

STALIN AND MAO: MARXISM TWO WAYS

Evaluating Stalin and Mao's leadership and what their Leadership Meant for the Russian and Chinese People

The average intellectual opinion of both Joseph Stalin and Mao Tse-tung will not be a positive one; however, if the policies of both leaders are evaluated from a Marxist ideological perspective, the plans implemented were not that unusual and also, more surprisingly, perhaps not such massive failures as many believe. Despite issues with implementation, there must be a reason that both the Russian and Chinese people look upon their past leaders respectively with respect and often a longing for a return to their leadership style. Has absence made the hearts grow fonder or was there some method behind the madness of Stalin and Mao? This paper will evaluate the programmatic leadership of both men, as well as the ideology behind the policies. It will then attempt to consider the possibility that these men, or at least their policies, were not all bad and that they may have had some success as leaders.

STALIN'S TAKE ON MARXISM

A fundamental element of Marxist-Leninist ideology is that all historical development is a result of struggle, whether it is within a nation, between nations, or on an over-arching issue such as against imperialism.¹ Stalin used ideology in an attempt to unite the Russian people: he suggested the philosophy of "Socialism in One Country,"

¹ "The Influence of Ideology." Worden, Robert L., Andrea Matles Savada and Ronald E. Dolan, editors. *China: A Country Study*. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987. <<http://countrystudies.us/china/125.htm>>

which called for all Russians to play their part in building a new economy and society under a “political consensus maintained by the one-party dictatorship.”² Once Russia succeeded in bringing about a socialist revolution, it would then serve an example for the oppressed classes of other capitalist states, encouraging them to initiate their own revolutions.³ Stalin therefore hoped that Russia, under his leadership, would not only transform itself, but also ignite a chain reaction resulting in a socialist world.

Stalin believed that the Marxist-Leninist ideology was actually a “science of the development of society, science of the workers’ movement, science of proletarian revolution, science of the construction of Communist society⁴.” Stalin’s ideology was based on a number of assumptions, including that of contradiction and struggle, which asserted that evolution is a process of struggle as inherent contradictions are exposed and overcome.⁵ Under this belief, class struggle was only a natural part of the evolution upwards from a contradictory capitalist system to a communist system⁶. The primary contradiction of a capitalist system was its system of production: capitalism brings large-scale development plants and programs; however, for these plants to run they must assemble and organize a large workforce, giving rise to a social character which contradicts capitalism’s basic tenet of private ownership.⁷ Therefore, as the mode of production develops and society evolves, communism is the natural advancement as the production unit becomes socialized to match its workforce; state-run production thus

² Service, Robert. “Stalinism and the Soviet State Order.” *Redefining Stalinism*. Harold Shukman, ed. August 30, 2003. pp. 7-22 at 14.

³ Historicus, “Stalin on Revolution.” *Foreign Affairs*. 27, 2, January 1949. pp. 175-214, 199.

⁴ Id at 177.

⁵ Id at 179.

⁶ Id.

⁷ Id at 180.

becomes logical as the proletariat replaces the bourgeoisie.⁸ Stalin believed that as the means of production evolved, they determined the accompanying changes in class structure, social institutions, and social ideas; this explains why Stalin placed so much emphasis on state-run heavy industries- they were meant to shape and control the development of the new communist society. Communist ideology was to Stalin a science of social development, and strong leadership by the Communist Party was necessary for a successful revolution.⁹

Stalin followed the earlier party trend of launching “campaigns” in order to mobilize the citizenry and create the desired changes; campaigns were quasi-militant and typically challenged production units and administrators to out-produce each other.¹⁰ Efficiency was the party goal, yet there was always a looming presence of corruption and elite privilege that created resentment in the average citizens who recognized the contradiction in the inequality and exploitation, and as a result, were often unwilling to follow party orders to work harder for the common good.¹¹ Even Stalin recognized that some patronage was necessary for the Party administration to operate, although the amount he would tolerate would vary depending on the circumstances; even with his vast power over the party and the citizenry as a whole, Stalin was unable to completely erase patronage.¹² And despite his use of terror and ideology, he never received full loyalty or cooperation, even within his party; there were always those who had their private doubts

⁸ Id.

⁹ Id at 194

¹⁰ Service 15.

¹¹ Service 15-16.

¹² Service 17, 19.

and would report to the Party hierarchy only so much as was necessary for their own survival, without the complete party loyalty which Stalin demanded.¹³

STALIN'S RISE TO POWER

Stalin's rise began in 1922 when Lenin appointed him General Secretary of the Communist Party where he had direct control over party appointments.¹⁴ While Lenin was ill, Stalin worked with Lev Kamenev and Grigorii Zinoviev to form a ruling triumvirate which was united against Trotsky and set to succeed Lenin.¹⁵ The other two believed they were exploiting Stalin in order to assert their own party dominance; in actuality, Stalin was using his position to appoint his own supporters and gain strength.¹⁶ When Lenin saw Stalin's use of his position, he began backing Trotsky to counteract Stalin's growing power; however, after Lenin suffered a stroke, Stalin was able to stifle Lenin's efforts by ordering him kept in medical isolation.¹⁷

After Lenin's death in 1924, the Communist party was divided into two conflicting schools of thought as to the future of the Soviet Union.¹⁸ The left-wing, led by Trotsky, felt that a world revolution was necessary for socialism's survival; they called for rapid economic development and a socialist society.¹⁹ The right-wing, believing that a world revolution was unlikely to develop any time soon, supported gradual development

¹³ Id at 20.

¹⁴ Gascoigne, Bamber. "History of Russia." *HistoryWorld*. December 14, 2008.

<<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?HistoryID=ac14&ParagraphID=qxe#qxe>>

¹⁵ Id.

¹⁶ Id.

¹⁷ Id.

¹⁸ Curtis, Glenn E., ed. *Russia: A Country Study*. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress. 1996. <<http://countrystudies.us/russia/>>

¹⁹ Id.

through a plan similar to Lenin's New Economic Plan.²⁰ The "Soviet order" was actually initiated under Lenin and his New Economic Policy in the early 1920's; and while major changes took place under Stalin, the social and political order which became known as "Stalinism," began long before Stalin became party leader.²¹

In 1925, Trotsky lost his position of commissar of war; Stalin had originally aligned with Kamenev and Zinov'yev in a troika, but as he consolidated his power, he broke with his two allies.²² As the new Soviet leader, Stalin became the dictator of a one-party state, centrally organized, with firm commitments to hierarchy and discipline; the Communist party used its complete control over the government structure and the law to indoctrinate and mobilize society to achieve Party goals.²³ Stalin used his power to focus Soviet attention on what he believed to be the country's main shortcoming: its economy.²⁴ Stalin believed that the weak and pre-industrial economy was the reason behind Soviet's lack of power and influence in the world; he believed that if the USSR was to become a world leader, it must transform its economy, and quickly.²⁵

Despite attacks on his leadership from Trotsky, now aligned with his former partners, Stalin was able to gain support for his theory of "socialism in one country," which called for the construction of a Soviet socialist society, regardless of the international situation.²⁶ Stalin rejected the leftists and their view that a socialist society required the support and assistance of other, developed socialist states; as support for his theory of an independent socialist USSR grew, Stalin's opposition was gradually

²⁰ Id.

²¹ Id at 10.

²² Id.

²³ Service 9.

²⁴ "Stalin." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. 22 December 2008. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stalin>>

²⁵ Id.

²⁶ "Russia." Curtis

eliminated and even Trotsky was forced into exile in 1926.²⁷ In 1928 Stalin rejected the NEP and initiated his own reforms; then later, in the late 1930's after dissatisfaction with the pace of development, Stalin utilizes terror to confirm his power and erase political obstacles.

STALIN'S POLICIES

By the end of the 1920's, Stalin began to implement his own economic plan which was extremely fast-paced and aggressive: his focus was on transforming the Soviet agrarian, pre-industrial economy to a major industrial power.²⁸ Stalin felt that industrialization must happen rapidly in order for the socialist country to not only thrive, but survive.²⁹ Often called the "Second Revolution" or "Revolution from Above," Stalin was able to mobilize the worker-peasants by presenting industrialization as a class war against their previous oppressors; this required and led to a massive increase in Communist Party membership, especially among young workers.³⁰ Anyone that opposed his radical development plan and continued to support the gradualist NEP was branded a "right-wing deviationist" and subsequently removed from any position of power.³¹

1926 saw the start of the First Five Year Plan, Stalin's "revolution from above," which emphasized collectivization of agriculture, accompanied by rapid industrialization of the rural country and a strong emphasis on heavy industry.³² The FFYP created a centralized, command economy; small-scale industries and services were nationalized and managers were required to meet quotas set by Gosplan, the State Planning

²⁷ Id.

²⁸ "Stalin." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.

²⁹ Martens, Ludo. *Another View of Stalin.*

³⁰ Id.

³¹ "Russia." Curtis.

³² Id.

Committee.³³ Stalin had the quotas set unrealistically high which, paired with the influence of trade unions, put major emphasis on increasing worker productivity.³⁴ Stalin also used incentive schemes for managers and skilled workers, disregarding the Communist ideology of equality.³⁵ Massive amounts of state resources were put into developing the oil and steel industry, utilizing the Soviet natural resources and the global market for these goods. Peasants were forced to work the factories under a system which was the basic equivalent of slave labor.³⁶ Massive infrastructure programs were also began, including the construction of a canal linking the Baltic and White Seas; led by the KGB, this project was manned by workers from prisons and labor camps, 200,000 (or 2/3 the total number of laborers) of which died before the canal even opened.³⁷

Despite rising productivity, the emphasis on heavy industry caused a large shortage of consumer goods, resulting in growing inflation rates.³⁸ To counteract the food shortages, the FFYP organized peasants into collective units more easily controlled by the party leadership; all land and livestock were organized into collective farms and state farms, in which the party leadership could control the peasants' movement and production, resulting in what was basically the reintroduction of a serfdom system.³⁹ Stalin hoped this system would eliminate wealthier peasants (kulaks), as he believed they forced the peasants into "capitalistic relationships."⁴⁰ While Stalin's collectivization plan claimed to be for the benefit of the peasantry, the poorest peasants resisted the collectivization just as strongly as the kulaks; many farmers even slaughtered their

³³ "Russia." Curtis.

