

### 3 Key Figures in the Russian Revolution

Source: <http://www.history.com/topics/joseph-stalin>

Joseph Stalin (1878-1953) was the dictator of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) from 1929 to 1953. Under Stalin, the Soviet Union was transformed from a peasant society into an industrial and military superpower. However, he ruled by terror, and millions of his own citizens died during his brutal reign. Born into poverty, Stalin became involved in revolutionary politics, as well as criminal activities, as a young man. After Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) died, Stalin outmaneuvered his rivals for control of the party. Once in power, he collectivized farming and had potential enemies executed or sent to forced labor camps. Stalin aligned with the United States and Britain in World War II (1939-1945) but afterward engaged in an increasingly tense relationship with the West known as the Cold War (1946-1991). After his death, the Soviets initiated a de-Stalinization process.

Source: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic\\_figures/trotsky\\_leon.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/trotsky_leon.shtml)

Trotsky was a key figure in the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia, second only to Vladimir Lenin in the early stages of Soviet communist rule. But he lost out to Joseph Stalin in the power struggle that followed Lenin's death, and was assassinated while in exile.

Trotsky was born Lev Davidovich Bronstein on 7 November 1879 in Yanovka, Ukraine, then part of Russia. His father was a prosperous Jewish farmer. Trotsky became involved in underground activities as a teenager. He was soon arrested, jailed and exiled to Siberia where he joined the Social Democratic Party. Eventually, he escaped Siberia and spent the majority of the next 15 years abroad, including a spell in London.

In 1903, the Social Democrats split. While Lenin assumed leadership of the 'Bolshevik' (majority) faction, Trotsky became a member of the 'Menshevik' (minority) faction and developed his theory of 'permanent revolution'. After the outbreak of revolution in Petrograd in February 1917, he made his way back to Russia. Despite previous disagreements with Lenin, Trotsky joined the Bolsheviks and played a decisive role in the communist take-over of power in the same year. His first post in the new government was as foreign commissar, where he found himself negotiating peace terms with Germany. He was then made war commissar and in this capacity, built up the Red Army which prevailed against the White Russian forces in the civil war. Thus Trotsky played a crucial role in keeping the Bolshevik regime alive. He saw himself as Lenin's heir-apparent, but his intellectual arrogance made him few friends, and his Jewish heritage may also have worked against him. When Lenin fell ill and died, Trotsky was easily outmanoeuvred by Stalin. In 1927, he was thrown out of the party. Internal and then foreign exile followed, but Trotsky continued to write and to criticise Stalin. Trotsky settled in Mexico in 1936. On 20 August 1940, an assassin called Ramon Mercader, acting on Stalin's orders, stabbed Trotsky with an ice pick, fatally wounding him. He died the next day.

Source: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic\\_figures/lenin\\_vladimir.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/lenin_vladimir.shtml)

Lenin was one of the leading political figures and revolutionary thinkers of the 20th century, who masterminded the Bolshevik take-over of power in Russia in 1917, and was the architect and first head of the USSR.

Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov was born in Simbirsk on the Volga River on 22 April 1870 into a well-educated family. He excelled at school and went on to study law. At university, he was exposed to radical thinking, and his views were also influenced by the execution of his elder brother, a member of a revolutionary group.

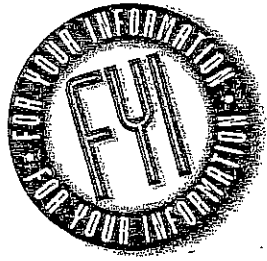
Expelled from university for his radical policies, Lenin completed his law degree as an external student in 1891. He moved to St Petersburg and became a professional revolutionary. Like many of his contemporaries, he was arrested and exiled to Siberia, where he married Nadezhda Krupskaya. After his Siberian exile, Lenin - the pseudonym he adopted in 1901 - spent most of the subsequent decade and a half in western Europe, where he emerged as a prominent figure in the international revolutionary movement and became the leader of the 'Bolshevik' faction of the Russian Social Democratic Worker's Party.

