

# COMMUNISM

## INFORMATION CARD

To understand the history of the 20th century in general, it is important to know what communism is.

Ideas similar to communist ones (about equality between citizens and a fair political system) emerged already in ancient times. Only in the second part of the 19th century did philosophers Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels develop the theory of communism. The basic idea is that capitalism is the last phase of society and that as the result of a workers' revolution, a classless society would be established. In communism, all property would be shared, everybody would be equal and everybody would receive according to their needs. Based on these ideas, the workers' movement in Russia, led by the Social Democratic Workers Party, grew.

In the autumn of 1917, under the guidance of Lenin, the left wing of the Social Democratic Party, known as the Bolsheviks, came to power in Russia with an armed coup d'état. This turned into a dictatorship of the Communist Party (all federal decisions were accepted by the party), that officially was called the proletariats' (working class) dictatorship. This regime existed in Russia and in the Soviet Union until the year 1991.

In 1922 Russia formed the Soviet Union (USSR), unifying Byelorussia, Ukraine and the Federation of Transcaucasia (Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia). At that time Russia included Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, which afterwards became separate USSR republics. In 1940 the USSR occupied and annexed the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) and Bessarabia (forming the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic). In 1944 the Soviet Union incorporated Tuva (which became an autonomous republic in the Russian Federation).

Hoping for a worldwide revolution, the Soviet Union supported the Communist Parties of other countries and in various ways contributed to the expansion of communist ideas and regimes. In the 20th century, communist regimes formed in China, Cambodia, Mongolia, Vietnam, North Korea and after World War II – in Eastern Europe (Albany, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland, Romania, Hungary and East Germany), in many African countries, Nicaragua and Cuba as well. In 2005 these regimes are still in power in China, Cuba, North Korea, Laos, and Vietnam.

### Main symbols of communism in the Soviet Union



**Red color, red flag:** to symbolize the blood of the working people shed in the struggle against capitalism.

**Five-pointed star:** an ancient symbol which was used by communists in the Soviet Union associated with the unity of working people on all five continents.

**Sickle and hammer:** to symbolize the unity of factory workers and peasants.

### Defining characteristics of a communist regime

- ★ Land, banks, industry and resources are state property. During the founding of the regime nationalisation takes place (the state power confiscates all private property).
- ★ Communist Party – the only and dominating party, all other political parties are forbidden.
- ★ Cult of the party leader.
- ★ Central planned economy. In the Soviet Union the economy developed according to the five-year plan. Economic decisions (even petty issues like the name and price of a new cake) were accepted by the ministries in Moscow.
- ★ Aggressive foreign policy.
- ★ Industrialisation, especially developing heavy industry (industry that produces not for consumption, but for production itself).
- ★ No freedom of speech, assembly, strike, movement, etc.
- ★ Censorship.
- ★ Persecution of dissidents, political litigations.
- ★ No democratic elections. Formally there are elections but voters have no choice – they have to vote for one candidate. The results of elections are often falsified.
- ★ Collectivisation of agriculture in some countries (including the Soviet Union).

To implement all of this, ruthless terror was used for many decades in the Soviet Union and China. As a result, society felt so threatened that the regime could exist also without terror. The Party controlled the citizens and ruled with executive repressive methods (strict censorship, eviction of political opposition, etc.).

### Victims of communist regimes

It is estimated that due to communist terror and communist policies that caused hunger between 85 and 100 million people have died. "The Black Book of Communism"\* provides the following statistics:

U.S.S.R.	20 million deaths
China	65 million deaths
Vietnam	1 million deaths
North Korea	2 million deaths
Cambodia	2 million deaths
Eastern Europe	1 million deaths
Latin America	150 000 deaths
Africa	1,7 million deaths
Afghanistan	1,5 million deaths
In other countries where Communist parties were not in power	10 000 deaths

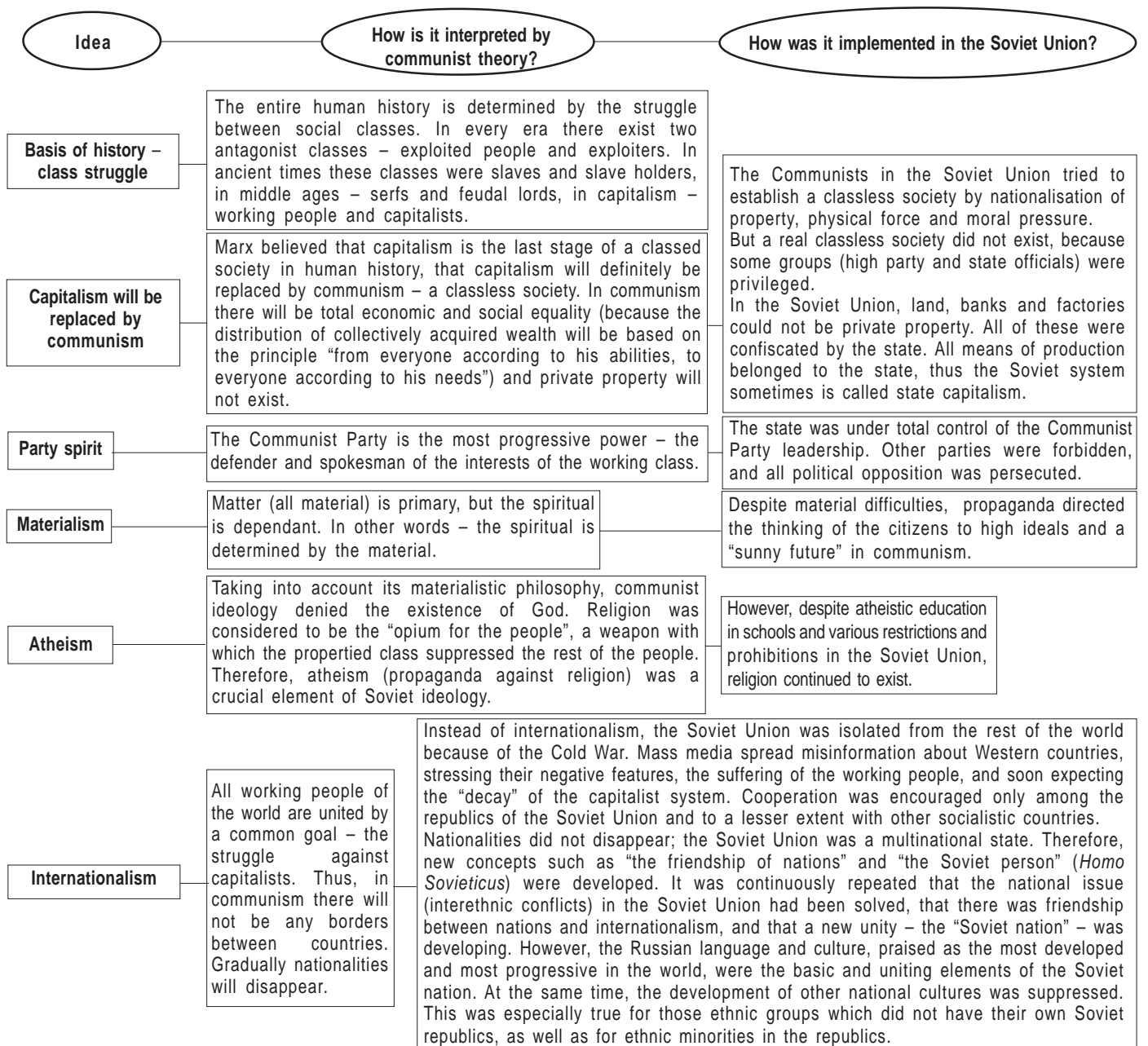
\* *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression.* / S. Courtois et al. – Cambridge et al.: Harvard University Press, 1999. – p.4.

