

Russia: WWII

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Russia: WWII

Hello Delegates!

Welcome to SSUNS 2015! Welcome to Montreal, and welcome to this years Russia WWII Crisis committee. I sincerely hope that the four days of thoughtful, engaging, and dynamic committee session that our team has prepared for you will always remain a highlight of your high school Model UN careers.

My name is Harangad Singh and I will be your chair for our committee, playing the role of Joesph Stalin, I hope to manifest unnecessary high levels of respect and act as a malevolent master of deception. This is only in committee though; I swear I'm a sweet gentle soul who enjoys long walks on the beach and Ben and Jerry's ice cream. I am entering my third year at McGill studying Urban Systems within Geography, and minoring in Geographic Information Science and possibly Statistics.

Born in Delhi, India, I moved to the United States of America when I was about a year old, living in various places but spending most of my childhood in Hanover NH. During high school I did a lot of Model UN, and was a delegate at SSUNS 2012 in the World Health Organization. I also played varsity golf and ski jumped. Here at McGill I am the Vice President of my fraternity, the Kappa Alpha Literary Society, in addition to my Model UN exploits. Last year at SSUNS I was the vice-chair for the Iraq 2003 crisis committee, and the previous year a crisis staffer for the War of 1812. At McMUN (McGill's university level conference) I have served as Entertainment and Events Coordinator for the past two years.

Allow me to introduce you to your vice chair, Claudia Lach. She is going into her third and last year at McGill, studying Economics with minors in Psychology and International Development. She's lived in Toronto for most of her life but now considers Montreal to be her home. She enjoys leading committees, acted as vice chair for Radio Free Europe at SSUNS last year and will be chairing the Peloponnese War Athens at McMUN 2016. She loves to binge-watch Netflix, read, travel and has recently toured Europe. Now, she aspires to conquer the rest of the continents.

Model UN is the extra curricular I give lots of credit to for molding my public speaking skills, research skills, and my debate skills. In committee I hope that you all engage with the committee, and yourselves. Participate actively, and never be scared to speak up. We are here for you, the delegate. Ensuring you get the most out of this conference, and that you learn the most about yourselves is my goal.

I am excited for SSUNS, and excited to meet all of you. Prepare for the committee, do your research, and be confident in yourselves that you will succeed.

Harangad Singh
Chair,
Russia: WWII, SSUNS 2015

Foreign Policy: Relations with other Countries

The current climate in Soviet foreign relations at the beginning of our crisis revolves around building alliances. The Soviet Union is fighting border disputes with Japan to its east, a strong Asian country expanding its empire. In the west, Hitler and Germany are growing stronger; vaguely resembling the crumbled state the country was left in after WWI. Germany is to be feared. France, who shares a border with Germany, is desperately seeking allies. Britain is in economic distress, having troubles controlling its overseas empires. The newly independent republic of Poland quivers between two great powers: Germany and Russia, only slightly settled by a pact of mutual support from Britain and France. War is brewing. Actions must be taken.

Japan

Russian-Japanese relations are tense in 1939, as they have been for centuries. Especially concerning Russia's expansionist policies especially in Manchuria. In 1902, Japan signs an alliance with Britain to curtail Russia's empire in East Asia.¹ However, Tsar Nicholas II, the emperor of Russia since 1894, doesn't see Japan as much of a threat; after all, Japan is an Asian country and to the Western eye: underdeveloped and inferior. He is proven wrong after Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). Rather than considering finances, he wanted to maintain racial ideologies and prove Japan's military weaknesses.² The public is disappointed with him, which plays a large role in the 1905 Revolution.

Tensions cool leading up to WWI after both powers sought an alliance with Britain, however they reignite following the Russian Revolution/Civil War when Japan sent troops to counter the Bolshevik presence in Eastern Russia. Japan is concerned about its northern border and wished to create a buffer in Siberia, sending 70,000 troops to the effort. Only Japan is seen as an actual threat to the Russian Civil War.³ The Allied intervention has been a mere 200,000 soldiers and both Britain and France backed out by 1919.⁴ Japan



Figure 1 –Japan and its empire 1939

¹ Richard Cavendish. "Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Alliance." History Today 52, no. 1 (2002).