In 1917, exhausted by World War One, Russia was ripe for change. Assisted by the Germans, who hoped that he would undermine the Russian war effort, Lenin returned home and started working against the provisional government that had overthrown the tsarist regime. He eventually led what was soon to be known as the October Revolution, but was effectively a *coup d'état*. Almost three years of civil war followed. The Bolsheviks were victorious and assumed total control of the country. During this period of revolution, war and famine, Lenin demonstrated a chilling disregard for the sufferings of his fellow countrymen and mercilessly crushed any opposition.



Although Lenin was ruthless he was also pragmatic. When his efforts to transform the Russian economy to a socialist model stalled, he introduced the New Economic Policy, where a measure of private enterprise was again permitted, a policy that continued for several years after his death. In 1918, Lenin narrowly survived an assassination attempt, but was severely wounded. His long term health was affected, and in 1922 he suffered a stroke from which he never fully recovered. In his declining years, he worried about the bureaucratisation of the regime and also expressed concern over the increasing power of his eventual successor Joseph Stalin. Lenin died on 24 January 1924. His corpse was embalmed and placed in a mausoleum on Moscow's Red Square.





# Animal Farm

## BACKGROUND

### Orwell's Bomb

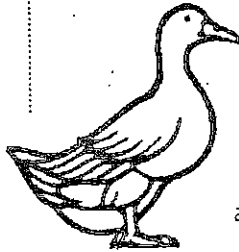
*Animal Farm* appeared on the bookstands in August 1945. That is the same month that the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. No one would say that the effect of Orwell's satire was as profound as the dawning of the nuclear age. Still, both *Animal Farm* and the bomb were aimed, ultimately, at totalitarian dictatorships, for Orwell wrote his book to alert citizens to the threat posed by such forms of government.

### Terror and Tyranny in the Third Grade

When he was eight years old, Eric Blair (Orwell's family name) was sent to St. Cyprian's, an English boarding school. Orwell describes the experience in an essay called "Such, Such Were the Joys..." as being "flung into a world of force and fraud and secrecy, like a goldfish into a tank full of pike." Separated from his family for the first time, the frightened boy wet his bed and was beaten for it. He ended up feeling guilty and outcast. He came away with a hatred of the school's authorities. It is this hatred of "force" and "fraud" and all-powerful authorities that animates almost all of Orwell's work as a writer. In *Animal Farm*, the authorities are pigs.

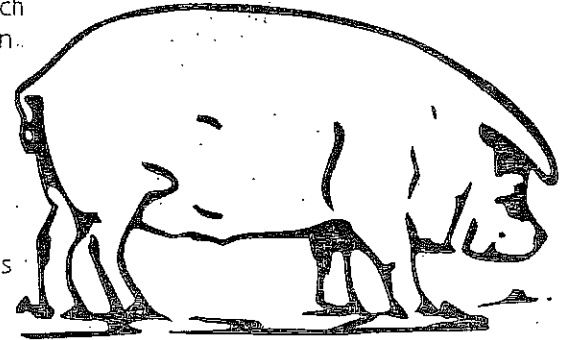
### Orwell's Love of Animals

Orwell had a great love for animals. His interest in furry and feathered beasts began in his youth and continued throughout his adult life. In letters he wrote home from school, George often inquired about animals in and around the family home. Friends of Orwell recall how his house in Burma was home to a variety of creatures, including ducks and geese. Critic J.R. Hammond writes the following in *A George Orwell Companion*: "While living at Wallington he kept goats and hens, and he and his wife invented humorous names for them and related to each other imaginary stories in which farmyard animals had amusing adventures."



### Marxism and Communism

Karl Marx, a German philosopher, developed the ideas that are known as the basis of communism. Marx imagined a society in which everyone shared equally in the society's wealth, thus ending poverty. Old Major's dream in the opening of *Animal Farm* echoes Marx's vision of a society in which the poor do not suffer at the hands of the rich, even though Old Major is talking about animals and humans.