³⁴ Id.

³⁵ Gascoigne, Bamber. "History of Russia."

³⁶ Id.

³⁷ Id.

³⁸ "Russia." Curtis.

³⁹ Id.

⁴⁰ Id.

livestock rather than forfeit them to the state farms, resulting in a large decrease in livestock resources which lasted for many years.⁴¹

Throughout the 1930's, Stalin instigated political purges, known as the "Great Terror," in which he systematically eliminated anyone he saw as a potential rival or threat to his ultimate control.⁴² However, Stalin did not believe that force and violence were inherent in revolution: they only become necessary when the bourgeoisie refused to peacefully relinquish power to the proletariat.⁴³ Stalin concentrated his own power through the development of a personality cult; he was glorified in statutes, monuments, and honorary titles such as the "Great Architect of Communism."⁴⁴ Trotsky criticized Stalin's use of personality cult as contrary to both socialism and Bolshevism because it exalted the individual above the party and class and did not allow for criticism.⁴⁵

STALIN'S RESULTS

Despite low agricultural production, the state appropriated a huge amount of all output, resulting in widespread starvation and millions of deaths.⁴⁶ Stalin actually refused to release grain reserves to the starving populace, opting instead to export the grain in order to produce capital to support the growing heavy industries. Stalin recognized that the agricultural sector had declining production rates, resulting in economic and social strains; however, instead of publicly recognizing this failure, Stalin declared the FFYP had successfully met its goals, one year before it was scheduled to end.⁴⁷ Stalin, still

⁴¹ Id.

⁴² Id.

⁴³ Historicus at 195.

⁴⁴ "Stalin." [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.](#)

⁴⁵ Id.

⁴⁶ "Russia." Curtis.

⁴⁷ Id.

refusing to admit failure, implemented the Second Five Year Plan in 1933, which set more realistic goals; and while factories built during the FFYP were used to increase industrial output, more attention was given to consumer goods.⁴⁸ Although more successful than the FFYP, the Second Plan was followed by a Third plan in 1938 which reverted back to unsuccessful results due to a shift in emphasis to war production.⁴⁹

While many critics attribute the famine to Stalin's policies and the peasant resistance response, others, such as Mark Tauger, are reluctant to attribute such widespread famine to human behavior.⁵⁰ Tauger finds it hard to believe that peasants, though resentful and resistant to the collectivization, would purposefully sabotage the farms and avoid work or even destroy harvests, especially because this would require a nearly complete disregard for their own and their neighbors' self-interest.⁵¹ Also, this theory would require that the peasant resistance intensified exponentially in 1932, given the record harvest in 1931.⁵² Tauger instead puts emphasis on the influence of exogenous factors, such as the problems common to the FFYP in general: constant changes in plans, unpredictable supplies, food shortages, and defective industrial products.⁵³ Although factory production was on the rise, the goods were often defective and factories often refused orders for spare parts necessary for repairs.⁵⁴ This created a cycle in which a lack of food resulted in lower industrial work product, in turn causing faulty agricultural tools

⁴⁸ Id.

⁴⁹ Id.

⁵⁰ Tauger, Mark B. "Natural Disaster and Human Actions in the Soviet Famine of 1931-1933" at 24. *The Carl Beck Papers in Russia & European Studies*, No. 1506. June 2001.
<<http://www.as.wvu.edu/history/Faculty/Tauger/Tauger.%20Natural%20Disaster%20and%20Human%20Actions.pdf>>

⁵¹ Id at 24-25.

⁵² Id at 27.

⁵³ Id.

⁵⁴ Id.

and lower agricultural output and a heightened shortage of food.⁵⁵ Stalin and other leaders often failed to recognize the problems at the root of the famine, instead blaming the food shortages on drought, the commonly-believed cause of famines, and misallocation of food procurements.⁵⁶ Failing to address the industrial problems, Stalin and other leaders blamed agricultural and environmental conditions in their 1932 decree for increased harvest production.⁵⁷

The average Soviet citizen paid for the fast-paced industrialization in another way: consumer consumption was restricted in order to re-invest any available capital into industry.⁵⁸ Capital was unavailable from other sources because of the negative international reaction to Communist policies, very little international trade, and the lack of a modern infrastructure.⁵⁹ Workers' wages were severely cut and many workers were forced into labor camps where they worked on state construction projects without pay.⁶⁰ Despite failure to meet the unrealistic quotas set by Stalin, heavy industrial production was on the rise and Stalin was able to achieve rapid industrialization despite the extremely low economic base.⁶¹ Stalin's forced collectivization of agriculture had less success: the plan was intended to increase output by shifting from small-scale farms to large-scale mechanized farms under state control; however, production increases were not realized which Stalin blamed on the kulaks that resisted collectivization and the resulting social changes, reminiscent of the 1800's serfdom society.⁶²

⁵⁵ Id at 30.

⁵⁶ Id at 43.

⁵⁷ Id at 44.

⁵⁸ "Stalin." [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.](#)

⁵⁹ Id.

⁶⁰ "Stalin." [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.](#)

⁶¹ "Russia." Curtis.

⁶² "Stalin." [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.](#)

Critics do not focus on capital growth, but on per capita consumption which leads to the conclusion that not only did millions die, but those who survived had a very low standard of living.⁶³ Critics also attack Russian industrialization, claiming even the massive growth and development was not a success: the goods produced are nearly useless on the international market and so also was the supporting capital.⁶⁴ Under this view, Stalin's development actually created false industrialization so that while there had been growth in production, the goods cannot compete internationally and because the Soviet state cannot finance their purchase, the industries are a failure.⁶⁵ Without economic success to buffer the social conditions, Stalin's command economics are considered a failure, resulting in minimal economic gains, while exacting a huge human cost with no production to redeem the cost.⁶⁶

MAKING SENSE OF STALIN'S POLICIES

In assessing the Great Famine and Stalin's role, it is important to realize that Stalin, as an "Old Bolshevik," viewed events from a "class-historical point of view," which is obviously going to be different from a humanitarian.⁶⁷ Stalin believed that the famine was actually the peasants' own fault: he believed that two groups, the "counter-revolutionaries" and the "idlers" "caused" the famine by infiltrating the collective farms and hindering their success.⁶⁸ These two groups were seen as working against the party

⁶³ Rosefielde, Steven. "Stalinism in Post-Communist Perspective: New Evidence on Killings, Forced Labour and Economic Growth in the 1930's", Europe-Asia Studies, 48, 6, September 1996, pp. 959-987.

⁶⁴ Id.

⁶⁵ Id.

⁶⁶ Id.

⁶⁷ Ellman, Michael. "Stalin and the Soviet Famine of 1932-33 Revisited." Europe-Asia Studies, 59, 4, June 2007: 663-693 at 689.

⁶⁸ Id at 664.

goals and Stalin adopted the slogan that “he who does not work, neither shall he eat”⁶⁹; this slogan was soon adopted by those peasants who were active within the collective farms and many officials developed the understanding that anyone dying of starvation had brought it upon himself and deserved that fate.⁷⁰ Thus even some critics of Stalin believe that Stalin did not intend to create a starvation policy through collectivization; instead, the Great Famine resulted from ignorance of the agricultural reality, overconfidence in their policies, and a misunderstanding of the cause of the policies’ failures.⁷¹ Realistic financial considerations also played a role as mass starvation was a much cheaper method of population purification than the mass deportation program that was later used.⁷²

Blaming counter-revolutionaries for the famine may explain why Stalin did not make fighting the famine a priority, but instead kept the focus on industrialization.⁷³ Another explanation is that such a policy was in line with Stalin’s Marxist ideology which rejected humanitarian considerations as a priority in decision-making, instead emphasizing the problems of the ‘class-war’ and the necessity of eliminating class enemies.⁷⁴ As far as Marxist thought goes, Stalin’s policies were not only understandable, but quite rational.⁷⁵ While starvation is extreme, it may have been what Stalin considered a “necessary cost” of creating a new socialist society.⁷⁶ Starvation is also universally recognized as a military tactic successful in compelling the enemy into submission; and given Stalin’s view of counter-revolutionaries as enemies of the party

⁶⁹ Id at 665.

⁷⁰ Id.

⁷¹ Id.

⁷² Id at 667.

⁷³ Id at 673.

⁷⁴ Id at 674.

⁷⁵ Id.

⁷⁶ Id at 675.

during a class-war and his frequent use of militant tactics, starvation as a tool is not all that surprising,⁷⁷ even if he did not intentionally implement it.

Critics of socialism have pointed to the collapse of the Soviet Union as evidence that administrative command planning, collectivization, and forced industrialization are not viable and successful economic policies, contrary to the claims of those who believe in the economic superiority of socialism.⁷⁸ Another criticism is of Stalin's harsh implementation: the oppressive and forceful methods he used to enact his economic policies incurred a massive human cost with little to no actual social benefit.⁷⁹ Often in evaluating the economic growth under Stalin, the statistics used can be determinative: some growth statistics show that under Stalin's command economy, the Soviet Union was modernized in an impressively short time with a comparatively low social cost; however, other stats show that the death toll was incredibly high without any significant economic benefit and thus Stalin's development plan was a complete failure that only succeeded in exactly a huge human loss.⁸⁰ Command economies utilize fear and force, both of which can be either justified or worsened, depending on whether the economic results were a success or failure.⁸¹

POSITIVE VIEWS ON STALIN

Despite the problems with the three Five Year Plans, Stalin did have one major success in that the Soviet economy was industrialized by the end of the 1930's.⁸² When

⁷⁷ Id at 677.