² Daniel Zylberkan. "THE CAUSES OF THE RUSSO JAPANESE WAR." Accessed June 21, 2015. http://www.academia.edu/4070238/THE_CAUSES_OF_THE_RUSSO_JAPANESE_WAR_1904_05GEOPOLITICS_ORIENTALISM_AND_RUSSIAN_FAR_EASTERN_POLICY

³ Ian C. D. Moffat. The Allied Intervention in Russia, 1918-1920: The Diplomacy of Chaos. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

continues to occupy parts of Siberia until 1922 and Sakhalin, the large Russian island above Japan, until 1925.

After the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, relations between the two countries get even worse. A few years later in 1936, Japan and Germany sign the Anti-Comintern Pact. Like many other countries, Japan not only fears Russian expansion but also the spread of communism, a novel idea at the time. The Pact was to disintegrate and subdue the Soviet Union and the rest of the international communist movement from “endanger[ing] internal peace and social-wellbeing”.⁵ In 1938, Mongolia, a Soviet colony bordering Manchuria is involved in frequent border clashes because of fuzzy boundaries on the Khalkha River. April of 1939, Japan’s Major Masanobu Tsuji declares that if armed forces skirmish, regardless of boundaries, they will fight until one side wins.⁶

Germany

The late 19th century brings with it an alliance system; the major powers begin to divide themselves as tensions, arms and empires rise in Europe. Each seeks the best-equipped allies; past feuds are ignored to prepare for the future, some of them done in secrecy. Russia is one of the major powers, strong enough to be called into an alliance with Germany and Austria called the League of Three Emperors in 1872.⁷ However, both Russia and

Austria have interests in the

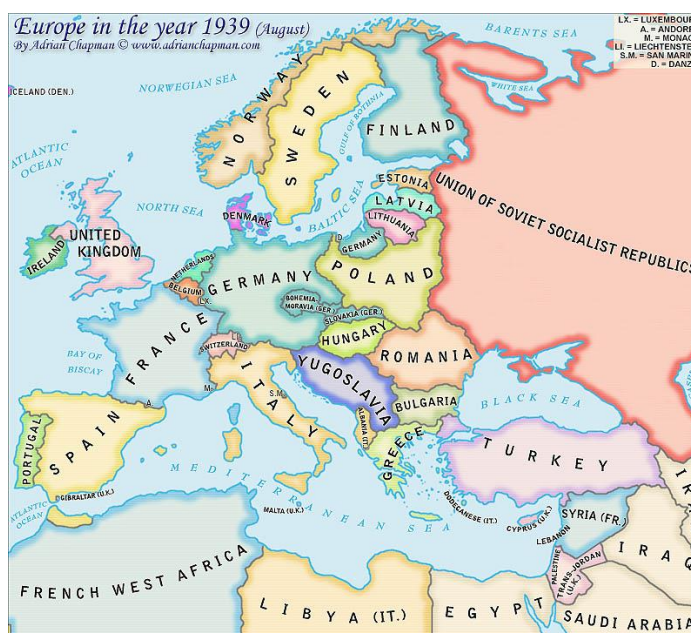


Figure 2 - Europe in 1939

Balkans, causing Germany to choose sides. They choose the latter, partially due to a similar background and language, forming the Dual Alliance of 1879. Germany wants to remain on friendly terms with Russia, signing the Reinsurance Treaty of 1887 with Russia promising mutual military support, but fails to renew the treaty in 1890.⁸ For the

⁴ "Russian Civil War | Russian History." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. July 14, 2014. Accessed June 21, 2015. <http://www.britannica.com/event/Russian-Civil-War>

⁵ Edmund Jan Osmanczyk and Anthony Mango. Encyclopedia of the United Nations and International Agreements. 3rd ed. Vol. 2. New York, New York: Routledge, 2003. 802.

⁶ Stuart D Goldman. "Mongolia 1939 - Stalin's Shrewd Opening Act." History Net Where History Comes Alive World US History Online. April 3, 2009. Accessed July 7, 2015. <http://www.historynet.com/mongolia-1939-stalins-shrewd-opening-act.htm>.

⁷ "1879-1914: The Deadly Alliances." Trenches on the Web. Accessed June 11, 2015. <http://www.worldwar1.com/tlalli.htm>.

⁸ Ibid.

next 2 decades, Russia chooses to focus its attention on the East and abandons European affairs.

