the NEP. Another organization that supervised nationalized industry was **Vesenkha**, set up in 1917.

Stalin believed that only through strict centralized control would the Soviet Union be able to achieve the level of production it needed to industrialize and urbanize. Since 1855, Russia had been attempting to achieve these twin aims, but with only limited success. Stalin was determined to succeed, however, where the Tsars had failed.

The Soviet economy was based on agriculture and it was agricultural exports that underpinned the economy. In order to industrialize, new technology needed to be imported from abroad, and to purchase this agricultural exports had to be increased. In other words, the Five Year Plan would be financed by agriculture, and the peasants, always unreliable in the eyes of the Bolsheviks, would have to work in the interests of the state. To achieve this, farms would have to be collectivized.

**The collectivization of agriculture**

The peasants were a force to be reckoned with, as they constituted more than 80 per cent of the population of the Soviet Union, but they were also a force to be crushed and bent to the will of the state. Bukharin had maintained that financial incentives would encourage peasants to increase production, but Stalin did not want to do this. He wanted to be sure that land and food production was under the full control of the state. Collectivization was also considered to be an important way to instil 'communalism' (people living and working together) and also to provide a workforce for the industrial cities.

In 1929, *kolkhozi* or collective farms were established to replace the individual farms owned by the peasants. Those who disagreed with or refused to go along with the orders of the party cadres were branded 'kulaks' and were severely punished. Norman Lowe states, 'It was probably in September, 1929 that Stalin was converted to total collectivisation' (Mastering Twentieth Century Russian History, 2002). Approximately 25 million small peasant farms were consolidated into 200,000 *kolkhozi* and hundreds of thousands of peasants became paid labourers on *sovkhozi* (state farms). By 1936, 90 per cent of all peasant households in the Soviet Union had been collectivized.

For Stalin, there were several advantages to collectivization:

- The USSR had an agrarian economy as most of its people lived in the countryside and worked the land, so collectivization gave state control to the main source of national wealth.
- Agriculture would 'pay tribute' to industry and cheap food could feed the cities and also be exported to finance the purchase of machinery from abroad.
- The authority of the Communist Party would be extended over the countryside and peasants would no longer be able to hold the state to ransom. Machine Tractor Stations were set up for a group of *kolkhozi*. Tractors and other machinery could be hired from these stations. Party officials were also based in the stations so they could check that party policies were carried out at a local level.
- Food production would be made more efficient and it would be easier to use machinery such as tractors on larger farms.
- Not all the peasants needed or wanted to stay in a collectivized countryside and the 'surplus labour' would be encouraged to leave and look for work in the cities.
- Collectivization would ensure state control over the production of food, which would be centrally planned like the rest of the economy.

Collectivization was not a popular policy and, in 1930, the shockingly poor harvest resulted in Stalin calling a temporary halt with his 'Dizzy with Success' article in *Pravda*. 
He also arranged for a small army of party activists known as the ‘25,000ers’ to go to the countryside to encourage the peasants to follow party directives.

In the end, Stalin just wore opponents down and the disastrous famine in 1932–33 killed as many as 5–8 million people, particularly in the Ukraine. Although many historians would argue that the famine in the Ukraine was ‘genocidal’, Robert Service challenges this allegation by pointing out that the requisitioning quotas were cut three times during 1932 in response to evidence of widespread starvation. He also maintains that Stalin needed Ukrainian labour as much as he needed labour from elsewhere and that a deliberate policy of starvation would not have made economic sense (A History of Modern Russia, 2003). Grain requisitioning was, nevertheless, a brutal policy carried out regardless of the human cost.

**SOURCE A**

Collectivization was the great turning-point in Soviet history. It destroyed a way of life that had developed over many centuries — a life based on the family farm, the ancient peasant commune, the independent village and its church and the rural market, all of which were seen by the Bolsheviks as obstacles to socialist industrialization. Millions of people were uprooted from their homes and dispersed across the Soviet Union... This nomadic population became the main labour force of Stalin’s industrial revolution, filling the cities and the industrial building sites, the labour camps and ‘special settlements’ of the Gulag.

