

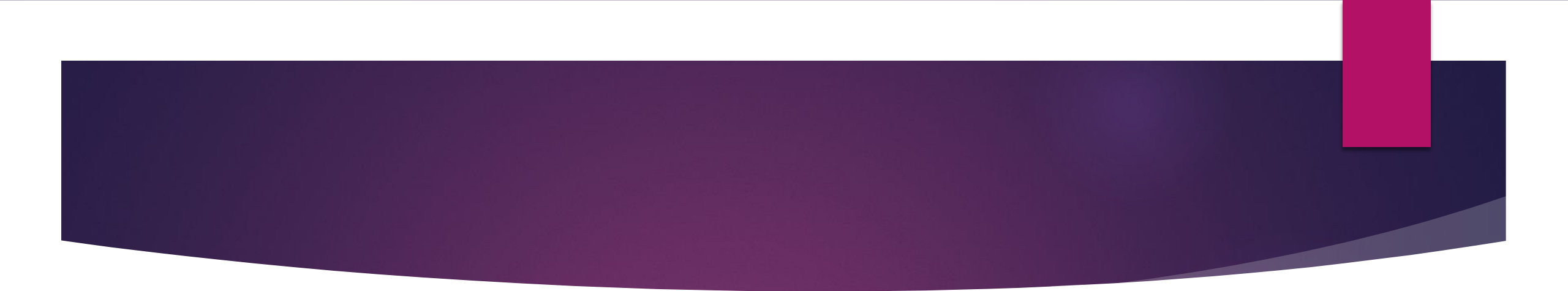
The Soviet State in the 20-30s of the XX century. The successes and mistakes of the Soviet government under I.V. Stalin

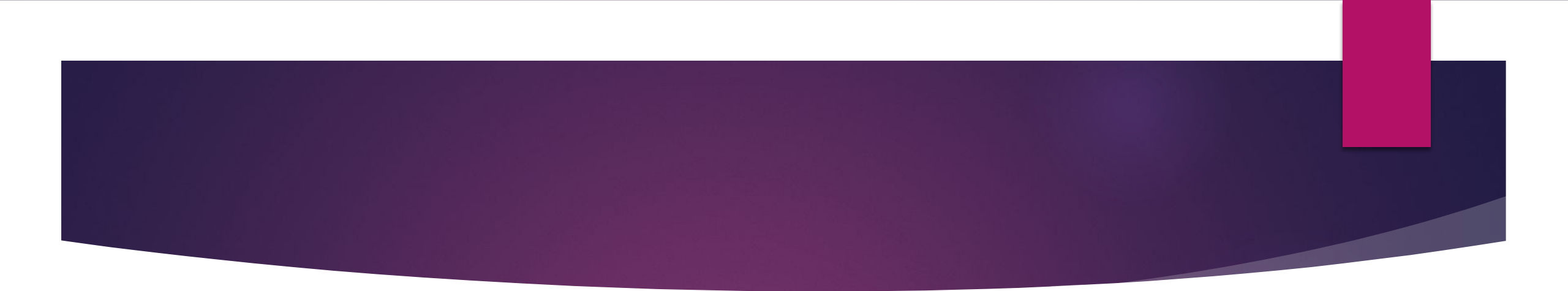
THE STALIN ERA (1928–53)

