




[These Bitesize notes are from 2015 and have been taken down.]

Stalin – collectivisation

Stalin's Five-year Plans dealt with industrial production, but something needed to be done about the food supply so Stalin introduced collectivisation. After years of resistance and famines Stalin eventually executed those who resisted, or sent them to labour camps.

	<p>Stalin advocated collective farms</p> <p>Although some <i>kulaks</i> were wealthy and successful, the thousands of tiny, backward peasant farms were not producing enough to feed the population. In 1927, Stalin declared that people in each village should voluntarily unite their farms into one collective farm. This <i>kolkhoz</i> would be able to afford machinery, be more efficient, and be able to create a surplus to send to the towns.</p>
	<p>The peasants burned their farms</p> <p>After two years, when everyone had ignored his idea and there had been a famine, Stalin made collectivisation compulsory. The peasants hated the idea, so they burned their crops and killed their animals rather than hand them over to the state. There was another famine in 1930.</p>
	<p>Kulaks were sent to the gulag</p> <p>Stalin relaxed the rules for a while, but in 1931 he again tried to enforce collectivisation. Again there was the same resistance and another, worse famine. Stalin blamed the kulaks, and declared war on them. They were executed or sent to the <i>gulag</i>.</p>
	<p>By 1939, 99% of land had been collectivised</p> <p>90% of the peasants lived on one of the 250,000 kolkhoz. Farming was run by government officials. The government took 90 per cent of production and left the rest for the people to live on.</p>

Why did Stalin collectivise the farms?

- He wanted more food to feed the workers in industry.
- He needed a surplus of food to sell overseas to bring money into the country.
- He needed people to leave the land and go to work in industry.
- He wanted an excuse to destroy the kulaks, who believed in private ownership, not communism.

How successful was collectivisation?

1. Stalin achieved most of his aims:
 - Grain production rose to nearly 100 million tonnes in 1937, though numbers of animals never recovered.
 - Russia sold large quantities of grain to other countries.
 - Some 17 million people left the countryside to go to work in the towns.
 - The kulaks were eliminated.
 - The peasants were closely under the government's control.
2. However, the human cost was immense:
 - Perhaps 3 million kulaks were killed.
 - There were famines in 1930 and 1932-3 when 5 million people starved to death.