

*A History*  
*of the*  
*Soviet Union*

*David MacKenzie*    *Michael W. Curran*

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# *A History of the Soviet Union*

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*To Bruce, Bryan, and Brendan MacKenzie;  
To Sara and Elizabeth Curran;  
and  
In memory of Peter F. Curran*

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## *Preface*

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This volume aims to provide a succinct, up-to-date view of the last years of the imperial tsarist regime and the development of Soviet Russia. We have decided to emphasize the role of the Great Russian people, centering in Moscow, who have played a predominant part in the emergence of the Soviet Union as a leading world power over the past 70 years. Meanwhile, we have not neglected contributions of other Slavic and non-Slavic peoples in its development.

We find the Marxist-Leninist theory, which has always been required doctrine in the Soviet Union, inadequate to explain the history of 20th century Russia, while admitting that it has often enriched the process of historical inquiry and produced useful insights and interpretations. Rejecting the persistent tendency of Marxist-Leninists to force facts and trends of modern Russian and Soviet history into preconceived and rigid patterns, we deny that socioeconomic change necessarily precedes or determines political change. Since many Western textbooks on Soviet history have slighted Soviet viewpoints and scholarship, we have made it a point to include such interpretations throughout this volume. While often disagreeing with our Soviet colleagues' theories and approaches, we nonetheless recognize and respect their knowledge and contributions. To introduce college and university students to major controversies among various historical schools, especially between Soviet and Western historians, we have included in this textbook a series of problems that present contrasting views and interpretations of key events. We hope that these problems will stimulate students to think about major historical issues, to probe further on their own, and to reach their own conclusions based on the evidence. History, after all, is not primarily just facts and dates to be memorized, but should involve analyzing and arranging specific data into general and meaningful frameworks.

We have attempted here to present a balanced overall view of modern and contemporary Russia. Besides political, socioeconomic, military, and diplomatic history—written entirely by Mr. MacKenzie—are several

chapters mainly by Mr. Curran on Russian and Soviet culture. The authors have sought to write directly and straightforwardly for the present college generation, to make recent cataclysmic events important to everyone appear interesting and relevant. Our hope is that this volume will also attract the lay reader. We welcome any suggestions for improvements and modifications.

David MacKenzie  
Michael W. Curran

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## *Acknowledgments*

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To all those who kindly introduced me to the study of Russian history, language, and culture, profound thanks; without their inspiration I could not have written this book. To Boris Miller of Stuttgart in the German Federal Republic, my first teacher in the Russian language and history, who encouraged me to devote myself to lifelong study of the Russian and Slavic experience, heartfelt thanks. At the Russian Institute of Columbia University I had the good fortune to study under Professors Philip E. Mosely, Geroid T. Robinson, Henry L. Roberts, and John Hazard, all of whom contributed greatly to my training in the field of Slavic studies. Extended visits to the USSR in 1958–59 and 1966 under the auspices of the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, and shorter sojourns in the Soviet Union in 1969 and 1974, provided me with essential first-hand exposure to Russia, the opportunity to travel widely, and to conduct research in Soviet libraries and archives. At Moscow State University, I received valuable advice and encouragement from the eminent Soviet historians, S. A. Nikitin and P. A. Zaionchkovskii. During these sojourns, I visited historic cities in the USSR and took photographs, some of which are contained in this book. Contributing expert advice and suggestions on individual chapters were Professors Samuel Baron and John Keep, who, of course, are not responsible for errors this volume may contain. I wish to thank my graduate assistants, Mary Best and Thomas Hickey, for their help in preparing the bibliography and putting together the manuscript for this book. This text derives, in part, from lectures for my students at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro; let me thank them for their interest and support. Without the patience and self-sacrifice of my wife, Patricia, I could neither have traveled to the Soviet Union nor had the time needed to complete this volume.