# COMMUNISM

## INFORMATION CARD

### Communist ideology in the Soviet Union

Soviet ideology was based on the ideas of communism developed by Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Lenin. These ideas became undisputable dogmas, which nobody was to question. With the aid of propaganda, the Soviet Union government attempted to make the basic principles of communist ideology an essential component of every citizen's life.



COMMUNISM



WORK

## TASK CARD

As a group, study the information and source cards! Answer the following questions:

- ★ Which ideas of communism are mentioned in the excerpts of the book “Communism and Work”?
- ★ Considering the excerpts from the book “Communism and Work”, how did reality in the Soviet Union differ from communist ideas?
- ★ What problems related to work are shown in the caricatures? Why did they arise?

**Summarizing your answers, prepare a TV program about the role of work in the Soviet Union and communist ideology in general. Remember to select an appropriate title for your program.**

**Duration of presentation – not longer than 5 minutes.**

**All group members should take part in the presentation.**

**There will be individual written assignments about the basic principles of communist ideology after the presentations.**

COMMUNISM



WORK

## SOURCE CARD

“What will the human being of the communistic future be like? We do not know much about this person yet, for nobody can foresee in detail a person who has grown up in a society where there is no worry about personal income, where nobody has to be paid for or pay for anything, and where money will be kept in glass show-cases in museums. [...] And no matter how difficult it is now to guess the tastes, the habits and the needs of this person, we know for sure that this will be a working person!

[...] Communism is not the land of indolent people, but the kingdom of work! [...]

Today we are already on the threshold of communism. The Soviet country has started to build a communistic society. In this era we have to create and produce all the material and mental prerequisites for implementing the transition from the first [present] phase of communism [i.e., socialism] to the second one [communism]. The two main tasks of communistic society-building are the following: creation of the material and technical base for communism, and education of young people for whom work will become the first necessity in life. [...]

What are the characteristics of work in socialism?

First of all, this is work free from any exploitation: it is work for one's own benefit and for the benefit of society. For a long time already, in the Soviet country there have not been any people who denigrate and demean the work of factory and farm workers. Under the leadership of the Communist Party, the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union overturned the power of the exploiters and eliminated all exploiter classes – landlords, capitalists and kulaks [wealthy farmers]. Thus all strata of society that profit from exploitation and the work of others have been stripped off our land.

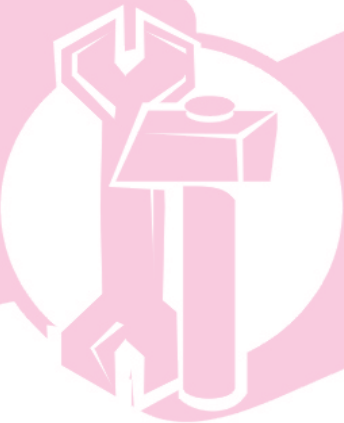
It was announced to the entire nation that work is the duty of the entire society. This obligation is expressed in the principle of socialism: “Who does not work will not eat.” In a socialist society, work is the duty of every citizen who is able to work. [...]

Socialistic work is collectively organized work, based on public ownership of the means of production. [...]

In communism as well, communal work will be a social requirement of every community member who is able to work, however, this duty will be carried out with no enforcement, voluntarily, for this obligation will be completely in tune with the internal need of every worker.”

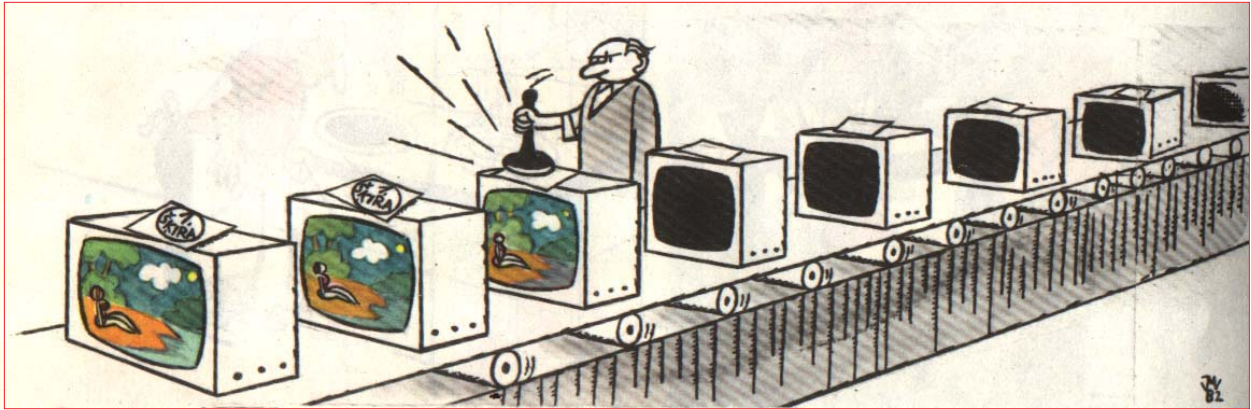
[Glezermanis G. *Komunisms un darbs (Communism and Work)*. – Rīga: Latvijas Valsts izdevniecība, 1961. – pp. 3–12.]

# COMMUNISM

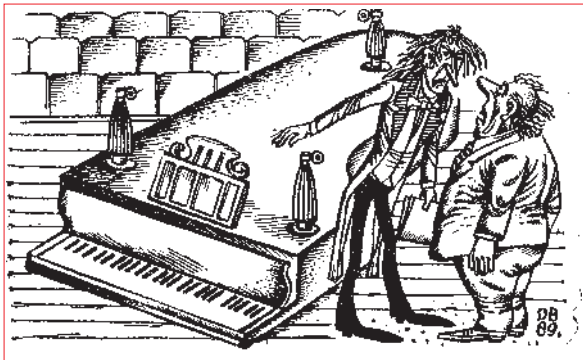


# WORK

## SOURCE CARD



[Latviešu padomju karikatūra (Latvian Soviet caricature). – Rīga: Liesma, 1985. – p. 72.]



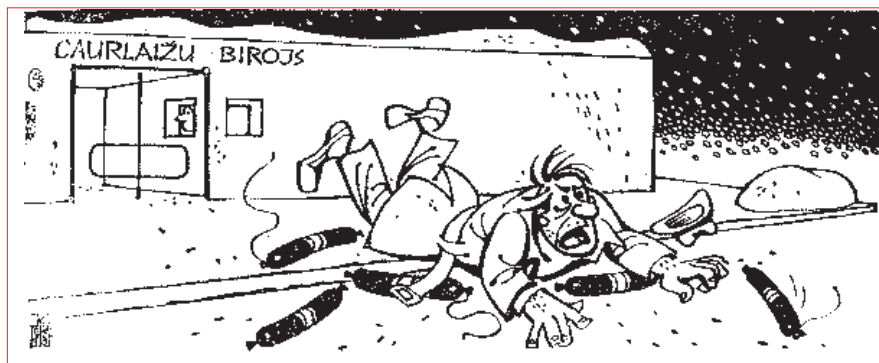
- Produced at the end of the month, maestro!