⁷⁸ Rosefielde, Steven. "Stalinism in Post-Communist Perspective: New Evidence on Killings, Forced Labour and Economic Growth in the 1930's."

⁷⁹ Id.

⁸⁰ Rosefielde, Steven. "Stalinism in Post-Communist Perspective: New Evidence on Killings, Forced Labour and Economic Growth in the 1930's."

⁸¹ Id.

⁸² "Russia." Curtis.

Stalin died in 1953, steel production levels had doubled those of 1940; however, the success in heavy industries was counter-acted by failure in other areas as consumer goods and foodstuff production were lower than they had been in the late 1920's.⁸³ Even with all the criticism and negative treatment both at home and abroad, Russia has seen a recent resurgence of support for Stalin and Stalinism.⁸⁴

After the Soviet Union broke up, the economy took a down-turn and politics have still not completely stabilized, causing many Russians to long for a strong central figure such as Stalin.⁸⁵ In fact, a 2006 survey showed 47% of Russians polled viewed Stalin as a positive figure and approximately 25% of adults said they definitely or probably would vote for Stalin if running for president today.⁸⁶ In 2008 he was voted by the population as the most popular figure in Russian history and culture.⁸⁷ The transition to a capitalist market system has been difficult for many who grew up under Stalin's rule. While Russians may not miss Stalin per se, they reminisce for what they saw as easier times in the Soviet Union; as one former Red Army captain put it: "everything was free then and in a democracy you have to pay."⁸⁸

Also, not all academic views on the developments under Stalinism have been negative. In 1928, Dr. Emile Joseph Dillon, once a teacher in Russian universities, returned to the USSR and wrote that "everywhere people are thinking, working, combining, making scientific discoveries and industrial inventions... Revolutionary

⁸³ Id.

⁸⁴ "Stalin." [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia](#).

⁸⁵ "Stalin." [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia](#).

⁸⁶ Mendelson, Sarah E. and Theodore P. Gerber. "Failing the Stalin Test." [Foreign Affairs](#), Jan/Feb 2006. 22 December 2008. <<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20060101facomment85101/sarah-e-mendelson-theodore-p-gerber/failing-the-stalin-test.html>>

⁸⁷ "Stalin holds the lead in The Name of Russia opinion poll." [Tatar:inform](#). 9 July 2008. Informational Agency of the Republic of Tatarstan. 22 Dec. 2008 <<http://eng.tatar-inform.ru/news/2008/07/09/17731/>>

⁸⁸ Lasky, Will. "Selling Stalin." [Georgian Business Magazine: AmCham News](#), 4, 2007. <http://www.magazine.amcham.ge/issues/2007_4/04_2007_05.htm>

endeavour is melting colossal obstacles and fusing heterogeneous elements into one great people; not indeed a nation in the old-world meaning but a strong people cemented by quasi-religious enthusiasm... The Bolsheviks then have accomplished much of what they aimed at, and more than seemed attainable by any human organization under the adverse conditions with which they had to cope...”⁸⁹

After World War II ended, the Soviet Union, under Stalin’s leadership, was able to become one of the world’s two superpowers along with the United States.⁹⁰ Prior to Stalin’s plans, Soviet natural resources in the Ural region, including iron, coal, gold, and petroleum, were severely underdeveloped; however, from 1930 to 1940, approximately two hundred industrial aggregates were not only built but began operating under Stalin’s construction program.⁹¹ Stalin’s plan to develop new industries such as rubber and machine tools, allowed the Soviet Union to end its reliance on other states for these commodities, and assume a technical and military independence it had never before experienced; and even more impressive than the magnitude and speed of development was that it was accomplished with almost no foreign capital. In 1932, 56% of the USSR’s national income was invested in capital outlay, compared to US recapitalization of approximately 12% of the national income.⁹² While American industrialization required European capital and immigrant man power, Stalin’s aggressive and tightly-controlled program utilized Soviet capital and resources almost exclusively.⁹³

⁸⁹ Martens, Ludo. *Another View of Stalin*. Version 95. January 19, 1995. Nikos Drakos, Computer Based Learning Unit, University of Leeds. <<http://www.plp.org/books.Stalin/book.html>>

⁹⁰ “Stalin.” [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia](#).

⁹¹ Martens, Ludo. *Another View of Stalin*.

⁹² Id.

⁹³ Id.

Many Soviets, especially youths, even took pride and found “Soviet heroism” in working in factories and on construction sites during the industrialization.⁹⁴ Ilya Ehrenburg wrote of the FFYP that “it was enthusiasm pure and simple that inspired the young people to daily and spectacular feats”; another observation was that “those days were a really romantic, intoxicating time: People were creating by their own hands what had appeared a mere dream before and were convinced in practice that these dreamlike plans were an entirely realistic thing.”⁹⁵ The numbers support that Stalin’s vision actually was at least somewhat realistic: by the end of 1932, the gross industrial output had more than doubled since 1928, the total gross industrial production was up 88% during 1934-36, and there were tremendous increases in the industrial output of pig iron, coal, electric power, and machine tools.⁹⁶ In fact, under Stalin’s iron will and strong centralized leadership, in 1935 the Soviet’s electric generating capacity surpassed the goals set by Lenin by 133%.⁹⁷ As Russian farmers developed culturally and technically, agriculture saw a sustained increase in investment which is contrary to the view that the agricultural sector was exploited by the city and industries.⁹⁸

The average worker and consumer did typically pay the cost for such increases in industry: consumer spending dropped over a billion dollars during the early 1930’s and 1932 real wages were only 53% of the 1928 level.⁹⁹ However, after seeing the devastation wrought by the German forces during WWI, Stalin knew that the socialist state must be developed and equipped for survival before any improvement in standard of

⁹⁴ Id.

⁹⁵ Id.

⁹⁶ Martens, Ludo. *Another View of Stalin*.

⁹⁷ Id.

⁹⁸ Id.

⁹⁹ Id.

living could occur.¹⁰⁰ Many Soviets, even those critical of industrialization, saw Stalin's plan, and its hardships, as giving the Soviets the ability to win the Second World War against Germany and preserve the socialist state.¹⁰¹ While still giving credit to the troops, Stalin emphasized that the military efforts would have been in vain without the industrialized military production and increased agricultural output through collectivization.¹⁰² Stalin also supported basic political education, creating Party schools from 52,000 to 200,000 between 1930 and 1933.¹⁰³

Also, not all peasants were reluctant to join the collective farms or work in Plan factories: in Ukraine, for example, unskilled laborers voluntarily worked on their free days in order to build the Kharkov (Tractor) Works.¹⁰⁴ Stalin himself wrote that peasants had to be persuaded through experience "of the power and importance of the new, collective organization of farming."¹⁰⁵ Some supporters of Stalin's accomplishments even attempt to rationalize the massive cost in human life incurred during Stalinism, arguing that industrialization has always been costly: English industrialization, for example, most likely would not have been possible without the pillage of India and the slaughter of American Indians during colonization, and African slave trade which caused an estimated 210 million deaths.¹⁰⁶

There have also been alternative causes suggested for the famine which killed millions: while anti-Stalinists blame his 'forced collectivization,' others blame the famine on sabotage by kulaks that killed over half the horses and oxen rather than forfeit them to

¹⁰⁰ Id.

¹⁰¹ Id.

¹⁰² Id.

¹⁰³ Id.

¹⁰⁴ Martens, Ludo. *Another View of Stalin*.

¹⁰⁵ Id.

¹⁰⁶ Id.

use on the new collective farms.¹⁰⁷ Without draft animals, peasants were unable to harvest crops; this, combined with the slaughter of millions of cattle and pigs, significantly contributed to, if not solely caused, the Soviet famine of 1932.¹⁰⁸ Even the great Stalin purges have an alternate side; an American engineer who worked in a Soviet factory said there were some benefits to the purges and the fear it created: officials and administrators who had previously been derelict in their work and the success of their units, began to “fight in a very real and earnest fashion for plan fulfillment, for economy, and for the well-being of their workers and employees.”¹⁰⁹ Also, at least in theory, there were practical reasons behind the Party purges of the early 1930’s: those who were expelled included ex-kulaks or corrupt bureaucrats, those who ignored Central Committee directives, and people who committed crimes or sexual abuse of others.¹¹⁰

Industrialism also brought the culturally and politically backward peasantry into modern times.¹¹¹ Most peasants did not have land and those that did farmed with primitive tools.¹¹² Also, before Stalin’s FFYP, in 1927, the kulaks controlled an estimated 2.13 million tons of wheat production, compared to collectivized agriculture which produced 0.57 million tons.¹¹³ While some view Stalin’s targeting of kulaks as illegitimate or unnecessary, it seems to have been supported by the peasants who had been suppressed for centuries and were often more than excited to join collectivization.¹¹⁴ And while collectivization was instigated and endorsed by Stalin’s central government, the massive, often uncontrolled response actually came from rural party government

¹⁰⁷ Id.

¹⁰⁸ Id.

¹⁰⁹ Id.

¹¹⁰ Martens, Ludo. *Another View of Stalin*.

¹¹¹ Id.

¹¹² Id.

¹¹³ Id.