DM

While it is not possible to acknowledge all those who have contributed to this endeavor, I do wish to recognize some of the most important. I owe a very special debt of gratitude to those who first introduced me to Russia and Russian history: Michael B. Petrovich of the University of Wisconsin and Werner Philipp of the Free University of Berlin. Their

knowledge of Russia and their scholarly enthusiasm have been a source of inspiration over many years. My brief association with the late George C. Soules did much to shape my views of Russian history. Special thanks are due my colleagues at The Ohio State University: Arthur E. Adams, Charles Morley, Allan Wildman, and Eve Levin. Their criticisms, helpful suggestions, encouragement, and constant intellectual stimulation are reflected in this volume. I am particularly indebted to my graduate students whose enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity have contributed significantly to the evolution of this volume. I hasten to add, however, that any shortcomings and errors contained in this study are entirely my own. I also wish to express my thanks to the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants and to the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education of the USSR which together provided me with two periods of extended study and research in the USSR in 1962–63 and 1966. The contributions of my two daughters, Sara and Elizabeth, who are just discovering the powerful magnetic qualities of Russian history and the Soviet Union, are too numerous to recount; suffice it to say that without their support and encouragement and their understanding patience this work would never have been completed.

MWC



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## *A Note on Russian Dates, Names, Measures, and Money*

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Dating Russian events has been complicated by the use in Russia until 1918 of "Old Style" dates of the Julian calendar, which in the 18th century were 11 days behind those of the Gregorian calendar employed in the West. In the 19th century the lag was 12 days, and in the 20th 13 days. Early in 1918 the Soviet regime adopted the "New Style" Gregorian calendar. Generally, here dates have been rendered according to the calendar utilized in Russia at the time, except that we have shifted to "New Style" dates beginning with 1917.

Transliterating Russian names into English likewise presents some peculiar problems. We have adhered largely to the Library of Congress system but have omitted diacritical marks for the sake of simplicity. Most Russian first names have been replaced with English equivalents, such as Peter, Nicholas, and Catherine, but not John and Basil instead of Ivan and Vasili.

Russian weights, measures, and distances have been rendered in their English equivalents for the convenience of English-speaking readers. However, Russian rubles have been retained with indications of their dollar value. The ruble, containing 100 kopeks, was worth about 50 cents in 1914. The official value of the Soviet ruble in 1984 was about \$1.20.

## *Area and Population of Union Republics (January 1, 1983)*

<i>Name of Republic</i>	<i>Area (in 1,000 square kms.)</i>	<i>Population (in thousands)</i>	<i>Capital</i>	<i>Population (in thousands)</i>
Armenian SSR	29.8	3,222	Erevan	1,095
Azerbaijani SSR	86.6	6,400	Baku	1,071
Belorussian SSR	207.6	9,806	Minsk	1,405
Estonian SSR	45.1	1,507	Talinn	454
Georgian SSR	69.7	5,137	Tbilisi	1,125
Kazakh SSR	2,717.3	15,470	Alma Ata	1,023
Kirghiz SSR	198.5	3,803	Frunze	577
Latvian SSR	63.7	2,568	Riga	867
Lithuanian SSR	65.2	3,504	Vilnius	525
Moldavian SSR	33.7	4,053	Kishinev	580
Russian SFSR	17,075.4	140,952	Moscow	8,396
Tadzhik SSR	143.1	4,236	Dushanbe	530
Turkmen SSR	488.1	3,045	Ashkhabad	339
Ukrainian SSR	603.7	50,456	Kiev	2,355
Uzbek SSR	447.4	17,044	Tashkent	1,944
USSR	22,402.2 (8,649,540 sq. miles)	271,203	Moscow	

## *Population of the USSR, January 1, 1985: 276,300,000*

*Largest Cities of the USSR (estimated population, January 1, 1983).*

1. Moscow	8,396,000	11. Dnepropetrovsk	1,181,000
2. Leningrad	4,779,000	12. Tbilisi	1,125,000
3. Kiev	2,355,000	13. Odessa	1,097,000
4. Tashkent	1,944,000	14. Erevan	1,095,000
5. Kharkov	1,519,000	15. Omsk	1,080,000
6. Minsk	1,405,000	16. Cheliabinsk	1,077,000
7. Gorkii	1,382,000	17. Baku	1,071,000
8. Novosibirsk	1,370,000	18. Perm	1,037,000
9. Sverdlovsk	1,269,000	19. Ufa	1,034,000
10. Kuibyshev	1,243,000	20. Kazan	1,031,000