[Dadzis 1990. – Rīga: Avots, 1989. – p. 249.]



- What do you do in your free time?  
- At work or - generally?

[Dadzis 1990. – p. 64.]



- Villains! Again the street is slippery!

[Dadzis 1990. – p. 93.]



## SOURCE CARD



- The footbridge has to be repaired by your kolkhoz, because ours has less workers!
- No, we have less workers!

[Latviešu padomju karikatūra (Latvian Soviet caricature). – Rīga: Liesma, 1985. – p. 168.]



- I measured it six times, but working hours are over...

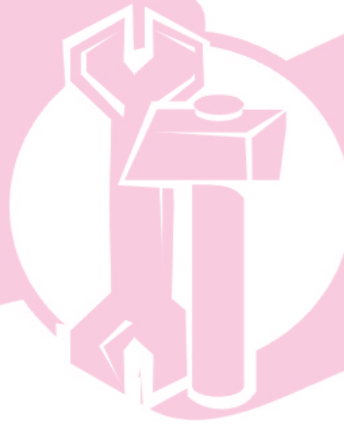
[Latviešu padomju karikatūra (Latvian Soviet caricature). – p. 148.]



- How can we accept this flat if the plastering has crumbled off?
- But why didn't you come earlier?

[Latviešu padomju karikatūra (Latvian Soviet Caricature). – p. 49.]

# COMMUNISM



# WORK

## SOURCE CARD

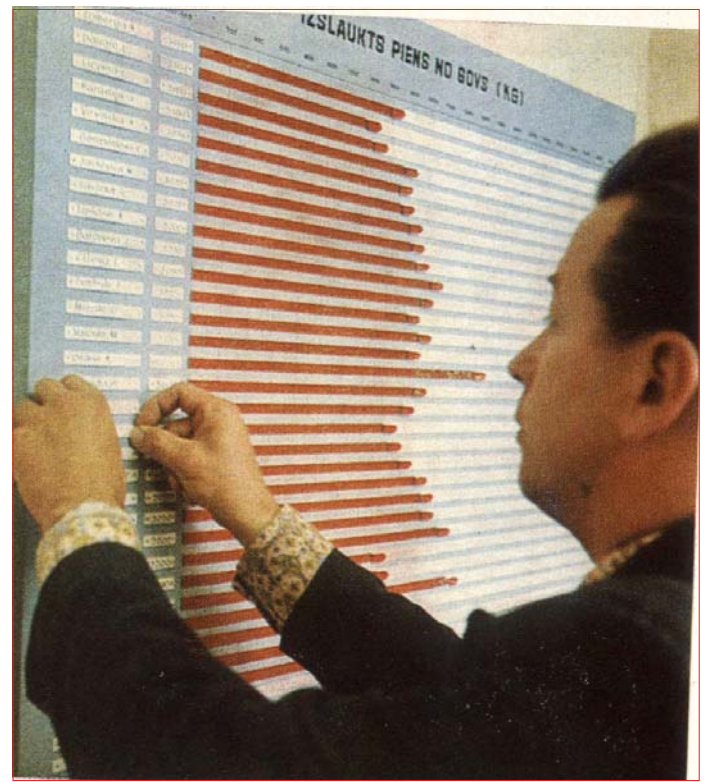
Displays showing the results of a “socialistic competition”\*

in a knitwear factory in the town of Ogre



[Uzskatāmā ai itācija (Visual Agitation). – Rīga: Liesma, 1975. – pic. 2.]

at the agricultural school Zaienieki



[Uzskatāmā ai itācija (Visual Agitation). – pic. 6.]

\* In a planned economy, it is important to fulfill and overfill the plans set by the authorities. Quality and the sense of the production were not the objective. To promote fulfillment of the plans, so-called “socialistic competitions” were organized. The winners were highly praised.

COMMUNISM



EDUCATION

## TASK CARD

As a group, study the information and source cards! Answer the following questions:

- ★ Which ideas of communism are mentioned in the text excerpts?
- ★ What role did the humanitarian disciplines play in education? What role did the exact disciplines play?
- ★ What were the objectives of education in the Soviet Union? How did they differ from education objectives in a democratic country? What other differences are there in the area of education?
- ★ Which educational characteristics do the visual sources attest to?

**Summarizing your answers, role play a conversation about education in the Soviet Union and in present day Latvia. Assign a moderator and representatives of different opinions: people who rate the Soviet education system positively and negatively. There has to be a summary of ideas expressed.**

**Duration of presentation – no longer than 5 minutes.  
All group members should take part in the presentation.**

**There will be individual written assignments about the basic principles of communist ideology after the presentations.**





### SOURCE CARD

“The main mission of the Soviet school is to prepare all-round developed people, active and conscientious builders of the communistic society.

The Soviet school is preparing this generation for life, work and for the struggle for communism. It arms its students with deep and broad knowledge; it brings them up in the spirit of communistic morality.”

*[Boldirevs N. Komunistiskās morāles audzināšana skolēnos (Developing of Communistic Morale in Students). – Rīga: Latvijas Valsts izdevniecība, 1954. – p. 3.]*

“In order to convince young people about the veracity of communistic ideas and viewpoints, and that these ideas are superior to bourgeois ideology, the ideological level of all subject areas must be raised, and the presentation of the subject matter must be attuned to the tasks of building communism. The struggle for a scientific, materialistic world view and communistic conviction is in equal measure the duty of both the humanities and the sciences. Each of them plays an important role in shaping the Marxist-Leninist world view of young people. Physics, chemistry, astronomy, biology and other branches of science explain phenomena from the materialistic perspective and create the essential prerequisites for forming a dialectically materialistic world view in students and teaching them to fight against the remnants of the past, especially against religion.

[..] The study of the humanities, including also the history of the USSR, helps students understand the process and importance of the revolutionary struggle of working people for their liberation, the heroic struggle of the Communist Party and of the working class, the tremendous scope of socialism and communism building in our country [the Soviet Union]. The foundations of historic knowledge foster the upbringing of students in the spirit of proletarian internationalism and Soviet patriotism and promote the shaping of a communistic world view. The teaching of history plays an important role in the education of students because they have not undergone the school of life destined for the older generations. The study of social sciences provides the opportunity to discover the immense superiority of socialism over capitalism. It is an integral part of communistic world view that gives young people the conviction of the victory of our grand effort. [..]

It would be wrong to think that the ideologically political education of students can be restricted just to teaching the subjects dealing with social and political issues. Deep communistic idealism must be present in the entire academic life, in the teaching of all subjects, in all educational activities, in the work of teachers and the leaders of Communist Youth and Pioneer organizations.”

*[Komunistiskās audzināšana pamati (The Basics of Communistic Education). – Rīga: Latvijas Valsts izdevniecība, 1961. – pp. 41–43.]*

COMMUNISM



EDUCATION

### SOURCE CARD

#### Pioneer organization room in school nr. 50 in Riga

Slogan on the wall: "Pioneers! Be ready to fight for the Communist Party of the Soviet Union!"



[Uzskatāmā ai itācija (Visual Agitation). – Rīga: Liesma, 1975. – pic. 21., 22.]