In 1907, Russia enters the Triple Entente, an alliance with Britain and France⁹, putting themselves as enemies with Germany. Due to the Bolshevik overthrow in 1917, Russia has to withdraw from the war and needs to guarantee peace with Germany. Germany's success in its Eastern Front results in a disadvantageous Brest-Litovsk Treaty of 1918 where Russia has to cede Baltic States to Germany, Kars Oblast to the Ottoman Empire, recognize Ukraine's independence and owes Germany 6 billion gold marks, among others.¹⁰ This is reversed once the Allies defeat Germany in November 1918.

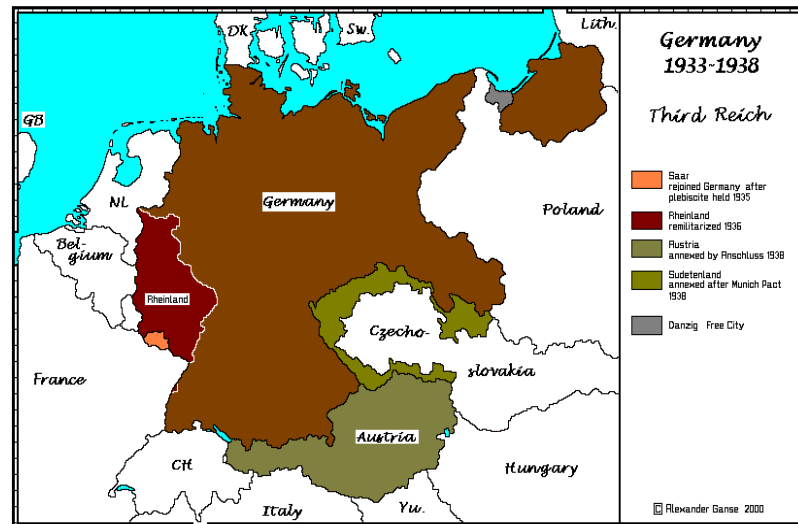


Figure 3 - Germany and its expansion

After the war, both Russia and Germany are heavily inconvenienced. Russia is only able to reassert control over Ukraine and Belarus; it loses Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland, who gain independence. Russia enters the war with the largest army: 5,000,000 soldiers, over 1,500,000 military casualties and over 13,000,000 civilian deaths.¹¹ Germany is also devastated by the war, losing up to 3 million in civilian and military deaths, owing 132 billion gold marks, approximately \$33 billion USD at the time, in reparation payments. Germany has to give away territory to Belgium, Poland and France, loses its overseas colonies and is forced to demilitarize the Rhineland, German land bordering France. The German military is disintegrated as well; its army is limited to 100,000 men, restrictions imposed in navy where no vessels can weigh over 100,000 tons and it is forbidden to have an air force.¹² Both Germany and Russia become outcasts on the international stage and aren't allowed to join the League of Nations. Although Russia has fought for the Allies, the rest of the members do not accept its communist ideology and revolution. Instead of standing isolated, Russia and Germany sign the Treaty of Rapallo on April 16, 1922, which renounces financial and territorial claims against each

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Trueman, C. N. "Treaty of Brest-Litovsk - History Learning Site." History Learning Site. Accessed June 15, 2015. <http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/modern-world-history-1918-to-1980/russia-1900-to-1939/treaty-of-brest-litovsk/>.

¹¹ "Effect of World War I on Each Country." The People, Nations and Events That Have Shaped Our World. Accessed June 14, 2015. http://www.worldology.com/Europe/world_war_1_effect.htm.

¹² Ibid.

other, allows them to mutually rearm and both agreed to remain neutral if attacked by a third party.¹³ Further neutrality is pledged in the Treaty of Berlin in 1926.

However, the rise of Adolf Hitler in 1933 and Nazi Germany produces anti-communist propaganda. The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) becomes a proxy war between Germany and the Soviet Union; Germany and Italy support Spanish nationalists whereas Russia supports the partially socialist Second Spanish Republic under Manuel Azana. Germany sends in the Condor Legion, volunteers from the air force, while Russia sends in volunteers from the International Brigade as well as military and political advisors; the former are victorious.¹⁴

Britain

In the late 19th century, both Britain and Russia have interests in Central Asia. Russia wants to expand in order to have warm water ports on the Indian Ocean; the British fear this may lead to an invasion of India. They are on the brink of war when Russian forces seize Afghan territory south of the Oxus River in the Panjdeh Incident in 1885 but diplomacy is quickly reached and Afghanistan is created as a buffer state, stopping Russia expansion southward.¹⁵ The two are brought on the same side during the Boxer Rebellion in China (1899-1901), both seeking to safeguard their Chinese interests.¹⁶ When Russia enters war with Japan in 1904, Britain is a foe due to an alliance made in 1902.