¹¹⁴ Id.

bodies and the farm leaders themselves.¹¹⁵ In this way, Stalin's Soviet Union was not the "all-powerful and totalitarian State" that some critics make it out to be: the party did not have the technical means, qualified personal, or leadership to control collectivization in a controlled manner.¹¹⁶

In some ways, working conditions improved during collectivization: regular work days, systems of payment by piecework, and wage levels were introduced.¹¹⁷ Workers tribunals were established to enforce rules and judge negligence, equipment and repair work became more accessible, and some workers were even given basic technical and literacy schooling.¹¹⁸ Due to farm collectivization, grain delivery to the cities increased by 21.7% from 1929 to 1931; and as a result of the massive industrial development, the people receiving bread rations from that grain increased even more during the same time.¹¹⁹ Although the state paid very low prices for grain, peasant revenues still managed to increase from sales on available free markets and other seasonal work, thus disproving right-wing accusations that the state was exploiting the peasantry and asking greater sacrifices of them than of the industrial workers.¹²⁰ Also, there was an eventual increase in the production of consumer goods along with industrial production: the Fourth and Fifth Five Year Plans saw consumer good production increase by 23% and 65% respectively, while still maintaining growth levels in capital goods production.¹²¹

Some historians have taken the successes of Stalinism into consideration, proposing that Soviet studies are often not based on reality but instead on the defense of

¹¹⁵ Id.

¹¹⁶ Id.

¹¹⁷ Id.

¹¹⁸ Martens, Ludo. *Another View of Stalin*.

¹¹⁹ Id.

¹²⁰ Id.

¹²¹ Id.

Western values and ideology; Gabor Ritterspoon has gone so far as to say that many 'historical works' on Stalin's Russia are "grotesque bourgeois lies" written under the guise of academia, but actually in support of anti-Communist policies and in defence of capitalist interests.¹²² Proponents of Stalin's methods have focused on the massive rate of industrialization and growth in physical output, claiming that the economic development was quite successful; they agree that the human cost was morally wrong, yet did not have a negative affect on the economy, especially considering that the Soviet economy declined after Stalinist methodology was discontinued.¹²³

In his article, Mark Harrison claims that while some Soviets had a declining rate of consumption and standard of living, others either maintained their prior position and millions even were able to enjoy improved conditions.¹²⁴ Declining household consumption may not always create a negative effect on the populace; diversion of resources to other areas may actually have an overall benefit to the people.¹²⁵ Harrison points out that while Soviet industrialization was costly in capital resources, environmental assets, and human labor, it must also be considered that those same features created a high demand for labor which led to continuous full employment beginning in 1930; Russians who have recently lost jobs, income, or social status during the transition to democracy, would not feel they had suffered a loss if they did not have or at least believe they had those things under communism.¹²⁶ Harrison also disputes that Russia's output was not valueless as critics claim: while full employment may not be

¹²² Id.

¹²³ Rosefielde, Steven. "Stalinism in Post-Communist Perspective: New Evidence on Killings, Forced Labour and Economic Growth in the 1930's."

¹²⁴ Harrison, Mark. "Stalinism in Post-Communist Perspective." *Europe-Asia Studies*, 49, 3, May 1997: 499.

¹²⁵ Id.

¹²⁶ Id.

worth what it cost in human lives, it does still have value, and Soviet products have shown to have some, albeit minimal, value on the global market.¹²⁷ Harrison also points to a somewhat obvious observation that if Stalin's policies had indeed been "false industrialization" with no redeeming qualities, as claimed by Rosefielde, they would not have lasted the 60 years they did; instead, because there were some real gains to all social strata, there was a resistance to reform and an adherence to Stalin's policies.¹²⁸

The USSR under Stalin is known for its strict party control; Stalin has even been said to be a "convinced adherent of the Bolshevik ideology of murderous class war", willing to pay any price for what he viewed as "progress".¹²⁹ The Great Terror often becomes the focus during any discussion of Stalinism; many of Stalin's critics believe he may have actually been weak, with a state policy of using mass repression to govern, utilizing surveillance and threats to control the people.¹³⁰ However, while his doctrinal framework remained rigid, Stalin may in fact have been relatively flexible in his strategy for revolution.¹³¹ Stalin would often gauge the revolutionary sentiments of the people, implementing his more aggressive tactics during times when there was a rise in revolutionary fervor.¹³² He also was open to limited cooperation with capitalist states; in response to the 1927 American Workers' Delegation, Stalin stated that temporary agreements in industry, trade, and possibly even diplomatic relations were possible between the Soviet Union and capitalist states, limited only by the inherent opposition of the party systems.¹³³

¹²⁷ Id.

¹²⁸ Id.

¹²⁹ Thatcher 909.

¹³⁰ Id at 913

¹³¹ Historicus at 205.

¹³² Id at 206.

¹³³ Id at 208-209.

Additional evidence that Stalin's system may not have been as negative as critics proclaim is the fact that its basic elements remained in tact long after Stalin died.¹³⁴ It is also interesting to note that the first reforms of the Soviet economic system, though rational to Westerners, were actually counterproductive and it was Gorbachev's introduction of market elements that eventually led the collapse of the Soviet economy.¹³⁵ Stalinist ideology consisted of elements of both traditional ideals and patriotism and more modern internationalism, with much more weight on the prior.¹³⁶ Emphasis on traditional values has been both criticized as old-fashioned as well as championed for their moral standing: Stalin was a supporter of the 'nuclear family,' abolished abortion, and restricted divorce.¹³⁷ The Stalin leadership did not wish to return to a traditional Russia; instead it used traditional values to mobilize the society to achieve their goals and create a modern and efficient socialist society.¹³⁸ There is also a view that Stalinism has features of the Enlightenment in that Stalin's goal was to create a "rational, harmonious social order," with many of the same social values as states with other political systems: a healthy citizenry, patriotism, and sense of community.¹³⁹ Stalin truly believed that his policies, including collectivization, were correct and would benefit the people; he believed that any negative consequences were not caused by faults in the policies, but were due to improper implementation, often caused by self-serving bureaucrats.¹⁴⁰ As for the use of violence, it was a tool inherent to the Bolshevik

¹³⁴ Thatcher, Ian. "Stalin and Stalinism: A Review Article." *Europe-Asia Studies*, 56, 6 September 2004, pp 907-932 at 910.

¹³⁵ Ellman at 678.

¹³⁶ Thatcher 910.

¹³⁷ Id.

¹³⁸ Id.

¹³⁹ Id at 911.

¹⁴⁰ Id.

mentality, and its use in the face of opposition or resentment was only natural, not just for Stalin.¹⁴¹

While the numbers appear mixed, it seems that Stalin's programs did have their successes. Agriculture was transformed and industries previously non-existent were established and developed to an extent that Russia was able to be a player in the global market. Not only did Russia become an industrialized state, but it did so at an extremely rapid pace; therefore, under Stalin, Russia went from an agrarian, pre-industrialized nation to an industrialized state on its way to becoming a global actor. It was also under Stalin that Russia became seen as a major superpower, capable of not only catching-up to countries like Great Britain and America, but of eventually surpassing them in industrial production and even military capabilities.

MAO'S MARXISM

China strongly opposed imperialism, which is one reason Leninist ideology, which emphasized fighting imperialism, became so attractive.¹⁴² Like Stalin, Mao was a Marxist who believed that conflict and struggle are inevitable; he also advocated the global advancement of communism. However, in his quest to spread Communism, Mao believed in the use of the Chinese model which advocated responding flexibly, yet with strict adherence to fundamental principles.¹⁴³

Maoism, while derived from Marxism and Leninism, is somewhat different. All three versions of socialist ideology are founded on a revolutionary struggle of the masses

¹⁴¹ Id at 918-919.

¹⁴² "The Influence of Ideology." Worden

¹⁴³ "The Influence of Ideology." Worden

against the exploiting upper class.¹⁴⁴ Maoism differs in that its focus is on the agrarian countryside and not the industrial urban population.¹⁴⁵ Two other significant differences were that Mao believed the military must be comprised of the people with a focus on the needs and demands of the masses and that improved material conditions are necessary before socialism can be successfully introduced.¹⁴⁶ So while Maoism was built on the same foundation as Stalinism, it was distinctly dissimilar in that Mao actually considered the Chinese people's material welfare whereas Stalin was not only willing to but also encouraged the personal material sacrifice of the Soviet people. Mao saw problems with the Soviet form of communism: he believed that under the soviet Communist Party, a new bourgeoisie had actually emerged in which the party leadership had developed into a privileged class; this resulted in a continuation of a class struggle.¹⁴⁷ Mao did not hesitate to claim that no parallel development had occurred under the Chinese method of transition: he recognized that while class struggle was still existent, it was only due to the remnants of the old bourgeois and their efforts to gain political protection.¹⁴⁸

Both Stalin and Mao based their development plans on the "Theory of Productive Forces" which proposes that technical change can bring about social change, or in other words, that "changes in the means (and intensity) of production causes changes in the relations of production, i.e., in people's ideology and culture, their interactions, with one another, and their social relationship to the wider world."¹⁴⁹ Belief in this theory explains

¹⁴⁴ "Mao Zedong." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.

¹⁴⁵ Id.

¹⁴⁶ Blunden, Andy, ed. "Maoism." Encyclopedia of Marxism. 1999. Marxists Internet Archive 22 Dec 2008 <<http://marxists.org/glossary/terms/m/a.htm#maoism>>

¹⁴⁷ Kojima, Reeitsu. "A Reconsideration of Mao Zedong's Theories of Socialism." China's Urbanization and Rural Villages. Tokyo: Ryukei-shosha, 1978. pp. 147-159 at 151. <http://www.ide.go.jp/English/Publish/De/pdf/80_02_01.pdf>

¹⁴⁸ Id.

