Power and Policy

Trace how Stalin gained power and used it.

TOT.C.8.1 "Examine the political history of interwar Soviet Russia: New Economic Policy rise of Josef Stalin Collectivization and the First Five Year Plan Great Terror, including murder of foreign Communists living in the USSR"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each economic policy, circle examples of state coercion, and number three steps that show how Stalin gained and kept power.

From Recovery to Terror

1. After civil war devastated the Soviet economy, Vladimir Lenin introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1921. Peasants could sell surplus crops, and small shops could operate privately, while the state kept control of major industry. The policy helped trade recover, but party leaders disagreed about how long limited private business should last. Stalin became Communist Party general secretary in 1922. After Lenin died in 1924, Stalin used party appointments and alliances to weaken rivals and gain control.

2. By 1928, Stalin had turned away from the NEP. His First Five Year Plan set ambitious targets for steel, coal, and other heavy industries. The government also forced many peasant families onto collective farms, especially beginning in 1929, to tighten state control of grain. The state demanded grain to feed industrial workers. Officials seized crops and punished people who resisted. Disruption and harsh grain demands contributed to a devastating famine in 1932 and 1933, particularly in Ukraine. Industrial output increased, but the human cost was enormous.

3. During the Great Terror of 1936 to 1938, Stalin's government arrested people it labeled enemies, including party members and military officers. Under pressure, many confessed to invented crimes. Many were executed or sent to labor camps. Foreign Communists living in the USSR were not safe either: some German Communists who had fled Nazi persecution were accused of spying and murdered. By targeting both longtime allies and outsiders, the terror helped Stalin eliminate possible opposition and made people afraid to challenge his rule.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Stalin use his party position to gain power after Lenin died?

2. How did Stalin's economic approach change from the NEP to the First Five Year Plan?

3. How was collectivization connected to industrial growth, and what was one human cost?

4. What does the murder of foreign Communists show about whom Stalin targeted during the Great Terror?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five- or six-sentence museum label explaining how Stalin's methods of gaining and keeping power changed from the 1920s to the late 1930s. Connect an economic policy to repression, and include the fate of foreign Communists.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each economic policy, circle examples of state coercion, and number three steps that show how Stalin gained and kept power. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Stalin use his party position to gain power after Lenin died?	**As general secretary, Stalin used party appointments and alliances to weaken rivals.**
2	How did Stalin's economic approach change from the NEP to the First Five Year Plan?	**The NEP allowed limited private trade; Stalin replaced it with state-directed industrial targets and tighter control of farming.**
3	How was collectivization connected to industrial growth, and what was one human cost?	**The state demanded grain to feed industrial workers. Forced farming, crop seizures, and harsh grain demands contributed to famine.**
4	What does the murder of foreign Communists show about whom Stalin targeted during the Great Terror?	**Even Communists who had come to the USSR could be accused of spying and killed; the terror reached beyond Stalin's rivals in the party.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Stalin first gained influence through his party position and alliances after Lenin's death. He then replaced the NEP's limited private trade with state-directed industrial planning. Collectivization forced peasants onto collective farms as the state demanded grain for industrial workers. Officials punished people who resisted, and harsh grain demands contributed to famine. During the Great Terror, arrests and executions silenced suspected opponents, including foreign Communists living in the USSR. These methods moved Stalin from party maneuvering to widespread coercion.

Accept answers that connect policies and repression using evidence from the passage. For the museum label, look for a change over time and the specific inclusion of foreign Communists.