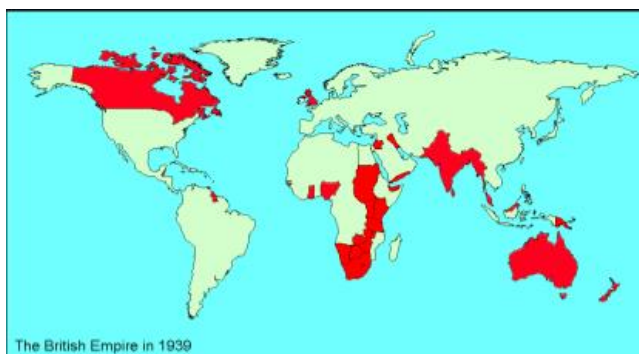


Figure 4 –British empire in 1939

In 1907, Russia enters the Anglo-Russian Entente, becoming allies against the Central Powers in WWI. Following the Russian Revolution, Britain sends troops to Russian ports during the Civil War to stop any aid to the German war effort after the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. Like the rest of the Allies, Britain wants to restore the Eastern Front; no one likes communism and they are troubled over the autocratic defeat. It's efforts in the north in areas like Murmansk and Arkhangelsk are pointless and eventually pulls out early in 1919. The Allies in general aren't successful and withdraw in 1920.¹⁷ The Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement is finalized in March of 1921 and Britain recognizes the USSR in 1924.

¹³ "Treaty of Rapallo | European History." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. Accessed June 20, 2015. <http://www.britannica.com/event/Treaty-of-Rapallo>.

¹⁴ "Spanish Civil War | Spanish History." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. October 11, 2014. Accessed June 8, 2015.

¹⁵ Carl Cavanagh Hodge. Encyclopedia of the Age of Imperialism, 1800-1914. Vol. 1. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2008. 288.

¹⁶ "Boxer Rebellion | Chinese History." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. November 26, 2014. Accessed July 2, 2015. <http://www.britannica.com/event/Boxer-Rebellion>.

¹⁷ "Russian Civil War | Russian History." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. July 14, 2014. Accessed June 21, 2015. <http://www.britannica.com/event/Russian-Civil-War>

In 1938, Britain and France, excluding Russia, authorize the Munich Agreement with Germany regarding the German annexation of Sudetenland, a mainly German-speaking region in Czechoslovakia.¹⁸ They don't believe it is wise to bring the Soviets into talks with the anti-Soviet Germany; Russia doesn't want to recognize this annexation anyways. Russia begins to feel excluded and feels European hostilities against it.

France

In 1892, France and Russia sign a Franco-Russian alliance after Germany chooses not to renew its Reinsurance Treaty with Russia. After Germany has formed an alliance with Austria, later joining with Italy in 1882, Russia

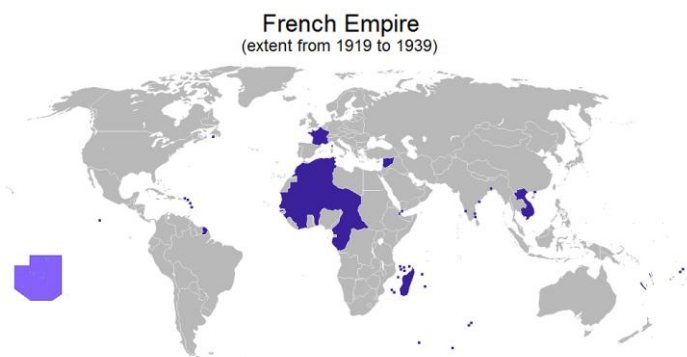


Figure 5 - French empire

feels vulnerable. France is in the

same position, having lost the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1) and Alsace-Lorraine, two of its wealthy and industrious regions, to Germany. This alliance makes France Russia's primary ally both economically and militarily until 1917, when Russia exits WWI.¹⁹ Similarly to Britain, France sends forces to intervene in the Russian Civil War. France strongly supports the Whites, anti-Bolsheviks, but fails in its campaign in Crimea and Ukraine due to confusion among the Whites, communists and Ukrainian nationalists.²⁰

In 1932, Russia and France sign a non-aggression pact and three years later in 1935, they form a treaty of mutual assistance in the aim of encircling Germany and cutting it off from Central Europe. In the end, it only becomes a hollow diplomatic threat against Germany because of long bureaucratic processes and France's refusal on a military convention regarding how the countries will coordinate actions against Germany.²¹ As previously mentioned, Britain and France authorize the Munich Agreement with Germany regarding the German annexation of Sudetenland, excluding Russia.