## SOURCE CARD

## Frontpage of a history textbook “Stories of Soviet History for Grade 4”



1654  
(17th century)  
The reunification of Ukraine and Russia



1709  
(18th century)  
The Battle at Poltau



1773--1775  
(18th century)  
The peasant war under the guidance of Pugatschow



1812  
(19th century)  
The Patriotic War



1825  
(19th century)  
The Decembrists uprising

[Golubeva T., Hellerdteins L. PSRS vçstures stâsti 4. klasei. – Rîga: Zvaigzne, 1985.]



## SOURCE CARD

## Performance description

## Five-pointed star

## Exercise

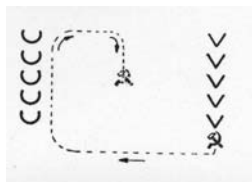
6 boys and 5 girls take part.

All participants dressed in Pioneer uniforms. [...] The boys, except the first one, have in their right hand a red flag. The first boy in the row is holding a golden hammer and sickle made from paper or cardboard.

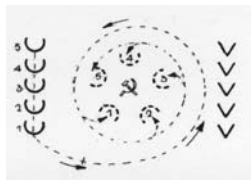
The participants stand on the stage in the following order: the girls in a column on the left side, with bent elbows holding the ribbons in front of them (ribbons as high as the elbows); the boys standing on the right side hold the red flags in their slightly raised right hands. In the front of the column the boy with the hammer and sickle stands like the other boys. All of the children face the public.

The curtain is raised during the musical introduction.

The boy with the hammer and sickle marches around the stage and comes out from the background to the centre, marching on the spot until the first musical part ends.

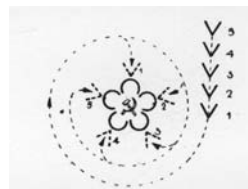


The girls with ribbons run around the stage and place themselves in a close circle around the boy with the hammer and sickle facing him.



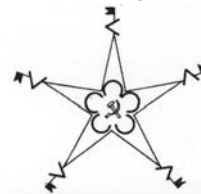
Then they turn their backs to the centre, touching the girls beside them. Their arms are bent at the elbows, the ribbons are hanging.

The boys, holding the flags in their slightly raised right hands, march vigorously around the stage. Each boy goes to one girl and stops an arms length away from her.



The boys take the ribbons with their left hand and pull it to themselves (forming a sharp angle).

Then they turn to the right and walk two steps to the side. They stretch out the right hand with the flag, holding the flag vertically, forming a five-pointed star.

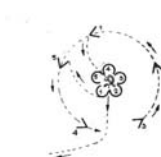


The boy standing in the centre lifts the hammer and sickle and says:

"Let's build a stronger fatherland,  
The stars over the Kremlin shine so bright for us.  
Everybody: - Lenin's glory, Stalin's glory  
Glory to the October country!"

The boy lowers the hammer and sickle to the beginning point. The other boys drop the ribbon, and hold the flags as in the beginning.

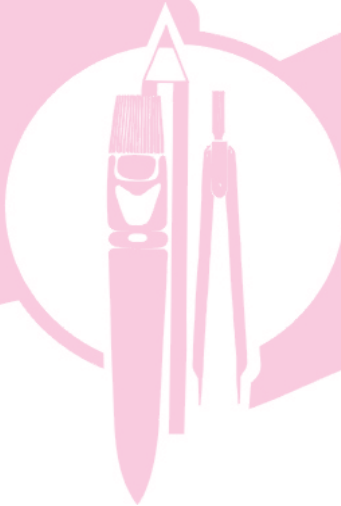
The boy from the centre comes out, and one after the other everybody walks after him.



The fourth and the fifth wait until the third gets to the foreground of the stage and then follow him.

At the same time the girls turn right and follow the boys. Everyone goes around the stage, steps off it and joins the audience (or goes to the side-scene).

COMMUNISM



ART

### TASK CARD

As a group, study the information and source cards! Answer the following questions:

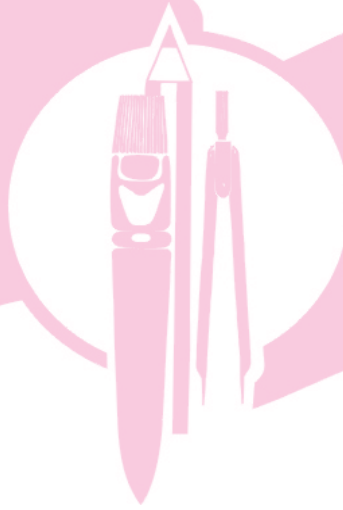
- ★ Which ideas of communism did art have to represent in the Soviet Union? Which of these ideas are found in the examples of Soviet art?
- ★ For which purpose was art used in the Soviet Union?

**Summarizing your answers, prepare an advertising clip of Soviet art. In your clip include at least two pieces of art (a poem, a sculpture, a painting or something else) created by your group using basic principles of communist ideology.**

**Duration of presentation – no longer than 5 minutes.  
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COMMUNISM



ART

## SOURCE CARD

“The policy of the [Communist] Party in the field of the development of socialistic culture has always been based and will always be based on the principles of Leninism and ethnicity. [..]

Our art is fortunate because the tasks and directions of artistic creativity are determined by the Party, which expresses the basic interests of the people and in all its activities is based on the most progressive philosophy. [..]

Literature and art are a mighty weapon, the most important means of communistic education and upbringing. It should always be ready for use, targeted in the right direction and kept sharp, and it should work irreproachably. Our art is charged with inspiring people to build communism, criticizing shortcomings in our work, supporting our friends and without fail smashing enemies of communism.

The ardent fight for the victory of the most humanistic and fair system in the entire world – communism – is the main task of modern literature and art.

The Party stands for a brave, heroic and true art that is free from all types of artificiality: both sopiness and embellishments, as well as unquenchable sorrow, sadness and pessimism. Above all one should see everything that is new and positive in our lives in order to fascinate people and to inspire them.

Who will determine and evaluate the positive qualities and shortcomings of creative works of art? The Party and the people.”

*[Ijiņevs L. Māksla pieder tautai (Art Belongs to the People). – Rīga: Latvijas Valsts izdevniecība, 1963. – pp. 5., 25., 27., 42., 49.]*

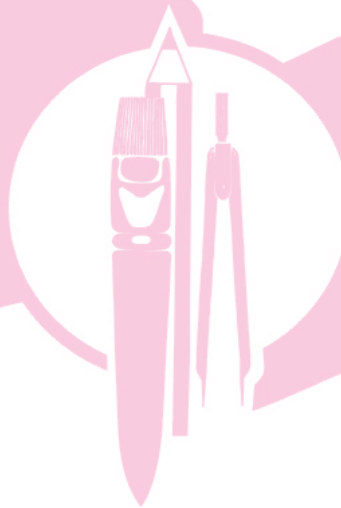
### **Congratulation for the 2nd Artist Congress from the Soviet Union Communist Party Central Committee**

Leading the whole nation’s fight for communism, the Party, unaided, takes care of its ideological weapon war footing, including an important communistic educational medium as fine art. [..]

Our party publicly and implacably stands against formalism, against abstract distortions in fine art, against naturalism, grey, primitive, insipid and negative works, which are crippled in content and helpless in form. [..]

Our artists are expected to do a great deal of work in industry and in the aesthetic sphere of social life, in designing our cities, towns and living spaces. Every day a real beauty should enter the life of Soviet citizens. The artists have to inspire work and make our lives happier.