SOURCE: *The Europa Year Book, 1984: A World Survey.*

## *Soviet Production of Selected Industrial Items*

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<i>Item</i>	1913	1940	1958	1975	1984
Pig iron	4.2	14.9	39.6	99.9	132 million tons (1982)
Steel	4.3	18.3	54.9	136	154 million tons
Coal	29.2	165.9	496.1	684	712 million tons
Petroleum	10.3	31.1	113.2	459	613 million tons
Electric power	2.0	48.3	235.4	975	1,493 billion kwh.
Automobiles	.45	5.5	107.8	1,119	1,300 thousands
	(1910-15)				

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## Index

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- Academy of Arts (1758), 100–01, 103  
Academy of Sciences, 240  
“Address from the Throne” (1906), 69  
Aehrenthal, Alois von (Austrian foreign minister), 79  
Aganbegyan, Dr. Abel (Soviet economist), 411  
Akhmadulina, Bella (poet), 332  
Akhmatova, Anna (1888–1966, poet), 249–51  
Akselrod, Paul (Russian Marxist leader), 53, 55, 57–58, 117  
Aksionov, Vasili (writer), 348–49, 365  
Aleksandrovich, Vladimir (grand duke), 65  
Alekseev, M. V. (general), 137, 156  
Alexander I (tsar, 1801–1825), 3, 14–15, 19–20, 26, 277  
Alexander II (tsar, 1855–1881), 3, 16, 26–29, 32, 43, 46, 49–50  
    reforms of, 20–25  
Alexander III (tsar, 1881–1894), 29–31, 36–37, 50  
Alexandra of Hesse (Russian empress, 1894–1917), 30, 72  
Alexis I (tsar, 1645–1676), 41  
Algeciras Conference (1906), 78  
Aliyev, Geidar (Soviet party leader), 400  
All-Russian Union of Soviet Writers, 243, 256–59  
    First Congress of, 244–45  
Allilueva, Nadezhda (Stalin’s second wife), 184  
Alpatov, Michael (art critic), 331  
Amalrik, Andrei (Soviet dissident writer), 364–65  
    predicts Sino-Soviet war, 423  
Amin, H. (Afghan Communist), 379, 381  
Andropov, Iuri V. (KGB chief, party first secretary), 356, 383, 419–20  
    career of, 399–400  
    economic policies of, 409–11  
    Andropov, Iuri V.—*Cont.*  
        foreign policies of, 413  
        as KGB head, 359  
        political policies of, 400–401  
        rise to power (1982), 396, 398–99  
Anglo-Russian Convention (1907), 79  
Anti-Comintern Pact (1936), 275  
“Anti-party group” (1957), 302–4, 313  
“April Theses” (1917), 145  
Arbatov, Iuri (Soviet scholar), 401, 414  
Arkhipov, Ivan (Soviet official), 413  
Armand, Inessa (friend of Lenin), 159, 163  
Association for Contemporary Music (ACM), 227  
“August Bloc” (1912), 72  
Austro-Russian agreements (1897, 1903), 37  
Averbakh, Leopold (Soviet writer), 243–44  
Azev, Avno (SR terrorist), 58, 72  
Baghdad Railway, 79–80  
Baibakov, N. K. (head of Gosplan), 366  
Bakst, Leon (designer), 99, 103  
Baķu Congress (1920), 271  
Bakunin, Michael (socialist), 46–48  
Balakirev, Mily (composer), 95–96  
Balkan Crisis (1875–1878), 27  
Balmont, Konstantin (symbolist poet), 94  
Balkan League (1912), 79  
Barbarossa, Operation (1941), 282  
Bariatinskii, Prince A. I. (fieldmarshal), 28  
Batu (Mongol khan), 10  
Belinskii, Vissarion G. (literary critic), 15, 42  
Belyi, Andrei (symbolist poet), 94  
Beneš, Eduard (Czechoslovak president), 293–94  
Benois, Alexander (designer), 99, 103