Poland

Following the Third Partitioning of Poland in 1795, Poland is carved amongst Austria, Prussia and Russia. Poland resents Russification and throughout its 123 years under Russian rule, it rises against its occupiers. Most notably, are the November and January Uprisings. The November Uprising (1830-31) and January Uprising (1863-1865)

¹⁸ "Munich Agreement | Europe [1938]." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. February 10, 2015. Accessed June 12, 2015.

¹⁹ "Dual Alliance | Europe [1894]." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. Accessed June 13, 2015.

<http://www.britannica.com/topic/Dual-Alliance>.

²⁰ "Russian Civil War | Russian History." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. July 14, 2014. Accessed June 21, 2015.

<http://www.britannica.com/event/Russian-Civil-War>

²¹ William Evans Scott. *Alliance against Hitler; the Origins of the Franco-Soviet Pact*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1962.

manage to spread as far as territories in Lithuania, Belarus, Latvia and Ukraine but each time are smoldered by the Russians. It is only after the end of WWI in 1918, that Poland regains independence, that being one of the conditions in Wilson's Fourteen Points (for political reasons).²²

Soon afterwards, war between Russia and Poland erupts in 1919 until 1921. Poland wants to expand its borders; the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth used to be a massive state in the 16-17th centuries and its remains seem a bit meager. However, much of this land is now Ukrainian, Belarusian or part of the Baltics.²³ Among others, it wants to incorporate East Prussia into a customs union, challenges borders with Czechoslovakia and wants to create a federation with Ukraine.²⁴ Lenin, leader of Russia at the time, wants to spread communism to Germany, which after the war is in disarray; to do that, Russian troops need to cross Poland. At the beginning, Polish troops capture most of western Ukraine but are pushed back by the Soviets to Warsaw, the Polish capital. Poland then takes the offensive and pushes the Russians back across, until fighting exhausts and a treaty is made, dividing disputed territories of Belarus and Ukraine.²⁵ Poland is able to stop the massive Russia and blocks the spread of communism throughout Europe.

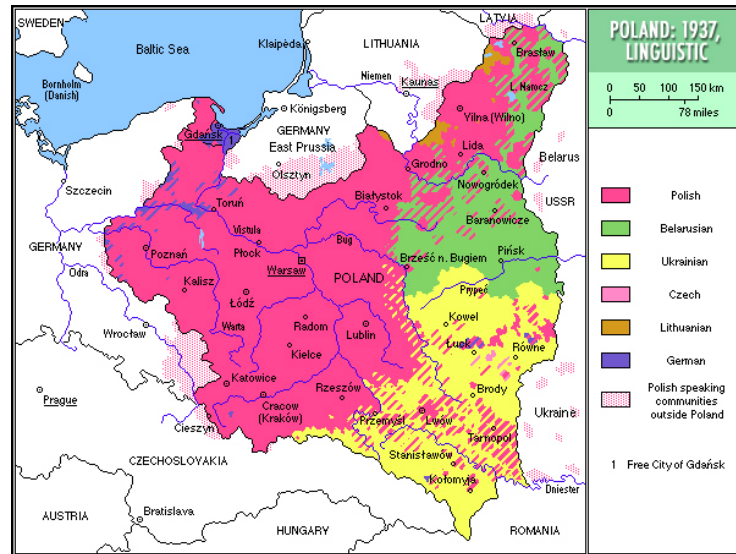


Figure 6 - Poland in 1937

In 1932, Poland and Russia establish diplomatic relations after years of hostility; until then, Poland is seen as pro-German and regards the Soviet Union as their greatest enemy but change due to Germany's refusal to accept post-1918 eastern boundaries. Yet again, in 1935, Poland gravitates to better relations with Nazi Germany because of its frightening expansionist plans and directs hostility towards Russia. Yet, Germany continues to target Poland after it refuses to sign an anti-Comintern pact to become a satellite state, like Hungary and Romania, and rejects territorial demands of Danzig and Gdansk Pomerania.²⁶