The First Five Year Plan, which set this pattern of forced development, launched a new type of social revolution (a ‘revolution from above’) that consolidated the Stalinist regime: old ties and loyalties were broken down, morality dissolved and new (‘Soviet’) values and identities imposed, as the whole population was subordinated to the state and forced to depend on it for almost everything — housing, schooling, jobs and food — controlled by the planned economy.

From Orlando Figes, The Whisperers, 2007

**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**QUESTION**

What does Source A tell you about the impact that Stalin’s policies had upon society in the Soviet Union?

**SOURCE B**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grain Production</th>
<th>Grain Procurement</th>
<th>Procurement as a % of production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>(16.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>(22.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>(34.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>(36.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>(32.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>(36.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE C

Table of statistics for grain production (millions of metric tons) and grain export 1929–33

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Grain Production</th>
<th>Grain Export %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>5.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


SOURCE D

Table of statistics for numbers of farm animals 1929–34 (million head)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>1929</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1931</th>
<th>1932</th>
<th>1933</th>
<th>1934</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigs</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep and Goats</td>
<td>147.0</td>
<td>108.8</td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>51.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Alec Nove, An Economic History of the USSR, 1969, quoted in Chris Corin and Terry Fiehn, Communist Russia under Lenin and Stalin, 2002

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

QUESTIONS

Study the tables of statistics and answer the following questions:

a) What do these tables tell you about the rate at which the state procured grain from the peasants?

b) Is there a decrease in the level of procurement? Why did this take place, do you think?

c) What happens to the numbers of farm animals? Why does this happen?

d) If you look at the statistics for the levels of grain production in the two tables, you will see they are different. Why, do you think, is this so?

Peasants to proletariat

SOURCE E

For every thirty peasants who entered the kolkhozi, ten would leave the countryside altogether, mostly to become wage labourers in industry. By the early months of 1932, there were several million people on the move, crowding railway stations, desperately trying to escape the famine areas. The cities could not cope with this human flood. Diseases spread and pressure grew on housing, on food and on fuel supplies, which encouraged people to move from town to town in search of better conditions. Frightened that its industrial strongholds would be overrun by famine-stricken and rebellious peasants, the Politburo introduced a system of internal passports to limit the immigration to the towns.

From Orlando Figes, The Whisperers, 2007
Orlando Figes goes on to describe how the internal passports were also used to get rid of 'socially dangerous elements' that might rise up against the government. He also states that for many of the dispossessed, having no passport made them move often, seeking work illegally. In this mass movement, children were often abandoned. They were also abandoned by parents exiled to gulags who wanted to spare their children the same fate and, during the famine, by parents who could not feed them. They roamed the streets, rummaging through rubbish for unwanted food. They scraped a living from begging, petty theft and prostitution.

Figes states that police figures showed that between 1934 and 1935, more than 840,000 homeless children were brought to the 'reception centres' and then sent to orphanages or the camps. In December 1934, Stalin passed a law stating that children over 12 could be treated as criminals and subjected to the same punishments as adults, including execution. Figes states that between 1935 and 1940, more than 100,000 children between 12 and 16 were convicted of criminal offences.

The dark side of the Soviet Union during the 1930s is very bleak indeed, and both Figes and the British novelist Martin Amis, in his book *Koba the Dread*, describe the brutality of a system that was determined to forge a new utopia. Stalin (it is claimed) said that 'to make an omelette, you must break eggs', that 'if a man is a problem, no man, no problem'. His callousness is demonstrated over and over again, as well as that of his henchmen, who arrested, tortured, imprisoned and executed victims. These victims were often innocent people plucked at random for having the wrong name; being in the wrong place; having a powerful enemy. This 'randomness' was terrifying and meant that no one was safe.

The First, Second and Third Five Year Plans

The Five Year Plans were Stalin's answer to the problems created by the NEP. Only by taking full state control of the resources and the labour of the Soviet Union would industrialization be achieved. For Stalin, this policy would result not only in economic growth and economic self-sufficiency, but also in an increase in state control (party control) over the USSR and the creation of a disciplined proletariat. The theory of Marxism would be put into practice not from the bottom up but from the top down, which is why it is sometimes called the 'revolution from above' or 'the second revolution'. The Bolshevik Revolution had occurred in 1917, but now the conditions for a Marxist state would be put in place.