- Berdiaev, Nikolai (philosopher), 59
- Beria, Lavrenti (secret police chief), 284, 297–98, 300–301  
blamed for Soviet-Yugoslav Dispute, 311
- Berlin, Treaty of (1926), 270
- Berlin Blockade (1948), 295–96
- Bernstein, Eduard (German socialist), 54
- Bevin, Ernest (British foreign secretary), 294
- Bezobrazov, A. M. (Guards officer), 38
- Bialer, Severyn (American scholar), 322–23
- Bismarck, Otto von (German statesman), 28, 37
- Björkö, Treaty of (1905), 78
- Black, C. E. (American historian), 4, 125
- Blagoev, D. (Bulgarian socialist), 53
- Blok, Alexander (1880–1921, symbolist poet), 94  
poetry of, 228–29
- “Bloody Sunday” (January 1905), 65, 67, 123
- Bogdanov, A. A. (founder of Proletkult), 225
- Bolotnikov, Ivan (Cossack rebel), 41
- Bolshevik Military Organization, 141
- Bolshevik Party  
in Civil War, 153–61  
first steps in power, 149–53  
Lenin, Stalin and, 170–78, 181, 188  
NEP and 161–67  
in 1914, 72–73  
during 1917, 143–47  
in March 1917, 119  
seizure of power by, 141–43  
Stalin and, 167–69  
and tsarist collapse, 122–24  
why it won in 1917, 143–47  
during World War I, 117–18
- Bolshevik Revolution (November 1917), *see* November Revolution (1917)
- Bonaparte, Napoleon: 14, 19–20  
in *War and Peace*, 89
- Borisov-Musatov, V. (artist), 104
- Borodin, Alexander (1834–1887, chemist, composer), 95–96
- Borodin, Michael (Soviet agent), 271
- Bosnian Crisis (1908–1909), 79
- Brandt, Willy (West German leader), 377
- Breshko-Breshkovskaia, Catherine (socialist), 57
- Brest-Litovsk, Treaty of (1918), 152–53, 262–66
- Brezhnev, Leonid I. (1906–1982, general secretary of CPSU), 304, 352–92, 402, 410, 412–13  
achieves supremacy, 356–57  
the arts and, 336  
assumes power, 353–54  
declining health and power of, 395–96  
economy and society under, 365–74  
foreign and military policy of, 374–84  
intervention in Afghanistan and, 379–82  
intervention in Czechoslovakia and, 384–92  
nationalist dissent and, 359–63  
the party under, 357–58  
political dissent and, 359  
political maneuvers and career of, 354–55  
political system under, 355–59  
punishment of dissidents under, 363–65  
Soviet culture and, 344
- Brezhnev Doctrine, 376, 387
- Brinton, Crane (American historian), 145
- Briusov, Valeri (symbolist poet), 94
- Bukharin, Nicholas (1888–1938, Bolshevik leader), 153, 163, 166, 168–69, 182–83, 198–99  
trial of, 180
- Bukovskii, Vladimir (Soviet dissident), 363, 365
- Bulavin, Kondraty (Cossack rebel), 41
- Bulgakov, S. N. (socialist), 54
- Bulganan, Marshal Nikolai (1895–1975, Soviet premier), 301–2
- Bulgarian Crisis (1885–1887), 37
- Bullitt, William (American ambassador), 274
- Bulygin Duma (1905), 65–66
- Campbell, Robert W. (American economist) on Soviet economy, 427–28
- Carr, E. H. (English historian), 128
- Carter, Jimmy (U. S. president) on Afghan invasion (1979), 381
- Catherine II (empress, 1762–1796), 3, 8, 13–14, 41–42
- Central Committee (of CPSU), 140–44, 268, 308, 358, 379, 396, 398–99  
reverses Politburo decision (1957), 302
- Chagall, Marc (artist), 104
- Changkuofeng, Battle of (1938), 276