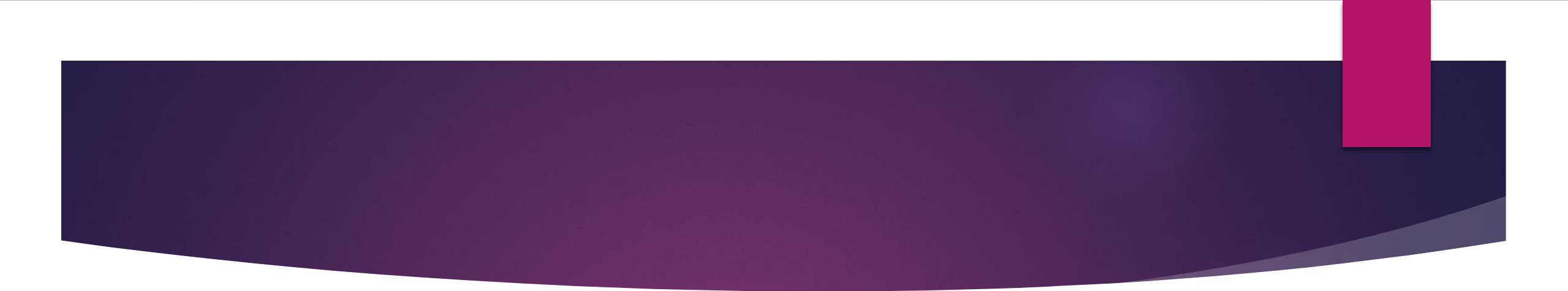
STALIN, A GEORGIAN, SURPRISINGLY TURNED TO “GREAT RUSSIAN” NATIONALISM TO STRENGTHEN THE SOVIET REGIME. DURING THE 1930S AND '40S HE PROMOTED CERTAIN ASPECTS OF RUSSIAN HISTORY, SOME RUSSIAN NATIONAL AND CULTURAL HEROES, AND THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE, AND HE HELD THE RUSSIANS UP AS THE ELDER BROTHER FOR THE NON-SLAVS TO EMULATE. INDUSTRIALIZATION DEVELOPED FIRST AND FOREMOST IN RUSSIA. COLLECTIVIZATION, THOUGH, MET WITH CONSIDERABLE RESISTANCE IN RURAL AREAS. UKRAINE IN PARTICULAR SUFFERED HARSHLY AT STALIN'S HANDS BECAUSE OF FORCED COLLECTIVIZATION. HE ENCOUNTERED STRENUOUS RESISTANCE THERE, FOR WHICH HE NEVER FORGAVE THE UKRAINIANS. HIS POLICIES THEREAFTER BROUGHT WIDESPREAD STARVATION TO THAT REPUBLIC, ESPECIALLY IN 1932–33, WHEN POSSIBLY MILLIONS MAY HAVE DIED. NEVERTHELESS, MANY PARTY OFFICIALS FROM UKRAINE CAME TO MOSCOW TO MAKE THEIR CAREERS, AMONG THEM NIKITA S. KHRUSHCHEV, WHO WOULD SUCCEED STALIN. THE ARMED FORCES WERE DOMINATED BY RUSSIANS AND UKRAINIANS, BUT THE UPPER ECHELONS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY DID NOT CONTAIN AS MANY UKRAINIANS AS MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED, GIVEN THE SIZE OF THAT REPUBLIC. THE POLITICAL POLICE, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAD MANY NON-RUSSIANS AT THE TOP, ESPECIALLY GEORGIANS AND ARMENIANS.

