

Stalin's economic policies 1

By the end of the next two spreads you should be able to:

- 1 describe the modernization of industry
- 2 describe the collectivization of agriculture

- 3 explain their a causes b consequences
- 4 describe their impact on the lives of different groups of Soviet people

Industrialization

Stalin wanted to transform the USSR from a backward agricultural country to a modern industrial one. His main reasons were:

- 1 Security. He believed the USSR was a likely to be attacked by Western Capitalist states
- b would be defeated by them unless it modernized.
- 2 Successful Communism. By creating and sharing wealth among the Soviet people he hoped to create a strong state based on Communist principles.

The Five Year Plans

To achieve industrialization, Stalin ordered the State Planning Commission (Gosplan) to draw up a series of Five Year Plans. Each Plan set targets which the workers in various industries had to achieve.

Plan 1, 1928-1932/3

- 1 To enable the USSR to increase its armaments quickly, the Plan emphasised heavy industry, especially coal, iron and steel.
- 2 All private businesses which had been allowed under Lenin's NEP were closed or taken over by the State.
- 3 In 1929 Stalin decided the Plan should be achieved in four years rather than five.

Plan 2, 1933-37

- 1 This Plan promised to concentrate on consumer goods and better housing for the Soviet people.
- 2 From 1934 the increased threat from Hitler's Germany caused the planners to change their targets in favour of armaments again.

Fig. 1 The first two Five Year Plans

Item	1927/8 Actual	1933 Target	1933 Actual	1937 Target	1937 Actual
Electricity Thousand million kilowatt hours	5.05	17.0	13.4	38.0	36.2
Coal Million tonnes	35.4	68	64.3	152.5	128
Oil Million tonnes	11.7	19	21.4	46.8	28.5
Iron Million tonnes	3.3	8.0	6.2	16.0	14.5
Steel Million tonnes	4.0	8.3	5.9	17.0	17.7

The power and wealth of the USSR

- 1 Although the Plan targets were not met, all Soviet industries made spectacular advances (Fig. 1).
- 2 By 1940 the USSR was the world's second largest industrial power (behind the USA).

New industrial centres

Huge towns and industrial centres, like the Magnitogorsk metalworks, were built from scratch deep inside the USSR where they would be safe from invasion.

Women were encouraged

- 1 to work to help to achieve the Plans
- 2 to have children because of the falling population:
- a facilities such as creches were provided in factories to help them both have children and work
- b In 1936 the divorce laws (page 122) were tightened up again.

Forced labour

- 1 Some of the biggest tasks in the Plans were carried out in appalling conditions by prisoners in labour camps.
- 2 Prisoners built the Belomor Canal and the Moscow Metro.

The workplace To persuade workers to raise their output, the Government used:

- 1 **Encouragement.**
 - a It urged workers to match the achievements of model workers such as the miner Stakhanov who was said to have surpassed his targets tenfold.
 - b Awarded medals. The highest was the Order of Lenin.
- 2 **Discipline.**
 - a Fines were imposed for lateness and bad workmanship.
 - b Workers absent for more than a day were sacked.
- 3 **Terror.**
 - a Failures were always blamed on saboteurs rather than on the system.
 - b the secret police encouraged workers to inform on one another.
 - c Anyone blamed for obstructing work could be sent to a labour camp or shot.

Urban population

Between 1929 and 1939 the population of the USSR's cities rose by 29 million.

Power and transport

Vast construction projects were completed such as the Dneiper Dam hydro-electric power station and the Belomor Canal.

Skills

- 1 In 1929 Soviet workers lacked many of the skills needed to implement the first Plan.
- 2 Between 1929 and 1937 investment in education and training schemes created a skilled workforce.

The economic results of the Five Year Plans

A new elite

- 1 Teachers, scientists, engineers, factory managers, and skilled workers were paid far higher wages than ordinary workers.
- 2 Like many officials, they also received extra benefits such as better housing or the right to buy scarce goods.
- 3 This group enjoyed a higher standard of living than everybody else. Communist principles of equality were abandoned.