¹⁴⁹ "Mao Zedong." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.

why Stalin had faith in his rapid development program, as opposed to opponents' views that Soviet development could be achieved only with the aid of other, developed socialist states. This theory also explains why Mao thought he could change cultural backwardness while simultaneously building industry and modern infrastructure.

A major goal of all Marxist governments is the continuous development of the means of production.¹⁵⁰ While Mao followed that goal, he did so in a way that subordinated economic policy to the ongoing class, and eventually political, struggles.¹⁵¹ Mao had a major lack of economic knowledge and instead of correcting the problems caused by the improperly planned and quickly-executed collectivization and the Great Leap Forward, he used politics and ideology against the earlier reformers¹⁵² which actually caused more damage to not only the economy, but also to Chinese politics and society.¹⁵³ Originally, Mao followed Stalin's social and economic development principles; however, not seeing the radical results he was looking for, he instead turned to a "masscampaign style of development" which he had used during his time as a guerrilla leader.¹⁵⁴ Mao's commands became a dogma, strictly adhered to by his followers, which only produced chaos and not the desired economic development.¹⁵⁵ When Mao faced opposition and saw that his radical programs were not being fully implemented, he simply purged the party. Mao put extreme emphasis on party values and a major goal became the adoption of those values by party members and eventually society as a whole;

¹⁵⁰ "Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought Re-Thought." Worden, Robert L., Andrea Matles Savada and Ronald E. Dolan, editors. *China: A Country Study*. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987. <<http://countrystudies.us/china/121.htm>>

¹⁵¹ Id.

¹⁵² Id.

¹⁵³ Id.

¹⁵⁴ Id.

¹⁵⁵ Id.

Mao pushed selfless dedication to the common good and ideal social behavior, often expressed in simple maxims.¹⁵⁶

Mao believed that to advance socialism, the economic policy's guiding principle should be to focus on economic construction in order to improve the lives of the people as much as possible, create a worker-peasant economic alliance, and ensure state sector economic predominance; economic construction should be used to increase agricultural and industrial production, expand outside trade, and develop cooperatives.¹⁵⁷ After the establishment of the PRC, the CPC focused much of its attention on developing the backward inland areas and attempting to reduce regional inequality.¹⁵⁸ While this plan was influenced by socialist ideology and the ideal of egalitarianism, critics claim that this plan actually weakened the effectiveness of resource transfer, resulting in continued and more pronounced regional inequality.¹⁵⁹ Proponents, on the other hand, believe that central control over financial resources and income redistribution may have actually had some success in reducing regional inequality.¹⁶⁰

MAO'S POLICIES

Although Mao had been a key figure in the early Communist Party of Chinese, it was not until the CPC won the civil war and established the People's Republic of China in 1949 that Mao became Chairman and leader of the new socialist state. While the state was headed by a "democratic dictatorship," the CPC was the only legal party and Mao

¹⁵⁶ Id.

¹⁵⁷ Tse-tung, Mao. "Our Economic Policy." Second National Congress of Workers' and Peasants' Representatives. Juichin, Kiangsi Province, 23 Jan. 1934.

<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_9.htm>

¹⁵⁸ Wei, Yehua Dennis. "Regional Inequality in China." *Progress in Human Geography* 23, 1 (1999) pp. 49-59 at 50.

¹⁵⁹ Id.

¹⁶⁰ Id.

soon asserted himself in a dictator-type role through use of a personality cult.¹⁶¹ Mao, part of the more radical faction of the CPC, advocated government control of agriculture in order to finance industrialization; his plan was to create a state monopoly over grain distribution and supply so as to buy low and sell high, raising capital to fund industrialization.¹⁶² Unlike in Russia, the Chinese peasants were reluctant to join the collective farms and were often forced; in addition to forming cooperatives, the CPC banished religious and mystic institutions, replacing them with political meetings.¹⁶³ Mao's plan was to change the Chinese culture and 'cleanse' the nation of its past.¹⁶⁴ He felt that the Chinese obsession and strict compliance with traditional values was both out-of-date and preventing China from developing into a world leader. His early political campaigns focused on land reform and suppression of counter-revolutionaries in order to both assure his control and transform the Chinese social, political, and economic schemes.

Unlike Stalin, Mao was more psychological in getting the peasant population to believe in, or at least follow, his policy programs. In fact, one of his early leadership roles was as the Propaganda Director of the Kuomintang, the nationalist ally of the CPC.¹⁶⁵ Mao studied socialist ideology and particularly labor movements; he decided that all earlier uprisings had failed because they had been led by industrial workers who were too small a portion of the Chinese population to effectually end the problems of imperialism and feudalism.¹⁶⁶ Instead, Mao believed that it was the peasantry that must lead a violent

¹⁶¹ "Mao Zedong." [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia](#).

¹⁶² "Mao Zedong." [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia](#).

¹⁶³ Id.

¹⁶⁴ "Mao Zedong." [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia](#). 22 December 2008.

<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mao>>

¹⁶⁵ "Mao Zedong." [AbsoluteAstronomy.com](#).

¹⁶⁶ Id.

revolution, starting in the rural areas; this belief led him to begin his program of indoctrinating the Chinese peasant population with Marxism, while simultaneously developing his own reputation as a leader for the masses.¹⁶⁷ Mao was able to use the idea of a communist utopia, so appealing to the extremely poor peasantry, to inspire them with a revolutionary fervor, which led to the creation of the Red Army.¹⁶⁸ However, due to poor training and lack of resources, the Red Army was limited to guerilla warfare and often very brutal methods of terrorization to gain control over what became “soviet areas”.¹⁶⁹ After the CPC defeated the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek fled the country, the CPC took control of the media in order to promote the party and Chairman Mao, and denounce the Nationalists, often along with the United States and Japan.¹⁷⁰

In a 1934 speech, Mao insisted that private enterprise was important and would retain a dominant role in the Chinese economy, with the state sector limited to necessary industries¹⁷¹; however, he soon changed positions as the state sector grew exponentially under his leadership. Mao portrayed himself as an enemy of landowners and imperialism and as a friend to the peasants and working class; he appealed to the peasants to take a stand against feudalism and growing capitalism.¹⁷² Propaganda, especially art featuring Mao, was produced to invite the peasants to join in ‘their’ movement. By appealing directly to the masses, Mao built a personality cult. One reason the Cult of Mao was so successful was that China had a large youth population, brought up during the

¹⁶⁷ Id.

¹⁶⁸ Id.

¹⁶⁹ “Mao Zedong.” AbsoluteAstronomy.com.

¹⁷⁰ Id.

¹⁷¹ Tse-tung, Mao. “Our Economic Policy.”

¹⁷² Id.

Communist era and taught to love Mao; these youth were Mao's largest support base, following his leadership almost without question.

MAO'S PLANS

In 1953 Mao implemented his First Five-Year Plan; the goal was to end Chinese dependence on agriculture which Mao viewed as dated.¹⁷³ Mao wanted China to become a world power; to do this he used USSR aid to build industrial plants, similar to Stalin's initial economic plan. The FFYP followed the Soviet model, stressing development of heavy industry, and using Soviet economic and technical assistance.¹⁷⁴ However, Mao doubted the Soviet assistance to China: he felt it did not meet expectations or needs and was a warning that China could become both politically and economically dependent.¹⁷⁵ In the early 1950's, China's population was much larger than the political leadership had expected and a sufficient food supply was among the top needs; also needed were domestic capital for investment, technology, capital equipment, and military hardware.¹⁷⁶ To meet its needs, the government rapidly collectivized agriculture, nationalized banking, industry, and trade, and nearly extinguished private businesses.¹⁷⁷ In the political arena, the party and government administration were centralized, a state constitution was passed, delegates were elected to the national legislature, and Mao was officially elected chairman.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ "Mao Zedong." [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.](#)

¹⁷⁴ "The Great Leap Forward, 1958-60." Worden, Robert L., Andrea Matles Savada and Ronald E. Dolan, editors. *China: A Country Study*. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987.

[<http://countrystudies.us/china/26.htm>](http://countrystudies.us/china/26.htm)

¹⁷⁵ Id.

¹⁷⁶ Id.

¹⁷⁷ Id.

¹⁷⁸ Id.

Mao's May Seventh Directive became the basis for CPC policies in the 1960's: it called for industry workers to also participate in military, political, and cultural activities, and for peasants to expand from agricultural into industrial or other work.¹⁷⁹ The administration was also reorganized and significantly downsized with small revolutionary committees doing both administrative and party work, reducing the number of bureaucrats and increasing the labor force.¹⁸⁰ Mao felt that imperialism was basically neo-colonialism and only through the destruction of capitalism could oppressed nations rid themselves of imperialism and establish a socialist society.¹⁸¹ The economy was the foundation of the new socialist state and Mao believed that a socialist economy would be developed not through "bureaucratic command but by increasing the initiative of the masses (through massive propagation of correct economic policy)."¹⁸²

There also were improvements in party organization as intellectuals were encouraged to participate and the party attempted to liberalize politics, encouraging intellectual discourse.¹⁸³ Mao took the lead with his "Hundred Flowers Campaign"; criticism was slow at first, but once critics began speaking openly against the party and its leaders the political climate changed, criticism was no longer welcome, and critics were targeted in an anti-rightist campaign.¹⁸⁴

Under Mao, the Cultural Revolution was meant to be a transitional period, transforming the society from capitalism to socialism; Mao wanted to persuade the lower

¹⁷⁹ Kojima 153.

¹⁸⁰ Id.