*[Pravda. – 1963. – April 11]*



## SOURCE CARD

**Instructions from the Art Office at the Latvian SSR Peoples Commissariat Council  
about themes that should be displayed in art works.**

[excerpts]

November - December, 1944

**Topical plan and example theme list**

**1. Daily life and battle scenes in the Red Army.**

Acts of heroism by Red Army officers and political workers in the battles near Moscow, moving westward and toward Latvia.

“Before the attack”, “Attack on a populated place”, “Joining the Party after a battle”, “Sniper at work”, “Catching of the tongue”, “Presentation of the guard’s flag”, “Scouting”, “Political information”, “Panzer commando”, “Airborne”, “Corps men on the battlefield”, “Actors on the battlefield”, etc.

From the daily life of the back-up regiment.

“Waking up in the morning” (lively morning mood), “Exercise” (a sunny day in summer or a rainy and muddy day in autumn, energy and vigour), “Political training” (concentrated attention), “Resting” (evening games, happiness), “Amateurs acting”, “The actors have arrived”, “Going to the front”, etc.

**2. The partisans fight against the occupants.**

“In the headquarters of the partisans”, “By the partisans in the woods”, “Partisans scouting”, “Signal man”, “Trial of the oppressor”, “Trial of the betrayer”, “Youngsters – partisans”, “Portraits of partisans”, etc.

**3. Daily life and working scenes of Latvians during the evacuation.**

[..] “Young communist-girl tractor driver”, “Donor-woman”, “In the children’s home”,

[..] “Joint work in the kolkhoz”, etc.

**4. From the history of the Latvian nation.**

**5. Occupation period.**

“A new order on the land”, “Betrayers of their own nation”, “Hanging of peaceful inhabitants”, “Salaspils concentration camp”, “Humans – beasts”, “Hiding of the injured commissar”, “Killing of children”, “Superhuman”, [..] “In the fascist hard labour camp”, “Capturing people”, “Escaping” (the Red Army comes), etc.

**6. Latvia free of occupants.**

“The liberators are coming”, “On the banks of Daugava after the eviction of the Germans”, “Rebuilding the railway”, “Demonstration on October 22, 1944”, “Again the red flag over Riga”, “Returning to the land”, “Surveyors working”, “Restoration of industry”, “The beginning of study in schools”, etc.

“Storm-trooper portraits”.

**7. Landscapes of the fatherland.**

“Destroyed Riga”, “Daugava’s amplitude”, “The Sea”, [..] “Forest sough”, “Golden autumn” [..], etc.

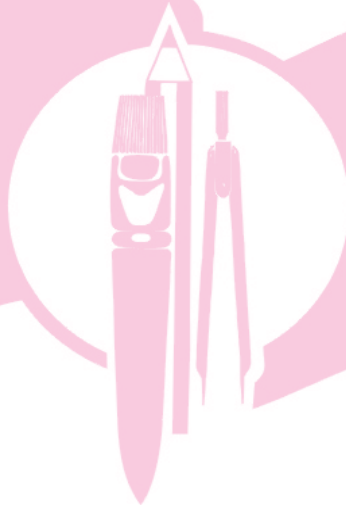
**8. Still-life.**

**Historical themes about the working class struggle in  
Latvia for fine arts**

[..]

- 2) Organizing of workers in all districts in Latvia
- 3) The first organized revolt of the workers and strikes
- 4) The further illegal organizing of workers
- 5) Mass meetings in the woods
- 6) Emergence of the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks
- 7) Distribution of forbidden literature 1890–1900
- 8) The first issue of the newspaper *Cīņa* (Struggle) published in 1904
- 9) The era of the growing revolution 1904–1905
- 10) The years of repression and punitive expeditions
- 11) Exposure of the imperialistic war
- 12) The reaction of 1920
- 13) Response attack to the proletariat
- 14) The deallocation of the Latvian proletariat
- 15) Deallocated working class
- 16) Land reform
- 17) Socialistic competition
- 18) The defending of Soviet Latvia

[Latvija padomju režīma varâ 1945–1986: Dokumentu krâjums (Latvia under the Soviet Regime 1945–1986: Document Collection). / Ed. I. Ēneidere. – Rīga: Latvijas Vēstures institūta apgâds, 2001. – pp. 389.–392.]



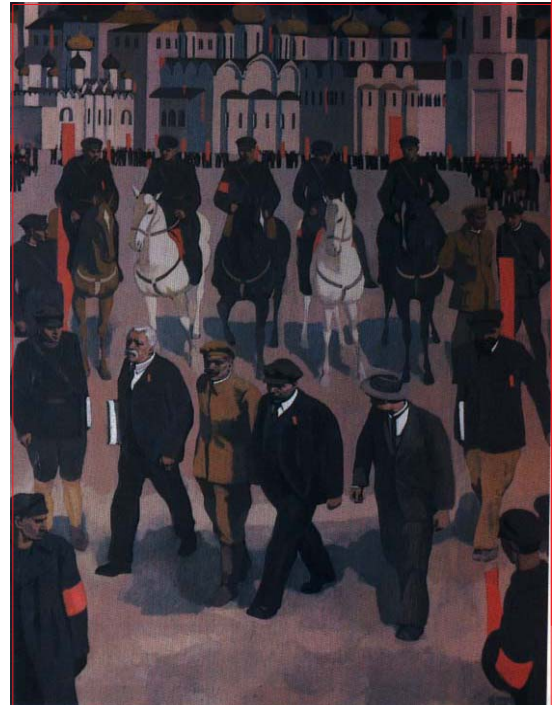
## SOURCE CARD

Painting by Otto Skulme, "Lenin among Red Riflemen in the Kremlin on May 1, 1918" (1957)



[Latvijas PSR māksla (The Art of Soviet Latvia). – Leningrad: Aurora, 1972. – pic. 14.]

Painting by Jānis Zemītis, "The Storm is over" (1969) [in the centre – Lenin]



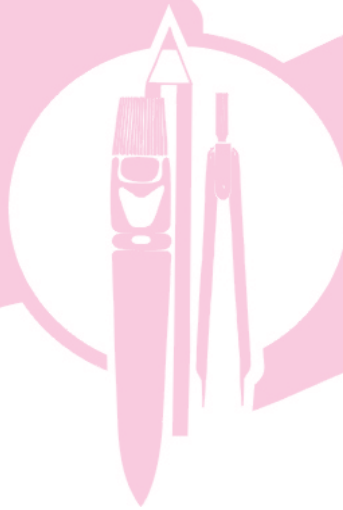
[Mākslas akadēmija (Art Academy). – Rīga: Avots, 1989. – p. 166.]

Stained glass by Girts Vilks, "Riflemen" (1961–1964)



[Padomju Latvija (Soviet Latvia). – Rīga: Liesma, 1977. – p. 23.]





## SOURCE CARD

A song “Latvians Cheer Stalin”  
[The frontpage and fragment from the notes]

Fragment of Aleksandrs Stankčviēš' painting  
“1919” (1978)



[Rīga sociālisma laikmetā (Riga during the Socialist Era). – Rīga: Zinātne, 1980.]