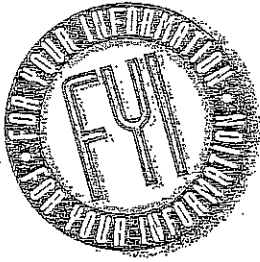


#### LITERARY CONCEPT

### Allegory

An allegory is a narrative in which the characters often stand for abstract ideas. As an allegory, the characters and events in *Animal Farm* stand for the leaders, social groups, and historical events surrounding the Russian Revolution and its aftermath.





# from The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union

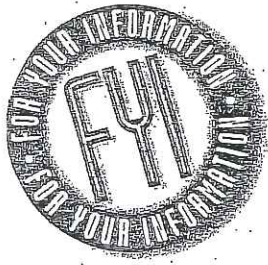
BY MICHAEL KORT

## The Tsar

"Tsar" or "Czar" was the title used by Russia's emperors before the revolution. The word "czar" comes from the word *Caesar*, originally ancient Rome's Julius Caesar, and then the name used by Roman emperors after him. The first Russian to call himself "Tsar" was Ivan the Terrible in 1547. The last was Nicholas II (1868-1918), who was overthrown by the Bolsheviks in 1917.

## Lenin's Legacy

The man who actually led the Bolsheviks to victory in 1917, founded the Communist party, and established the dictatorship that ruled the new Russia was Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. Lenin believed that workers and peasants could not bring about revolution on their own. He thought workers needed to be led by a small party of professional revolutionaries. He used force to take control of the Russian government and made himself dictator. To his credit, Lenin, who worked with Stalin, witnessed Stalin's rise to power and warned against giving him absolute control, but it was too late. Weakened by a series of strokes, Lenin died in 1924, and Stalin made himself dictator. Lenin's revolutionary legacy had become a curse.