¹⁸¹ "On Maoism." National Unity Congress of C.P.N. December 1991.
<http://www.cpnm.org/worker/issue1/on_maoism.htm>

¹⁸² "On Maoism."

¹⁸³ "The Transition to Socialism, 1952-57." Worden, Robert L., Andrea Matles Savada and Ronald E. Dolan, editors. *China: A Country Study*. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987.

<<http://countrystudies.us/china/25.htm>>

¹⁸⁴ Id.

working classes to support a socialist system, replacing the old capitalist system, in which they would work for the benefit of the people and not the private production owners. Much effort was put into nationalizing the formerly private means of production and strengthening their output capacity. Mao's persuasion tactic showed results: by 1956, the agricultural sector had been almost completely reorganized into collective farms on initiative of the farmers themselves, and over ten years ahead of planned.¹⁸⁵

However, these early collectivization efforts were not successful and 1956 saw a famine, despite CPC propaganda claiming increased harvest rates.¹⁸⁶ At the end of the First Five-Year Plan, in 1958, Mao implemented a much more aggressive economic policy in the Second Five Year Plan or Great Leap Forward.¹⁸⁷ The goal was rapid collectivization: small agricultural collectives were merged into larger people's communes with land taken from landlords and wealthy citizens and given to poorer peasants; private food production was banned and all farms and livestock were owned collectively.¹⁸⁸ Though the FFYP had made some accomplishments, Mao and his fellow radicals believed that development could occur much more rapidly if the Chinese people were ideologically motivated and if domestic resources were used more efficiently to develop industry and agriculture simultaneously.¹⁸⁹

Mao hoped to industrialize China by using the country's supply of cheap labor and thus having to avoid importing heavy machinery.¹⁹⁰ Primary importance was given to grain and steel production, often done in small-scale, backyard furnaces located on each

¹⁸⁵ Id.

¹⁸⁶ "Mao Zedong." [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.](#)

¹⁸⁷ "Mao Zedong." [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.](#)

¹⁸⁸ Id.

¹⁸⁹ Id.

¹⁹⁰ Id.

commune; though ineffective and resourcefully wasteful, these furnaces continued production of low quality pig iron until eventually replaced by large-scale projects in 1959.¹⁹¹ However, even the large plants and other capital construction projects were not very successful because they were typically poorly planned, often built without engineers overseeing the work.¹⁹² The massive routing of labor to steel and construction works also caused a lack of sufficient man power for harvesting; this led to a grain deficit and starvation during 1958-60 in many areas of China¹⁹³; however, China continued to be a major grain exporter, despite shortages at home, in order for Mao to save face for himself and his policies.¹⁹⁴

While heavy industry was important, Mao's theory of development was different from Stalin in that he subscribed to the "theory of the three differences," between urban and rural, factory workers and peasants, manual and mental labor.¹⁹⁵ The emphasis on eliminating these differences accounts for a major difference between Chinese communes and their Soviet counterparts and even the earlier Chinese cooperatives: the Chinese communes were a single structural organization in which all members, regardless of their job, cooperated equally; Chinese communes aimed to industrialize agriculture so as to abolish the three differences.¹⁹⁶ Industrialized agriculture brought the working class together with the rural peasant farmers, helped develop the 'backward' countryside, and got the educated doing manual labor alongside the farmers. While the Soviet system emphasized the development and growth of large cities in order to get industrial and

¹⁹¹ Id.

¹⁹² Id.

¹⁹³ "Mao Zedong." [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.](#)

¹⁹⁴ Id.

¹⁹⁵ Kojima 148.

¹⁹⁶ Id at 149.

material goods to the rural areas, gradually turning peasants into workers, Mao's theory of the three differences supported the development of smaller cities with the goal of simplifying and decreasing urban bureaucracies and increasing the role of agriculture and peasants in the development process.¹⁹⁷

During the Great Leap Forward there was a policy of "small concentration and large dispersion" of city construction; this allowed movement of industry to the countryside, avoiding concentration in the urban areas and a widening of the urban/ rural difference.¹⁹⁸ The goal was to narrow existing contradictions and disparities, spread the means of production, and develop cohesion as all workers began to do similar work and have more similar lives, regardless of geography.¹⁹⁹ The Daqing oil field was seen as a model commune because its members worked in agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, side-occupations, fishery, and even oil mining; the diversity of work on this commune was seen as the ideal way of eliminating the three differences as well as preventing bureaucracy.²⁰⁰

1962 saw the abandonment of the Second Five Year Plan as Mao lost policy support due to the famine and sprouts of capitalism emerging in the countryside.²⁰¹ In 1961, Mao maintained leadership, but was now heavily influenced by more moderate party members; in response to the economic and political failures of Mao's Plans, the government began to implement corrective measures.²⁰² Communes were reorganized with each having more control over administration and economic planning and a

¹⁹⁷ Kojima 150.

¹⁹⁸ Id at 154.

¹⁹⁹ Id.

²⁰⁰ Id at 155.

²⁰¹ "Mao Zedong." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.

²⁰² "Readjustment and Recovery: "Agriculture First," 1961-65." Worden, Robert L., Andrea Matles Savada and Ronald E. Dolan, editors. *China: A Country Study*. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987. <<http://countrystudies.us/china/89.htm>>

reinstatement of material incentives; the CPC reestablished its regional bureaus and encouraged leaders to use populist-style leadership to counteract the public apathy which had developed towards party leadership.²⁰³ Industrial goals became more realistic and efficient with ideologies no longer controlling the management.²⁰⁴ New CPC leaders, including the reformer Deng Xiaoping, de-emphasized Maoist ideology and implemented a massive economic overhaul based on market-oriented policies.²⁰⁵

Despite the logic behind these measures, Mao did not agree with the new, more moderate political and economic measures. He believed that they were capitalist and antisocialist tendencies that were corrupting the people and were actually “counterrevolutionary.”²⁰⁶ In response, Mao launched his Socialist Education Movement, which paired with the People’s Liberation Army, in an attempt to restore ideological purity, reintroduce the revolutionary spirit, and intensify the class struggle.²⁰⁷ This movement included a reform of the school system in order to provide mass schooling for the uneducated and re-educating intellectuals on the need for them to participate in manual labor.²⁰⁸

In a final attempt at maintaining political and economic control, Mao implemented the Cultural Revolution in 1966. Mao enlisted students to criticize party leadership and promote Mao’s original revolutionary ideology.²⁰⁹ He gave power directly to these students, who became known as the Red Guards; however, the result was

²⁰³ Id.

²⁰⁴ Id.

²⁰⁵ “Mao Zedong.” [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.](#)

²⁰⁶ “Mao Zedong.” [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.](#)

²⁰⁷ “The Cultural Revolution, 1966-76.” Worden, Robert L., Andrea Matles Savada and Ronald E. Dolan, editors. *China: A Country Study*. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987.

<<http://countrystudies.us/china/90.htm>>

²⁰⁸ Id.

²⁰⁹ Id.

disastrous as millions were prosecuted, thousands killed, and economic and social chaos erupted.²¹⁰ The Revolution also caused a rift in the CPC, as it became the first large-scale action against the CPC party itself.²¹¹ The ultimate result was not a consolidation of Mao's power, but party disorganization and civil disorder; the PLA, the only institution retaining some organization, became the new political authority and despite its support for the left, actually restrained leftist radicals in order to restore order.²¹²

Only three years later, in 1969, Mao declared the Cultural Revolution over and the party turned to rebuilding itself, stabilizing the economy, and giving attention to foreign affairs.²¹³ The radical revolutionary efforts had calmed and Mao himself withdrew some of his support for the radicals, instead focusing on stabilization through both revolutionary enthusiasm and pragmatism, each checking the other.²¹⁴ Possibly as a result of his new more moderate view, the Ninth National Party Congress confirmed Mao as supreme leader.²¹⁵ During the early 1970's, the CPC focused on rebuilding, led largely by the PLA, although it too was divided.²¹⁶ Moderates continued to gain support and influence, affirmed by the adoption of the Four Modernizations plan which focused on modernization of agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology.²¹⁷

Prior to his death in 1976, Mao was less politically active, yet still highly influential; he played the two party factions off each other to keep them in check and retain personal influence.²¹⁸ However, after Mao's death, the leftists became vulnerable

²¹⁰ Id.

²¹¹ "The Cultural Revolution, 1966-76." Worden, Robert L.,

²¹² Id.

²¹³ "The Cultural Revolution, 1966-76." Worden, Robert L.,

²¹⁴ Id.

²¹⁵ Id.

²¹⁶ Id.

²¹⁷ Id.

²¹⁸ Id.

and were eventually removed from power. Leftist policies, including Mao's programs, were opening criticized as the CPC became much more moderate, purging itself of any remaining leftist leaders.²¹⁹ Yet while there was a movement away from Maoist ideals, they continued to be highly regarded, even after Mao's death in 1976.²²⁰

MAO'S RESULTS

Privatization and collectivization were two major tenets of Mao's method of Chinese development; the Great Leap focused on the newly created people's communes, each of which was a self-supporting community organized on paramilitary and efficiency standards.²²¹ The new communes were, in a way, one method of Mao's assault on traditional Chinese values; the communes were a fundamental attack on the family institution as dormitories replaced nuclear family housing, mess halls replaced family dining, and nurseries were used to watch all the commune children.²²²

The Great Leap Forward was the "biggest and most ambitious experiment in human mobilization" even though it was abandoned after less than one year.²²³ The plan called for confiscation of all private property and converting all peasants into one large labor force that worked in all areas of production- from farming to steel production in backyard furnaces.²²⁴ This was different than Stalin's collectivization which maintained separate work forces for agricultural and industrial production, on collective farms and in state industrial plants respectively. Although the GLF goal was to bring China to

²¹⁹ "The Cultural Revolution, 1966-76." Worden, Robert L.,

²²⁰ "Mao Zedong." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.

