



**CALIFORNIA CONTENT  
STANDARD 10.7.2**

## *Stalinist Russia*

**Specific Objective:** Trace Stalin’s rise to power in the Soviet Union; trace the connection between economic and political policies, absence of a free press, and systematic violations of human rights.

**Read the summaries to answer questions on the next page.**

After the death of V. I. Lenin, Joseph Stalin took control of the Communist Party in Russia. While Lenin had wanted to unite the workers of the world, Stalin focused on transforming Russia into a **totalitarian** state. In a totalitarian state, a government takes near total control over people’s daily lives. Stalin and party leaders used violence to assert their totalitarian power.

**Economic Control:** Stalin’s government made all economic decisions in a system that was known as **command economy**. Economic control included:

- Setting goals for rapid industrial growth
- Choosing workers and setting their wages
- Telling workers where they could live
- Organizing collective farms, to produce food for the state

**Political Control:** Stalin held absolute power, outlawed all other political parties, and demanded obedience, which was enforced in part by secret police (and a system of **police terror** that treated ordinary citizens like criminals). Government control included:

- Using tanks and weapons to stop protests
- Tapping telephone lines and reading mail
- Jailing and executing political opponents
- Asserting the right to punish any person for disobedience—almost any act

**Cultural Control:** Under Stalin, the government used means of mass communication to shape people’s thinking toward absolute faith in the Communist Party, including

- Controlling all newspapers, radio stations, and movie studios
- Destroying churches and synagogues and killing or imprisoning religious leaders
- Controlling all education, including curriculum, textbooks, and teaching
- Censoring many writers, painters, and composers, and forced others to create **propaganda**—biased or false information used to influence people

**Reign of Terror:** Under Stalin, Russians lost most basic rights. Millions died—an estimated 8 to 13 million. In the Ukraine, an area that resisted rule by Stalin, his government confiscated food, forcing an estimated 5 million people to starve. The event is the **Terror Famine**.

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Directions: Choose the letter of the *best* answer.

- 1 What is *one key* trait of a totalitarian system of government?**
  - A worker control of industry
  - B the use of violence
  - C freedom of the press
  - D multi-party rule
  
- 2 In Stalin's command economy,**
  - A workers set their own hours.
  - B the government alone made all decisions.
  - C millions returned to subsistence farming.
  - D migrant labor became a major force.
  
- 3 Police terror was a weapon used by Joseph Stalin, *mainly* against**
  - A Communist leaders.
  - B ordinary Russians.
  - C Ukrainians.
  - D the military.
  
- 4 In Stalinist Russia, religious leaders were**
  - A forced to create propaganda.
  - B mostly ignored.
  - C often persecuted.
  - D helpful in keeping people obedient.
  
- 5 What was *one* goal of the Communist government of Stalin's Soviet Union when they tapped people's telephones and read their mail?**
  - A pioneering new technologies
  - B looking for a worthy new leader
  - C increasing open communication
  - D making people afraid to protest
  
- 6 What caused 5 million Ukrainians to starve under Stalin's rule?**
  - A their crops were destroyed by blight
  - B they could not keep pace with industrialization
  - C the government took their food from them
  - D severe overpopulation resulted in famine