

NOTE: This is NOT a fully comprehensive history of Russia, however, the majority of events listed below have appropriate paralleling context to the events within *Animal Farm* by George Orwell.

1917 "The February Revolution," growing out of violent street protests against the war and the poverty it contributed to, finally topples Czar Nicholas II. With the Czar gone, both the Provisional Government and the communist soviets make claims to power.

The October Revolution--Bolshevik troops, at the behest of Vladimir Lenin advance on the Provisional Government headquarters at the Winter Palace. A bloodless coup brings the soviets to power, and marks the start of the communist era.

1918 Leon Trotsky signs a peace treaty with Germany and Austria-Hungary at Brest-Litovsk, Poland, ending Russian involvement in World War I. The treaty is not favorable to Russia; it passes a great deal of land to the enemy, and demands huge "reparations fees" be paid.

Civil war begins in Russia. "White" forces, intent on removing the soviets from power, battle the "Red" forces of communist Russia, under the leadership of Leon Trotsky. Trotsky's skillful execution of the three-year war effort results in the maintenance of communist authority.

Vladimir Lenin orders the beginning of the "Red Terror," a systematic campaign during which the communist police and army forces round up and execute suspected opponents.

1921 Lenin announces the New Economic Policy, which allows for limited private ownership of land and business. Lenin calls it a necessary "breathing space" before true communism can prevail.

1922 USSR is formally established. It is a federation of Russian states united under the communist system.

Joseph Stalin is named Secretary-General, a powerful position in the communist hierarchy. His ability to make appointments to other positions of power gains him many important allies.

Lenin suffers paralyzing strokes, which remove him from a position of leadership.

1924 Lenin dies. In the ensuing struggle for power, Joseph Stalin adroitly out-maneuvers Leon Trotsky, and assumes full command of the USSR. He immediately begins the process of isolating Trotsky within the party.

1928 Stalin announces the first Five Year Plan, an ambitious attempt to make Russia a modern industrial state. Stalin exhorts his "comrades" throughout the Soviet Union to work harder than they ever have, so that Soviet Russia can prosper as a beacon of hope to workers everywhere.

1930-1933 Rise of fascist Adolph Hitler in Germany.

Stalin proposes the second Five Year Plan, which again emphasizes the rapid growth of Soviet Industry. By the end of the second Five Year Plan, Soviet Russia is a formidable world power.

1934 The beginning of the "Great Purges" and "show trials" under Stalin. These public accusations and forced confessions were followed by quick trials and executions or imprisonment. Between 2-7 million people suspected of opposition to Stalin are executed; many more are sentenced to years of hard labor in the Gulags--cruel Soviet labor camps.

1939 German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact: a secret agreement between Joseph Stalin and Adolph Hitler which carved Eastern Europe into German and Soviet spheres of influence. The pact also guaranteed that neither country would oppose or attack the other, in perpetuity.

1941 Adolph Hitler begins "Operation Barbarossa," the full-frontal assault on the Soviet Union, in defiance of the Non-Aggression Treaty of 1939. Hitler moves quickly into Russia, straining his supply lines and trapping his troops deep within Russia as winter approached. The bitter winter that followed sapped German troop strength, and they began to retreat under a withering new counter-assault by the Russians.

1945 World War II in Europe ends.

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1950 The Korean conflict begins.

1953 Stalin dies. Nikita Khrushchev takes power, and soon denounces the excesses of the Stalin era. Korean conflict ends.

1957 Sputnik. The Soviet Union launches the first man-made satellite to orbit the earth.

1958 The United States launches the National Aeronautics Space Administration. The Space Race is in full gear.

1959 Leftist forces under Fidel Castro overthrow the government of Fulgencio Batista in Cuba.

1960 The U-2 Spy Plane Affair. An American high-altitude spy plane is shot down over the Soviet Union. After the Soviets capture pilot Gary Francis Powers, the U.S. recants earlier assertions that the plane was on a weather research mission.

1961 The United States rejects proposals by Khrushchev to make Berlin a "free city" with access controlled by East Germany. Communist authorities construct Berlin Wall to prevent East Germans from fleeing to West Berlin.

1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. After the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, the Soviet Union installs nuclear missiles in Cuba capable of reaching most of the continental United States. When U-2 Spy planes confirm their existence, President Kennedy orders a naval blockade of Cuba until the Soviet Union agrees to remove the missiles. This was one of the most dangerous confrontations of the Cold War.