- Chebrikov, Victor (KGB head), 400
- Cheka (Extraordinary Commission, 1918), 151
- Chekhov, Anton (1860–1904, writer), 90–93
- Chepik, Nikolai (Soviet soldier-hero), 414
- Chernenko, Konstantin U. (1911–1985, Soviet party chief), 354, 396, 399–401  
 achieves power, 402  
 career of, 402–4  
 economic policies of, 411–12  
 illness and death, 404  
 philosophy of, 404
- Cherniaev, General M. G. (1828–1898), 28
- Chernov, Victor (1873–1952, socialist leader), 58, 118, 134, 151
- Chernyshevskii, Nikolai G. (socialist), 45–46, 52, 54, 87
- Chiang Kai-shek (Chinese nationalist leader), 271, 273, 276, 296
- Chicherin, George (1872–1936, foreign commissar), 263–64, 268–70, 273
- Chinese Eastern Railroad, Soviets sell to Japan, 275
- Chingis-khan (Temuchin) (Mongol leader), 10, 200
- Chkheidze, N. S. (Menshevik), 130, 133
- Chornovil, Viacheslav (Ukrainian dissident), 361–62
- Chronicle of Current Events*, 340
- Churchill, Winston (British statesman), 157, 266, 287–88  
 “Iron Curtain” speech of (1946), 299
- Civil War (1918–1921), 153–61
- Cohen, Stephen (American political scientist), 170  
 on Lenin, 177–78
- Collectivization, forced (1929–1936), 200–204, 213–19
- Cominform (Communist Information Bureau, 1947– ), 295–96
- Comintern (Communist International, 1919–1943), 193, 268–72  
 First Congress, 266–67  
 role in early Soviet foreign policy, 262  
 Seventh Congress, 274
- “Committees of the poor” (*kombedy*), 160
- Conquest, Robert (English scholar), 187
- Constituent Assembly (1918), 136, 138–41, 145–46, 151
- Constitution of 1918, 153–54, 164, 189
- Constitution of 1924, 189
- Constitution of 1936 (Stalin), 140–41, 181, 189–93, 212
- Constitutional Democrats, *see* Kadet Party
- Contemporary, The (Sovremennik)* (journal), 45
- Cossack Brigade (1879), 37
- Cossacks, 118–19, 137, 141, 156, 158
- Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), 308
- Council of People’s Commissars (re-named Council of Ministers, 1946), 140, 143, 154
- Crimean War (1853–1856), 19, 25–27, 88, 105, 194  
 economic policy and, 32–35
- Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), 314, 333, 375, 377
- Cui, Cesar (musician, 1835–1918), 95
- Curzon Line (1920), 287–88
- Custine, Marquis de (French observer), 15
- Daniel, Iuli (writer, pseud. N. Arzhak), 337–38  
 trial of, 338–39
- Daniels, Robert (American historian), 128, 146, 358
- Danilevskii, N. Ia. (Panslav writer), 27
- Dargomyzhskii, Alexander (composer), 95
- “Decree on Peace” (March 1917), 143, 152, 263–64
- De Gaulle, Charles (French president), 375
- Democratic Conference (September 1917), 138
- Denikin, Anton I. (general), 156, 158–59
- Derevenshchiki* (village writers), 345
- Deutsch, Lev (socialist), 49
- Deutscher, Isaac (English scholar), on collectivization, 201
- Diagilev, Serge (1872–1929, impresario), 99–100, 103
- “Dizzy with Success” (1930), 202, 214–15, 217
- Dobroliubov, N.A. (journalist), 45
- “Doctors’ Plot” (1953), 297, 300–301
- Dostoevsky, Feodor (1821–81, writer), 84–88
- “Dual Power” (1917), 128–32
- Dubček, Alexander (Czechoslovak leader), 376, 384–85

