

## Animal Farm

### 1. The Opening:

Quotation from *Animal Farm*:

As Clover looked down the hillside her eyes filled with tears. If she could have spoken her thoughts, it would have been to say that this was not what they had aimed at when they had set themselves years ago to work for the overthrow of the human race. These scenes of terror and slaughter were not what they had looked forward to on that night when old Major first stirred them to rebellion. If she herself had had any picture of the future, it had been of a society of animals set free from hunger and the whip, all equal, each working according to his capacity, the strong protecting the weak, as she had protected the lost brood of ducklings with her foreleg on the night of Major's speech. (Orwell 101-102).

My research topic for my thesis paper is the Russian Revolution. I will investigate how communism was introduced through the leadership of Lenin and Stalin. My thesis statement is as follows: True communism was never fully achieved in the Soviet Union because of the brutal and harsh dictatorship of Stalin. I'm starting with this research question: What were some of the ways that Stalin corrupted communism? I am interested in this topic because it is fascinating to see that the people believed they were equal when they had a ruthless dictator.

In ninth grade, I read the book *Animal Farm*, so I knew a little bit about how the book related to the Russian Revolution. Furthermore, I knew that Orwell, author of *Animal Farm*, wrote the book to expose Stalin as a corrupt leader and to reveal how obsession with power can cause individuals to manipulate and abuse people. Also, I already knew that many of the Russian people wanted to be equal, especially the peasants. Lenin took ideas from Karl Marx and began the revolution, and he was the leader. Lenin used propaganda to persuade everyone that he was right. Stalin, the successor of Lenin, was paranoid and killed many people, including officers and his own family. I believe I will find that Stalin treated the citizens as inferiors and did not allow them rights. In addition, I will find that Stalin contradicted the ideas of communism in many ways. I will look for details of the actions that Stalin performed while he was the leader of the Soviet Union.

### 2. The Search:

I started out my research on the Internet, and I searched under [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) for the Russian Revolution. In order to make sure my information was accurate, I only looked for sites with *edu* or *org* on the end. Later, I went to the local library and found a couple of books to support my research. I looked for biographies of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin, and I looked for books about Russian history. In addition, I found an encyclopedia that contained information about communism, and I looked in my history book. Moreover, I checked out *Animal Farm* to find a quote for my introduction. Finally, I checked on [thinkquest.org](http://thinkquest.org) and found an article about Joseph Stalin. My best source of information was the encyclopedia because this contained a lot of facts and was very easy to read and understand. However, this didn't have any profound quotes or eyewitness accounts, like the ones I found in some of my books. A few of my books proved to be very valuable because they contained quotes that support my thesis.

Unfortunately, some of the books I looked at were difficult to understand the point the author was trying to make, and the books were lengthy about just one topic. Since there was so much information to read and look over, I had to pick and choose specific information that will help me to prove my point. My questions or assumptions did not change during my research because I found many facts that support my thesis.

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A breakthrough for me was when I finally found an encyclopedia that contained information necessary for my paper. I had been searching for a long time already on the Internet, and I had been having difficulty finding anything specific. The encyclopedia was very specific and detailed with information of communism and the development of communism through Lenin and Stalin. In fact, I could understand most of what the book was saying. My mother helped me to find some books that might be useful in my research, and she took me to the library.

### 3. What I Discovered:

#### **Background Information of Communism from *World Book Encyclopedia*:**

Before the Russian Revolution began, Karl Marx encouraged workers to revolt against the noble classes and start a communist society. A communist society is a system without a government and social classes. "After classes had been eliminated, everyone would live in peace, prosperity, and freedom. There would be no more need for governments, police, or armies, and all these institutions would gradually disappear" (Urban 890). Therefore, the revolution should have created equality and economic security.

#### **Collectivization of Farms from *Russia*:**

Stalin announced that the state required the sacrifice and obedience of the people. Stalin had a "Five Year Plan" that would "benefit" the Soviet Union economically by making the Soviet Union an industrial state. Ordering the state to take control of the farms, Stalin selfishly sold the food for profit to build industry without any sympathy towards the people who needed food. Therefore, kulaks, prosperous farmers, and peasants resisted, and they were severely punished.

