

Daly City Library & Recreation Services
Active Adult/Senior Services
presents



Current Events with Frank Damon

Doelger Senior Center has been fortunate to have Frank Damon leading both our Current Events and History discussion groups for the last 6 years. During this time of physical distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Frank is sharing his current events discussion topics online. Starting on Monday, January 4, 2021 at 1:30 pm Frank will offer Current Events discussion groups each Monday on ZOOM.

Daly City Active Adult/Senior Services invites you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Current Events with Frank Damon

Time: 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm every Monday

Join Zoom meeting with following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87222786510?pwd=d0VucFhGYzhMMXVhSUNJTmdFWDNwdz09>

Meeting ID: 872 2278 6510

Passcode: 724368

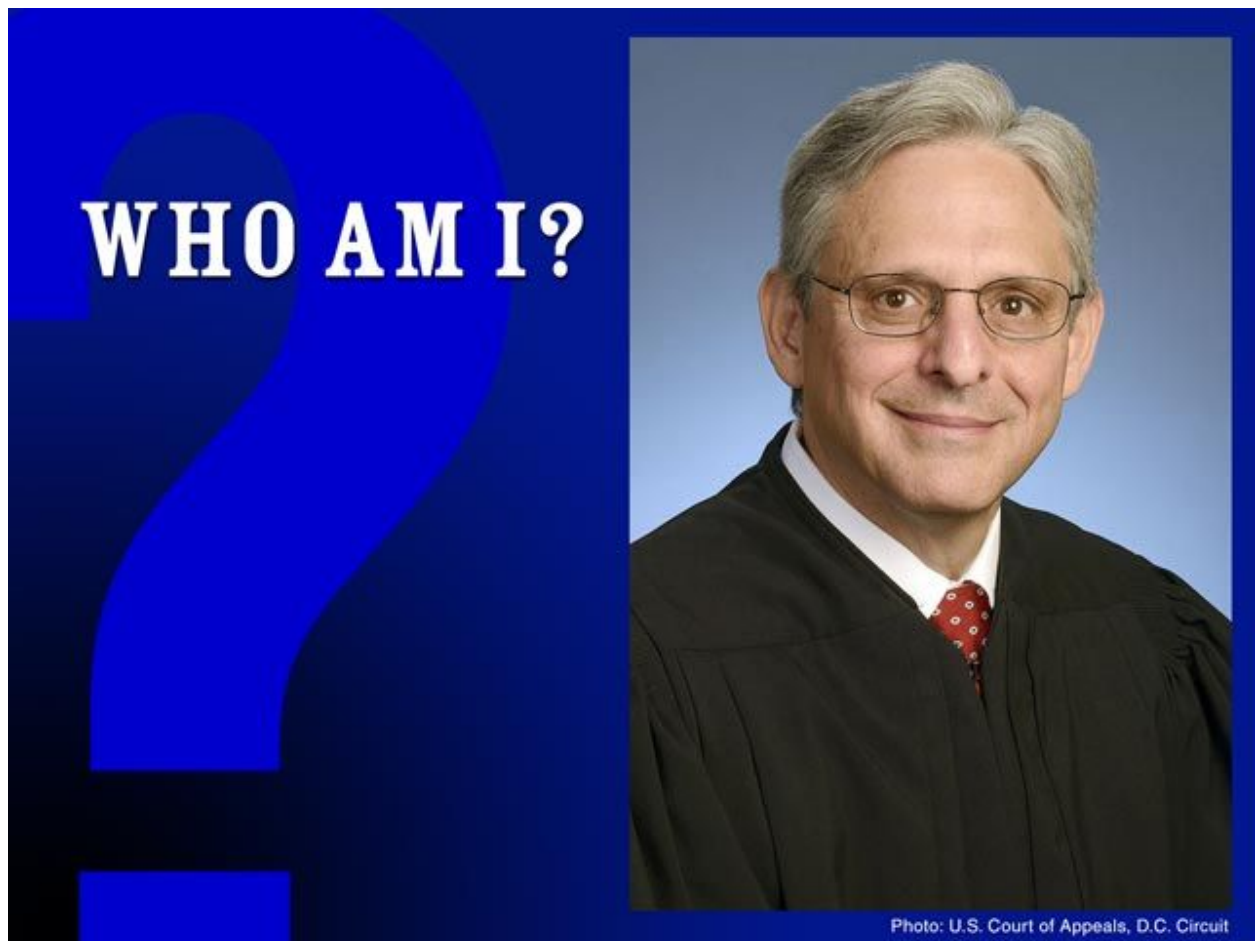
Frank received his BA degree from the University of San Francisco with a dual major in Political Science and American History. He also earned his MA in Political Science and teaching credentials at USF. Over the course of his career, Frank taught in the San Mateo Union High School District and at Marin Catholic High School, Terra Nova High School, Golden Gate University, College of San Mateo, Skyline College and Canada College.