# from The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union (continued)

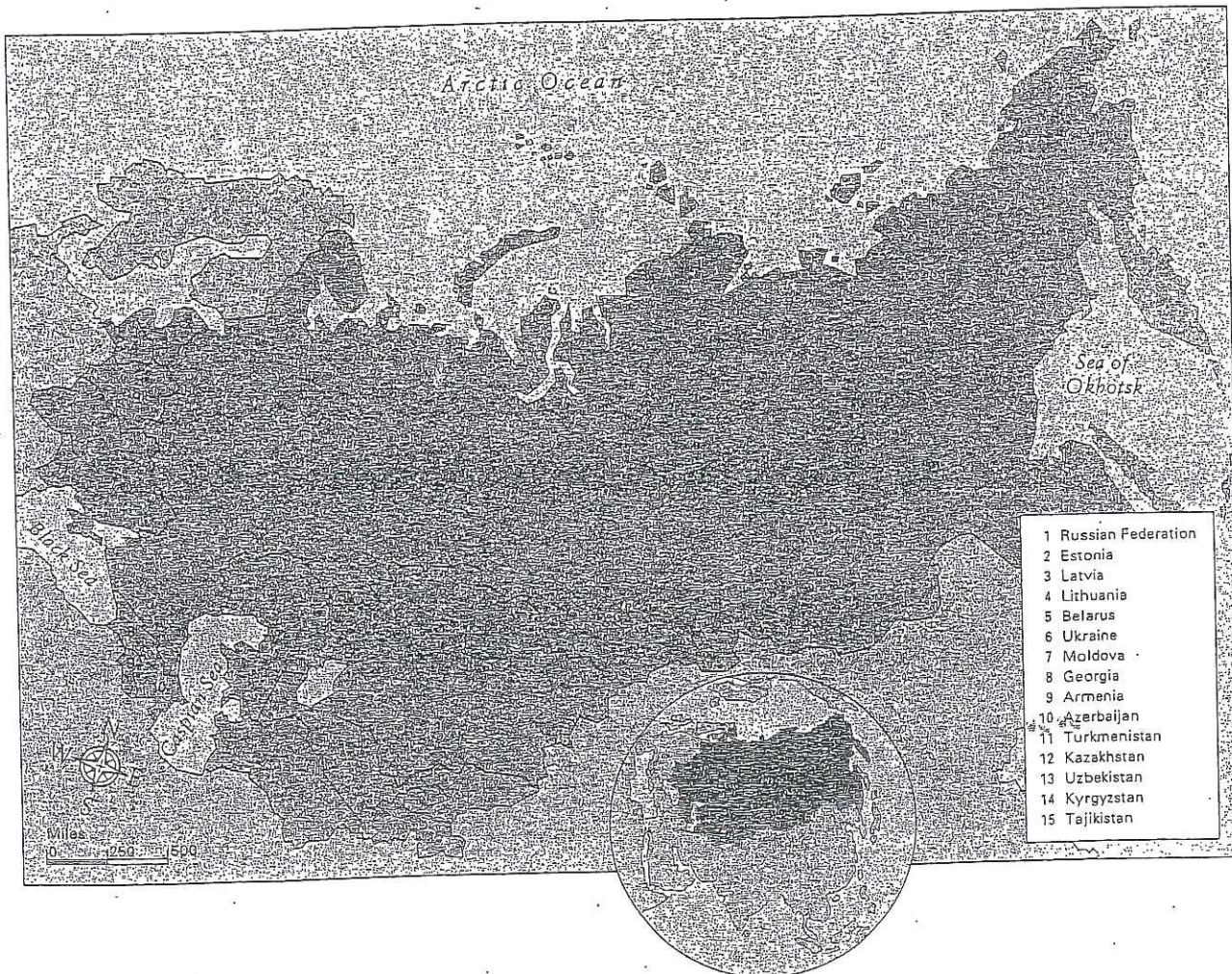
BY MICHAEL KORT

## The Former Soviet Union

The country known as the Soviet Union (or USSR—Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) no longer exists. In its place are the 15 nations that used to be the republics, the largest of which is Russia. Others include Uzbekistan, the Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan. The former Soviet Union was tremendously large, covering 8.6 million square miles and extending from Europe to Asia.

## Kulaks

*Kulak* is a Russian word referring to a wealthy peasant farmer who profited from owning land. To the Communists the kulaks were oppressors: they owned too much land, exploited others, and refused to join collective farms. Under Stalin they were fined, deprived of property, and then driven into exile or labor camps.





## Propaganda

The term **propaganda** dates back to 1622 when the Roman Catholic Church established the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith to direct missionaries in converting non-Catholics to Catholicism. Propaganda is biased, one-sided communication meant to influence the thoughts and actions of an audience. The methods used in propaganda are much stronger than those needed in persuasion. Propaganda often includes lies, distortions, and appeals to emotion rather than to reason. People sometimes use it to stir up hatred and fear of a supposed enemy, or simply to promote one point of view without giving fair consideration to other ideas. Powerful symbols, loaded language and simple repetitive messages are the tools of the propagandist. Squealer uses twisted arguments in his manipulation. George Orwell feared that modern technology and totalitarian control would enable propaganda to gain a new and awesome power over the individual.



**Propaganda** is a biased, one-sided communication meant to influence the thoughts and actions of an audience. Methods used in propaganda are much stronger than those used in persuasion. A propagandist may conceal contradictory information and discourage debate. Propagandists may also lie, distort facts, and rely on very simple and repetitive messages. At the same time, the propagandist works to gain the audience's trust. Powerful symbols and loaded language, or the use of the connotative meanings of words to manipulate the audience, are tools of the propagandist.

In one interpretation, the distorted ideas spread among the animals by the character Squealer represent the use of propaganda as a way of manipulating people in society. Squealer convinces the animals that their memory is inaccurate—that in fact Snowball was in collusion with Jones, that Snowball destroyed the windmill, and that Napoleon needs his special privileges. These are, of course, lies and excuses, and show that the ruling class of pigs are deceiving the masses for personal gain.

