Joseph Stalin 2 Essay, Research Paper

JOSEPH STALIN: TYRANT OF STEEL

Iosef Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili (a.k.a. Joseph Stalin), was the undisputed leader of the Soviet Union from 1929 to 1953. Although Stalin s reign in power did not begin immediately his contribution to government began in 1912, and from then on he slowly rose to the high chain of command. Stalin s long and troublesome road to absolute power had many steps that marked important events in the Soviet Union s condition but they did not always improve the life of his people.

Stalin s first position in government began in 1898 when he joined a secret Marxist revolutionary group and became involved in many demonstrations. In 1901 Stalin began writing for the Brdzola which published many of his revolutionary articles and ideas. At the end of 1901, he was formally accepted into the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. Between the years of 1902 and 1913 Stalin was arrested and exiled many times for countless crimes and as a result in 1907 he was expelled from the Social Democratic Labor Party. However, his luck changed in 1912 when Lenin appointed Stalin to the Bolshevik Central Committee. In addition, he was given various commands and was appointed to the position of people s commissar for nationalities. After proving himself at this position, he was assigned the position of commissar of workers and peasants inspection. He finally gained the power he desired most in 1922, when he became general secretary of the Central Committee. With this position Stalin was able to control appointments, set agendas, and transfer officials and increase his own power. When Lenin died in 1924, Stalin used the current power he attained and crushed his opponents to become the dictator in 1929.

Stalin used his new authority to try and make the Soviet Union a world power so that no enemies could destroy his nation. When he first took over, he began a series of five-year plans. The first plan was to industrialize the country, however, the production of machinery and farm equipment became more important than the production of household items and necessities such as clothing and food. Secondly, Stalin wanted to use collectivization to increase the production of agricultural products and to end private farming. Stalin also decided to transfer the control of the farms to the government, and as a result, caused a severe resistance in the peasant class especially the kulaks. The measures taken by Stalin to discipline those who opposed his authority were either exiled, or executed as well as a great famine killed 10 million peasants (1932-33). However despite these incidents Stalin achieved his goals. Collectivization was a success in terms of industrial growth attained by the series of five-year plans. Stalin had finally conquered the economic hardships that the Soviet Union had encountered.

Stalin was then ready to deal with any opposition to his policies. In 1935 he started what is now known as the Great Purge in which no one was able to escape the terror of his rule. First beginning with the elimination of most of the prominent Bolsheviks and many army officers, he staged the Moscow show trials where these men were convicted of terrible crimes. By 1938 more than half of the central committee s members were dead, and many of the delegates were arrested. Even the general public suffered when Stalin s secret police annihilated a huge portion imprisoned in concentration camps. However, Stalin had accomplished his task: he had gained absolute power. In 1939 Stalin signed a nonaggression treaty with Adolph Hitler to ensure Russia s safety from attack and to expand influence in Europe. Germany and the Soviet Union now each seized a part of Poland, but the treaty was ignored when, in June 1941, German troops invaded. During 1941 and 1942, Stalin s army was able to restrain the German attacks, and by doing so, he reached the height of his popularity. Later in 1943, Stalin met with Churchill and Roosevelt in Iraq where they agreed to work together until Germany was defeated. Finally, in 1945, after Hitler had been beaten, the leaders met again to discuss the military occupation of Germany. This time was a feeling of power and prestige for Stalin, who was considered a savior by his subjects, even though he had been such a terrible animal before. Stalin s absolute power lasted until March 5, 1953, when he suddenly died.

An entirely unrelenting and determined man, Stalin s climb to power was not always honest and moral. He disposed of his opponents and plotted against many distinguished politicians. Once Stalin was in control of the Soviet Union, he used any means possible to make his country a world dominate powerhouse. Because of the great famine, labor camps and his infamous purging, many of his people suffered greatly. Joseph Stalin did however, obtain absolute power. His regime also marked significant events that changed the course of the Soviet Union s history. Although Stalin s rule was considered drastically inhumane, he was in some people s eyes a savior, and he did reach power and prestige.