



# The Soviet Union

**BEFORE YOU READ**

In the last section, you read about some causes and effects of World War I and World War II.

In this section, you will learn about the growth of the Soviet Union.

**AS YOU READ**

Copy this chart to take notes about the Soviet Union.

Causes	Event	Effects
	Growth of Soviet Union	

**TERMS & NAMES**

**Iron Curtain** an invisible barrier between the people of Eastern and Western Europe after World War II that reflected their being restricted from traveling outside their respective countries

**puppet government** a government that is controlled by an outside force

**one-party system** a system in which there is only one political party to choose from when voting and only one candidate to choose from for each government position

**Joseph Stalin** ruler of the Soviet Union from 1928 to 1953

**collective farm** a government-owned farm that employs large numbers of workers

**Warsaw Pact** a treaty signed in 1955 that established an alliance among the Soviet Union, Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania

**Cold War** after World War II, a period of political non-cooperation between the members of NATO and the Warsaw Pact nations, during which these countries refused to trade or cooperate with each other

**East Against West** (pages 342–343)**How did the Soviet Union become the strongest nation in Europe?**

The countries of Western Europe were separated from the Soviet-controlled countries of Eastern Europe after World War II. An invisible wall known as the **Iron Curtain** was erected. This meant that people could no longer pass freely from the West to the East.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or USSR, included 15 republics. Russia was the largest republic. When Germany invaded

in 1941, the Soviet Union entered World War II. The Soviet Union nearly collapsed after the invasion. The Germans destroyed much of the western Soviet Union. Millions of people were killed. After the defeat of Germany in the war, however, the Soviet Union became the most powerful nation in Europe.

The Soviet Union established Communist governments in Eastern Europe after World War II. Force or politics were sometimes used to keep the governments in line.

The Soviet Union used puppet governments to control the countries of Eastern Europe. Members of a **puppet government** do what they are told by an outside force. In this case, that outside force was the Soviet leadership in Moscow.

Most Eastern Europeans could vote, but elections gave them no choices. The only party to choose from was the Communist Party, since all other parties were outlawed. Only one candidate was on the *ballot* for each government position. Soviet citizens could not complain about this **one-party system**. They could be thrown in jail for expressing their opinions.

### 1. What was the relationship between the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries after World War II?

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#### Joseph Stalin (pages 344–346)

##### **What methods did Joseph Stalin use to rule the Soviet Union?**

Joseph Stalin came to power after the death of Vladimir Lenin, a Communist leader who had helped overthrow the czar in 1917. Stalin ruled the Soviet Union during World War II. He continued to control the government until his death in 1953.

The government controlled every aspect of Soviet life. Stalin hoped to make the country stronger. He created *five-year plans*, which were sets of economic goals. For example, many new factories were built upon Stalin's orders. The Soviet government made all the decisions about these factories.

Stalin believed that agriculture could be used to strengthen the Soviet Union. Therefore, in the 1930s, peasants were forced to move to collective farms. A **collective farm** was owned by the government, which distributed all the crops the farms produced. Sometimes there was not enough food left over to feed the large numbers of workers who lived on the farms.

Russians who did not support the government were arrested by the secret police. The

police also arrested citizens whom Stalin did not trust. Millions of these prisoners were sent to Siberia to live and work in slave-labor camps. Siberia, in northeastern Russia, is remote and bitterly cold. Many prisoners died there.

### 2. What was life like for most Russians during Stalin's rule?

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#### The Cold War (pages 346–347)

##### **What were the causes of the Cold War?**

The United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union were allies against the Axis powers during World War II. After the war there was little reason for these countries to remain allies. They no longer had a common enemy.

The governments of most Western European countries were either constitutional monarchies or democracies. The governments of Eastern Europe were Communist and largely Soviet-controlled.

For many years after World War II, the members of NATO and the nations in the **Warsaw Pact**—the Eastern European alliance—refused to trade or cooperate with each other. This period is called the **Cold War**. The war stayed “cold” because neither side wanted to start an actual war. Such a war might involve the use of nuclear weapons. These weapons could cause massive destruction to the planet.

The United States and Western Europe worried about Soviet influence in other countries. At the same time, the Soviet Union wanted to protect itself against invasion. Countries on opposite sides of the Iron Curtain were suspicious of each other. For almost 40 years, the tension caused by the Cold War would continue.

### 3. What did both sides in the Cold War want?

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