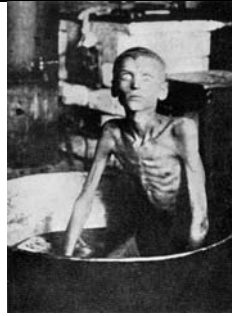


### Was Collectivisation successful or not?

Look carefully at the table. Some things were clearly successes for the plans; others were clearly failures. But some “failures” may not have been a concern for Stalin. Therefore it can be tricky deciding whether Collectivisation succeeded or not.

<i>Clear successes</i>	<i>Failures in the purest sense but not issues that would cause Stalin very much concern in light of his targets.</i>	<i>Clear failures</i>
<p>Class warfare was encouraged. Although it was not as successful as hoped, the Kulak class was targeted by some poorer peasants. Denunciations were made by neighbours of richer peasants, although often this was based on personal grudges rather than on an economic basis. The success of propaganda is reflected in the denunciations of parents by children and neighbours.</p>	<p>Failure to produce sufficient foodstuffs led to a famine across much of the USSR between early 1932 and late 34, except for a brief respite in the fall of 1932. The deaths may have reached 7 million, although this number is disputed because the official line of the Soviet Government was that the famine never happened; the inability of collectivisation to produce sufficient foodstuffs was inadmissible. Further, since illiteracy was common place, few private records survive. Some historians think that Stalin allowed this to happen to ensure that the peasants were working hard.</p>	<p>Initial quotas of food to 1931 were met and sufficient to support industrialisation and urban construction, but various factors led to a fall in production of food after 1931. Activists as managers did not have the skills to run farms effectively; peasants were practising passive resistance effectively; insufficient draft animals remained after the peasants killed many to avoid confiscation; tractors were not being produced fast enough and were breaking down; changes to collective farms had disrupted existing systems and practices; a drought in 1931 led to a failed harvest in many areas.</p>
<p>By the mid 30's, Kulaks as a class had gone. They had been shot, imprisoned, sent to Gulags, settled on poor quality land, or purely hidden or sold their possessions to avoid trouble. However, whilst this gave Stalin a degree of control over the peasants, it did not solve passive resistance, and new, apathetic peasants had to be targeted. Also it meant that the talented farmers were largely gone from fertile areas of Russia.</p>	<p>The famine was particularly bad in Ukraine. The breadbasket of Russia, the Ukraine had been set high targets but actual produce fell each year. Stalin made an example of them, sending in extra units of collectors and OGPU to strip the countryside bare. Soldiers patrolled the borders to prevent food entering Ukraine, in order to encourage more food production internally. Stalin considered deporting the whole population but was told that there was no where to send them to. Food that was collected was either transported out of the Ukraine to other regions, sold abroad, or allowed to rot. This man made famine, aimed at encouraging production, killed millions of Ukrainians.</p>	<p>The majority of Kolkhoz were led by Twenty-Five Thousanders, activists who were willing to leave the cities to take charge of the farms. 69% were members of the Communist Party, and 48% had experience of either team leadership in a factory or agricultural for 12 or more years. 9% were members of the Komsomol. However 13% had less than 5 years of any relevant experience. Some were sent on 2-3 month training courses, but most were sent to learn on the job.</p>

Targets were kept impossibly high, with punishments for hoarding or failing to meet targets as an incentive to work harder. Peasants reportedly went as far as looking through horse manure for full seed grains to eat. Farms gave 90% to the State and kept 10% to feed the Collective and seed the following year. Even working hard would not guarantee enough food during the winter, but it would make it more likely.



Exact date of picture unknown but shows victim of famine in Ukraine, early 1930s.



Uzbekistani farmer sowing seed in mid-1930s in the traditional, non-mechanised manner.


The 'Law of Seventh-Eighths', passed 7<sup>th</sup> August 1932 (the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month), prescribed 10 years in prison for any theft of socialist property. This could include tools, animals, or even a few ears of corn so it was a catch-all law that covered most direct resistance. This was later changed to the death sentence; later in 1932 decrees were passed giving 10 years imprisonment to any peasant selling meat or grain before quotas has been met. This significantly reduced sabotage and damage.