The First Five Year Plan (1928/29–32)

The First Five Year Plan was officially adopted in 1929, although it had unofficially begun in late 1928. It called for a massive increase in industrial output; this was highly ambitious for a country that did not have a workforce with the necessary skills. Stalin now set out to create a proletariat by moving large numbers of peasants from the countryside to the cities, or perhaps more accurately in some cases, to areas where cities would be built.

The aim of this plan was to 'increase the production of the means of production', in other words: to build iron and steel manufacturing plants; to build electric power stations; to build the infrastructure including railways; and to increase the production of coal and oil. This expansion would be the basis of the push for industrialization.

Listed here are some of the problems that Stalin faced with the Five Year Plan, along with the solutions that he came up with.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To access the necessary skills</td>
<td>Encourage skilled technicians and engineers to come from abroad on fixed-term contracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To import the necessary technology</td>
<td>Pay for it by accumulating foreign exchange from the sale of grain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To persuade peasants to adapt to the discipline necessary for working in a factory, for example, getting to work on time</td>
<td>Introduce harsh labour laws to punish offenders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To prevent workers from leaving jobs they found too demanding and looking for work elsewhere</td>
<td>Introduce internal passports that prevented workers from changing jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To explain why the targets set by the Five Year Plans were not achieved</td>
<td>Change the statistics or blame the foreign experts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**Research Activity**

Read through the 'problems and solutions' listed above. See what you can find out about when some of these measures were introduced.

The Second (1932–37) and Third Five Year Plan (1937– )

The focus in these two Five Year Plans shifted to the production of heavy industrial goods. The iron and steel plants were producing iron and steel, the electric power stations were providing electricity, but the country needed trains, trucks and tractors. Reflect for a moment on the European context of this period, when Hitler was focusing on the re-armament of Germany and many Central and Eastern European countries had right-wing authoritarian governments that were opposed to communism and the Soviet Union. For this reason, Stalin wanted to make sure that the Soviet Union would have the resources to re-arm, and so this emphasis became an important aspect of both the Second and Third Five Year Plans. (Note that the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 interrupted the Third Five Year Plan.)

**Source F**

**Industrial production during the First and Second Five Year Plans**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1928</th>
<th>1932</th>
<th>1933</th>
<th>1936</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electric power (billion kWh)</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal (million tons)</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>76.3</td>
<td>126.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pig iron (million tons)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolled steel (million tons)</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality steel (million tons)</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cement (million tons)</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>5.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locomotives (standard units)</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>828</td>
<td>941</td>
<td>1566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tractors (thousand 15hp units)</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>799</td>
<td>1732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorries (thousands)</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>131.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woollen fabrics (million linear metres)</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How did Stalin carry out the Five Year Plans?

Labour discipline

Many of the workers who came to the cities were peasants whose work routine varied in accordance with daylight hours and the seasons. Now, they needed to adjust to the demands of factory life and so had to arrive at work on time and stay until their shift was over. There were very harsh laws introduced that punished workers who were late or absent and that also made it a crime to break machinory or to take anything from the workplace. In the most extreme cases, these crimes were punished with execution. Early on during the First Five Year Plan, workers would move from one factory to the next looking for better conditions, but this practice was also forbidden. Workers had to have workbooks as a form of internal passport, and losing a job also meant losing your right to accommodation and food rations.

Managers were held responsible for meeting targets given to them by the state. If they failed to do so, they could be charged with 'sabotage' and accused of deliberately preventing the fulfilment of the Five Year Plan. This was a crime that could be punished with a death sentence. Both worker and manager sabotage quickly became an official excuse that could be used to explain the failure to meet the very ambitious targets set by the state.

