

# Animal farm: its parallels to european history

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Animal Farm is not just a novel for entertainment; it is a historical satire: a satire on European History. George Orwell was concerned with the spread of communism throughout Europe and the world and the oppression that took place under it. He hoped to bring awareness to the problem, and did so with his novel, Animal Farm. He wrote Animal Farm to parallel the events in European history concerning the Bolshevik Revolution and the communists' rise to power. He used a wide variety of characters, scenes, and objects in the novel to represent important peoples, places, and events that were pivotal to the history of the time. In Animal Farm, Mr. Jones represents the last Czar of Russia, Czar Nicholas II (Sparknotes). Mr. Jones repeatedly abuses and mistreats his animals, through acts of whippings, lack of adequate food, and harsh labor (Orwell). After a night in which he forgets to feed his animals, the animals break into food supply and begin to feed themselves. Jones and his men attempt to stop the animals but are chased off and away from the farm (Orwell). Shortly before the animals revolt, Mr. Jones and his men go "rabbitting" in which they try to rid the farm of rabbits that are destroying the crops. Mr. Jones and his men's attempt at "rabbitting" parallels Czar Nicholas II's attempt to maintain law and order in Russia before the Bolshevik Revolution, as the rabbits of the farm represent the lower social classes of Russia, who begin to start waves of violence throughout the cities before the revolution (Newspeak). The animal's revolt against Mr. Jones parallels the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, in which the people of Russia ousted Czar Nicholas II after years of oppression and poverty, paralleling the lack of food and harsh punishments for the animals. The animals of Animal Farm represent the people of Russia, but individual

pigs mirror key people in the history of Russia. In the beginning, the pigs represent the Intelligentsia, the smartest people in Russia to lead the country in the beginning of the Bolshevik revolution, because the pigs are the smartest animals on the farm after the revolt and they lead the farm right after the revolt. Afterwards the pigs are voted to be the leaders due to their smarts, a precise parallel to the Intelligentsia (Sparknotes). Old Major is an elderly pig on the farm that sees a better future for the animals of the farm. He sees a farm for animals to be equal and lead peaceful lives, without the interference of humans; he calls it Animalism. He states that the only way for the animals to achieve this, is through a revolution (Orwell). Old Major is a representation of Karl Marx, the creator of Socialism. Karl Marx's socialism hoped to create a better world for its followers. Marx's followers were workers, as he believed they should rule the people. He believed the only way to achieve this was through a revolution of some kind. Both Karl Marx's socialism and Old Major's Animalism wanted to create a better world for its followers. They both believed the only way to achieve their goals was through a revolution, and they both believed the workers should rule (workers in Animalism being the animals) (Sparknotes). Another pig that represents a famous historical: Napoleon is the pig that succeeds to continue Old Major's Animalism. He, at first, upholds all of Old Major's rules about Animalism, but as the story moves on, he begins to abuse his power by assuming all leadership, removing all opposition and then installing fear in all the animals through his force of dogs, who will attack anyone that doesn't follow his rules. He twists Old Major's rules to suit his needs, such as when he twists the rule of no animals were to drink alcohol, to no animals were to