²² "History of Russian-Polish Relations | European Dialogue." History of Russian-Polish Relations | European Dialogue. August 9, 2010. Accessed June 12, 2015. <http://www.eurodialogue.eu/History-of-Russian-Polish-Relations>.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Boemeke, Manfred F and Piotr S. Wandycz. "Polish Question." In *The Treaty of Versailles: A Reassessment after 75 Years*, 313-336. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

²⁵ "History of Russian-Polish Relations | European Dialogue." History of Russian-Polish Relations | European Dialogue. August 9, 2010. Accessed June 12, 2015. <http://www.eurodialogue.eu/History-of-Russian-Polish-Relations>.

²⁶ John Lukacs. *The Last European War: September 1939 - December 1941*. Yale University Press, 2001. 31.



The State of Russia

Russian Revolution and End of WWI

Russia left the Great War in a dire state; the Brest-Litovsk Treaty of 1918 officially declared Russian withdrawal but fighting effectively ended in November 1917 after the Second Communist Revolution of the same month. People were dissatisfied with both the war and the economic and social situation of the country. Rapid industrialization had left overcrowded cities, unsanitary living conditions and long work hours. Many skilled workers were unwillingly conscripted into the war to be replaced by unskilled peasants. Famine hit and massive migration from the cities occurred. Those conscripts replaced the officers loyal to the Tsar, who had been killed. People were unsatisfied with the aristocracy and Tsar Nicholas II, who was unwilling to enact any progressive reforms. The Age of Enlightenment had hit Russia and the people were slowly wanting democracy. Civil war broke out and the Allies intervened supporting the anti-Bolshevik White forces in the Civil War.

By the end of the war, Russia was only able to reassert control over Ukraine and Belarus; they lost Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland (which gained independence) and ceded Russian territory to Germany. Entering the war, it had had the largest army, when fully mobilized: 5,000,000 men, and ended up with over 1,500,000 casualties along with over 13,000,000 civilian deaths.

Structure of Soviet Government

Stalin

In the country of Georgia in 1879 Joseph Stalin was born to a cobbler and a washerwoman. At the age of seven he suffered from smallpox, which left scars on his face for the rest of his life. In his tween's a carriage accident left his left arm deformed. He was bullied as a result. He developed a deep seeded anger for anyone who did not respect him. His mother was very religious Russian Orthodox Christian and wanted young Joseph to be a priest. In 1888 she was able to enroll him into a church school, and in 1894 he earned a scholarship to the Tiflis Theological Seminary. In this environment of higher learning he met other students who were part of an underground political group, which supported Georgian independence from Russia. Here he was introduced to the socialist writings of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin. He left school in 1899 and pursued political activism. In 1902 he was arrested for helping a labor strike and was sent to Siberia. In the coming years he would be arrested many times, and during this time he got the name "Stalin" meaning "steel" in Russian. He was marked an outlaw by the Tsar's secret police, and went into hiding. He got involved with kidnappings and robberies, and supposedly stole 250,000 rubles (~\$3.4 million USD today) during a bank robbery. In February 1917 the Russian Revolution began, in march the tsar was no longer on the throne, and by October Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin was in control.

In 1922, Joseph Stalin was appointed to the office of the general secretary of the Communist Party. He was given control over who got appointed to the Bolshevik party; subsequently he built up a base of supporter's for himself within the party. After Lenin's death in 1924, Stalin had people who did not support him removed from power and exiled from Russia through bureaucratic denunciations, and then instigated a campaign of terror having people arrested and executed publically. Anyone who opposed him were convicted of being an enemy of the people, and executed. In the 1920's and 1930's Stalin took the land from the people, and put them to work. He put in economic plans that industrialized the land, but cost millions of lives to put into place. In 1939 he signed a nonaggression pact with Germany. 1941 when Germany attacked, breaking the pact, Stalin hid in his office in shame for days.²⁷

Joseph Stalin Quotes ²⁸—

“A single death is a tragedy, a million is a statistic”

“Those who vote decide nothing. Those who count the vote decide everything”

“Idea's are far more powerful than guns. We don't let our people have guns. Why should we let them have ideas?”

