

Segment One



Khrushchev allows an American exhibition into Moscow in 1959. He claims, "You shall see that Communists live no worse, but better than many other countries. In the future we'll live better than any other country. I'm telling you!" By 1961, Yuri Gagarin is the first man to orbit the Earth. The Cold War's pressure to rearm keeps heavy industry a priority. Those who join the military are rewarded with higher wages and other benefits.

- How did the Cold War affect the economy of the Soviet Union?
- What evidence can you find that changes were happening in the Soviet economy?
- According to eyewitnesses, what benefits did Soviet citizens gain by joining the military?
- Compare the impact the Cold War had on the Soviet economy with what was happening in the United States in the 1960's? How do you account for the similarities and differences?

Segment Two



Khrushchev makes some shifts in the planned economy toward light industry and consumer needs. To solve the housing shortage, the Soviet Union turns to prefabricated housing. Apartment blocks shoot up around every Soviet city. Living conditions improve but there is still a severe and persistent shortage of goods in the shops. To address the food shortage, Khrushchev proposes agricultural reforms. The Virgin Lands Campaign ploughs up the natural grasslands of Central Asia and plants them with wheat. Khrushchev boasts that he will overtake America in meat, milk and grain.

- Describe the housing problem in the Soviet Union. How did the government try to solve this housing shortage? How do these efforts compare with what happened in the United States in the 1950's and 1960's?
- How did some eyewitnesses react to Khrushchev's reforms? Based on these accounts, how did the Soviet government react to Khrushchev's shift toward light industry and consumer needs?
- What was the Virgin Lands Campaign? According to eyewitness Yuri Moskalenko, what were the results of the campaign?

Segment Three



Russians who work for the defense industry get special privileges. Western lifestyles penetrate the Soviet Union. Young people who begin wearing tight jeans and long hair are punished for imitating Western fashion. This struggle becomes known as the "War of the Trousers." The new music, new dances and new portable radios continue to expose young Soviet citizens to Western culture.

- How do young people often show their rebellion? (Throughout the world, throughout history: dress, music, lifestyles, hair, etc.)
- Based on archive footage, what was considered "Western culture?" Why do you think it was so appealing to many young people in the Soviet Union? Why do you think Soviet teens liked rock-and-roll so much? Do you think music transcends culture, politics, government and language barriers?
- What was the War of the Trousers? How did this compare with the reactions to the way the hippies dressed in the United States?
- Compare the concerns of teenagers in the United States with those in the Soviet Union during the 1960's.

Segment Four



Though writers and artists grow bolder and begin to challenge the censors, the Party continues to maintain control. In 1962, Communist hard-liners persuade Khrushchev to visit an exhibition of modern art, hoping it will shock him into restoring tighter censorship. They succeed. Censors stifle free speech in other parts of the Soviet Empire.

- Who was Yevgeny Yevtushenko? How does he account for his popularity in the 1960's? What can you infer about life in the Soviet Union based on his comments?
- How did the KGB deal with artists and writers considered unsupportive of the state?
- What was Khrushchev's reaction to the exhibition of modern art? How does his son Sergei explain his reaction?
- How do you feel about censorship? Do you agree with Khrushchev's claim that "writers are like...artillery men because they clear the way for our infantry.... You should fire...precisely, but shoot at the enemy, not at your own side"?
- What does film director Milos Forman say about the role of censorship? What does he say is the "worst evil"?

Segment Five



Still facing a problem of food supply, Khrushchev orders the Soviet people to grow corn. But in 1963, the harvest fails. Wheat has to be imported from America. Soviets lose patience with Khrushchev. To many, his actions abroad seem clownish and irresponsible. The Politburo decides to replace Khrushchev with a dual leadership arrangement-- Leonid Brezhnev and Alexei Kosygin. Stability is restored in the Soviet Union but unrest is stirred in the Empire. In January 1968, Alexander Dubcek is appointed First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. By February 1968, Dubcek begins to implement reforms to Communism. The Soviet Union responds with force.

- According to eyewitnesses, why were some Soviet officials and citizens losing patience with Khrushchev? Why was Khrushchev removed from power? Based on the accounts, what were Khrushchev's failures? What do you think?
- What changes were taking place in Czechoslovakia? What reforms did the new Czechoslovak leadership make? How did the Czechoslovak people receive the reforms? How did the Soviet government react?
- How did these changes affect the relationship with the Soviet Union?

Segment Six



On the night of August 21, 1968, 350,000 Warsaw Pact troops invade Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia's party leaders are arrested. The Czech and Slovak people are shocked but the troops encounter little armed resistance, unlike in Hungary 12 years earlier. The kidnapped leaders choose not to resist; the experiment in political pluralism, to "humanize" Communism, fails. Polarization between two different ways of life will last until the Cold War ends 20 years later.

- What effect did the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia have on the people of that country? How did this invasion compare with that of Hungary in 1956?
- Why do you think the Soviet Union chose to invade rather than allow the reforms to continue? What were the interests of the Soviet leadership?
- Why do you think the United States did not interfere?
- How do you interpret Soviet reactions to the Czechoslovak reformers?
- How does this segment of the video compare with earlier segments? What can you infer about the Soviet Empire in the 1960's?
- Why do you think the title of this episode is Red Spring?