A poem by Valdis Lukss “Lenin Teaches”

And Lenin teaches us:  
If you are a communist, then your heart should beat fast,  
Let apathy not come to visit you.  
Let komsomol blood run through you forever  
And warm you in the coldest winter, -  
If you are a communist.  
And Lenin teaches us:  
If you are a communist, there is always just one way  
Although it is the hardest, and no one has walked it,  
It should be a path of struggle, let the marl shiver under your soles  
And beside you should march all the working people, -  
If you are a communist.  
And Lenin teaches us:  
If you are a communist, let everything be bright and clean,  
Wherever you stop, let Auroras bloom.  
You are a warrior for the party and the nation  
You must be ready, you stand in a watchful guard, -  
If you are a communist.  
And Lenin teaches us:  
If you are a communist, be rigorous towards yourself,  
And always take the silent simplicity as help on your side,  
In noble anxiety your work will always succeed!  
Bravely take the morning star and put it on your breast, -  
If you are a communist.  
And Lenin teaches us.

[Lukss V. Asins raudze (Blood Hallmark). – Rīga: Liesma, 1970.]

COMMUNISM



PROPAGANDA

## TASK CARD

As a group, study the information and source cards! Answer the following questions:

- ★ Which ideas of communism are mentioned in the text excerpts?
- ★ Which symbols and ideas are used in the visual sources?
- ★ What information about the Soviet Union can you find in the sources?
- ★ Which propaganda statements could be most convincing for people?
- ★ Which propaganda statements seem the most untruthful to you?
- ★ What effects of Soviet propaganda might be observed in post-socialist countries nowadays?
- ★ In which present day spheres can similar methods of persuasion and of opinion influencing be observed?

**Summarizing your answers, create an information board for today's young people, explaining the basic principles of communist ideology and its propaganda. Presenting your information board, use pantomime or associative sculpture (material – group members).**

**Duration of presentation – no longer than 5 minutes.  
All group members should take part in the presentation.**

**There will be individual written assignments about the basic principles of communist ideology after the presentations.**



## SOURCE CARD

“In our country [the Soviet Union] there is full freedom to fight for communism. In our country there is no freedom and there cannot be any freedom to fight against communism. [..]

In order to win in the battle for communism, the minds and the hearts of the people have to be won over. Therefore, our ideological weapon must be kept in working order; it must be continuously improved, and the smallest spot of rust must be removed from it.”

*[Iļijēovs L. Māksla pieder tautai (Art Belongs to the People). – Rīga: Latvijas Valsts izdevniecība, 1963. – pp. 16., 25.]*

“Our Soviet state is the most democratic country in the world. [..] Only in the Soviet state, where all the power and all the natural resources belong to the working people, there is true democracy.

In the USSR, all spheres of life are managed by people representing the entire nation, the true spokespersons of the nation.

Let us have a look at the composition of the highest sovereign body – the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union<sup>1</sup>. In the elections of 1937 to the Supreme Council were elected: factory workers – 45.3 % of the total number of deputies, farm workers – 23.7 %, representatives of intelligentsia and public servants – 31 %. [..] Where else, in which other country can we find such a composition of the highest national authority? [..]

All the governmental bodies of the Soviet Union – from village and town councils up to the Supreme Council of the USSR – are elected on the basis of universal, direct and equal election rights, by secret ballot. We have truly universal and truly equal election rights without any of the many restrictions in existence in any bourgeois country. In the latest elections to the Supreme Council [..] 99,7 % of all eligible voters took part – [..] nearly all adult residents of the country. More than 99 % of the voters who took part in the elections voted for the candidates of the communist and non-partisan block<sup>2</sup>. These figures are self-explanatory. In no other place in the world is there an elected body that represents the nation so completely and correctly, and that expresses the will of the nation so perfectly.

The foreign policy of the Soviet country, like its internal national policy, is based on the recognition of equal rights of all nations, on the respect of their freedom and independence. These policies manifest their truly democratic character.”

*[Ivanovs N. K. Padomju valsts – jauna tipa valsts (The Soviet Country – A New Type of Country). – Rīga: Latvijas Valsts izdevniecība, 1947. – pp. 29., 31.–34., 47.]*

<sup>1</sup> Officially – the highest legislative institution, similar to a parliament. In reality it had only formal functions and was not elected in free elections.

<sup>2</sup> In all elections there was only one candidate list to vote for. The Communist Party was the only political party in the Soviet Union. The list also included trusted non-Communists.

COMMUNISM



PROPAGANDA

### SOURCE CARD

**A slogan in a sovhoz (Soviet farm) building in Zalenieki County.**

Text: "Comrades! Let's implement the decisions of the 24th Party Congress by selfless and inexhaustible work!"



[Uzskatāmā ai itācija (Visual Agitation). – Rīga: Liesma, 1975. – pic. 34.]

**A slogan "USSR - the warrant of peace!" in Riga**



[Uzskatāmā ai itācija (Visual Agitation). – pic. 86.]

COMMUNISM



PROPAGANDA

## SOURCE CARD

A board displaying the “honoured” (the best) employees of the Lenin’s district in Riga



[Uzskatāmā ai itācija (Visual Agitation). – Rīga: Liesma, 1975. – pic. 32.]

### A factory building in Riga.

In front of it is a board displaying the factory’s “honoured” (the best) employees



[Uzskatāmā ai itācija (Visual Agitation). – pic. 31.]



## SOURCE CARD

### Signpost with names of kolkhozes

Stream  
Victory  
Clearance  
New Road  
Cornfield



Communard  
Work  
Foundation  
Ray  
Red Flag  
New Morning  
Lenin's Road

[Dzintarzeme Latvija (Amberland Latvia). – Rīga: Latvijas Valsts izdevniecība, 1960. – p. 111.]

COMMUNISM



RELIGION

## TASK CARD

As a group, study the information and source cards! Answer the following questions:

- ★ What is atheism?
- ★ Why was atheism important in communist ideology?
- ★ Why did communists think that religion is destructive, and why did they fight against it?
- ★ How is atheist propaganda connected to other ideas of communism?

**Summarizing your answers, imagine that you are Soviet students and create a musical propaganda show about the basic principles of communist ideology and especially – atheism.**

**Duration of presentation – no longer than 5 minutes.  
All group members should take part in the presentation.**

**There will be individual written assignments about the basic principles of communist ideology after the presentations.**

COMMUNISM



RELIGION

## SOURCE CARD

“Atheism is an essential characteristic of the communistic world outlook. [...] Any kind of religion hinders the educational work of builders of a communistic society and strives to bring up spiritually poor hypocrites.

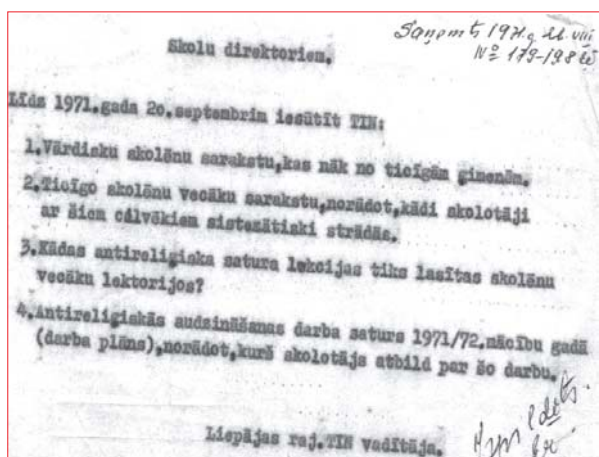
Now, when private ownership of the means of production has been eliminated and exploitation has been eradicated, when the national economy is developing in a planned manner and the accidental factors in the national economy have been overcome, when science and technology flourish, when tremendous success has been achieved in subduing the forces of nature – circumstances have been created to completely overcome the erroneous religious ideas about the world. Religion is inevitably approaching its demise because the worthless social order [class society] that has created religion is also doomed to perish. [...]