“It is not heroes that make history, but history that makes heroes”

“Death is the solution to all problems. No man- No problem”
http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/138332.Joseph_Stalin

Purges

To discuss Joseph Stalin's purges of the 1930s, it is important to first understand that government oppression is, unfortunately, rooted deep in Russian history. The first form of secret police in Russia were the the Oprichnina. The brainchild of the Grand Duke of Moscow and first Tsar Ivan the Terrible, this organization, which had more in common with a gang of murderers more than the Soviet KGB or NKVD units that operated centuries later, was a tool of mass intimidation set up in 1565. The members of the Oprichnina, called the Oprichniks, were roughly six thousand black-clad men, whose jurisdiction was outside the law. Therefore, it is not surprising that throughout the eight years of the groups' existence, the Oprichniks committed mass murder, raped, pillaged, and plundered the Moscow countryside while



²⁷ <http://www.biography.com/people/joseph-stalin-9491723#communist-party-leader>

²⁸ http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/138332.Joseph_Stalin



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remaining completely unpunished²⁹. Russia was a far-cry from the institutionalized terror machine that would emerge in the years of the Soviet Union. Ivan the Terrible's paranoia rivalled Stalin's own, and it led to the perpetration of mass atrocities, such as the Massacre of Novgorod in 1570. Led personally by the Tsar, the Oprichniks raided the city of Novgorod, ransacked the countryside and murdered thousands, acting on a mere suspicion of conspiracy among the Novgorodians against Ivan.³⁰

Subsequent Tsars of the Russian Empire were not as overt in their oppressive tactics as Ivan, but many of them took great interest in rooting out enemies both real and imagined. For Peter the Great (1672-1725), denunciation was the most valuable method of finding and exposing "word and deed" criminals. So intent was Peter on encouraging his subjects to expose conspirators that he granted enormous rewards for denunciations. Large monetary rewards were most common, while some serfs managed to win their freedom by reporting their owners for a particularly heinous offense. Peter also issued capital punishment for all "sovereign's word" crimes in the Naval Regulations of 1720, stating: "Anyone who commits the sin of abuse in reference to his Majesty's personage, expresses contempt towards His actions or intentions, and discusses them in an unseemly way, shall be deprived of life by execution through beheading."³¹

Despite promises of reforming Russian security forces after centuries of autocratic Tsarist rule, the first leader of Communist Russia, Vladimir Lenin, stuck closely with his Tsarist predecessors' methods of ensuring public order. The new government's first priority was to create an organization to effectively police and control the common folk. The Extraordinary Commission to Combat Counter-Revolution, initialed VChK or Cheka, was tasked with tracking and suppressing all anti-Soviet³² activity. The Cheka was unrestricted and unhindered by the law in their hunt for those they deemed "enemies of the Revolution". In a three-year campaign not unlike the Terror that followed the French revolution, the Cheka surpassed all previous Imperial Secret Police organizations in their ruthless and relentless repression. This period is commonly referred to as the Red Terror.³³ Felix Dzerzhinsky, serving under Lenin, was credited with the organization of the most expansive extermination campaigns of the Cheka during the Red Terror. Despite his murderous and ruthless tactics, Soviet propaganda called him a "Knight of the Revolution" and eulogized his organization, the Cheka, as "Sword and Shield" of the Communist party.³⁴

The Red Terror coincided with the five-year Russian Civil War during which the Bolsheviks thwarted attempts by Tsarist sympathizers to regain control of the country. Lenin instituted a number of reforms after the conclusion of the devastating war. In

²⁹ Hingley, Ronald. *The Russian Secret Police*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), 2

³⁰ *Ibid*, 3

³¹ Rudd, Charles A. and Stepanov, Sergei A., *Fontanka 16: The Tsars' Secret Police*, (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 9

³² The word "Soviet" comes from the term used to denote Revolutionary "councils", but is widely used to describe the Communist Government that ruled Russia from 1917 to 1991.

³³ Hingley, 126

³⁴ See figures 1 and 2



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addition to economic reforms, Lenin renamed the Cheka the “State Political Administration” or GPU, and ordered Dzerzhinsky to induce some order into the formerly-extraordinary division. Dzerzhinsky remained at the helm, replacing the organizations previous brutal methods with softer measures focused on internal security³⁵.