²²¹ "The Great Leap Forward, 1958-60"

²²² Id.

²²³ Pong, Myra. "The Significance of Remembering Mao Zedong." 22 December 2008. <
<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/maraas/wanek01.htm>>

²²⁴ Id.

Britain's level of industrialization in only fifteen years, the actual result was reversing the economic prosperity that China had enjoyed during the past eight years under Communist leadership.²²⁵ Mao claimed the problem was bureaucracy and a lack of adherence to orders; but in reality, many programmatic problems were a result of Mao's method of "destruction before construction."²²⁶

The major economic transformation, however, was in the massive diversion of labor from agriculture to the production of steel and infrastructures.²²⁷ It was believed that the commune system would free-up manpower for use on major works projects which were a necessary part of the development plan.²²⁸ Mao ordered large-scale industrialization projects which peasants were forced to work on; peasants were also ordered to work on small-scale iron and steel production.²²⁹ In this way, the Chinese plan had a strong resemblance to Stalin's economic plan: both started as pre-industrial, primarily agrarian states, which shifted their focus to development of steel and oil natural resources and the building of massive infrastructure in an attempt to support the developing industries. Strict price controls were implemented, possibly to counter-act the massive drop in grain production resulting from the diversion of labor.²³⁰ During the Third Five-Year Plan, beginning in 1966, the state also diverted large amounts of subsidies, raw materials, and labor into the rural interior.²³¹

In actuality, however, the Great Leap Forward created an economic disaster: there was a shortage of food, industrial raw materials, overproduction of poorly produced

²²⁵ Id.

²²⁶ Id.

²²⁷ "Mao Zedong." [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.](#)

²²⁸ "The Great Leap Forward, 1958-60"

²²⁹ "Mao Zedong." [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.](#)

²³⁰ Id.

²³¹ "The Great Leap Forward, 1958-60"

goods, mismanagement and deterioration of industrial plants, and exhaustion and demoralization of everyone from peasants to party leaders.²³² One of the major problems was that during the Great Leap Forward, new unproven agricultural techniques were used in the communes which, along with the diversion of labor to heavy industry and infrastructure projects, led to lower levels of grain production and a severe shortage in grain which had been China's main output.²³³ Despite the reduced harvest, party leaders exaggerated the production levels which resulted in a disproportionate amount of grain being sent to urban areas and exported, creating a shortage in the rural areas; the result was the largest famine in history in which millions of Chinese died.²³⁴ It was the massive failure of the Great Leap that eventually caused Mao to step down as Chairman in April 1959.²³⁵ Whether Mao knew the true extent of the shortage has been widely contested—some claim he only knew there was a mild shortage, exasperated by poor environmental conditions, while others claim he knew the massive extent of the problem and was simply dismissive.²³⁶

Another problem with the Great Leap Forward was that although there was a massive increase in heavy industry and infrastructure, like in Russia, most of it was basically worthless. Steel production quotas were typically met, but because most production was done in steel furnaces poorly-constructed on each commune, what came out of them were typically worthless scrap metal.²³⁷ The infrastructures employed millions of peasants but the work often cost them their lives and ultimately did not

²³² Id.

²³³ “Mao Zedong.” [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.](#)

²³⁴ “Mao Zedong.” [AbsoluteAstronomy.com.](#)

²³⁵ Id.

²³⁶ Id.

²³⁷ Id.

benefit Chinese development because the projects were constructed without the supervision of engineers whom Mao ideologically rejected.²³⁸ So while China appeared to be advancing with massive steel output and major infrastructure development, the truth was that the Chinese peasantry was giving their labor and lives to produce worthless scrap and that could neither be used at home nor successfully exported. In response, communes were restructured, partially restoring family units and reinstating material incentives to production.²³⁹

While Mao's goal was to end the existing social classes through his "class struggle," the reality was that over 90% of the Chinese population remained peasants; not only did the lower classes remain peasants, but they were discriminated against while the urban population received preferential treatment.²⁴⁰ Mao's economic goals were not intended to promote the welfare of the Chinese people, but instead to allow China to 'catch up' to England and eventually overtake the United States.²⁴¹ Mao's political motives took precedence and the people paid the price- often with their lives. And while China did make enormous strides in industry and other economic sectors, it was at the cost of exploiting China's once rich reserves of natural resources, turning China into an environmental nightmare: China's tremendously fast-paced industrialization wreaked havoc on the environment.²⁴²

Mao's methodology and obsession with overcoming the world powers and becoming a major, nuclear power resulted in Chinese isolation; his severe ideology and

²³⁸ Id.

²³⁹ "The Great Leap Forward, 1958-60"

²⁴⁰ Korzec, Michal. "Beyond the Party-State: Remarks About State Formation in the People's Republic of China." 22 December 2008. <

<http://64.233.169.132/search?q=cache:JsWP06qXJtYJ:www.degezonderoker.nl/Frontpage,%2520Introduction,%2520Epilogue.doc+Korzec+Beyond+the+Party&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us>>

²⁴¹ Id.

²⁴² Id.

distain for traditional Chinese values led to a disconnect with traditional Chinese culture as love and tolerance were replaced with a philosophy of struggle, superstition, and hate.²⁴³ And while general literacy rates increased, China lost a great deal both culturally and intellectually as Mao closed schools and persecuted intellectuals in his quest to establish and maintain his control during the Cultural Revolution.²⁴⁴

POSITIVE VIEW OF MAO

Despite all the negative effects of Mao's rule, he is still revered by a large portion of the Chinese people. The CPC continues to use public funds to preserve Mao's corpse, and even has a Bureau whose sole purpose is to maintain the Mao Mausoleum so that the people may visit his body and pay reverence.²⁴⁵ Despite Mao's mistakes and the horrible consequences his policies had for the people, many Chinese still follow "Mao Zedong Thought" because they believe it is what led to victory in the Communist Revolution.²⁴⁶ Mao was seen, and still is by many Chinese, as a great revolutionary and strategist whose policies led to the defeat of Chiang Kai-shek during the Chinese Civil War and allowed China to develop into a major power.²⁴⁷

Mao's mistakes are considered secondary to his accomplishments: a successful revolution, the introduction of Communism, the end of imperialism and foreign dependency, and the establishment of China as a world military and economic power.²⁴⁸ And even with the changes in Chinese economic policies, many Mao supporters did, and

²⁴³ Id.

²⁴⁴ "Mao Zedong." AbsoluteAstronomy.com.

²⁴⁵ Korzec, Michal. "Beyond the Party-State."

²⁴⁶ Pong, Myra. "The Significance of Remembering Mao Zedong."

²⁴⁷ "Mao Zedong." AbsoluteAstronomy.com.

²⁴⁸ Pong, Myra. "The Significance of Remembering Mao Zedong."

still do, continue to credit Mao and his policies with social and economic development.²⁴⁹ They credit his aggressive policies for the increased literacy, life expectancy, and industrialization; they also see Mao as the leader that ended Western and Japanese imperialism in China and brought China to the status as a major world power.²⁵⁰ Even the numbers reflect some success as during the Great Leap Forward, Chinese iron production increased 45% in 1958 and 30% for the two subsequent years²⁵¹; however, it declined again in 1961 and stayed below the 1958 level until 1964.²⁵²

Despite the negative results of Mao's leadership, especially the deaths of tens of millions of Chinese, many still view Mao as a positive figure whose accomplishments outweigh the massive costs they imposed; the CPC in 1981 made an official evaluation of Mao which was extremely positive, stating that not only was he a great revolutionist and theorist, but "his contributions to China's revolution far outweigh his mistakes... [and] he has made significant contributions to the emancipation of the oppressed people of the world and to the cause of human progress."²⁵³ However, over 25 years later, there continues to be debate over Mao's actual accomplishments. Chen Yun, another key figure in the early years of the People's Republic of China, said of Mao that he made "achievements in founding the country, mistakes in development and crimes in Cultural Revolution."²⁵⁴ Another interesting way to look at Mao is not as the first democratic leader, but as the first emperor of the People's Republic of China; but based on the

²⁴⁹ "Mao Zedong." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.

²⁵⁰ Id.

²⁵¹ "Mao Zedong." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.

²⁵² Id.

²⁵³ Huang, Michael. "How to Evaluate Mao Zedong." China Elections & Governance. 22 December 2008. <<http://en.chinaelections.org/newsinfo.asp?newsid=13709>>

²⁵⁴ Huang, Michael. "How to Evaluate Mao Zedong."

criteria typically used in evaluating the success of a Chinese emperor, Mao was only minimally successful in one category- his ability to maintain his 'throne'.²⁵⁵

While categorizing the deaths of tens of millions of Chinese as developmental 'mistakes' seems very callous, if these negative affects are ignored, Mao's policies take on a much more positive and even impressive appearance; economist Utsa Patnaik has stated that despite the criticisms, the "real and rational content of Mao Zedong's contribution to the economic and social development of new China continues to be insufficiently appreciated by economists."²⁵⁶ She claims that Mao's strategies were very innovative in that he took full advantage of rural surplus areas which contributed to the huge rise in the rate of capital formation without severely restricting mass consumption.²⁵⁷ Mao therefore avoided a major criticism of Stalin's plan which collectivized labor, but also restricted mass consumption, giving preference to exporting produced goods over consumption by the national market. China had a potential labor surplus in that some of its labor, especially in the rural areas, was going unused; however, this surplus could not be utilized until farms were converted into collective units.²⁵⁸ Cooperatives were successful because they allowed the pooling of surplus labor time and means of production into larger units; this method allowed a smaller number of people working more days per year to put in the same total time as before yet increasing crop

²⁵⁵ Id.