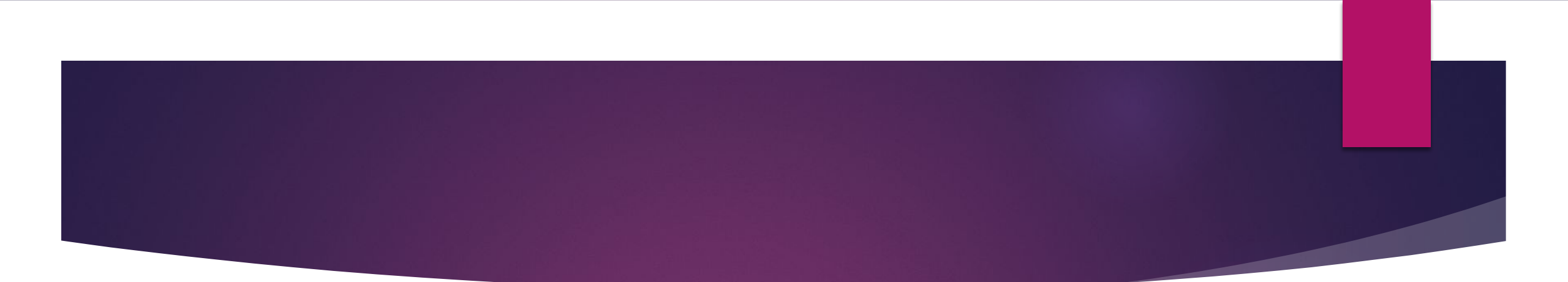
Joseph Stalin

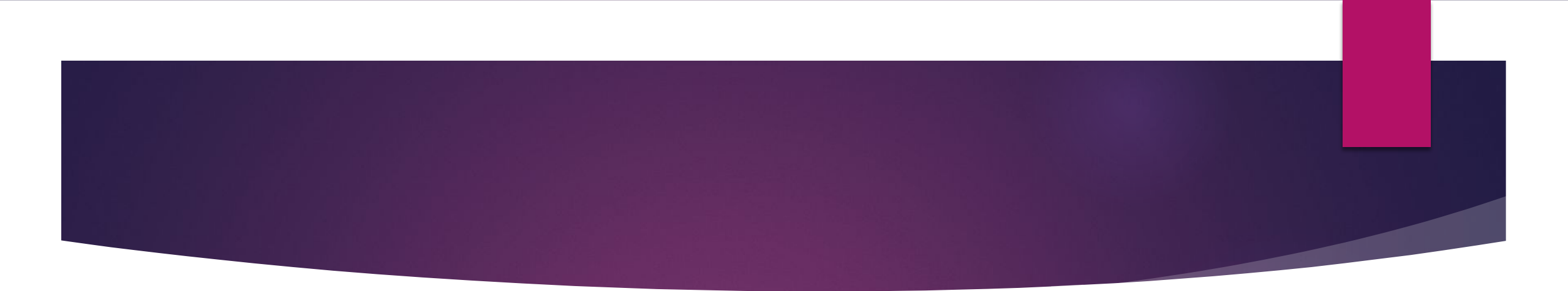


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- ▶ Russian industry expanded rapidly under Stalin, with Ukrainian in second place. The industrialization of the Caucasus and Central Asia began during the 1930s, and it was the Russians, aided by the Ukrainians, who ran the factories. The labour force was also predominantly Russian, as was the emerging technical intelligentsia. Stalin's nationality policy promoted native cadres and cultures, but this changed in the late 1920s. Stalin appears to have perceived that the non-Russians were becoming dangerously self-confident and self-assertive, and he reversed his nationality policy. He came to the conclusion that a Sovietized Russian elite would be more effective as an instrument of modernization. In the non-Russian republics, Russians and Ukrainians were normally second secretaries of the Communist Party and occupied key posts in the government and political police.

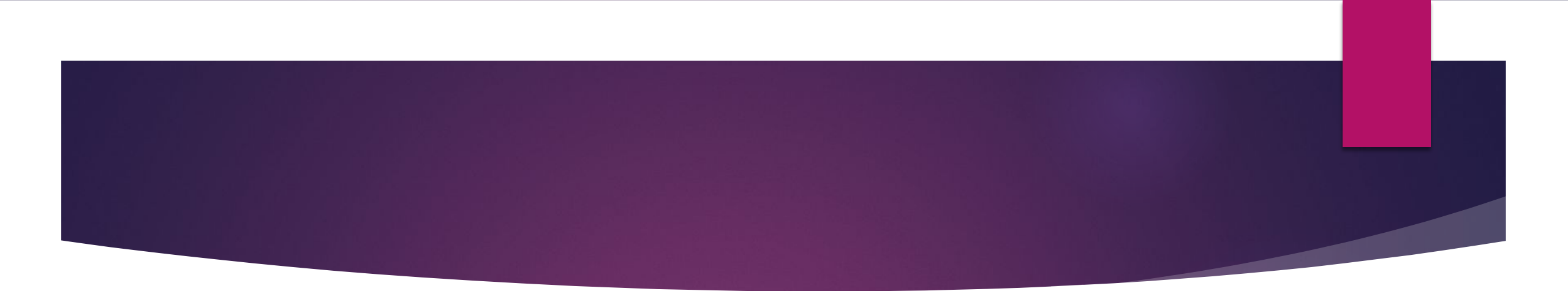
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- ▶ Diplomats were predominantly Russian. The Soviet constitution of 1936 was democratic—but only on paper. It rearranged the political and nationality map. The boundaries of many autonomous republics and oblasts were fashioned in such a way as to prevent non-Russians from forming a critical mass. Moscow's fear was that they would circumvent central authority. For example, Tatars found themselves in the Tatar (Tatarstan) and Bashkir (Bashkiriya) autonomous republics, although Tatars and Bashkirs spoke essentially the same language. Tatars also inhabited the region south of Bashkiriya and northern Kazakhstan, but this was not acknowledged, and no autonomous republic was established. Moscow played off the various nationalities to its own advantage. This policy was to have disastrous long-term consequences for Russians, because they were seen as imperialists bent on Russifying the locals.

