Stalin Essay, Research Paper

Joseph Stalin, an official of the Communist party, was the successor of Lenin after his death. His goal was to continue what Lenin had left behind ? that is to build a classless society in which the means of production were in the hands of the people.

Stalin was born Joseph Djugashvili to a poor family. He studied for the priesthood when he was a boy but had a growing interest in revolution. He was punished for reading a novel about the French Revolution. In 1900, he joined the Bolshevik underground and took the name ?Stalin?, meaning ?man of steel?.

When Stalin gained power, he set out to make the Soviet Union into an industrial power. He wanted to get rid of Russia?s backwardness. This is the reason why Stalin proposed several ?five-year plans?. These plans aimed at improving industry and the growth of the economy. The Soviet Union developed a command economy, which was a system in which government officials made all the basic economic decisions. Under Stalin, all businesses were controlled by the government.

Stalin also brought agriculture under government control. He forced peasants to give up their private plots and live on either state-owned farms or on large farms that were owned and operated by peasants as a group, also known as collectives. The state set all prices and controlled access to farm supplies.

On the other hand, the peasants were very upset with this and revolted against the government. The government responded with brutal force. Kulaks were the main target. Stalin wanted to eliminate these wealthy farmers because they did not want to be a part of a ?classless society?.

The effects of collectivization were horrible. Around ten million people died in Ukraine and the Soviet Union because the government seized all the grain from the farmers and left them to die from starvation. He did this because the farmers were not producing much.

In 1934, Stalin launched the Great Purge. He used his secret police to capture all the revolutionaries. Around four million people were purged between 1936 and 1938 and as many as 800,000 thousand were executed. 90 percent of the nation?s military officers were among the people who were purged. These events show what could happen to a person who was disloyal to the country.

The people of the Soviet Union began to hate Stalin, and most of the world was afraid of him. Stalin is distinguished in world history because he changed the Soviet Union from once one of the most undeveloped countries to one of the most industrial nations. It became one of the military powers in the world.