alcohol in excess (Orwell). These events directly parallel the Russian leader, Joseph Stalin. Like Napoleon's twist of Animalism, Stalin twisted Socialism into his own, to create communism, having complete control of Russia. Napoleon's guard dogs represent Stalin's KGB, who were a secret police force that eliminated all of Stalin's opposition through terror and brutality (Lamant). Napoleon, later on in the novel, begins to build a windmill to increase production of the crops. This plan parallels Stalin's Five Year Plan to revitalize Russia's industry and agriculture. Along with Napoleon in the beginning of the novel, Snowball is a pig that shares leadership over Animal Farm. He leads the animals in the battle of Cowshed against neighboring farmers, earning him respect and honor. He stresses an importance on industry for the farm, as opposed to Napoleon's stress of agriculture. This conflict leads to a bitter fight over the building of a windmill, which leads to Napoleon having his dogs chase Snowball off of the farm. Snowball is a representation of Leon Trotsky. After Lenin's death, Russia's power was asserted to two people, Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin, a parallel to Snowball's and Napoleon's share of power in the beginning. Trotsky was very popular with the people after he led the Red Army to victory against Western Capitalist Country. This is a parallel to Snowball's victory at the battle of Cowshed (Rodden 16). Trotsky envisioned Russia under an industrial economy, while Stalin envisioned agriculture (Rodden 16). The two became enemies and in 1927, and Stalin defeated Trotsky as the Communist Party Congress election. He persuaded followers to yell at Trotsky, who was attempting a speech, to prevent Trotsky from presenting it. This event represents Napoleon's and Snowball's disagreements at meeting on how to

move forward. A disagreement leading to Napoleon peeing on Snowball's drawn-out plans for a windmill. Stalin had Trotsky flee from Russia when he had secret police KGB agents track him down and kill him in Mexico City in 1940. The event mirrors to the banishment of Snowball off the farm by Napoleon's guard dogs. Finally, the last pig, Squealer promotes Napoleon and his ideas. He carries out many of Napoleon's plans, such as changing and manipulating the commandments (Lamant). He is an avid propagandist for Napoleon (Sparknotes). Squealer very much represents the propagandists of Stalin's time who supported and promoted him, but he could be a direct to parallel to the communist newspaper Pravda, which highly promoted Stalin (Sparknotes). Now unlike the pigs, the horses aren't as smart, but they do have their parallels. Boxer and Clover represent the ideal workers of Russia. They are hard working, loyal, and easily manipulated (Sparknotes). Boxer is repeatedly heard saying, " I will work harder," an ideal working habit valued by Napoleon and the Communist powers in Russia. Like the workers in Russia, Boxer is taken advantage of and eventually killed for money. The workers are worked for no money and are treated with no respect (Sparknotes). Mollie, a horse, is the opposite of Boxer and Clover, she represents the Bourgeoisie. Mollie loves wearing ribbons and eating sugar cubes given to her by humans. She eventually leaves the farm after another farmer gives her sugar cubes to eat. The Bourgeoisie were the extreme upper class of Russia before the Bolshevik revolution. After the Bolsheviks took power, they fled the country in order to keep their luxuries, represented by the ribbons and sugar cubes. Moses, the raven, is a parallel to the Eastern Orthodox Church (Rodden 17). Throughout the novel, Moses

preaches about Sugarcandy Mountain, an afterlife for animals to go to when they die. He does this much to the annoyance of Napoleon, who forces him to flee, but is later allowed to return. The Orthodox Church is first outlawed in Russia after Stalin took power. He wanted to eliminate any opposition to workers zeal for work, however the church is allowed back after public pressure. During Mr. Jones reign, he fed Moses beer-soaked bread, a representation of the Czar's bribery of the Orthodox Church (Rodden 17). Another type of bird, the hens of the farm represent peasant farmers in Ukraine at the time of the Revolution (Newspeak). Napoleon demanded that the hens surrender their eggs for the farm; the hens didn't feel it necessary and smashed their eggs in protest. So in retaliation, Napoleon starved them into submission. The event mirrors Stalin's starvation of Ukrainian farmers as punishment for their slaughtering of livestock in protest of their forced entry into a collective, a farm regulated by the government (Newspeak). The story in Animal Farm contains many men that live outside of the farm in which the story takes place. These men are a direct parallel to significant people in European history. Mr. Frederick is one of these men. He is a nearby farmer who forms a trade agreement with Napoleon, in which he agrees to trade goods of his farm in return for goods from Animal Farm. However later in the novel, Mr. Frederick betrays Animal Farm, and is seen starving his cows to death (Sparknotes). Mr. Frederick in the novel represents Adolf Hitler. Adolf Hitler signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact with Stalin that forbade neither Germany nor Russia from invading the other country, however Hitler betrayed Stalin and invaded Russia in 1941 (Newspeak). This event parallels Mr. Frederick's early peaceful relationship with Animal Farm and then his betrayal to it. The

