**Stalinist Historiography**

**The Five Year Plans**

Nicholas Riasanovsky

* The plans did succeed
* Production increased
* New industries appeared
* Armed forces obtained an advanced armaments base
* Wage differentials grew
* Workers resented increased quotas
* Desperate shortage of consumer goods
* Inadequate housing
* Top-heavy bureaucracy
* Low productivity per worker
* poor quality goods

Paul Kennedy

* See Rise and Fall of the Great Powers pp. 414 - 423

Roy Medvedev

* The First Five Year Plan (1928-1932) failed to meet its targets but did produce production increases
* Stalin deliberately falsified statistics to cover the failure
* He insisted on unrealistic targets
* Sugar, meat, and milk production declined throughout the five year plans
* Goals for building materials were not met
* Farm machinery goals were not met
* Power production goals were not met
* Pig iron goals were not met
* Working class population grew faster than anticipated
* Stalin jumped on progress and then set unrealistic goals - synthetic
* He was adventuristic and incompetent
* Industrialization in the first five year plan proceeded more slowly and at greater price than necessary as a result of Stalin

**Stalinism – General**

Three broad approaches to understanding Stalinist Russia

* Totalitarian/Intentionalist
* Pluralist/Structuralist
* Reconstructionist

Totalitarian/Intentionalist

* Concentrates on the state and the personality and preferences of Stalin himself
* Power flowed from the top down
* The state was organized in a strictly disciplined manner

Pluralist/Structuralist

* The state mere acts as a referee between competing interests in Soviet society
* The state was ineffectual in imposing its will on the people
* Initiatives came from below
* The totalitarian facade of Stalin was covering a chaotic structure of many different interests
* Broadly Marxist in that they look to socioeconomic causes

Sheila Fitzpatrick - Pluralist/Structuralist

* Argues against idea that the state worked to mobilize a incoherent, resisting population
* She maintains that Soviet society was dynamic and fluid - new interests were emerging in response to new challenges and situations, this created shifting power groupings and relationships, new elites emerged etc.
* She believes that Stalinist rule (coercion) was a method of managing this fluidity
* Her approach is also called social history because it takes the emphasis off politics in the strict sense

Rittersporn and Getty - Pluralist/Structuralist

* They see the Purges as a response to the essentially chaotic ungovernability of the USSR in the 1920s and 30s - bureaucratic infighting and the centre-periphery conflict
* Believe that the Purges were a normal political process carried to an extreme - difference in quantity rather than quality
* The purges were a spontaneous reaction from above and below to the above problems
* Stalin was merely the most visible player in this political process

Criticisms of Pluralist/Structuralist Approach

* Some believe it lets Stalin off the hook - de-demonizes him
* It reduces this period to simply another era of political strife

R.C. Tucker- Reconstructionist

* Seeks a broadly rounded combination of the other two approaches
* See Stalinist Russia as a series of advances and retreats in order to consolidate/strengthen the revolution
* Revolution/War communism was an advance toward communist ideals
* NEP was a retreat
* 1928-32 advance
* 1933-36 temporary slow down to consolidate
* 1937-39 violent advance
* 1939-41 slowdown with the end of the purges
* Gives weight to both the power of the state and the resistance to this power from below

E. H. Carr - Reconstructionist

* Stalin was an average political leader carried along by the powerful forces of revolution
* Industrialization was inevitable and Stalin happened to be the man to direct it
* Stalin was molded by his times more than he molded them
* Comes close to saying that Stalinism happened because it had to happen