

To what extent did the cult of personality contribute to Stalin's maintenance of power?

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Historiography

Lauren Zammit 12B

Joseph Stalin was the leader of the USSR between his successful rise to power in 1929, ~~to~~ ^{until} his death in 1953. Stalin's dictatorship ~~and presence~~, presence, ideology and reforms as the leader of the USSR had a profound effect on not only Soviet, but world history. It was as a direct consequence of Stalin that events within the Soviet Union, such as the mass famines, fear, and millions of deaths occurred. Other profound events, such as ~~the~~ the Soviet Union's rise to power ^{as a superpower}, victory in the Second World War and presence in the Cold War are other events which can ~~all~~ ^{directly} be linked to Stalin's dictatorship.

~~Without the methods used to maintain this~~ Without the methods used by Stalin to maintain his power, perhaps this period of the ~~19th~~ 20th century would have differed. Stalin was able to maintain his power as a direct result of the cult of personality which he created. However, other methods, such as his elimination of opposition via both purges and ~~reforms~~ ^{policies} also played a crucial role in his maintenance of power. ~~The~~ Stalin's cult of personality did contribute to his maintenance of power however, was not entirely responsible for it. spelling ↑

During his reign, particularly ^{from} during the mid-1930s Stalin utilized ~~his~~ ^{the} cult of personality to preserve his dictatorial power over the USSR. As is discussed by historians such as Robert Conquest, ~~the~~ ^{the} portrayed image Stalin projected of himself had a significant effect upon the Soviet people. Through propaganda mediums, such as posters, films, art etc. Stalin was depicted as a fatherly figure of the USSR, who was genuinely interested in ~~the~~ the best interest of the people. Furthermore, he was conveyed as an extremely powerful, ~~almost god like~~ ^{superhuman} figure of a being. As Conquest argues, this portrayal of Stalin gave the Soviet people assurance during the instability of the 1930s that a powerful leader was ^{to security of a better life} guiding them. Without the cult of personality, perhaps ~~the~~ the Soviet society would have responded differently to this era of controversial reforms (such as collectivisation and industrialisation) as well as mass terror which consumed

the nation. Stalin's cult of personality was also important in portraying him as the rightful successor of Lenin and effective interpreter of Karl Marx's Communist theory. Through such techniques Stalin was depicted as the rightful heir ^{which was important in maintaining his power, especially against so} ~~of the USSR~~ many political opponents. Whilst Stalin's cult of personality was important in preserving his power, alone, this ~~method~~ ^{method} may have not been able to preserve Stalin's leadership over the USSR. Other methods, such as fear and purging also contributed to this maintenance.

~~Since~~ ^{Since} the 1930s, Stalin used terror and purges as a means of preserving his power. ~~Stalin~~ ^{Stalin}, weary of his political ^{and foreign} opponents used terror to ~~bring an end to this threat~~ ^{bring an end to this threat} ~~After~~ During the reign of Lenin, violence was never used within the party itself, against comrades. However, Stalin differed from this aforementioned mindset, using violence and purges to rid of many of his political opponents, ~~in~~ which were perceived as a clear threat to his ~~own~~ title. After the mysterious murder of Kirov, the secretary of the party and significant threat to Stalin's power in late 1934 took place, Stalin began purging his political opponents to maintain his power. Historians such as ^{author} Solzhenitsyn and again Robert Conquest believe Stalin intentionally initiated the purges for this very purpose. Throughout the late 1930s, the show trials took place in which ^{many of} Bolsheviks were tried and either ~~sent~~ ^{sentenced} to death or sent to work in the Gulags, the vast network of ~~forced~~ work camps throughout the USSR (just like many of Stalin's other opponents. Among these Bolsheviks included Kamenev and Bukharin - two individuals who greatly threatened Stalin's ^{successful} rise to power. Alongside these purges within the political party itself, the general population ^{and the army} were also controlled by Stalin's ^{fearful} methods ~~in the USSR~~. They were paralysed by fear to question or stand up against Stalin, ~~any~~ Stalin's purges of political threats as well as ~~fear~~ ^{Stalin's purges as a partial threat} as well as ~~fear~~ ^{as well as} ~~Stalin's~~ ^{Stalin's} fear over the population assisted him in maintaining power.

Finally, Stalin also maintained his power through limiting the power of potential threats through limiting the rights of particular members of society. This was achieved through Stalin's reforms as well as introduced ~~political~~ policies. Stalin maintained his power through drastically reducing the power of the church. Many places of spiritual worship were destroyed during his reign; and pro-religious propoganda was made illegal. Those who ~~spare~~ resisted this were liable to be sent to the gulag or labelled an enemy of the state. Furthermore, Stalin developed an undeniable power over educational institutes and the creative freedom of artists. Lecturers were only allowed to ~~to~~ preach pro-Stalinist messages and likewise, artists were only allowed to reflect messages in the best interest of Stalin's preservation of power. Through these enforced restrictions Stalin was able to make the likelihood of opposers/threats less likely, heavily contributing to his ~~successful~~ preservation of power.

English here is not accurate; read these sentences again.

~~to~~ whilst Stalin's cult of personality ~~did~~ definitely contributed to his ability to maintain his power. Through the god like image of himself which he projected he was able to minimise the negative reaction of the general public in response to the traumatic changes taking place in the USSR. Stalin's ability to get rid of his opponents and diminish resistance via purges ~~and~~ terror as well as enforced policies also was a significant factor in his preservation of power. Stalin's ~~main~~ ability to maintain his position as undisputed dictator of the USSR for such a long time was a direct result of these multiple factors, not only his cult of personality.

Very well written Lauren. Clear understanding of the demands of the question. The challenge is to improve your use of historiography... See the rubric for 18-20 points.