

Failure of the Soviet System Student Worksheet

Introduction:

The Soviet State after the Second World War was caught on the horns of a dilemma. On one hand, they were pledged to the good of the workers and peasants. Economic decisions were to be made to provide for the workers and to prevent their exploitation by capitalists. On the other hand, without capitalist risk-takers, there was practically no incentive for anyone to work hard or innovate. As a result, the Soviet leadership chose to suppress all dissent, whether it was aimed at economic failure or lack of political liberty and human rights.

All Web links for this lesson can also be found at:

<http://www.socialstudies.com/worldlinks.html>.

Directions:

Note by the Procurator-General of the USSR N Trubin on Events in Novochoerkassk, June 1962

<http://www.korolevperevody.co.uk/korolev/novochoerkassk.html>

Answer the following questions:

1. Why did people of Novochoerkassk go on strike?
2. What happened at the City Executive Committee building when leaders tried to get the crowd to disperse?
3. What did the government ultimately do to put an end to the protest?
4. Whom did the Procurator General of the USSR blame for the disturbances in Novochoerkassk? Do you believe his version of the events? Why or why not?

Sakharov's Telegram

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/archives/ac2sakh.html>

Read the document, then answer the following questions:

5. Why was Sakharov writing to the authorities?
6. What was the official response to Sakharov's appeal?

Petition on the Legality of the Trial of Ginzburg, Galanskov, Dobrovol'skii and Lashkova

<http://teachers.sduhsd.k12.ca.us/ltrupe/sources/coldwar/dissidents.htm>

Read the document, then answer the following questions:

7. The authors of the petition make mention of the earlier trials of Siniavskii and Daniel, of Khaustov, and of Bukovskii, claiming that, “All these trials were declared to be public, but in reality were not.” What evidence do they give to support this assertion?

8. According to the authors of the petition, what “scandalous violations of legality” occurred during the trial of Ginzburg, Galanskov, Dobrovol’skii and Lashkov?

9. What were the “crimes” of which Ginzburg, Galanskov, Dobrovol’skii and Lashkov were accused? Do the authors of the petition believe that the “actions of the defendants constitute a just basis for their arrest”? Why or why not?

10. Why do you think Soviet authorities felt it necessary to firmly crush any sign of dissent? In their minds, why did the existence of opposition ideas pose such a threat?