- Dudintsev, Vladimir (writer), 327
- Duma, State (Russian national legislature, 1906–1917), 67–73  
 March Revolution and, 119  
 Provisional Committee of, 120, 123, 125, 133, 136–37  
 in World War I, 108–9, 115–17
- Eberstadt, Nick (American scholar), 372
- Education  
 campaign against illiteracy, 236–37  
 Lunacharskii and, 223–25  
 Soviet policies, 211–12
- Egorychev, N. (party leader), 355
- Ehrenburg, Ilia (1891–1967, writer), 248, 291, 326, 335–36
- Eisenhower, Dwight (U.S. president), 312
- Eisenstein, Serge (filmmaker), 235–36
- Emancipation (1861), 43–44
- Encausse, Helene (French scholar), 361
- Engels, Friedrich (German writer), 50, 52
- Ezhov, N. I. (head of NKVD), 185–86, 188, 319
- Fadeev, General Rostislav A. (Panslav), 27
- Fedorchuk, Vitaly (KGB head), 396, 400
- Fefifer, George (American journalist), 371–72  
 on mood of USSR (1980), 423–27
- Feshback, M. (American scholar), 372
- Feuerbach, Ludwig (German philosopher), 51
- Figner, Vera (socialist), 49
- Filosofov, Dmitri, 103
- Filosofova, Ann (feminist), 36
- Fischer, George (American political scientist), 284
- Fischer, Louis (American journalist), 290
- Five Year Plans (1928– )  
 First, 181, 200, 204–8  
 Second, 208–9  
 Third, 209  
 Fourth, 240, 273  
 Fifth, 297  
 Sixth, 306  
 Ninth, Tenth, 366, 430  
 Eleventh, 384
- Fokine, Michael (choreographer), 99
- Food Program (1982), 409, 411
- Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871), 26
- Franco-Russian Alliance (1893), 34, 37, 274
- Franco-Soviet Pact (1935), 274–75
- Frederick II, “The Great” (king of Prussia), 13
- Frunze, General Michael, 233
- Fundamental Laws (1906), 68, 71–72
- Furtseva, Ekaterina (1910–1974, minister of education), 372
- Galanskov, Iuri (Soviet dissident), 339–40
- Gapon, Father George (1870–1906, priest), 65
- Geneva Conference (1954), 309
- Geneva Summit Conference (1955), 311
- Genoa Conference (1922), 269
- Gerschenkron, Alexander (American historian), 124–25
- Gershuni, A. (socialist), 57–58
- Gierek, Edvard (Polish leader), 377, 382–83
- Ginzburg, Alexander (dissident writer), 339–40, 365, 424
- Gippius, Zinaida (symbolist writer), 94
- Girs, N. K. (Russian foreign minister), 37
- Glazunov, Alexander E. (1865–1936, composer), 98
- Glinka, Michael (composer), 95
- Gogol, Nikolai V. (1809–1852, writer), 15, 82, 86
- “Going to the People” (1874), 50
- Golan, Galia (Israeli scholar) on Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, 390–91
- Goldman, Marshall (American scholar), 408
- Golitsyn, N. D. (prince), 116
- Golovachev, A. A. (gentry leader), 43
- Gomulka, Wladyslaw (Polish Communist leader), 296, 311, 377
- Goncharova, N. (artist), 104
- Gorbachev, Mikhail S. (1931– ), Soviet party chief, 350  
 advocates economic decentralization, 410–11  
 aids Andropov’s reform moves, 401  
 challenges Chernenko, 412  
 new leadership of, 422  
 political honeymoon of, 406–7  
 prepares for succession, 404  
 role under Chernenko, 402  
 on Soviet socioeconomic development, 429