In 1930 ... thousands of peasants armed with hunting rifles, axes, and pitchforks revolted against the regime ... NKVO [secret police] units and militia were sent... For three days ... a bloody battle was waged between the ... people and the authorities ... This revolt was cruelly punished. Thousands of peasants, workers, soldiers, and officers paid for this attempt with their lives, while the survivors were deported to concentration camps. In the villages of Ternovka and Baganovka ... mass executions were carried out ... The soil of this region was soaked in blood. After these executions, these villages were set on fire (qtd. in Kort 36).

When Stalin claimed the farms, many farmers were not excited about having to change their lifestyle, and one can recognize how difficult it would be to give up their possessions. As a result of collectivization, Stalin created a famine, which starved the peasants to death. "And no matter what they did, they went on dying, dying, dying. They died everywhere—in yards or streetcars and on trains. There was no one to bury these victims of the Stalinist famine" (qtd. in Kort 37). Stalin used the famine to put a stop to the resistance. Even though industry increased, many lives were lost to the famine.

#### **Use of Propaganda from Stalin: *Russia's Man of Steel*:**

Stalin used propaganda to change people's ways of thinking. Instead of letting the people think for themselves, Stalin put his own ideas into their heads.

There was no freedom of information in the Soviet Union ... Every word in every book, newspaper, magazine, play, poem, film, sermon, speech, scientific paper and radio script had to be approved in advance by the government censors. Usually they asked that a fact be omitted here and a line toned down there, but sometimes an entire piece was destroyed (Marrin 83-84).

Stalin effectively used the propaganda to lead the people astray and keep them from getting any ideas that Stalin was doing the wrong things.

**The Great Purge from Joseph Stalin and from "Joseph Stalin":**

Stalin maintained his control of the people through social terror. During 1936, Stalin wrongly arrested high-ranking officials and forced the prisoners to admit to crimes they did not commit in his rush to stop opposition. "An investigation sometimes included physical torture. Questioning could go on as long as a suspect protested innocence. Threats against a suspect's family members were made. Under these conditions, it was hardly surprising that so many confessed" (Hoobler and Hoobler 64). Amazingly, he willingly executed millions of people, including his friends because he was suspicious of their actions. After Stalin's death, people finally realized what a brutal leader he was. "... Nikita Khrushchev ... devoted three hours to the systematic destruction of Joseph Stalin's image as a public hero. Among other charges, Stalin was now accused of wanton slaughter during the prewar purge trials; of being abnormally suspicious of associates ... Above all he was denounced for having paraded himself as a savior" ("Joseph Stalin" 3).

When I began my research, I thought that the Russian people were mistreated and had no freedom. In the end, I found out that despite that, people still believed Stalin to be a great hero because of his propaganda. I found so many examples of his cruelty that it is difficult to figure out what to include.

People need to know about keeping an eye on their leaders because they could abuse their powers. Leaders should be evaluated by whether they are doing what they promised to do, and whether they are trying to help the people. Today, we still have people who follow ruthless leaders similar to Stalin. For example, we have Saddam Hussein, who we have just recently stopped. By making sure children have a decent education and learn about the evils of terrorism, parents are ensured that their children will not be deceived. I can do further research on the effects of propaganda, how Stalin made himself a hero, and the education of little children. I intend to find more quotes to prove my point.

**4. How I Have Grown as a Researcher:**

I have learned to look for more specific details. It was frustrating to search with a lot of information, so I learned to look for the main idea in the index. Also, I learned that some Internet sites are inaccurate and could provide false information and that books have more information.

If there is not enough time to read the whole book, use the index to find the general topic. In further research, I can use my newly found skills to help my research go faster. The next time I write an I-Search paper, I will try to take more notes at home to be prepared for class and bring my source books to class with me.

**References:**

See Works Cited page.

**Works Cited**

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