The impact of the Five Year Plans on the lives of the Soviet people

Living conditions

- 1 **Housing.**
 - a It was impossible to build enough new houses for the millions of peasants who flooded into the cities.
 - b Most families had to live in overcrowded, rundown buildings.
- 2 **Food.**
 - a At first, shortages led to rationing.
 - b In the mid-1930s conditions improved. Food remained dull but there were no more famines.
- 3 **Education.** All workers' children received free primary education.
- 4 **Health.** Free health care schemes were extended.
- 5 **Wages.** Workers were poorly paid. Between 1928 and 1933 the value of their wages fell by 50%.
- 6 **Goods.** There was an acute shortage of all consumer goods including clothes and shoes.
- 7 **Crime.** Alcoholism, juvenile delinquency, and crime increased.

Stalin's economic policies 2

Collectivization

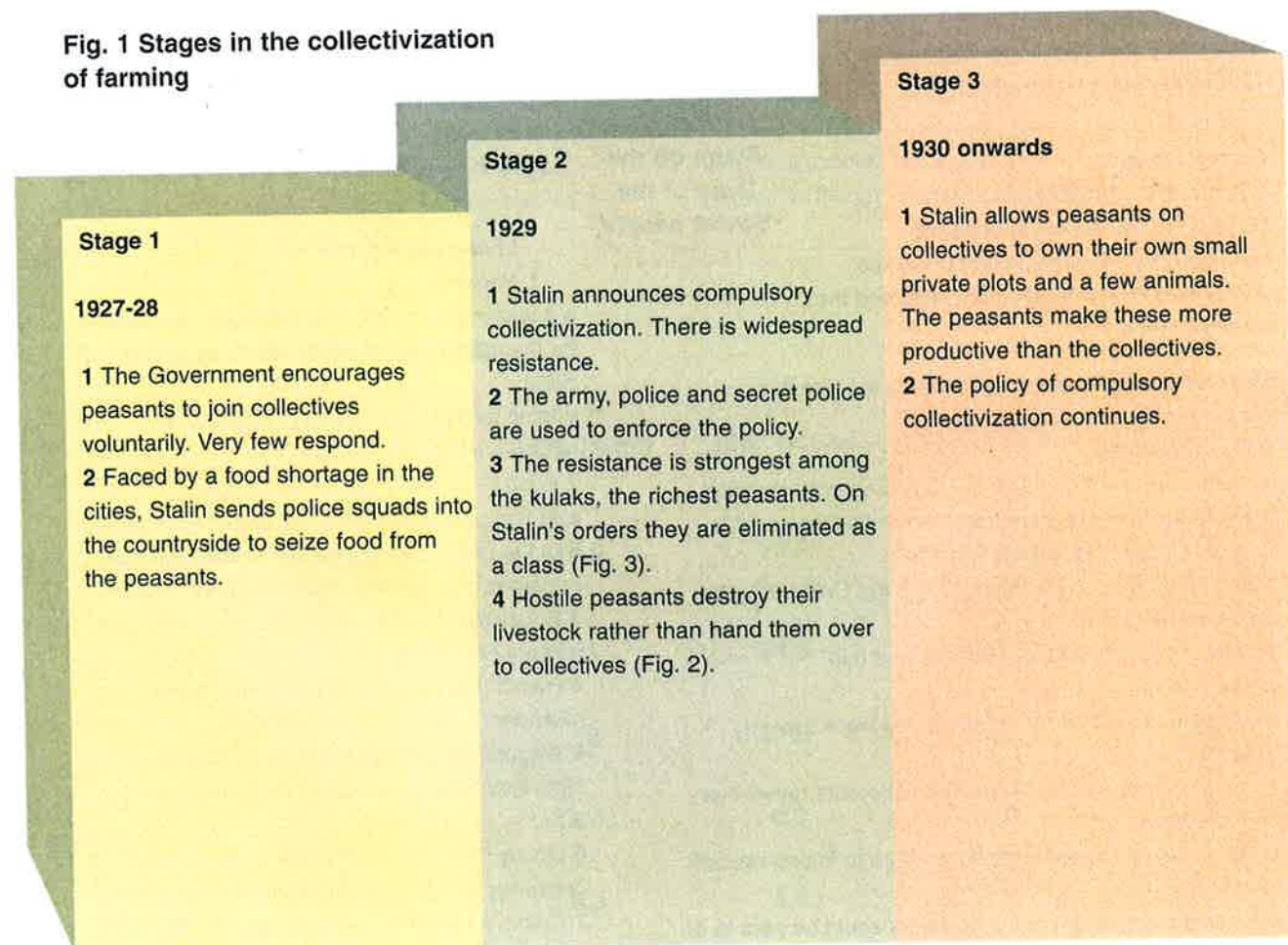
The problem

- 1 Soviet peasants used old-fashioned, inefficient farming methods. Even under the NEP they were producing insufficient food for the workers in the cities.
- 2 If the USSR was to industrialize successfully, its farming had to be improved because:
 - a even more workers would have to be fed.
 - b peasants were needed as industrial workers. Fewer peasants, therefore, had to produce the food.
 - c the Government aimed to sell surplus food abroad in order to make the money it needed to spend on developing industry. There had to be a surplus to sell.

The solution Stalin decided to collectivize the farms. This meant

- 1 the peasants had to
 - a give up their small plots of land and animals
 - b pool them with those of other families to make farms large enough to use machinery and modern farming methods.
- 2 the State provided each collective farm with machinery (e.g. tractors), other tools and seeds.
- 3 the Government bought the produce of each farm at a low fixed price.
- 4 the peasants received a small wage.

Fig. 1 Stages in the collectivization of farming



The economic results of collectivization