starving of his cows represents the Holocaust of the Jews, as the cows were inhumanely killed off for no purposeful reason, like the Jews had been under Hitler's command (Newspeak). Mr. Whymper is another man who is a parallel to people in history; He is a parallel to capitalists who did business in Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution (Newspeak). In the novel, Whymper is hired to represent Animal Farm in human society, including produce markets. The animals of the farm are shocked at first to hear the farm doing business with a human, as they are perceived as enemies. Mr. Whymper parallels the capitalists in Russia because the people of Russia were also appalled to find the country doing trade with what were their perceived enemies, the capitalists (Sparknotes). The farmhouse Mr. Jones lived in represents the Kremlin (Animal Farm 3). In the book after the revolution, the animals wanted to preserve the house as a museum to show how luxurious the humans led their lives as opposed to animals. However as Napoleon gained power he began to reside in the house, just as Stalin began to reside in the Kremlin even after it was made into a museum to show how the Czar's lived in opulence (Sparknotes). After and during the animals' revolution, the animals create two things to express their pride in and inspire the revolution: a flag and a song named "Beasts of England." The flag the animals' create was designed to represent the animals and their achievement. The flag depicts a white hoof and horn, two symbols of working animals on the farm, on a green background. It represents the animals' unity and pride in being ruled by themselves, not humans. The flag mirrors the Soviet flag of the time which portrayed a hammer and sickle, two symbols of the working class in Russia, on a red background. The Russian flag depicted the hammer and

sickle to show that the former aristocratic Czars weren't ruling, but the every day working man. Both flags represent a common bond directed toward the end of past leaderships that abused their workers. "Beasts of England" is the song created by Old Major to inspire the animals to begin a revolution against human leadership. It is noteworthy that "Beasts of England" parallels the Russian Socialist Anthem "The Internationale" (The Internationale). A Wikipedia article states, "The first line (In "Beasts of England"), 'Beasts of England, beasts of Ireland', shows the international nature of 'animalism', just as "The Internationale" included the line 'unites the human race'. It speaks of a future utopia free from human control, and a time of plenty. In "The Internationale" this is . . . mentioned ('And give to all a happier lot')" (Beasts of England). In the beginning, Napoleon comes up with a notion he calls Animalism. He envisions a world without human contact to animals; he views Animalism as the best way for animals to live. Animalism includes rules such as no owners, no rich or poor, workers have a good life, all animals are equal to all other animals, and everyone owns the farm equally. Animalism is a parallel to Communism in Russia. Communism stresses no owners, no rich or poor, all people are equal, government owns everything, and the people own the government (Lamont). Many events in Animal Farm parallel significant events in Russian History. The revolt of the animals against Mr. Jones in the beginning of the novel is one of these parallels as it is a representation of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. The animals in the Animal Farm hadn't been fed in a day and a half after Mr. Jones had arrived home at Manor Farm (later changed to Animal Farm) drunk and incapable of feeding his livestock. After struggling with their hunger for