If you are interested in joining *Current Events with Frank Damon*, please go to www.dalycityseniors.org/current-events or contact Frank directly at frankdamon@my.smccd.edu.

Man in the News

He has been the chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit since 1995. Born in Chicago in 1952, He attended Harvard and Harvard Law School. In 1989, he became a federal prosecutor. In this role, he oversaw the Oklahoma City bombing and the Unabomber case. He came to national prominence in 2016, when President Obama nominated him for the Supreme Court. But Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell refused to act on his nomination. The seat was eventually filled by Trump nominee Neil Gorsuch.

Earlier this month, President-elect Biden announced that he would be Biden's pick for U.S. attorney general. This means he will lead the U.S. Department of Justice, and act as the chief lawyer for the federal government.



Who am I? (Merrick Garland.)

Insurrection at the U.S. Capitol

Ever since the Associated Press called the 2020 election for Joe Biden, Donald Trump has refused to accept that he lost. He and his staff launched more than 60 lawsuits in many different states, only to lose almost all of them. Trump encouraged supporters to meet in Washington, D.C., on January 6, 2021, for a rally called “Save America.” What was happening at the U.S. Capitol on that day? (It was the day Congress was meeting to confirm Biden’s Electoral College win.)

At this rally, Trump told a massive crowd of his supporters that the presidential election had been stolen from him, and that he hoped Vice President Mike Pence had the “courage” to reject the results. Pence had already said that he could not do that. In fact, the Congressional confirmation is a purely ceremonial act since the Electoral College votes had already been certified. The crowd started moving towards the U.S. Capitol building before the end of Trump’s speech. They pushed aside the small Capitol Police force outside the building, forcing their way in by breaking doors and windows. This turned the riot into an insurrection. What is an insurrection? (A violent uprising against the government.) Some of them chanted “Hang Mike Pence!” Rioters eventually found the room where lawmakers had been, and broke into several congressional offices. But by that time, Pence and the lawmakers had been removed to a secure location, and a staff member grabbed all the Electoral College ballots.

Insurrection at the U.S. Capitol

Map showing the Eastern United States with labels for Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, and Washington D.C. A red dot is placed on Washington D.C.

Rioters on January 6, 2021

Photo: Tyler Marbler, CCA-SA-Lic. 2.0

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump
JANUARY SIXTH, SEE YOU IN DC!
2:06 PM · Dec 30, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone
33.3K Retweets 3.2K Quote Tweets 146.1K Likes

"We are going to walk down to the Capitol.... You will never take back our country with weakness."

—Donald Trump at the "Save America" rally

Capitol Police risked their lives to move lawmakers into secure rooms. How do you think lawmakers felt when this was happening? Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick was killed when an insurrectionist hit him in the head with a fire extinguisher, and many officers suffered injuries. A rioter named Ashli Babbitt was shot dead by police while climbing through a broken window into a Senate chamber. In addition, three rioters died of medical emergencies during the mayhem. Do you think these tragic events could have been avoided?

Soon members of the D.C. police arrived at the Capitol, helping Capitol police to get all the insurrectionists out of the building as D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser called for a city-wide curfew. This allowed senators and representatives to come out of hiding and continue the electoral ballot count.

Before the counting began, Vice President Pence made the statement you see below. What is the main takeaway from his statement? Pence clearly wanted to assure Congress and the nation, that the peoples' representatives would not be deterred by those who try to violently stop their work, nor would they be prevented from defending the U.S. Constitution. Eight senators and 139 House members still objected to the electoral counts of certain states, but that didn't change the results. The count was finally completed at 3:27 a.m. on January 7th, and Vice President Pence confirmed that Joe Biden will be the next president of the United States.