- 1 By 1932 about 62% of the land was collectivized; by 1941 it was almost all collectivized.
- 2 About 17 million peasants left the land to work in towns and industrial centres.
- 3 Collectivization failed to increase Soviet agricultural production (Fig. 2). It led to a decline in
 - a harvest yields
 - b the numbers of livestock.

Item	1928	1933
Grain (Millions of tonnes)	73	69
Cattle (Millions)	70	38
Pigs (Millions)	26	12
Sheep and goats (Millions)	147	50

Fig. 2 Food production in the USSR, 1928-1933

Fig. 3 The impact of collectivization on the lives of the Soviet people

Famine

Between 1932 and 1934 seven million people in the countryside died from famine caused by

- 1 harvest failures
- 2 the amount of food taken by the Government.

Peasants

Their traditional way of life was ended.

- 1 By 1940 nearly all had given up their own land to work on collective farms.
- 2 Most of their churches were closed.
- 3 Including the kulaks, about 10 million peasants were sent to labour camps or deported.
- 4 About 17 million left the land and went to work in the cities.

How collectivization affected the lives of the Soviet people

The kulaks

As Stalin intended, the kulaks were destroyed as a class. At least five million people in kulak families were made to leave their farms:

- 1 The kulaks believed to be the most hostile to the Government were handed over to the secret police and sent to labour camps. Their families were deported to inhospitable parts of the country such as Siberia.
- 2 Of the rest, a few may have been allowed to farm poor land in their own region, but most were deported. Many died of cold and starvation.

- 1 Make a table to show the a aims b methods c successes d failures e human costs of
 - i The Five Year Plans
 - ii Collectivization.
- 2 Use pages 128-133. What was the impact of Stalin's rule on the lives of
 - a peasants and their families
 - b workers and their families
 - c members of minority nationalities
 - d members of the armed forces
 - e writers and artists
 - f managers and professional people?