

Third Paper Topic

At several important stages in Soviet history the Communist leadership of the country embarked on radical changes that involved the repudiation of the previous regime's policies. In this paper you will analyze the language and significance of two such reversals: Khrushchev's de-Stalinization and Gorbachev's perestroika. You will have several readings to analyze for each of these transitions. Feel free, of course, to bring in others from the sources we have read in class.

Be sure to consider the "logic" of the criticisms. What is being said and what is being ignored or overlooked? What structures and individuals are being particularly criticized and why? Consider also what you know about the outcomes of these criticisms. How significant were the changes that resulted in each case? Were there criticisms that did not in fact lead to changes? You may also want to think about the dangers of repudiating the past. What actions were taken to shore up the regime even as it was rejecting the previous policies?

Your paper will be due on Wednesday May 7 in class. It should be 7-10 pages in length. Any paper that is delivered after Friday May 9 will have one third of the grade subtracted for each class period that the paper is late. An "A" paper, for example, handed in on Monday would receive an A-; on Wednesday it would receive a B+ and so on.

Suggested readings for the paper

1. De-Stalinization

Khrushchev's Secret Speech (20th Party Congress), Sakwa 8.4
also recommended: Sakwa 8.5, 8.8

2. Perestroika

Gorbachev's early speeches (Sakwa 10.1-10.3, 10.7); 19th
Party Conference, Sakwa 10.12;
also recommended: Gorbachev in Sakwa 10.8-10.9; changes in
the Party structure, Sakwa 10.13-10.17