"To those who wreaked havoc in our Capitol today, you did not win. Violence never wins. Freedom wins. And this is still the people's house.... Even in the wake of unprecedented violence and vandalism at this Capitol, the elected representatives of the people of the United States have assembled again on the very same day to support and defend the Constitution of the United States.

So may God bless the lost, the injured and the heroes forged on this day. May God bless all who serve here and those who protect this place. And may god bless the United States of America.

Let's get back to work."

— Vice President Mike Pence

Photo: Gage Skidmore, CCA-SA-Lic. 2.0



Riot police enforcing barrier around Capitol



Photo: Tyler Merbler, CCA-SA-Lic. 2.0

A lot happened in the week following the insurrection. Many members of Congress blamed Pres. Trump's rhetoric for the riot, vowing to remove him from office. Do the American people want this as well? (According to polls, 56 percent support this.)

The House of Representatives went ahead with a motion to impeach the president for a second time, on a single charge: "incitement of insurrection." Do you agree or disagree with the statement here from the single article of impeachment?

However, the president is unlikely to be found guilty in a Senate trial. Why not? (It would take a two thirds vote to find the president guilty and remove him.) It is also unlikely that a trial could be held before the president's term ends.

Other lawmakers wanted to invoke the 25th Amendment, which allows for the president's removal if the vice president and a simple majority of the Cabinet believe he can no longer fulfill his duties. However, Vice President Pence declined this option. The security of the U.S. Capitol was also questioned in light of the insurrection. The head of the Capitol Police as well as both congressional sergeants-at-arms resigned. In addition, several Cabinet members and White House staff members resigned. Why do you think they did this? And, as of last week, nearly 100 rioters, identified from their social media profiles and images on film, had already been arrested and charged with felonies. More arrests are planned.

The aftermath:

- A second impeachment for Trump
- Security questions
- Cabinet resignations
- Many rioters arrested
- Transition finally begins



"President Trump gravely endangered the security of the United States and its institutions of government."

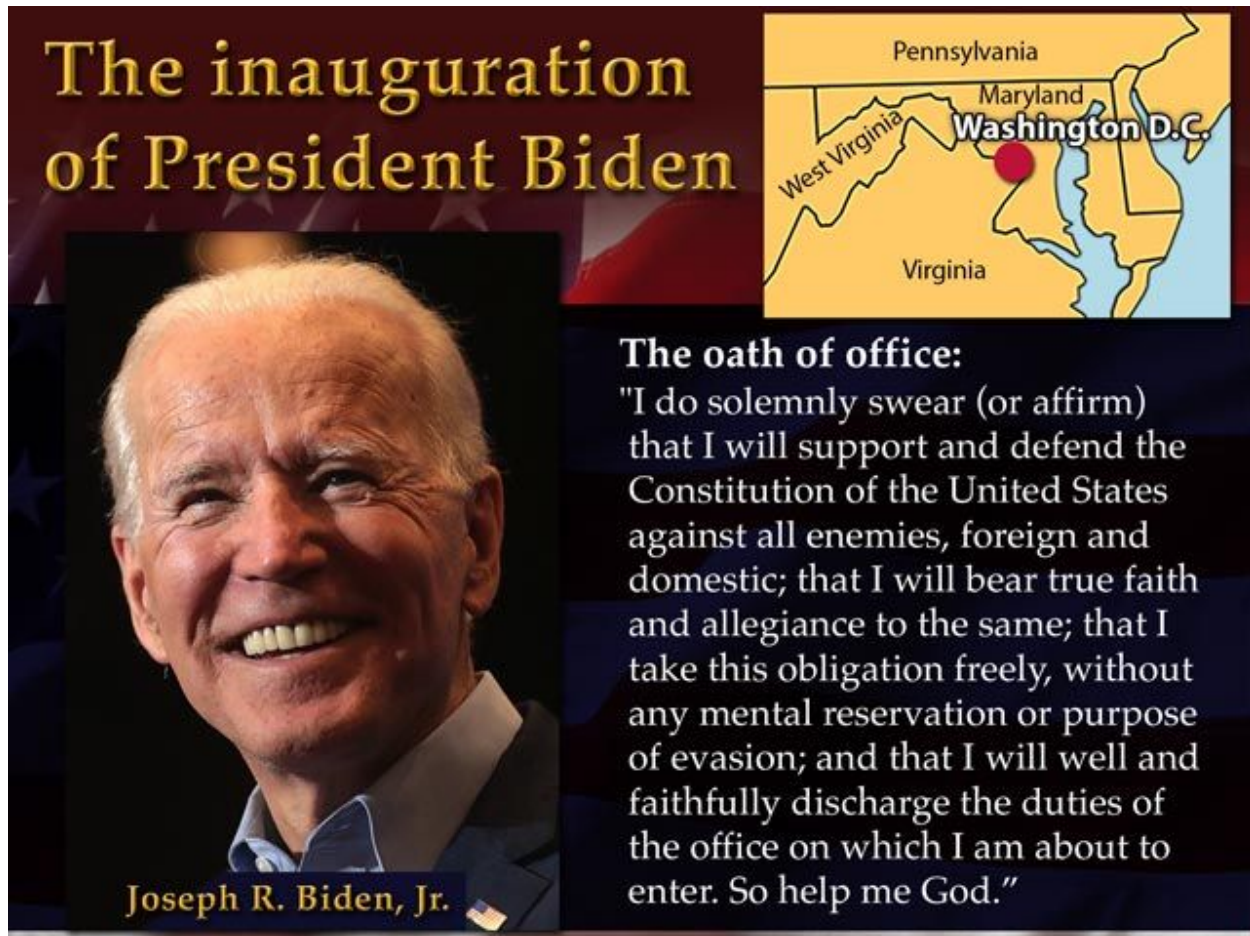
—From article of impeachment against Pres. Trump

