefore able to act as a complete dictator until the end of his rule
   6. Initiative was thought to be dangerous and several areas of Soviet life stagnated.

2. Dealing with Nationalism
   1. 2 prong approach to deal with republics of USSR
      1. National cultures and languages allowed to flourish and republics have some independence – different from tsars who tried to “Russianize” republics
      2. However, it was made clear that Moscow had the final say – if necessary, force would be used
         1. Purge of Ukrainian Communist Party after they said collectivization had failed in 193
   3. Propaganda and Indoctrination
      1. Reasons: To control the public and their opinion, to support and to expand Soviet power, to portray Russia as a superior nation, to increase war efforts
      2. Communist mission – to eliminate “backwardness”, to have a modern, socialist society
      3. 1928-1931 Cultural Revolution
         1. Artists, musicians, writers were to produce works of “social realism” – glorification of Soviet System
         2. To be “engineers of the human soul” by helping indoctrinate masses with socialist values
            1. Restrictions were set on paintings in that they could only portray political figures and exemplary workers in factories and in the fields.
            2. Literature was also censored and authors could only write their novels on a limited amount of themes that were considered permissible by Stalin. A simple way of ensuring everyone followed these restrictions was that the authors who disobeyed were executed, imprisoned or exiled.
      3. Film
         1. Lenin’s idea that film was “the art of the 20th century” and that it should be used as a propaganda medium. Stalin strongly agreed.
         2. He built hundreds of theatres across the country and used film as a form of
his propaganda.
3. Made sure that all films glorified his policies (such as the collectivization and the Five Year Plan) He also made sure that the movies showed how “happy” the Russian people were with their regime and him as their leader.
4. No film could be released into Russian theatres unless it was reviewed and approved by Stalin. This gave Stalin an enormous amount of control over what messages his people received.

4. Anti-religious campaign
   1. By 1941 only one in 40 church buildings were still functioning as places of worship

5. Education
   1. Very important to Stalin considering he had very little of it. Illiteracy was reduced from 50 percent in 1927 to 19 percent right before WWII.
   2. Stalin changed the education system to “train young people for slots in the economic, social, political and cultural life of the state”
   3. Uniforms - Stalin wanted the children to feel unified, equal and part of one large group instead of individual beings (which sounds rather similar to the army. He hoped the children would get a great feeling of unity and belonging. And he felt that this would encourage them—the boys anyway—to join the army when they were older.

6. Youth Groups
   1. Stalin saw children themselves as an excellent means of propaganda.
   2. His goal was to almost recruit the children as his supporters at an early age so that they would follow him and would practice his ideology as adults.
   3. He felt that it was in this way that his ideology and leadership would pass from generation to generation and live forever.
   4. In youth groups children were instructed on Stalin’s political ideal.
   5. One way Stalin made sure that the children liked him was to make these groups enjoyable and therefore had the groups gather for fun activities such as sports, cultural and social activities.

7. Stalin’s Personality Cult
   1. Much of the propaganda established his personal dictatorship by elevating him to a divine level, showing his close relationship with Lenin, that only he could interpret and carry out Lenin’s ideas, his military genius, his religious devotion, his respect for the Russian people, his strong work ethics, his leadership, his education

4. Societal Changes
   1. Personal Hygiene emphasized
   2. Free Education (used to indoctrinate, however) and Healthcare
   3. Facilities for Leisure
   4. Food supplies improved and all rationing was abolished in 1936
   5. Women enter workforce (ironic because so many men killed in Purges and now women had to run homes and work)
   6. Stalin wanted to shift loyalties from family and church to the state
      1. Abortion was legalized
      2. Divorce became more available and acceptable
      3. Religious practices were discouraged and considered counterrevolutionary;
churches were closed down and atheism encouraged

7. Despite Marxism, Stalin created privileged elite out of high Party officials, talented artists and athletes, who were then used as showpieces in propagand

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