	USSR	Ukraine	Byelorussia
1914-15	4,965,318	1,492,878	235,065
1928-29	5,997,980	1,585,814	369,684
1938-39	7,663,669	985,598	358,507

Table shows the number of 7 year olds enrolling for school in 1914, 1928 and 1938. Note the drop in the Ukraine and, to a lesser degree, Byelorussia and the lesser increase in Russia after 1928. Bear in mind that the first number 1914-28 includes the impact of WW1, Civil War and War Communism.

Internal passports were introduced to prevent peasants moving between rural areas or into urban areas searching for food. It was made illegal to leave a collective farm without permission from the manager. In reality, some migration did still occur, but much less with the agricultural workers than in the industrial centres of the USSR

Some peasants revolted and destroyed farm tools and slaughtered animals, rather than let them be taken in by the collective farms. Between 1929 and 1933, half of the pigs and cattle in the USSR were slaughtered to prevent their being requisitioned, accounting for over 40 million animals. However, by 1933 most of the more active resisters had been removed or had given up. The only real form of resistance

	after 1933 was passive resistance (working slowly).																			
<table border="1" data-bbox="193 271 572 636"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1930</td> <td>23.6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1931</td> <td>52.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1932</td> <td>61.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1933</td> <td>66.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1934</td> <td>71.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1935</td> <td>83.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1936</td> <td>89.6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1941</td> <td>98.0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="193 712 572 775">The % of collectivised farms in the USSR.</p>	Year	%	1930	23.6	1931	52.7	1932	61.5	1933	66.4	1934	71.4	1935	83.2	1936	89.6	1941	98.0	<p data-bbox="604 271 986 869">By 1930, too much grain had been collected in and the collective farms were left without seeding grain for the subsequent years. Because of this, Stalin was forced to relax Collectivisation, writing an article called "Dizzy with Success" which attributed the problems to over-enthusiasm and being too successful. 50% of collective farms were disbanded. After a year, in which grain production recovered, Stalin reinvigorated his policy. By 1936, 90% of farms were collective.</p>	
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<p data-bbox="193 882 572 1122">In 1928, only 1% of farms were collectivised. In 1929, even the overly optimistic <i>Gosplan</i> only predicted 15% by the end of the First Five Year Plan. By September 1929, only 7.4% were collectivised.</p> <p data-bbox="193 1128 572 1406">But suddenly, during Sept-Dec 1929, the figure rose to 15%, and then in Jan-Feb 1930, 11 million households joined, raising the total to over 50%. Although this fell to about 25% after the "Dizzy with Success" article, it was a good start.</p>																				
 <p data-bbox="193 1688 572 1787">Peasants being taught basic literacy in a field on a collective farm.</p>																				
<p data-bbox="193 1800 572 2022">Following the pause in 1930, Stalin allowed peasants to have a private plot of land in the Kolkhoz, from which any produce became the private property of the individual. This was very successful and</p>																				

<p>peasants made full use. Although the private plots only made up less than 4% of private land in USSR, they produced between 25 and 35% of the agricultural output, indicating how hard the peasants worked on them.</p>		
<p>MTS, or Motor Tractor Stations, were set up near groups of Kolkhoz. They provided communal access to mechanised equipment, including tractors and combined harvesters, as well as other mechanical tools. There were major issues with breakdowns due to the poor quality of industrial output, but for many farms it was the only way of accessing mechanical equipment.</p>		

