

Chronology: Key Events in *Stalin's Russia, 1924–53*

Year	Month	Event
1924	21 Jan	Lenin dies – subsequent funeral – not attended by Trotsky; Stalin delivers the oration
	May	CP Central Committee decides against publishing Lenin's testament Collective leadership begins with Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev forming unofficial triumvirate
	October	Ideological war of words begun by Trotsky ('Lessons of October')
1925		Trotsky loses position as Commissar for War Zinoviev and Kamenev form 'United Opposition', calling for end to NEP – but defeated in CP Congress 'Socialism in one country' accepted as policy
1926		Trotsky joins United Opposition CP Congress votes against them, dismissing Zinoviev and Kamenev as party bosses and expelling Trotsky from Politburo and Central Committee
		Creation of Komsomol
1927	October	CP congress expels Trotsky from party
		War scare with Britain
1928		Grain procurement crisis – CP Congress supports Stalin in abandoning NEP and promoting rapid industrialisation – signals defeat of Bukharin and the right, and start of five-year plans and collectivisation
		Shakhty industrial trial sets tone for industrial managers
		Religious persecution stepped up
1929	February	Trotsky expelled from Soviet Union
		Mounting peasant resistance to collectivisation
		Stalin's 50th birthday celebrations mark the start of personality cult
1930		'Dizzy with Success' article by Stalin to temporarily slow down pace of collectivisation
1931		Cultural Revolution ends – drive to restore traditional educational standards begins
1932		Famine becomes really serious
		Trial of the Ryutin group
		Greater control of the arts becomes obvious with emphasis on Socialist Realism
		Suicide of Nadia, Stalin's second wife
1933		Famine at its height
		Second five-year plan begins
		Widespread purges within CP – card checks and expulsions
		Hitler comes to power in Germany
1934		Assassination of Kirov, and subsequent intensification of purges under Yagoda
		Union of Soviet Writers formed – power to ban or censor any writing not promoting Socialist Realism

1935		Start of Stakhanovite movement – incentives, as well as punishments, in the workplace
		Purges organised by Yezhov, Vyshinsky and Beria
1936		New Family Code introduced – restrictions on abortion, divorce and homosexuality
		'Great' purges begin – 'Trial of the Sixteen' on left of CP, including Zinoviev and Kamenev
		New Constitution published – claims to be that of a 'classless society'
		Anti-Comintern Pact of Germany, Italy and Japan
1937		'Trial of the Seventeen' on the right of CP Start of military purges – victims including Marshal Tukhachevsky
		Purging of lower ranks of CP in regions and of industrial managers – pace set by Yezhov ('Yezhovschina')
1938		Third five-year plan begins – emphasis back to rearmament, away from consumer goods
		'Trial of the Twenty', including Bukharin and Yagoda Continued purging of armed forces and of lower CP ranks Beria replaced Yezhov at end of year
		Munich Agreement shows that West unwilling to work with Russia against Hitler
1939		Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact buys time and divides Poland with Germany
		Invasion of East Poland, then Finland
		Stalin's 60th birthday celebrations – personality cult reaches new heights
1940		Assassination of Trotsky in Mexico
		Peace with Finland Annexation of Baltic States
		Absenteeism from work made a criminal offence
1941		Germany invades Russia – 'Great Patriotic War' begins
		Siege of Leningrad begins Germans thrown back from Moscow
1942		German Sixth Army encircled at Stalingrad
1943		Surrender of German Sixth Army
		Battle of Kursk
1944		Siege of Leningrad lifted Germans in retreat westwards Second front opened in France
1945		Yalta Conference Defeat of Germany Potsdam Conference
1946		Fourth five-year plan begins
		Communist control of East Europe becoming established
1951		Fifth five-year plan begins
1953		Death of Stalin