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- ▶ New industry usually attracted Russian and Ukrainian labour rather than the locals, and this changed the demographic pattern of the U.S.S.R. Russians spread throughout the union, and by 1991 there were 25 million living outside the Russian republic, including 11 million in Ukraine. Russians and Ukrainians made up more than half the population of Kazakhstan in 1991. Almost half the population of the capital of Kyrgyzstan and more than a third of the population of Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, were Russian at the time the union ended in 1991.
 - ▶ The German invasion in June 1941 resulted in much of Ukraine being overrun. Many Ukrainians welcomed the Wehrmacht (German armed forces). Stalin was already displeased with the Ukrainians, and this reinforced his feelings. (In his victory toast after the war, he drank to the Russian triumph over the Germans.) This was in line with Stalin's wartime policies, through which he rehabilitated the Russian Orthodox Church while identifying himself personally with previous Russian leaders such as the medieval prince Dmitri Donskoy and the tsars Ivan IV (the Terrible) and Peter I (the Great).

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- ▶ Victory over Germany precipitated an upsurge of Russian national pride. Russia, in the guise of the U.S.S.R., had become a great power and by the 1970s was one of two world superpowers. The advent of the Cold War in the 1940s led to Stalin tightening his grip on his sphere of influence in eastern and southeastern Europe. Russian was imposed as the main foreign language, and Russian economic experience was copied. This was effected by having Russian and other communist officials in ministries. A dense network of treaties enmeshed the region in the Russian web. War reparations went first and foremost to Russian factories. Paradoxically, when the United Nations was first set up, in 1945, Stalin did not insist that Russia have a separate seat like the Ukrainian and Belorussian republics had, a move that suggests he regarded the U.S.S.R.'s seat as Russia's.



► The Bolsheviks had always been mindful of minorities on their frontiers, and the first deportation of non-Russian minorities to Siberia and Central Asia began in the 1920s. Russian Cossacks also were removed forcibly from their home areas in the north Caucasus and elsewhere because of their opposition to collectivization and communist rule. On security grounds, Stalin deported some entire small nationality groups, many with their own territorial base, such as the Chechen and Ingush, from 1944 onward. They were accused of collaborating with the Germans. The Volga Germans were deported in the autumn of 1941 lest they side with the advancing Wehrmacht. Altogether, more than 50 nationalities, embracing about 3.5 million people, were deported to various parts of the U.S.S.R. The vast majority of these were removed from European Russia to Asiatic Russia. Nearly 50 years later, Pres. Boris Yeltsin apologized for these deportations, identifying them as a major source of interethnic conflict in Russia.

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- ▶ The late Stalin period witnessed campaigns against Jews and non-Russians. Writers and artists who dared to claim that Russian writers and cultural figures of the past had learned from the West were pilloried. Russian chauvinism took over, and anything that was worth inventing was claimed to have been invented by a Russian.



▶ **The Khrushchev era (1953–64)**

- ▶ After Stalin's death in 1953, a power struggle for leadership ensued, which was won by Nikita Khrushchev. His landmark decisions in foreign policy and domestic programs markedly changed the direction of the Soviet Union, bringing détente with the West and a relaxation of rigid controls within the country. Khrushchev, who rose under Stalin as an agricultural specialist, was a Russian who had grown up in Ukraine. During his reign Ukrainians prospered in Moscow. He took it for granted that Russians had a natural right to instruct less-fortunate nationals. This was especially evident in the non-Slavic republics of the U.S.S.R. and in eastern and southeastern Europe. His nationality policies reversed the repressive policies of Stalin. He grasped the nettle of the deported nationalities and rehabilitated almost all of them; the accusations of disloyalty made against them by Stalin were declared to be false. This allowed many nationalities to return to their homelands within Russia, the Volga Germans being a notable exception. (Their lands had been occupied by Russians who, fearing competition from the Germans, opposed their return.) The Crimean Tatars were similarly not allowed to return to their home territory. Their situation was complicated by the fact that Russians and Ukrainians had replaced them in Crimea, and in 1954 Khrushchev made Ukraine a present of Crimea. Khrushchev abided by the nationality theory that suggested that all Soviet national groups would come closer together and eventually coalesce; the Russians, of course, would be the dominant group. The theory was profoundly wrong. There was in fact a flowering of national cultures during Khrushchev's administration, as well as an expansion of technical and cultural elites.