



## AP European History 2000 Student Samples

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Both Josef Stalin's and Mikhail Gorbachev's political and economic policies had tremendous effects on the Soviet Union. The changes brought about by Stalin before the ~~Second~~ "Great Patriotic War" and those of Gorbachev in the troubled days of the ~~late~~ mid-80's to early 90's deeply altered the lives of every Soviet citizen. However, whereas both men were common in the tremendous effects on political and economic life, they were almost diametrically opposed as to the policies that brought about these changes. Whereas Stalin fit the image of "Man of Steel" that his name suggests with his totalitarian and repressive practices, Gorbachev was an innovator who was sympathetic to communist ideals but realized that the execution of those ideals was flawed in the Soviet Union. Thus, his policies reflected a more reform minded and liberal mindset hoping to fix the stagnation in politics and economy the Soviet Union found itself in in his term of office. Both men would affect Soviet life in ways that continue to this day.

After Stalin consolidated his power within the party against Trotsky in particular in the 1920's, he sought to bring about the reforms he thought the Soviet Union needed. Although he had supported the New Economic Policy, <sup>of limited small capitalism</sup> instituted by Lenin during the turmoil of the Russian Civil War between the ~~Reds~~ <sup>Reds</sup> and ~~the~~ Whites, Stalin soon proved that his true economic plans would involve the expansion of ~~the~~ government control of the economy from the "commanding heights" retained by Lenin into the relatively ~~free~~ liberal farming, ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~business~~, and light industry sectors. Ironically, this hard line Marxist position was ~~also~~ advocated by Trotsky, showing Stalin to be ~~both~~

be committed to Marxism and himself. Through a series of 5 year plans, Stalin sought to boost Soviet production in agriculture and forcibly industrialize the ~~the~~ Soviet Union's persistent rural character. By spending almost 70% of the GNP into industrialization, ~~the same~~ Stalin created over a thousand new factories and ~~whole cities~~ whole industrial cities were built from mere crossroads. Heavy industry was favored over consumer goods and the Soviet gains reflected this in dramatic increases of coal, electricity, pig-iron, and steel but ~~the~~ <sup>little</sup> textiles, shoes, or dinnerware. Stalin also collectivized agriculture by establishing large farms served by state controlled tractor stations. This process was not without difficulty as ~~hundreds~~ millions of Soviet citizens were relocated to meet the demands of the central planners resulting in great disruptions and starvation. Stalin also ruthlessly broke the resistance of the well-to-do kulaks, prosperous peasants. In reverse, the kulaks slaughtered over a 103 million livestock ~~which~~ <sup>in return for</sup> their persecution and starvation. ~~This set the setbacks caused by this ~~resulted in~~ the~~ This wholesale slaughter caused the Soviet's outputs in areas such as eggs and milk to not reach their 1930's levels until the 1980's.

In addition to his heavy handed economic policies, Stalin also proved dictatorial when it came to politics. ~~As~~ As Commissar of Peoples, Stalin had crushed ethnic opposition from surrounding non-Russian groups in ways that shocked Lenin. He continued this lack of self-determination unabated and continued to rule the Soviet Union with little openness and strict censorship. ~~the~~ Criticism of his policies was forbidden within the party and bureaucracy itself. Stalin still feared his political position was

unsound and thus conducted ~~as~~ a series of purges to eliminate potential rivals. Stalin devastated the top Soviet military leaders on particular a fact which greatly weakened Russian military strength on the eve of World War II. Through a series of mock trials, Stalin killed and banished to Siberia not only ~~Russian~~ <sup>Soviet</sup> generals but party members as well. Stalin even punished his former ally Bukharin who had helped him gain power over Trotsky.

Juxtaposed to this ~~was~~ tyranny of Stalin, ~~Gorbachev~~ Gorbachev presents the almost opposite of Stalin. Faced with serious economic problems, Gorbachev realized that Stalinist policies continued under Brezhnev and Andropov were not helping the Soviet Union. In response, Gorbachev relaxed collectivization, ~~and~~ eliminated the tractor stations, and pursued a policy of perestroika, or restructuring. By reducing central economic planning Gorbachev wanted to stimulate economic growth. He even proposed allowing private property on a small level. His policies are strikingly similar to the NEP practices before Stalin's ~~g.~~ forced collectivization.

¶ Gorbachev also pursued perestroika in the political realm through glasnost, or openness, which allowed criticism outside the bureaucracy to be free in order to help solve economic and political problems. Gorbachev turned increasingly to political perestroika as the Soviet economy continued to flounder under his limited economic reforms. Eventually, Gorbachev allowed free debate within in party circles to occur and was moving toward freer elections and greater autonomy to various Soviet economic groups particularly the Baltic provinces of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia as they became more vocal under glasnost. However, Gorbachev's reforms were cut short by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, with Boris

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B Keltin in power, there was no room for Gorbachev.

Both Stalin and Gorbachev made tremendous changes to the Soviet Union. Both men also represent the historical pattern of Russian change. For Russia, change often comes from the top down instead of the masses. Both Stalin and Gorbachev are part of the long chain of Russian rulers that sought to imitate Western industry, ~~and~~ politics, and culture that began with Peter the Great.

The political and economic policies of Joseph Stalin and Mikhail Gorbachev were similar and different in many ways.

The political policies of Joseph Stalin and Mikhail Gorbachev were nearly opposite, while their economic policies were similar in many ways.

The political policies of Stalin and Gorbachev were very different. For example, Stalin authorized bloody purges to kill off his political enemies. After having Leon Trotsky, his opponent, murdered in Mexico, and declaring any support of him illegal, Stalin staged "show trials" to "legally" get rid of any who opposed him. Most of the time, the "Trotskyites" killed by Stalin were simply trying to express themselves. Stalin tolerated no individual thought or freedom. If you opposed Stalin, you would most likely be killed. In contrast, Mikhail Gorbachev encouraged individual thought during his "glasnost," a time of intellectual openness, where people would no longer be killed for expressing themselves. In addition, Stalin made sure that Communism was the only legal political party. Soviet-controlled states who tried to gain some freedom were repressed. However, Gorbachev eventually let controlled nations leave the Soviet block, such as Poland and the Baltic states. He continued to allow Soviet states their freedom, even though it

obviously resulted in a loss of power for the Soviet Union, ~~Stalin clearly~~ attributing to its dismantlement in December, 1991. Clearly, the political policies of Stalin and Gorbachev were nearly opposite. One ~~repress~~ practiced repression, while the other encouraged expression.

The economic policies of Stalin and Gorbachev were similar and different. Both launched programs to aid the economically struggling nation. Stalin created his 5-Year Plan, ~~the~~ Gorbachev his policy of perestroika. However, that is where the similarities end. The ~~plans~~ two plans sharply contrasted, Gorbachev nearly undoing what Stalin had begun. Stalin's 5-Year Plan involved collectivization, where ~~on~~ the small, privately run farms were merged together into a few large, government run ~~on~~ farms. To achieve total government economic centralization, Stalin resorted to killing off the kulaks, ~~a~~ successful private farm owners. Within a few years, Stalin had completely changed the agricultural structure of the Soviet Union. In contrast, Gorbachev launched "perestroika." This policy allowed limited capitalism. Some private trade was encouraged, and the economy was no longer completely centralized or run by the government. Clearly, ~~then~~ while both tried to save their country economically through planned programs, the actual policies were quite different.

The political and economic policies of Joseph

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Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

Stalin before WWII and Mikhail Gorbachev from 1985-1991 were similar in a few respects, but mostly they differed greatly in their methods of changing the country they governed.