Slave labour

It was during the 1930s that so many of the gulags were built. These were the labour camps where the kulaks were sent and also where hundreds of thousands of political prisoners were sent during the 'purges' (see Section III below, p.122). Conditions were so harsh that the majority of prisoners would die, often in their first year of captivity. The gulags were located in the most inhospitable areas of the Soviet Union, where winter temperatures fell as low as -50 degrees centigrade. They were remote from areas of habitation, and so difficult to escape from, and they were also located in areas rich in resources such as gold, uranium and coal. Free citizens would not have wanted to go and work in such places, but prisoners had no choice. When the growth of the Soviet economy during the Five Year Plans is measured, the contribution of the gulag prisoners has to be included as part of the terrible human cost.

Enthusiasm

There was clear enthusiasm among the workforce for many of Stalin's ambitious policies, although Robert Service maintains that the enthusiasts were in a minority. Even so, many
people believed in the importance of what they were achieving and were ready to tolerate extremely difficult conditions as they built, for instance, the city of Magnitogorsk. Here conditions were hardly better than in the gulags. Machinery was scarce but tremendous feats were achieved with man (and woman) power alone. Enthusiasts maintained that they were working for the country's future. This was not the 'alienated' labour that Marx had written about, but was the labour of people building a new world for themselves and for future generations.

Rewards
Workers were given different rewards or incentives for their efforts:
- Posters and party directives extolled the virtues of Stakhanovites and many were encouraged to try to emulate his success. They could receive food that was in short supply or even a motorbike for doubling or tripling their work quotas.
- League tables were published in all the factories, publicizing what each worker had produced in a week.
- Wages differentiated between skilled and unskilled workers.
- A good work record and party membership could lead to promotion for workers who had little formal education.

Propaganda
Stalin's speeches about the successes of the Five Year Plans were printed in Pravda. Yet the workers who actually built huge factories and electric power plants could see with their own eyes that the Soviet Union was industrializing and, indeed, catching up with the capitalist powers. Workers were told that the conditions in the capitalist countries were dire, and as this was the era of the Great Depression, newspapers carried photographs and articles about the food lines in New York and the hunger marches in London. What Stalin did not tell Soviet citizens, of course, was that in the Soviet Union prison camps were overflowing with people put there for no other reason than that their names had been added to a list. Like everything else, there were targets to be achieved for political prisoners.

For ideological indoctrination, Stalin's Short Course on the History of the Communist Party of the USSR was published in 1938 and, like the Foundations of Leninism, served as an introduction to the 'new' history of the Bolshevik Revolution.

**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**QUESTION**

How successful were Stalin's domestic policies?

In an essay asking you to assess the success of Stalin's domestic policies, you would need to refer to the Five Year Plans. How would statistics help you to support arguments for their success?

To help you put these statistics in perspective, consider the levels of economic growth – for comparison, check the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of the USA or China or Russia between 1929 and 1937.

Don't forget that when you are asked a question like this in the exam, you must first consider what the aims were. When you think about the success of a policy, you need to ask yourself what the single-party leader intended. Then, you can look at the evidence and decide whether or not he achieved his goals. It is also worth looking more holistically at the notion of 'success'. Was the policy successful for the citizens of the country concerned? Was the human cost of 'success' too much to bear?
In the case of Stalin’s domestic policies, you would need to think about the following:
What did Stalin want to achieve when he devised the Five Year Plans? Use the following subheadings to organize your evidence.
- His economic aims
- His social aims
- His political aims.
Was he able to achieve these aims?
Were his policies successful for the people of the Soviet Union:
- In the countryside
- In the city
- For the workers
- For the managers
- For the party members?
What was the cost? Was it worth it?

Stalin’s social policies

The role of women

The role of women had changed after the revolution, with opportunities opening up for careers as engineers and doctors, professions traditionally seen as the privilege of men. It is worth noting, however, that the upper echelons of the Communist Party did not have many women in its ranks and none appeared in the Politburo. By 1930, furthermore, Stalin wanted to restore more conservative values and this shift backwards became known as ‘The Great Retreat’. The family once again became the central unit of society. The freedom afforded by revolution had to be reined in, as easy divorce had led to the abandonment of children and the ease of abortion threatened to halt population growth (although other reasons for this included poor nutrition, shortage of accommodation and exhaustion from hard work). To encourage population growth, abortion was made illegal in 1936, divorce was discouraged and women were rewarded with medals for giving birth to ten or more children. Moshe Lewin notes that, officially, there was a slight improvement in the birth rate in 1937, but that it fell again in 1939.