The inauguration of President Biden


On Wednesday, January 20th, Joseph Biden, Jr., will be inaugurated as the 46th president of the United States. Where does this ceremony take place? (At the west front of the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.) Part of the tradition of the day is that the outgoing president escorts the new president to the Capitol. But that is not happening this year. Why not? (Pres. Trump said he will not attend the inauguration.) However, Vice President Mike Pence will be there.

Each president's term starts at noon Eastern Time on January 20th, according to the 20th Amendment. But the president elect must take the oath of office before assuming duties. The Chief Justice of the U.S., John Roberts, will ask Biden to repeat the words shown below. What does this oath ask of the incoming president? (To obey and defend the Constitution.) Chief Justice Roberts will also swear in Kamala Harris as vice president. Biden will then give his inaugural speech, which will be broadcast all over the world.


Usually, hundreds of thousands of people would be attending the inauguration ceremony. This year, however, the COVID-19 pandemic means that crowds will be severely limited. What other considerations might surround this year's inauguration? (Fears that Trump supporters might try to disrupt the ceremony.) Officials will be beefing up security to prevent this. And the traditional parade down Pennsylvania Avenue will be largely focused on its online presence.



The inauguration of President Biden



Joseph R. Biden, Jr.



The oath of office:
"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God."

The position of president carries some weighty responsibilities with it. For example, the president is the official commander-in chief of the U.S. military. Do you agree with this idea? The president also heads the executive branch of the federal government. What does this mean? (This branch is in charge of enforcing federal laws — or deciding how they are enforced.) The president does not get to make the laws. Which branch does this? (The legislative branch.) But when Congress passes a new law, the president can either sign it or veto it. What happens when a law is vetoed? (It goes back to Congress, which can pass it with a two thirds majority in both houses.) This is part of the Constitution's system of checks and balances. What is the third branch of government? (The judicial branch, headed by the Supreme Court.)

President Biden will also have the power to appoint people to more than 6,000 federal positions. He has already chosen people for most of his Cabinet positions. The group of advisers that head each of the federal departments. But he will also have to appoint the heads of government agencies, White House staff, federal judges, and so on. Many of these people must be approved by a majority of the Senate before they can serve. And then there is the power of executive clemency. How would you define this? (The ability to pardon or commute the sentences of people convicted of federal crimes.) Does the presidency carry too much power? Why or why not?

What are the powers and duties of the president?