²⁵⁶ Patnaik, Utsa. "The Economic Ideas of Mao Zedong: Agricultural Transformation." Across the Himalayan Gap: Socio-Political Changes and Economic Development. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1998. <http://ignca.nic.in/ks_41032.htm>

²⁵⁷ Id.

²⁵⁸ Patnaik, Utsa. "The Economic Ideas of Mao Zedong: Agricultural Transformation."

output, thus releasing the potential surplus labor to be used for capital formation projects.²⁵⁹

Not only did the collectives allow for increased output, but they also ensured that all workers had the same basic standard of living, with each worker getting his share, even if not involved in agricultural work.²⁶⁰ In this way, Mao's methods differed from the typical socialist theory of distribution²⁶¹; under Mao, the implemented distribution was "from each according to his ability, to each according to his basic needs."²⁶² If the typical socialist distribution based on work was utilized, the project workers would have gotten nothing and therefore no project work would have occurred unless the state implemented a wage or some equivalent to induce the workers.²⁶³ Mao credited the new ability of two workers to do the work which once required three as one of the reasons socialism, and especially cooperative production, was superior.²⁶⁴ Patnaik says that tapping into the surplus labor resources was a virtually costless method of capital formation.²⁶⁵ During this time, and because of Mao's policies, there was a massive rise in the rate of economic investment; and most significantly, the increase was not at the cost of popular consumption as the rate of real consumption by both peasants and workers rose during 1958-59 and 1978-79.²⁶⁶

²⁵⁹ Id, Collectivization was necessary because it allowed removing only a 'partial worker' from each farm, spreading the loss of labor units across the entirety, instead of one farm suffering the larger loss if a worker was removed from that workforce entirely.

²⁶⁰ Id

²⁶¹ "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work"

²⁶² Patnaik, Utsa. "The Economic Ideas of Mao Zedong: Agricultural Transformation."

²⁶³ Id.

²⁶⁴ Id.

²⁶⁵ Id. The number of days worked per person rose from 119 to 189 during 1950 to 1959.

²⁶⁶ Patnaik, Utsa. "The Economic Ideas of Mao Zedong: Agricultural Transformation."

Patniak argues that part of the problem in evaluating policy successes is that the shift to collectivization coincided with poor harvests and thus a temporary decrease in output; the result was the Great Famine which has been probably the largest criticism of Mao's policies. Patniak she claims the production decline would have happened regardless, and was not necessarily caused by the shift to communal farming.²⁶⁷ She hypothesizes that the famine conditions were so widespread because the egalitarian distribution of food spread the effects over the entire population, instead of concentrating it in a small, very poor segment of society as may typically happen during a food shortage.²⁶⁸ She also criticizes those that use the lowered birth rates of the time to increase the death rate by including the "missing millions" as part of the number.²⁶⁹ It is very possible that because of the spread of labor and the increasing ability of women to work in other areas, many women may have made a conscious decision to postpone having children and instead work outside the domestic sphere.²⁷⁰

Although it had initial problems, the commune system seemed to show significant benefits as capital formation continued to increase up until 1978, the death rate and child mortality rates once again declined, and literacy rates increased; modern industrial inputs and capital use had significant annual growth with increased employment despite the workforce growing and expanding to include women.²⁷¹ One of Mao's major accomplishments was taking the unused surplus labor, which had been a liability, and converting it into capital and a very minimal cost, thus allowing agricultural

²⁶⁷ Id.

²⁶⁸ Id.

²⁶⁹ Id.

²⁷⁰ Id.

²⁷¹ Id.

transformation and industrial growth, and eventual gains in human development indicators.²⁷²

Mao's numbers are much less easily rationalized compared to Stalin: his programs had much lower rates of production output with a much higher cost of human life in a shorter time. However, in light of China's position today, it may just be that it took more time for the positive effects of Mao's programs to be felt. Today China is a major world power, producing a massive proportion of consumer goods and playing a huge role in the global trading and banking markets. Without industrialization, which occurred under Mao, this would not be possible. Also, had Mao not emphasized an end of Chinese isolation and an end of backward social and cultural values, it is not likely that China would have become such an active player in the international community. Therefore, while China's successes have been much more recent, they are a result of Mao's leadership and policy initiatives.

GOING HEAD-TO-HEAD

Stalin and Mao both followed Marxism, albeit different versions of it, and they both had huge aspirations of ending capitalism and backwardness in their states. Both men implemented programs focused on the same major premises of development: using agricultural collectivization and massive increases in heavy industrial production to end dependency on other states and assume the role of an industrialized world superpower. These goals were executed with such focus and determination that both men had the

²⁷² Patnaik, Utsa. "The Economic Ideas of Mao Zedong: Agricultural Transformation."

policy-equivalent of blinders on: they failed to see the collateral damage that their policies were causing.

Despite the costs of their programs, do Stalin and Mao truly deserve the heavy criticism that they continue to receive? While both Russia and China lost millions of lives during these periods, both countries also enjoyed an extremely fast-paced rate of industrialization. Both Russia and China began as pre-industrialized states but after Stalin and Mao respectively, became not only global players, but global leaders. And while problems still remain- such as the environmental issues in China, these states still to this day enjoy a position as two of the most powerful countries in the world.

And while hindsight is twenty-twenty, as they say, is it really fair to evaluate Stalin and Mao from such a perspective: did they or could they have known the exact cost that their programs would entail? And even if they did, were they entitled to authorize those costs in their leadership role; in other words, were they just making the unsavory decision that no one wants to make but everyone knows will pay dividends in the end? This is highly possible, especially considering that even today both Stalin and Mao are highly revered in a large segment of Russian and Chinese society. Even with all the information we have today- including the massive numbers of deaths resulting either directly or indirectly from the programs- Russians and Chinese still think fondly of their past leaders, even to the point of idolization. Mao's Personality Cult is still very much in tact and thriving and even Stalin's Cult has seen a revival with the recent economic downturn. A simple possibility is just the 'grass is always greener' explanation: that the people will always long for a time past when the present is not going so well.

However, this simple explanation seems inconceivable when ‘the other grass’ cost millions of lives and supposedly much lower standard of living with labor more closely resembling a feudal system than a free, industrialized nation. Another possibility is that Stalin and Mao were actually not horrible tyrants hated by all. While neither Stalin nor Mao had the economic knowledge or expertise that someone in their position should have had, they may have done the best to their capabilities. Stalin and Mao took power at a time when their countries were socially, culturally, and industrially undeveloped; not only were they undeveloped, but they were decades behind the world superpowers. Stalin and Mao both realized that they had two choices: a more moderate development program which would take years, if not decades; or a much faster-paced, tightly controlled, and often harshly implemented program that would rapidly transform their state into an industrialized nation that could not only participate, but compete, on the global market.

While I am certainly not advocating sacrificing millions of lives for the sake of increased steel production, I recognize that every leader must weigh costs and benefits and make decisions, based on the information available, which he thinks is to the best advantage of his country. Stalin and Mao took this to the extreme in that they not only made the decision to sacrifice millions of lives, but did so willingly. While this cost to benefit ratio may not seem to us as beneficial or one we would be willing to take on, Stalin and Mao apparently valued industrialization at such a level that they were more than willing to pay any cost to reach the level of Europe and America. And it is important to note that while Stalin and Mao made the decisions, they did have and even to this day, maintain support from their people which goes to show that they may have, at least to an extent, be justified in their decisions as simply enacting the will of the people.

It is also important to consider that Russian and Chinese development happened at an exponentially faster rate than the industrialization of Europe and the United States; therefore, it is possible that the exact cost of that industrialization was not as extreme as we may think. It is possible that the numbers just seem so massive because they were concentrated in such a short time span; millions of lives lost during the Great Famine would not be nearly so offensive if they had been lost gradually over decades. Perhaps an increased level of cost is just the inevitability of an increased rate of benefits: while the Russian and Chinese people paid high costs during the development programs, they also reaped greater rewards at a much faster pace. This may be one reason while both Stalin and Mao are viewed favorably by some: the people know the costs were high, but they also know how much they got in return.

As to the argument that the benefits were minimal compared to the costs, this is hard, if not impossible to defend; although numbers can be used, the reality is that development is hard to quantify because there are so many intangibles that should be considered. Both Russia and China, under Stalin and Mao, saw both increases and decreases in numerical evaluations of development; the argument can therefore be made either way: that the plans were successful or that they were not. However, it may be the intangibles, the changes that cannot be counted or weighed, that support the argument that Stalin and Mao were not mass-murderers, but strong leaders that enabled their people to develop in ways previously unimaginable. While increased rates of agricultural and industrial output are valuable, perhaps the Russian and Chinese people put more value in the effect these leaders had on their countries' international standing: both Russia and China, under these strong leaders, rose to become world leaders, able to compete with the

strongest international actors, and eventually become dominant superpowers themselves. It is therefore possible that national pride was more valuable than the arguably minimal industrial gains, as well as the massive social and cultural costs.

Overall, the ultimate issue is one of choice: did the Russian and Chinese people choose to support Stalin and Mao and thus pay the high costs in exchange for the high rewards, or did Stalin and Mao ignore the desires of their peoples and instead enact what they choose as the best policies? Stalin and Mao did have resistance and their policies were opposed by some; however, it is hard to believe that if the majority had been against their leadership that they would have been able to maintain such high levels of power and control. The other alternative is that the people, at least for the most part, supported or acquiesced in Stalin and Mao's decision-making, therefore validating their actions; in which case, Stalin and Mao, while making sacrifices we may not be willing to make, did what they had to do and were authorized to do by the people whom they led.