

From Late Stalinism to Khrushchev, to Brezhnev, 1945-1980

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Part I:

Recovery Amidst Devastation, then Death: 1945-1953

- The trail of Destruction that followed the Nazi retreat and defeat.
- A snapshot of rural and urban Soviet life, 1945-1953
- Soviet Triumphalism: the “Seven Sisters”.
- The Gulag overflows
- (Cold) War on the Cultural Front
- Stalin’s Decline and Death
- Looking back: the enduring popularity of Joseph Stalin.

Part II:

Khrushchev and the (erratic) “Thaw”:

De-Stalinization, Coexistence, and Confrontation

- Khrushchev: a brief biography (and why the 1930s were so good for him!)
- De-Stalinization as Cultural Thaw (the *Stilyagi!*)
- *Young Guard* as a cautionary tale, and the appeal of the West.
- Looking back: Soviet loyalists confront “The Great Patriotic War.”
- The end of the Gulag
- The 20th Party Congress: Blame it all on Stalin. Who likes this?
- The Khrushchevka’s and Soviet literature in the Thaw; The War on Religion
- The Cuban Missile Crisis
- Khrushchev is given “an offer he can’t refuse” (1964)

Part III:

“Mature Socialism” or “Stagnation”:

The Brezhnev Era, 1964-1982

- This part of the lecture in two films, or three
- A brief biography, and what made Brezhnev so different from Khrushchev
- Foreign Policy: Toward Détente
- Brezhnev and privilege
- Brezhnev and the commitment to basic care, health, education, and so on
- So was the collapse of the USSR inevitable by 1980?

Sources?

A Few popular Soviet Films that You Might Watch, available free online:

- *The Cranes are Flying* (1957)
- *Ballad of a Soldier* (1959)
- *Moscow does not believe in Tears* (1980)