Following Lenin’s death in 1924, Joseph Stalin assumed the position of General-Secretary of the Communist Party and Leader of the United Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Stalin became an even more merciless dictator than his predecessor. In the 1930’s Stalin used the GPU to repress farmers and peasants that he deemed enemies of the state.³⁶ Following Dzerzhinsky’s death in 1926, Stalin replaced him with V.R. Menzhinsky. Soviet officials described Menzhinsky as “a shadow of a man”, and suspected that he was merely a puppet installed so that Stalin could use the organization for his personal gain³⁷. Stalin did use the GPU as a method of arresting and executing his political enemies in the 1930s, in a reign of terror known as the Great Purge³⁸. After Menzhinsky’s death in 1934, Stalin appointed Henry Yagoda as the head of internal security. The GPU was renamed the Union Commissariat for Internal Affairs, or NKVD. During the great purge, Yagoda and Yezhov, two subsequent heads of the NKVD fell victim to the same purges they helped Stalin orchestrate, with Yagoda being replaced by Nikolai Yezhov. Yezhov ordered the arrest and execution of Yagoda in 1938, ordering the former NKVD head to be stripped naked and beaten before his execution³⁹ Ironically, Yezhov suffered the exact same fate as his predecessor. Having executed the purges of 1937-38, Yezhov, like Yagoda fell out of Stalin’s favor and was deposed in 1938. Yezhov’s fate is not certain, but the most probable hypothesis is that he was secretly executed.⁴⁰ Yezhov presided over a two-year period of purges that became known as the “Yezhovchina”. The leadership of the Red Army was decimated, former revolutionaries were accused of treason and sentenced in a number of show trials, half of the members of communist parties in Yugoslavia and the Ukraine were exterminated⁴¹. Lavrentiy Beria succeeded Yezhov, and remained the People’s Commissar of Internal Affairs (i.e. head of the NKVD) until Stalin’s death in 1953⁴².

Current Climate

May 11, 1939, 70-90 men from Mongolia’s cavalry have intruded on disputed borders with Manchuria. Lt. Gen. Michitaro Komat-subara of the imperial Japanese army ordered to destroy the invading forces, a clash which is to be called the Nomonhan

³⁵ Levytsky, Boris, *The Uses of Terror* (New York, Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc., 1974), 49

³⁶ *Ibid*, 63

³⁷ *Ibid*, 61

³⁸ *Ibid*, 70

³⁹ Sudoplatov, Pavel, *Days of Secret War and Diplomacy, 1941* (Russia: Olma Media Goup, 2001), 22

⁴⁰ Hingley, 182

⁴¹ Levytsky, 111

⁴² Hingley, 183



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Incident, driving the forces back across the river. Mongolian troops are now preparing to attack with an even larger force.⁴³

As for the West, Russia is secretly engaging in talks with Germany on one hand, and Britain, France and Poland on the other. Talks are ongoing in late 1938 to March 1939 between Germany and Russia for economic reasons; Russia needs new technology and equipment to undergo its third, Five Year Plan and Germany needs raw materials in case of an expected British blockade.⁴⁴ In March, the others also look towards Russia for a political and military agreement.

Russia is scared of a two-pronged attack from Germany through Hitler's expansion; it is known that Germany has interests in Poland. Russia is scared of Western powers and of being encircled; it doesn't doubt that war can be avoided and it is heavily weakened by the Great Purge and dealing with Japan. It needs to be able to effectively rearm. It has little faith in the Polish army let alone French and British strength. France is greatly invested in talks with Russia for fear it will ally itself with Germany. Britain is less invested; Chamberlain can't stand communism and doesn't see losing Russia as an ally as a great loss. Poland fears Russian occupation and does not want Russian troops entering Poland for protection purposes.⁴⁵ Germany promises territorial expansion for Russia in the event of an alliance.

Russia's foreign minister, Maxim Litvinov, has been replaced with Vyacheslav Molotov. The talks are ongoing, which side will Russia take?

⁴³ Stuart D Goldman. "Mongolia 1939 - Stalin's Shrewd Opening Act." History Net Where History Comes Alive World US History Online. April 3, 2009. Accessed July 7, 2015.

⁴⁴ Edward E. Ericson. Feeding the German Eagle: Soviet Economic Aid to Nazi Germany, 1933-1941. Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1999.

⁴⁵ "The Nazi-Soviet Pact." BBC News. Accessed June 12, 2015.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/history/mwh/ir1/nazisovietpactrev1.shtml>.



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