- Commander-in-chief of armed forces
- Heads executive branch of federal government
- Signs (or vetoes) legislation
- Nominates Cabinet members, Supreme Court justices
- Can grant executive clemency

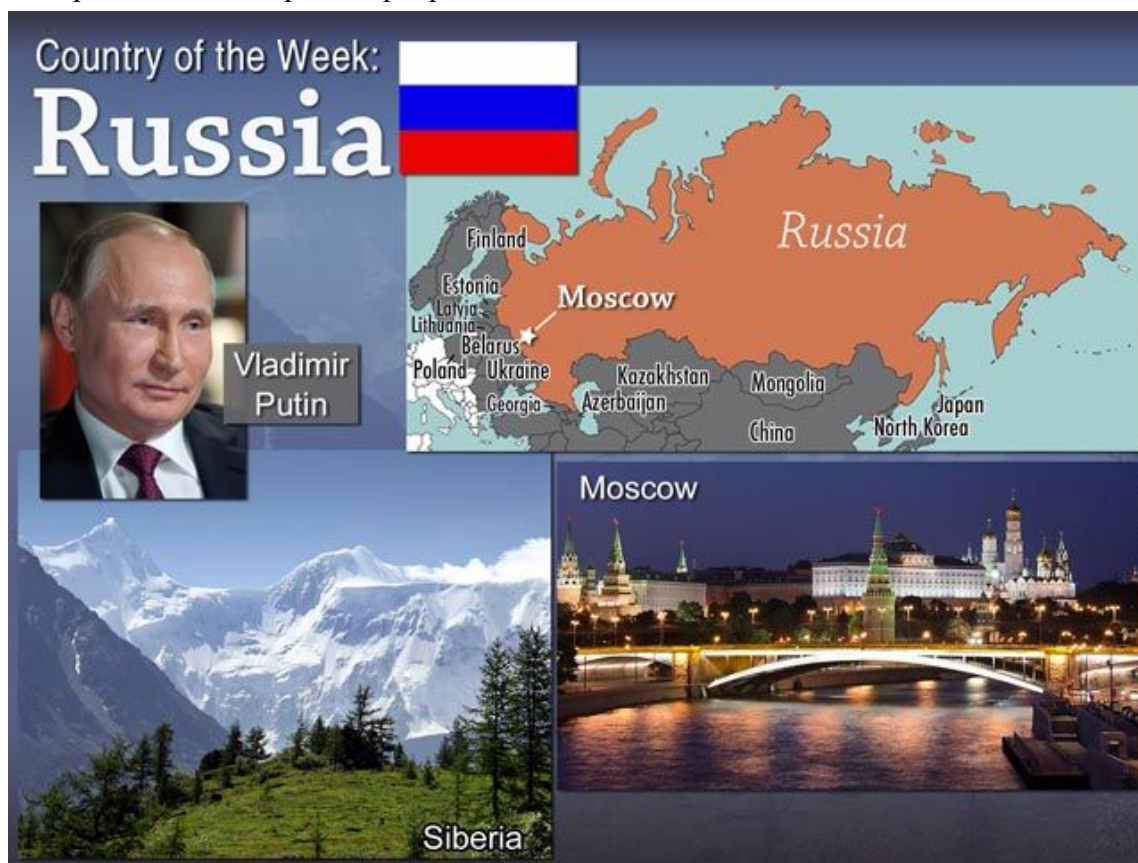


Country of the Week: Russia

Russia is located within two continents. What are they? (Europe and Asia.) It is the largest country in the world by area and the 9th largest by population. Nearly 147 million people live in Russia. The majority of the population lives on the European side of the country. The sparsely populated Asian side is known as Siberia.

Siberia makes up about 9 percent of the Earth's total land area, and it is known for its frigid temperatures and its natural beauty. Many parts of Siberia get very little annual rainfall, but the region still has large forests that support many different species of animals. The uppermost fringe of Russia is tundra. What is tundra? (An inhospitable biome characterized by permanently frozen soil.) Moscow is the largest city in Russia as well as the country's capital. Moscow has more than 12 million inhabitants, making it the most populous city in Europe. This city is the main cultural and economic hub of the country, and many of Russia's largest companies are headquartered there. Russia's economy is mostly dependent on the sale of natural resources such as oil, timber, and minerals, which together make up about 80 percent of the country's total exports. It is the world's second largest producer of oil after Saudi Arabia, and the second largest producer of gold after China.

The president of Russia is Vladimir Putin. What do you know about him? Putin has been in power in Russia, either as president or prime minister, since 2000. He is often seen as one of the most powerful and important people in the world.



