

## ■ 14A The development of the Stalin cult

1924–29

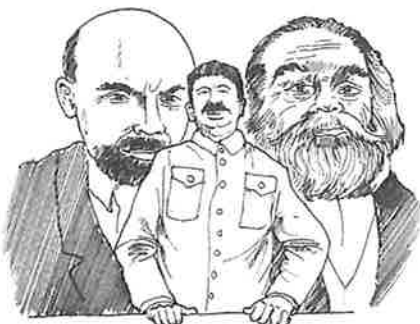
### ORIGINS OF THE CULT



- After Lenin's death in 1924, Stalin assumes a modest image. He wants to appear as a hard-working man of moderation.
- He takes on the mantle of Lenin's disciple and servant of the party. 'Stalin is the Lenin of today' becomes a commonly used phrase.
- Tsaritsyn is renamed Stalingrad in his honour in 1925.

1929–33

### CULT UNDERWAY



- For his fiftieth birthday in 1929, Stalin receives 350 greetings, including some from organisations that did not even exist. Stalin is portrayed as Lenin's faithful pupil and companion-in-arms.
- The length of applause for Stalin at conferences gets longer.
- By 1931, huge portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin appear on special occasions such as celebrations of the October Revolution. There are few individual portraits of Stalin.

1933–39

### CULT FULLY ESTABLISHED



- Stalin's image is used to reassure people that they have a strong leader to help them through the great disruption of the First Five-Year Plan and the confusion of the purges.
- Paintings, poems and sculpture promote the Stalin cult. SOCIALIST REALIST art glorifies Stalin's role as leader.
- The *History of the All-Union Communist Party* is published in 1938. History is reinterpreted in Stalin's favour.
- As war looms, his image becomes more that of an all-powerful leader.

Post-1945

### HEIGHT OF THE CULT



- Stalin's image is everywhere; his power cemented by his success as war leader.
- His childhood home becomes a shrine.
- Increasingly, portraits show him in god-like solitude, superior and apart.
- The celebrations of his seventieth birthday are extremely elaborate, organised by 75 leading figures including the whole Politburo. There are galas and greetings almost every day from 21 December 1949 to August 1951.