However, religion will not decay by itself, it will yield its place to the scientific world view only after a struggle that has to be carried on by the sustained daily propaganda of atheism.

In a class society, religion and church is a weapon of the exploiters to obfuscate the minds of working people and to force them into slavery; in a socialistic society, religion impedes the building of communism and does not allow people to live happily. Thus religion harms workers. The Communist Party protects the interests of working people, and its main aim is the welfare of working people. Therefore, the Party cannot accept religion and cannot have a neutral attitude towards it. That is why the Party fights against religion.”

[*Komunistiskās audzināšana pamati (The Basics of Communistic Education)*. – Rīga: Latvijas Valsts izdevniecība, 1961. – pp. 155., 156., 159., 162.]

## Document from Vaiņode Secondary school about work in antireligious education



[From the collection of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia]

For school headmasters

To be sent in by September 20, 1971:

1. The list of pupils who come from religious families.
2. The list of pupils' parents who are religious, specifying, which teachers will systematically work with these people.
3. Which antireligious lectures will be given for parents?
4. The scheme for an antireligious education program in the 1971 /72 school year, specifying which teacher is responsible for this work.

Chief of Liepāja district Peoples Education Department.

[Handwritten remarks:]

Received ...

Accomplished

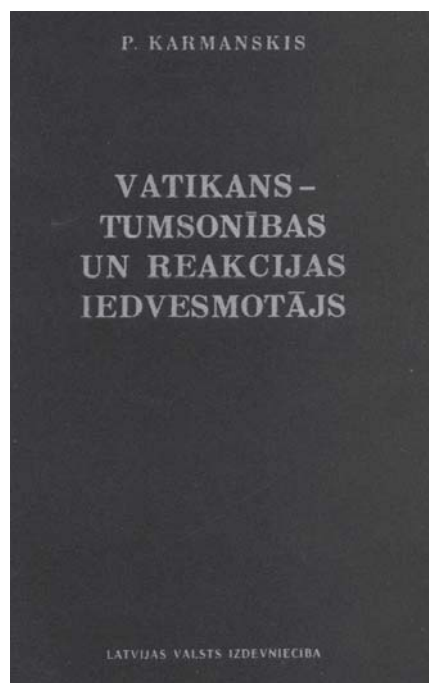




## SOURCE CARD

## Antireligious publications

## Satirical collection "God's Work"

The Vatican - Inspirer of  
Obscurantism and Reaction

## Faith Testimony

I believe in you, god, that you can do all,  
That you created the living and dead as well,  
That the sun and the earth is given by you,  
That rain and sunshine are sent over the fields by  
you.  
Only one thing, oh high lord, I don't understand:  
Why you created those, who don't believe in you?



## SOURCE CARD



[From the collection  
of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia]

### Report from the Vaiode Secondary school atheist group about the accomplished work in the 1966/67 school year

In the 1966/67 school year the fighting atheist group of Vaiode secondary school is continuing the work of previous years. There are 12 members in the group. Several of them participated in the previous years. Each group member has to read the newest anti-religious articles and tell the other members about them. Together we discuss them and popularize them in the classes. We have analyzed Kazdan's "How people created god", "Secrets around us" and "Magic beverage".

The group is preparing an anti-religious evening. We rehearse plays "Sacred springs", "Fortune-teller surmises", "Shuri, muri", "Kikerigū", etc.

This evening is scheduled to be organised together with the new chemists hobby group. Films about flora and fauna: "Bewitched island", "Depth of the ocean", etc., are being shown in the school.

Most of the group took part in the anti-religious evening organised by the Kazdanga agricultural school "From heart to heart" [...].

The group had 14 meetings. Group members participated in discussions about the origin and entity of religious celebrations (classes 5a, 5c, 6a, 6c and others).

A stand - exhibition of photographs, "Why is religion destructive?" and "Religion and morality", was exhibited in the school library. Pupils can regularly become acquainted with the newest literature in natural sciences and antireligious materials.

The group publishes a wall newspaper, "Against darkness", four times a year. A survey was taken in the school, and afterwards a list of religious pupils and parents was compiled, with whom the group, teachers, and also the leader of the People's University are working.

Due to individual work Aina Eihmane resigned from religion. We have been working a great deal to convince 3rd grader Aina Kundziņa, who does not attend school on Saturdays.

We have succeeded in getting religious parents of pupils (Gertnere, Kaspere) to join the People's University, where lectures about emotional education and morality were given.

The members of the group involve pupils with religious parents (Puiņe) in the group and help these pupils to get involved in amateur performances and school activities. The members have organised broader social participation in new traditions (recruit cafeteria), and delivered invitations to participants of the People's University.

Chief of the group:

Chairman:



## SOURCE CARD

**Report of E. Kokars–Trops, USSR Council of Ministers’ representative of religious affairs in the Latvian SSR, to the USSR Council of Religious Affairs about the use of cult buildings for economic and cultural purposes**

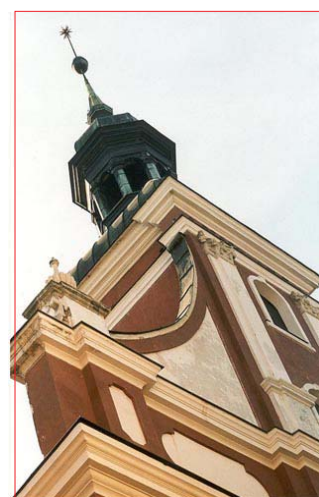
March 20, 1986

Denomination	Total	Cult buildings not being used for religious needs			
		Including:			
		Used		Not used	
		For economic puposes	Social and cultural purposes	Total	In poor condition
Russian Orthodox church	29	11	15	3	3
Ev. Lutheran church	66	30	29	7	7
Roman Catholic church	5	1	4	-	-
Old-believer church	7	5	1	1	1
Baptist church	11	6	5	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>

Representative of the Council:

E. Kokars–Trops

[Latvija padomju reģīma varā 1945–1986: Dokumentu krājums (Latvia under the Soviet Regime 1945–1986: Document Collection). / Ed. I. Ēneidere. – R.: Latvijas Vēstures institūta apgāds, 2001. – pp. 369.]



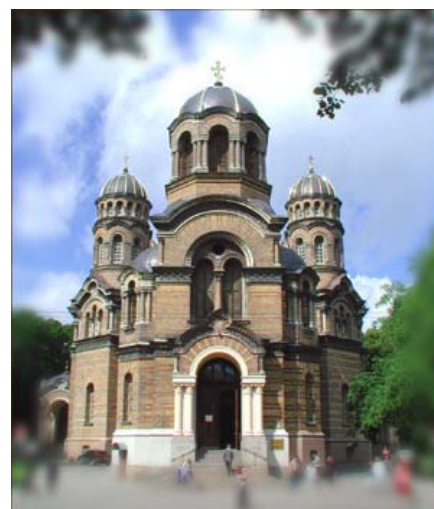
The Reformed Church was dispossessed in 1965 and was used by the recording studio “Melodija”.