so long the animals break into the feeding stock, and began to feed themselves. Mr. Jones and his men tried to restrain them, but the animals broke free and charged all of the men off of the farm, passing the farm over to the animals (Gradesaver). The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 starts off much like the animals' revolution. The farmers of Russia had been moving into the major cities after crop failure and inflation had caused them to go hungry and penniless. They moved into the cities in search of jobs, but found just the same problem—hunger. The problem finally escalated into a riot on February 23, 1927 when people started to shout in the streets " We want bread! Down with autocracy!. . ." 160, 000 soldiers under the Czar had been deployed to put down the riot, but couldn't suppress it. The riot evolved into a revolution as the whole country was eventually rioting, the Czar was forced from rule, and the people were no longer under his rule (Dunn 51). The poor, hungry farmers represent the animals in Animal Farm that forced their way into the food supply. The farmers revolt in history, parallels the animals revolt in that they both were spurred by lack of food, and they both toppled the rulers that lorded over them. Another significant event in history that is paralleled in Animal Farm is the backlash of support toward the spread of communism. In the book, farmers attack Animal Farm (known as the Battle of Cowshed) in hopes of stopping the revolts on their farms that spurred from the revolt of Animal Farm. The revolts on their farms were started by the farms' animals after they heard about Animal Farm's revolt from the pigeons sent out by Snowball. The spread of Animalism, by Snowball, is the direct cause of these revolts that eventually cause the Battle of Cowshed. In Europe many countries dealt with revolts for communism by " weeding out"

communists after Leon Trotsky led an international movement in support of communism. They either killed or banished these people, much like what the farmers tried to do to animals and Animal Farm (Sparknotes). The next events paralleled in Animal Farm are the purge trials from the late 1930's in which old Bolsheviks were brought forth before trial, found guilty of treason, and killed. All of the evidence in the trials had been fabricated by the secret police and all confessions were made under intensive pressure of torture. These trials successfully eliminated all opponents and critics of Stalin (Purge Trials). In the book, animals are brought forth to trial in front of Napoleon and his guard dogs. Napoleon forces them to tell false stories of helping out Napoleon's enemy, Snowball, and then has his guard dogs rip out their throats (Sparknotes). The events parallel each other in that they both have leaders who force opponents and/or critics to testify to false confessions to have them killed and eliminate any opponents. Finally the last event to be paralleled in Animal Farm is the Tehran Conference in 1943. The Tehran conference is a meeting of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin at Tehran, Iran. The conference was held to strengthen bonds between the three allied nations in World War II, the United States, Great Britain, and the U. S. S. R. In the novel, the Tehran Conference is mirrored by a card game between Napoleon, Mr. Pilkington, and other farmers. The point of the card game is to show a hand of friendship Animal Farm is lending to the farmers, and to show how productive Animal Farm has become. Both the Tehran Conference and the card game are planned to better promote relations between the members of each group (Tehran Conference). Animal Farm was written to bring attention

to the Bolshevik Revolution and the communist's rise to power. The novel does this through the use of parallels and representations of historical places, peoples, and objects into characters or objects in the novel. Such examples being Mr. Jones being a parallel to Czar Nicholas II due to his harsh treatment of his underlings, and the eventual ousting of him by the same underlings, a strong parallel to Czar Nicholas II. Or Manor Farm being a representation of Russia under the Czar, as the farm is only known as Manor Farm when Mr. Jones is the leader of it, since Mr. Jones is a representation of Czar Nicholas II. It then turns into a representation of the Soviet Union after Napoleon takes over and transforms the farm into Animal Farm. It is these examples and many others that makes Animal Farm a historical satire on European history. Works Cited Animal Farm. 1 Dec 2006 Newspeak Dictionary. 10 Jan. 2006 . Animal Farm. Sparknotes. 7 Dec. 2006 Beasts of England. Wikipedia. 22 Feb. 2007 Dunn, John. The Russian Revolution. San Diego: Lucent Books, 1994. Kuhn, Rick. 20 Apr. 2006 The Internationale. 22 Feb. 2007 < [http://www. anu. edu. au/polsci/marx/int/internationale. html](http://www.anu.edu.au/polsci/marx/int/internationale.html)> Lamant, George. Animal Farm - Comparison of Characters to the Russian Revolution. 7 Dec. Orwell, George. Animal Farm. New York: Penguin Books Ltd., 1996. " Purge Trials." Encyclopedia Britannica. 2007. Brittanica Concise Encyclopedia. 22 Feb. 2007 Rodden, John. Understanding Animal Farm. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999. Tehran Conference. Infoplease. 22 Feb. 2007