Further sources

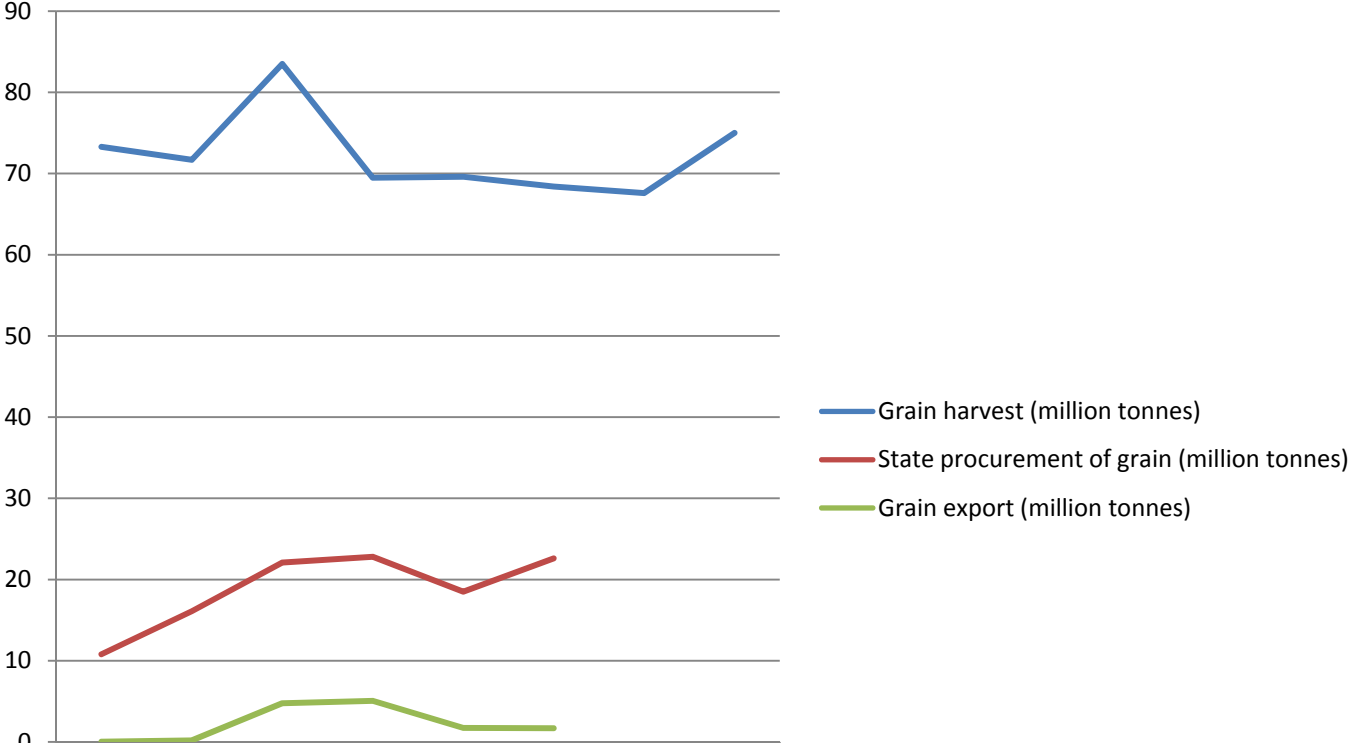


Population decline in western USSR between 1929 and 1933. The darker the colour, the more the population decreased.

Note the huge death rate in the Ukraine. This was because in the Ukraine, collectors were particularly harsh. Also logistics were poor and food rotted in the fields and in warehouses due to insufficient transport.