As well as being mothers and homemakers, women also had to play their part in the expansion of the Russian economy. On the collective farms, women were expected to work in the fields. This role was especially important during World War II, when men were drafted into the Red Army and many did not return from the war. In factories, women were expected to do the work of men and to take part in construction brigades, which helped to rebuild war-torn cities after 1945. Women were trained as pilots during the war and, unlike their counterparts in the USA and in Britain, they saw combat duties.
Religion

The Russian Orthodox Church had for centuries been a strongly nationalistic mainstay of Russian society. Under Lenin, it was frowned upon to attend church and the demonization of religion was an important aspect of collectivization among the peasants, for whom religious belief was still very important. Churches were destroyed, bells hauled away to be melted down, priests were driven out along with the kulaks. Geoffrey Hosking argues, however, that centuries of religious worship could hardly be eradicated so easily and that in many cases, people formed 'underground' churches, meeting secretly (A History of the Soviet Union, 1917–1991, 1992). Similarly, in the areas where Islam was the dominant religion, most mosques closed and imams suffered the same fate as priests. Such practices as the veiling of women, fasting during Ramadan, polygamy, and travelling to Mecca on the haj were all forbidden. As in Christian communities, however, official prohibitions did not drive out religious belief but, rather, drove it underground.

When World War II broke out, Stalin changed his approach to the Church and used it to gather support from the people for the war effort. Religion was linked to nationalism and support for the defeat of the German invaders.

Art and culture

Stephen Lee suggests in Stalin and the Soviet Union that music in the USSR underwent something of a renaissance during the 1930s. The compositions of Prokofiev and Shostakovich, in particular, gained critical acclaim and would surely be considered among the finest music of the 20th century. No other dictatorship saw such a quantity of fine music. Stalin did not understand music but, clearly, he did not fear it either, although in the post-war period his taste grew more conservative and even Prokofiev and Shostakovich fell out of favour.

As summed up by Robert Service, 'Above all, the arts had to be optimistic' (A History of Modern Russia, 2003) and the school of Soviet Realism produced paintings that resembled propaganda posters intended both to entertain and educate the masses. Meanwhile, the writer Maxim Gorky returned to the Soviet Union in 1928, was feted by Stalin and provided with a large house in which to live. He was instrumental in establishing, in 1934, the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers to 'unite all writers supporting the platform of Soviet power and aspiring to participate in the building of socialism' (Hosking, A History of the Soviet Union, 1917–1991, 1992). In other words, the aim was to capture 'Soviet realism' in literature. Hosking explains how such novels revolved around a hero 'who appears from
among the people, he is guided and matured by the party ... and then leads his comrades and followers to great victories over enemies and natural obstacles in the name of the wonderful future that the party is building' (A History of the Soviet Union 1917–1991, 1992). Flow the Steel Was Tempered (1934), an autobiographical novel by Nikolai Alexeevich Ostrovsky, was from this genre and glorified the workers of the new Soviet Union. Another famous novel was written by Mikhail Sholokhov, Quiet Flows the Don. It focused on the heroic years of the revolution and civil war and gained an international reputation, with its author being awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1965.

Writers who found favour with the regime were well looked after and led lives of privilege. Not all writers chose to follow the guidelines laid down, however, and Isaac Babel, Oscar Mandelstam, Anna Akhmatova and Boris Pasternak chose what Babel called 'the genre of silence'.

Sergei Eisenstein, the famous film-maker, produced epics such as Ivan-the-Terrible, recalling Russia's great leaders. The sequel to this film, however, was interpreted as being critical of Stalin and Eisenstein was criticized and dismissed from his post as the head of the Moscow Film School.

Sergei Eisenstein
(1898–1948)
Best known for his film of the mutiny on the battleship Potemkin and for October, his account of the 1917 revolution, Eisenstein was one of the leading film-makers in the Soviet Union. He experienced mixed fortunes under Stalin, but was praised both for Alexander Nevsky (1938) and Ivan the Terrible – Part One (1943), both of which were strongly nationalistic. Ivan the Terrible – Part Two (1946), however, depicted the Tsar as a ruthless tyrant, and Eisenstein was strongly criticized. The film was banned and scenes that had been filmed for Ivan the Terrible – Part Three were destroyed.