- Gorbachev, Mikhail S.—*Cont.*  
 speech of March 1985 on aims, 428  
 succeeds to power, 405  
 supports reformers, 411  
 talks with foreign leaders, 406
- Gorchakov, Alexander M. (1797–1883,  
 foreign minister), 26–27, 269
- Goremykin, Ivan L. (1839–1917, pre-  
 mier), 70, 117
- Gorkii, Maxim (born A. M. Peshkov)  
 (1868–1936, writer), 92–94, 232, 245
- Gosplan (State Planning Commission),  
 204, 306, 366, 411
- Gottwald, Klement (Czechoslovak Com-  
 munist leader), 294
- Grand Alliance (1941–1945), 285
- Great Depression (1929–33), 205, 272
- Great Purge (1936–1938), 181, 209, 212,  
 240, 301, 316–20  
 and writers, 247, 253
- Grechko, Marshal Andrei A. (1903–76),  
 356
- Grigorenko, General Peter (dissident),  
 363
- Grishin, V. V. (1914– , party leader),  
 356
- Gromyko, Andrei A. (1909– , Soviet  
 foreign minister, president), 356,  
 379, 405–6
- Guchkov, A. I. (1862–1936, war minister,  
 1917), 69, 120, 129, 132, 134
- Guderian, General Heinz, 282
- Gulag Archipelago, The*, see Solzhenitsyn,  
 Aleksandr I.
- Gumilev, Nicholas (1886–1921, poet), 94
- Haimson, Leopold (American historian),  
 73, 121, 123–24
- Hartvig, N. G. (Russian consul in Bel-  
 grade), 79
- Hegel, G. F. (German philosopher),  
 50–51
- Herzen, Alexander (socialist), 42, 44–45,  
 47, 344
- History of the USSR* (1967), on collectiviza-  
 tion, 215–17
- Hitler, Adolf (Nazi leader), 19, 204,  
 273–75, 277–78, 282, 285, 289, 298,  
 319
- Hoffman, General Max von, 265
- Hoffmann, E. T. A. (German writer), 226
- Hötzendorf, Conrad von (Austrian gen-  
 eral), 79
- Hughes, John (English capitalist), 33
- Human Rights Movement (1970– ),  
 340
- Hyland, William (American scholar, 420
- Iagoda, Henrikh (1891–1938, NKVD  
 chief), 184  
 trial of, 186
- Ianushkevich, General N. N. (tsarist chief  
 of staff), 107
- Ignatiev, N. P. (ambassador to Constanti-  
 nople), 27
- Ilyichev, Leonid (Soviet ideologist),  
 334–36
- Ippolitov-Ivanov, M. M. (1859–1936,  
 composer), 98
- “Iron Curtain” speech (1946), 294
- Ishutin, Nicholas (socialist), 46
- Iskander, Fasil (Georgian writer), 346–47
- Iskra (The Spark)* (newspaper), 55–57
- “Itinerants,” 101, 223
- Iudenich, General N. N. (White leader),  
 158
- Ivan III, “the Great” (grand prince of  
 Moscow, 1462–1505), 11
- Ivan IV, “the Terrible” (tsar, 1533–84),  
 7–8, 11, 102,  
 and Stalin, 181, 194
- Ivanov, Alexander (painter) opposes So-  
 viet invasion of Czechoslovakia  
 (1968), 388–89
- Ivanov, Viacheslav (symbolist writer), 94
- Ivanov-Razumnik (Populist historian), 42
- Izvol'skii, Alexander P. (Russian foreign  
 minister), 78–79
- Jaruzelski, Marshal Wojciech (Polish  
 \* leader), 383, 410, 414
- Jews, 31–32, 69, 160–61, 291  
 purges and, 187  
 emigration of, 377
- Kadar, Janos (Hungarian Communist  
 leader), 311, 399
- Kadet Party (KD), 69–70, 117, 125, 129,  
 134–35, 138, 145, 151, 158–59
- Kaganovich, Lazar (1893– , Commis-  
 sar of Heavy Industry), 184, 189,  
 218, 291, 302
- KAL Flight 007 (1983), 415–20
- Kalinin, Mikhail (Soviet president), 153,  
 184