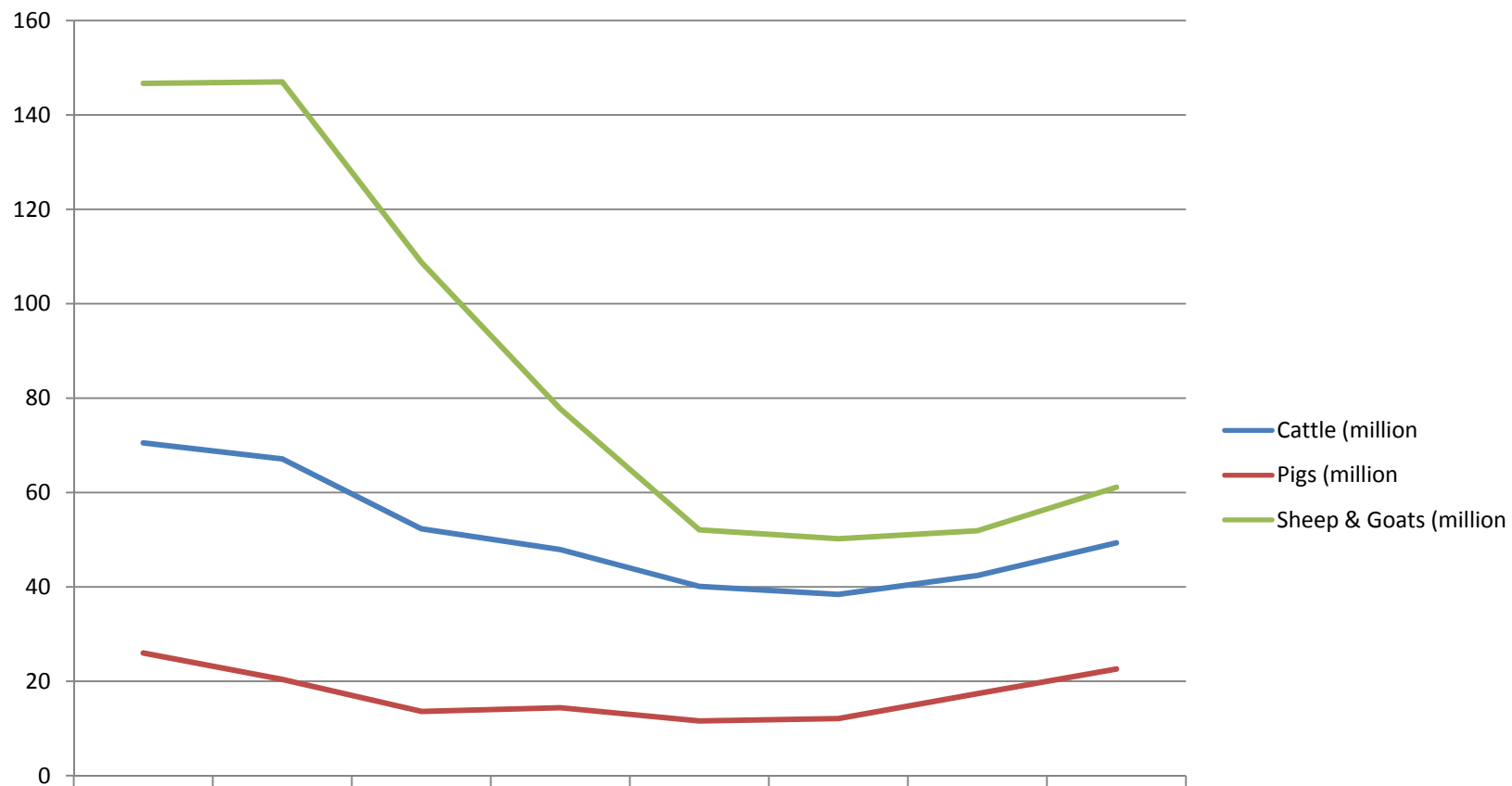
Some historians, like Robert Conquest, think that this was deliberate as the Ukrainians were very nationalistic and did not like being in the USSR.

### Grain produce, procurement and exports.



	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935
Grain harvest (million tonnes)	73.3	71.7	83.5	69.5	69.6	68.4	67.6	75
State procurement of grain (million tonnes)	10.8	16.1	22.1	22.8	18.5	22.6		
Grain export (million tonnes)	0.03	0.18	4.76	5.06	1.73	1.69		

## Numbers of pigs, cattle, sheep and goats in USSR



	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935
Cattle (million)	70.5	67.1	52.3	47.9	40.1	38.4	42.4	49.3
Pigs (million)	26	20.4	13.6	14.4	11.6	12.1	17.4	22.6
Sheep & Goats (million)	146.7	147	108.8	77.7	52.1	50.2	51.9	61.1

## **BAR'S CONCLUSIONS**

1. Collectivisation, like the 5YPs, had many failings as well as successes.
2. In a logistical sense, it was not real success. The farms were not as productive as they could be, millions starved to death and the livestock were slaughtered.

BUT

1. In terms of what Stalin wanted, the plans were a success BECAUSE most of the “failings” were not things that would balance out what Stalin saw as successes. Suffering on the part of the peasants was a price that Stalin was willing to pay.
2. Contemplate the aims of Collectivisation:
  - a. Control the peasants: The kulaks were dead or exiled by 1932, resistance was soon crushed except passive resistance and 98% of farms joined collectives by 1941. Objective achieved!
  - b. Produce enough food for the industrialising cities: Grain produce was not at its optimum but it was stable and could be relied upon. Food was reaching the cities with regularity, and newer mechanised techniques, though not used to their best, freed up more workers for the cities. Objective achieved!
  - c. Produce enough food to have a surplus to sell abroad: Every year, surplus food was provided to sell abroad and this allowed an input of foreign finance which helped the new cities and industrial centres grow. Objective achieved!

***Key point to take away – despite the many sufferings and weaknesses in the logistical side of the plan, the objectives were met and so Stalin would consider the plan a success. True, it could be improved upon, but it did what it was meant to.***