**ToK Time**

Here are examples of the kind of art that was encouraged and discouraged under Stalin's rule. On the left we have an example of Soviet Realism and on the right, an example of the work of Kazimir Malevich.

Why do you think did Stalin prefer Soviet Realism? Which painting would be critically acclaimed today? Justify your answers.

Education and social mobility

One of the dilemmas that faced the revolutionaries in their efforts to transform the Soviet Union into a socialist state was how to address education. The children of the better-educated were more likely to go on to higher education, but appeared to perpetuate an elitist system. The difficulty lay in getting more people from poorer backgrounds into education. Under Lenin there was an attempt to make education more accessible, although the actual curriculum in schools did not change much. In 1928, it was pronounced that 65 per cent of those entering higher technical education had to be of working-class origin, a figure raised to 70 per cent in 1929, when 14 per cent of students had to be women. The
percentage of working-class students in higher education went up from 30 per cent in 1928–29 to 58 per cent in 1932–33, and an effort was made to get rid of non-party lecturers and professors.

Already by 1931, the Central Committee was determined that students needed to be literate and have an understanding of basic science. By the mid 1930s, there were officially prescribed textbooks; tests and exams were restored; the teaching of history had to focus on political events and great men; uniforms were compulsory (including pigtails for girls); and fees were imposed for the three upper forms of secondary school.

But education was not just about book work and class learning. Back in the late 1920s, reforms took place to introduce closer links between education and practical work experience. As Hosking explains, 'The upper forms of middle schools were reclassified as teknikury, or vocational training colleges, and by the end of 1930 all schools were required to attach themselves to an enterprise... The proportion of political instruction was also increased' (A History of the Soviet Union 1917–1991, 1992). Hosking mentions some of the side-effects of these reforms, with children as young as 11 working in coal mines or picking cotton for weeks on end. In other cases, factory managers found the attendance of children to be disruptive and tried to avoid having them present. Undoubtedly, the dismissal of schoolteachers who were not party members or who had, in most cases, simply been educated before the revolution, opened up opportunities for social mobility as younger 'red specialists' were given teaching posts. The party also realized it needed future leaders and selected these from factories, mines and state farms to study at technical institutes. According to Sheila Fitzpatrick, during the first Five Year Plan, some 110,000 Communist adult workers and some 40,000 non-party ones entered higher educational institutions in this way (Hosking). The quota system imposed in 1929 was abolished in 1935. This change was probably due to questionable results as 'probably 70 per cent failed to complete their course' (McCauley, The Soviet Union 1917–1991, 1993).

Urbanization and more access to education often did lead to more social mobility as, for many people, opportunities they could hardly have imagined previously now appeared. Former peasants moved to cities where at least a few became managers and, if they were extremely fortunate, rose within the ranks of the party to lead privileged lives. As the Soviet Union made economic progress, it needed more managers and technicians, and at the end of the 1920s the importance of class meant that a humble background was advantageous. This was especially true during the period of the purges.

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**Examiner's hint**

An essay question like this is fairly common, as social change plays a significant role in a single-party leader's domestic policy. When you answer a question like this, however, it is important to include evidence of change. Always try to mention the names of artists or musicians and to know something about their work. Also, be sure that you discuss social policies and not political or economic policies.

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<th>STUDENT STUDY SECTION</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>QUESTION</strong></td>
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<td>Assess the impact of Stalin's social and cultural policies on the USSR up to 1941.</td>
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| Here are some extracts from student essays discussing the impact of cultural change. |

**Student Answer A – Leo**

Stalin also wanted to change Soviet culture. He liked art to be used for propaganda and preferred paintings that showed him with Lenin or surrounded by children, but he did not like modern art. He wanted people to read his books such as The History of the Communist Party and not novels and poetry. Stalin did like to attend the ballet and composers like Shostakovich were very popular. As long as artists and composers did what they were told to do, they were able to survive and they often lived in large apartments and were part of the elite of Soviet society.