**Presentation Suggestions** Remind students of the definition of propaganda at the top of this page. Explain that students are familiar with different forms of propaganda, which show up occasionally in political speeches, political cartoons, commercial advertising, even songs and slogans. Statements of propaganda seem slanted and distort the truth. For example, the statements "No one who eats Baggies Bagels will ever eat another kind again," "Only Bill Bagly cares about you. All the other candidates are racists," and "You're too smart to fall for a soft heart like Lucy," are examples of slanted speech. They are designed to provoke a certain reaction from an audience. Help students to discover what could be false in these and other examples. Alert them to look for propaganda as they read *Animal Farm*. **Literary Concept 3** worksheet, page 38, will give them additional practice.



## Russian Revolution

**Russian Revolution of 1917**, two revolutions, the first of which, in February (March, New Style), overthrew the imperial government and the second of which, in October (November), placed the Bolsheviks in power.

By 1917 the bond between the tsar and most of the Russian people had been broken.

Governmental corruption and inefficiency were rampant. The tsar's reactionary policies, including the occasional dissolution of the Duma, or Russian parliament, the chief fruit of the 1905 revolution, had spread dissatisfaction even to moderate elements. The Russian Empire's many ethnic minorities grew increasingly restive under Russian domination.

But it was the government's inefficient prosecution of World War I that finally provided the challenge the old regime could not meet. Ill-equipped and poorly led, Russian armies suffered catastrophic losses in campaign after campaign against German armies. The war made revolution inevitable in two ways: it showed Russia was no longer a military match for the nations of central and western Europe, and it hopelessly disrupted the economy.

Riots over the scarcity of food broke out in the capital, Petrograd (formerly St. Petersburg), on February 24 (March 8), and, when most of the Petrograd garrison joined the revolt, Tsar

Nicholas II was forced to abdicate March 2 (March 15). When his brother, Grand Duke Michael, refused the throne, more than 300 years of rule by the Romanov dynasty came to an end.

A committee of the Duma appointed a Provisional Government to succeed the autocracy, but it faced a rival in the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The 2,500 delegates to this soviet were chosen from factories and military units in and around Petrograd.

The Soviet soon proved that it had greater authority than the Provisional Government, which sought to continue Russia's participation in the European war. On March 1 (March 14) the

Soviet issued its famous Order No. 1, which directed the military to obey only the orders of the Soviet and not those of the Provisional Government. The Provisional Government was unable to countermand the order. All that now prevented the Petrograd Soviet from openly declaring itself the real government of Russia was fear of provoking a conservative coup.

Between March and October the Provisional Government was reorganized four times. The first government was composed entirely of liberal ministers, with the exception of the Socialist Revolutionary Aleksandr F. Kerensky. The subsequent governments were coalitions. None of them, however, was able to cope adequately with the major problems afflicting the country: peasant land seizures, nationalist independence movements in non-Russian areas, and the collapse of army morale at the front.

Meanwhile, soviets on the Petrograd model, in far closer contact with the sentiments of the people than the Provisional Government was, had been organized in cities and major towns and in the army. In these soviets, "defeatist" sentiment, favouring Russian withdrawal from the war on almost any terms, was growing. One reason was that radical socialists increasingly dominated the soviet movement. At the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets, convened on June 3 (June 16), the Socialist Revolutionaries were the largest single bloc, followed by the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks.

Kerensky became head of the Provisional Government in July and put down a coup attempted by army commander in chief Lavr Georgiyevich Kornilov (according to some historians, Kerensky may have initially plotted with Kornilov in the hope of gaining control over the Petrograd Soviet). However, he was increasingly unable to halt Russia's slide into political, economic, and military chaos, and his party suffered a major split as the left wing broke from the Socialist Revolutionary Party. But while the Provisional Government's power waned, that of the soviets