

Concept week
Holocaust

Stalin's Purges

- Stalin very paranoid
 - He wanted an unrestricted dictatorship
 - He became the undisputed leader but he wanted unquestioned loyalty
 - He would order the killing of anyone he suspected of being his enemy
 - What is a purge?
 - Flushing or eliminating unwanted people from the government or country
 - Ethnic cleansing that took place in Kosovo a recent example of a purge.
 - Stalin focused the purges on three main groups
 - Kulaks
 - The Kulaks were wealthy peasants who prospered under Lenin's rule
 - They were able to make money off of Lenin's New Economic Plan
 - They needed to sell their produce abroad to buy goods to industrialize the Soviet Union
 - When Stalin began the 5-Year Plans, the prosperous Kulaks resisted giving up their land to the govt.
 - Resisters were arrested, sent to labor camps, or executed. As many as 10 million Kulaks were killed
 - The Old Bolsheviks were men who had been part of Lenin's revolutionary government.
 - They were close associates of Lenin who knew that Lenin hated Stalin.
 - Stalin secretly arranged for the murder of Sergei Kirov, a man in line for leadership of USSR (1934)

- Used Kirov's murder as an excuse to purge Old Bolsheviks from govt.
- By 1939, 850,000 Communist party members (1/3 of total) had been purged
- This included all of the original leaders except Stalin himself
- Stalin purged the Red Army Officers because he feared they were loyal to Trotsky
 - Most of the leadership of the Army, created by Trotsky, was killed
 - 8 top leaders convicted in a secret trial
 - 350,000 Red Army officers were purged
 - By doing this, Stalin left the Soviet Union weaker against Hitler in WWII
- A series of "Show Trials" were held
 - First trial in 1936 - "The Trial of the 16"
 - Lenin's closest friends forced to publicly "confess" to crimes against the Soviet Union
 - In the "Trial of the 21" in 1938, the leader of the Communist International (Comintern) and the leader of the NKVD, the Soviet Secret Police, were executed
 - Nikolai Bukharin - Comintern
 - Yagoda - NKVD - helped Stalin plan first trials
 - Trotsky convicted in absentia.
 - A special unit of the NKVD was assigned to hunt him down.
 - Found him in Mexico City in 1940 & killed him