Siberia was conquered and integrated into Russia during the 1600s. In 1721 Tsar Peter the Great proclaimed his country the Russian Empire. Peter the Great was one of the most important figures in Russian history, as his modernizing reforms turned Russia into a major European power. He also founded the city of Saint Petersburg, the second-largest city in Russia today. The Russian Empire lasted until 1917, when it was overthrown by the Russian Revolution. What do you know about the Russian Revolution? This revolution was led by Vladimir Lenin, and it transformed Russia and several surrounding countries into the Soviet Union.

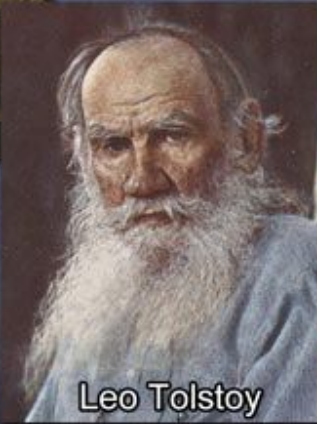
The Soviet Union was a communist country. What is communism? (An ideology that advocates for the workers to be in control of their workplaces and for common ownership of all land and property with strong governmental control.)

The Soviet Union dissolved in 1991. Russia has produced many great composers, scientists, and dancers, but it is perhaps best-known for its writers. Novels and poetry are an important part of Russian culture. One of the most well known Russian writers is Leo Tolstoy. Can you name any of his novels? (“War and Peace,” “Anna Karenina,” and more.) Tolstoy is widely considered one of the greatest writers who ever lived. Other famous Russian writers include Anton Chekhov and Alexander Pushkin. Many great works of architecture have been constructed in Russia, with the most famous building perhaps being Saint Basil’s Cathedral. Saint Basil’s Cathedral was built in 1561, and it is seen as a national symbol of Russia.

Peter the Great



Vladimir Lenin



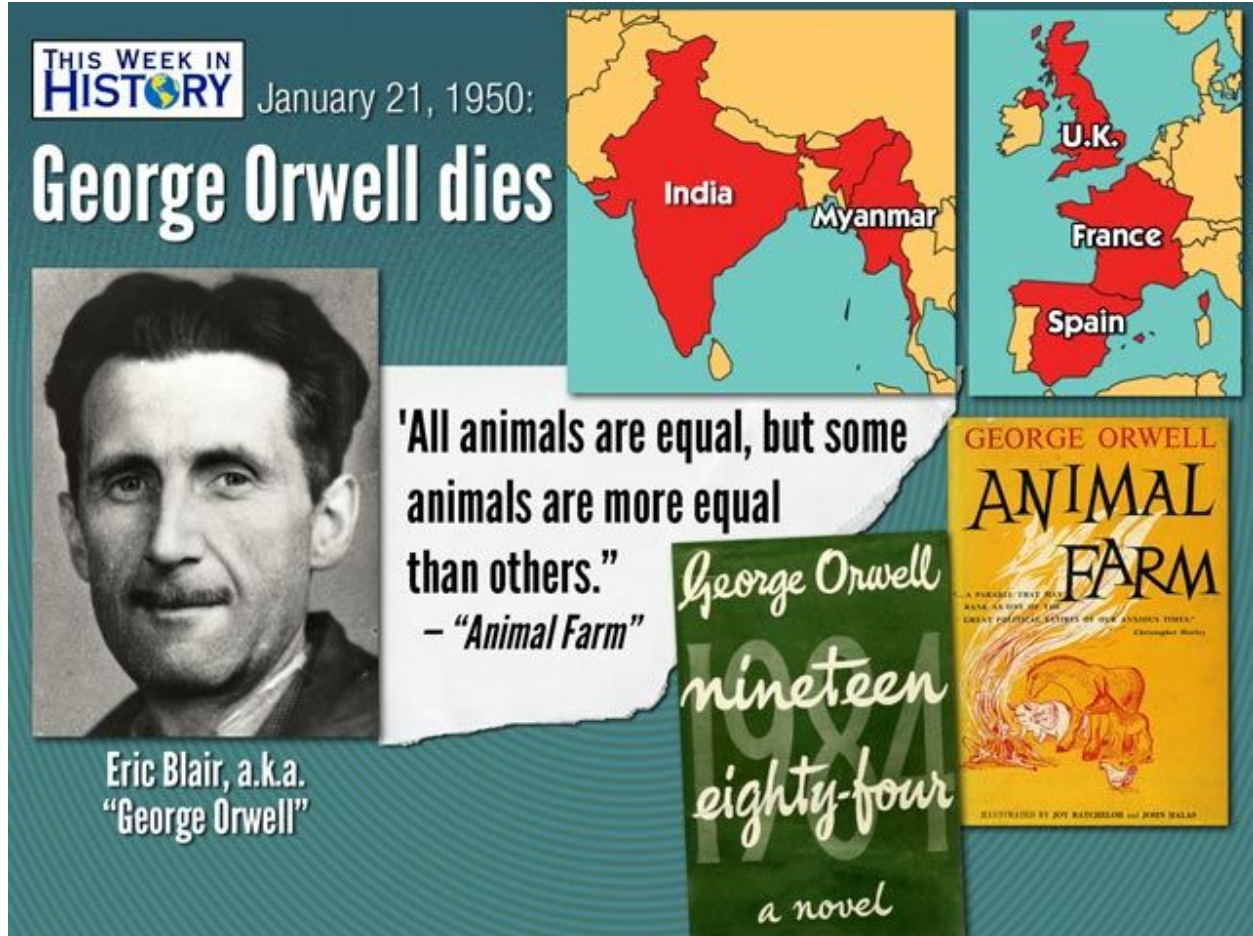
Leo Tolstoy

Saint Basil's
Cathedral



This Week in History: George Orwell

On January 21, 1950, a man named Eric Arthur Blair died at the age of 46. He was not famous — at least under his given name. But many people around the world had just gotten to know him by his pen name. As “George Orwell,” Blair wrote some of the most important and long lasting works of fiction and journalism of our time. Have you ever heard of the books shown below?



Blair was born in India on June 25, 1903. What European nation had colonized India? (The United Kingdom.) In 1904, his mother moved Eric and his sister back to England. Blair later described his family as lower-upper-middle-class.” He attended exclusive private schools, but he hated the cruel teachers and did not get along with his richer classmates. He couldn’t afford college, so he joined the Imperial Police in Burma. By what name is Burma now known? (Myanmar.) Although he represented the British Empire, Blair came to hate imperialism. Can you define this word? (A policy of extending a country’s power over other countries and peoples.) At the age of 24, Blair returned to Europe to be a writer. He spent a few years working low-paying jobs and often living in poverty. He later turned this experience into a book called “Down and Out in Paris and London.” This was the first book published under the name of George Orwell. During this time, Blair began to develop his socialist views. What is socialism? (An economic and political philosophy in which there is no private property, and wealth is

shared by everyone in the state.) How is socialism different from communism? (In communism, the government controls all wealth and political power, instead of the people.) After publishing a novel and a well received study of coal miners in northern England called “The Road to Wigan Pier,” Blair decided to put his views into action by fighting in the Spanish Civil War. He joined the side of the Republicans, a group of Spaniards who were fighting against the fascist dictator Francisco Franco. Can you define fascism? (A political system in which an all-powerful leader controls every aspect of life.)

Blair was wounded in the throat by a bullet while fighting. He went back to the U.K., disgusted by the actions of both the Spanish fascists and the Communists fighting against them. This disgust led him to write a book called “Animal Farm.” Have you ever read this book? He called it a “fairy story,” because it features talking animals. But this is not a fairy tale or a children’s story. After the animals take over the farm where they live, they say they will set up an equal society. Soon, however, the pigs take control, using dogs as a vicious police force to oppress the rest of the farm.

In 1948, Orwell wrote another famous fictional work called “1984.” It discusses a future world with three huge superstates that are always fighting each other. Orwell’s main character, Winston Smith, lives in Oceania, a superstate led by a mysterious figure known as “Big Brother.” The government controls everything, using phrases such as “Ignorance Is Strength” and “War Is Peace.” Winston Smith tries to break free of Big Brother’s control, but he is brainwashed into believing the same lies that everyone else believes.

Why do you think this book has been so popular for so long? With the publication of “Animal Farm” and “1984,” George Orwell finally gained fame and respect. But Eric Blair came down with tuberculosis, a disease of the lungs, and died on January 21, 1950. In the years following his death, his books became international best-sellers. Today, the word “Orwellian” is used to describe any situation in which the government tries to control the thoughts and actions of its people using lies and misinformation.