The Lutheran Cathedral of Riga was dispossessed in 1959 and used as a concert hall.



From 1953 the church of Bulduri was used as a storehouse for the audiovisual document archive.



The Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Riga was dispossessed from the congregation in 1963 and was modified into a planetarium and Republican science house.

# Theme: Communism

## TEST

Maximum points  
60

1. What were the main ideas of communism in the Soviet Union?

6 pts.

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2. In the previous question, mark those ideas that could be more exciting to people. Explain your answer!

10 pts.

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3. Which idea of communism does this saying relate to:

“We allow other parties to exist. Though an essential principal, which seperates us from the West is this: one party, and the other ones are in prison!”

1 pt.

*Mihail Tomski, leader of the labour unions of the Soviet Union,  
newspaper “Trud”, November 13, 1927*

4. Select one of the sub-themes (education, propaganda, religion, work or art) and explain how it is related to the previously mentioned ideas of communism.

10 pts.

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5. Choose one of the symbols of communism in the Soviet Union (red colour, pentagle star or hammer and sickle). Explain the meaning and its connection to ideas of communism.

11 pts.

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**6. Below are characteristics of various political regimes. Mark in the table which characteristics fit each regime.**

12 pts.

Characteristics of political regimes	Political regimes		
	Totalitarianism	The communist regime in the Soviet Union	Democracy
One leading party, other political parties are forbidden			
Multi-party system			
Privatization of land and private property			
Cult of the leader			
There is the right to gather, to strike, freedom of speech, etc.			
There is no right to gather, to strike, freedom of speech, etc.			
Terror against citizens			
Collectivisation of agriculture			

**7. In your opinion, which factors can especially promote the prevalence of communist ideas?**

10 pts.

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Name, Surname

Date

# COMMUNISM

## ROLES AND RULES IN GROUP WORK

### **Organiser:**

- ★ Guarantees that everybody has understood the task and the directions;
- ★ Guarantees that everybody takes part;
- ★ Guarantees that the group is not digressing from the task;
- ★ Guarantees that everyone is doing role tasks;
- ★ Represents the group if there is a question for the teacher.

### **Harmoniser:**

- ★ Guarantees that the communication in the group is positive;
- ★ Guarantees that the contribution of each group member is noticed and evaluated;
- ★ Guarantees that conflicts (if such appear) are resolved;
- ★ Guarantees that the group reaches an agreement.

### **Reporter:**

- ★ Is responsible for the end result of the work – a presentation;
- ★ Guarantees that the presentation is ready on time;
- ★ Guarantees that all conditions are taken into account (all questions are answered, everyone participates) and that the time limit is observed;
- ★ Is responsible for the process of the presentation.

### **Material manager:**

- ★ Guarantees that all materials are accessible;
- ★ Guarantees that all materials are used accordingly;
- ★ Guarantees that the group knows the time limit for the task;
- ★ Guarantees that the work space is in order after the presentation.

### **Information manager:**

- ★ Guarantees that the group gets all the necessary information;
- ★ Summarizes the answers to the questions;
- ★ Guarantees that every group member knows the answers to the questions of the task card;
- ★ Guarantees that information is accessible to every group member.

**Everyone has the right to ask for help. Everyone's duty is to help if someone asks for it.**

**The group ends work at the same time (nobody may finish working before the entire task has been accomplished).**

**All pupils fulfill the academic exercise, the role is an extra task.**

**Nobody has all skills to fulfill the exercise but everybody has some skills necessary for the task. Remember the saying: "Two heads are better than one!"**

# COMMUNISM

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

### Target group –

12th grade, and with a smaller amount of source cards, also the 9th grade.

### Learning objective –

To promote the development of a conceptual understanding of a complicated 20th century phenomenon – communism, explaining basic principles of its theory, as well as its implementation in the Soviet Union.

### Necessary materials:

- ★ Information card – a copy for each student;
- ★ Description of roles – a copy for each group. Labelling of roles is recommended to facilitate observation;
- ★ Source and task cards – every group has a different sub-theme;
- ★ Crayons, paper, glue, scissors, cardboard, markers – as broad a variety as possible;
- ★ Further literature and sources regarding the topic, and opportunity to use a library and the internet.

### Introduction

At the beginning of the unit, the teacher explains the objectives and assigns homework – for students to interview their parents and learn at least 3 positive and 3 negative aspects of life in the Soviet Union. During the next class the results of the interviews should be summarized. The questions: What aspects of life do the parents mention? What is surprising? What is unclear? Then the teacher gives an introduction, explaining the information card “Communist Ideology in the Soviet Union”.

### Preparing for group work

#### Forming of groups

The teacher divides all the students into heterogeneous groups (no “friend groups”) with four or five participants in each. It can be done by a lottery. The ideal would be five groups, according to the five sub themes. If it is not possible to make five groups, then there are some variations. For example, if there is a small number of pupils and there are less than five groups, a theme can be ignored or each group can work on two themes (then more source cards are necessary and more time should be granted). If the class is big and there are more than five groups, then several groups work on the same sub-theme separately.

### Assigning of roles and rules of group work

During group work each group member has to do the academic task and has their own role: organiser, harmoniser, reporter, material manager or information manager. If there are four people in the group, the role of the harmoniser can be united with any role (except the organiser). The assigned roles can be written on a big sheet in front of the class. For observation it is necessary that every role is noticeable. Therefore every role gets a different mark, for example, *Post-it* notes can be used. Each group receives the “Roles and rules for group work” card, reads it and adds its own rules if necessary.

If the formed groups continue to work together for a long period of time, then at the beginning of a new task the pupils change roles by rotation, so that everyone has the opportunity to exercise the most responsible duties and the less important tasks.

### Multiple abilities

Before starting the group work, the teacher discusses the skills and abilities that are necessary and useful for the task, lists the abilities on the blackboard (see the example below), and asks the pupils to add to it during the work. The teacher accents the role of cooperation, because no one has all the abilities needed for the exercise and only by working together can pupils solve the task.

#### Analytical skills:

To gain information from a source; to compare and analyse different kinds of information.

#### Visual abilities:

To “read” and “translate” visual information; to express oneself in a visual way; to synthesize visual information with written information.

#### Presentation skills:

To express the main idea in a brief, understandable and interesting manner; to catch attention of the audience; to involve the audience; to generate new ideas; to find non-traditional approaches.

#### Cooperation skills:

To maintain an active and creative atmosphere in the group; to resolve conflicts; to encourage peers; to develop ideas.

#### Work management:

To plan and predict work phases; to divide tasks, and responsibilities; to fit in the timeframe.

# COMMUNISM

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

### Group work

Each group gets a different task card and source cards according to the sub theme. After getting acquainted with the task card the whole class jointly (under the guidance of the teacher) works out the evaluating criteria for the presentation. It is recommended to use extra materials – books, source publications, museum expositions, etc. After finishing the work, the pupils have to make a presentation according to the task card.

### Teacher's role: Observing

During the group work the main task of the teacher is to observe how each student is fulfilling his or her task, and to give an evaluation. It is necessary for the teacher to consider the division of roles (for example to answer only the questions asked by the "organiser", if the role description says so).

Observing means more than watching. Watching is occasional but observing is planned and systematic. Of course, while observing the teacher sees things that he/she did not plan to observe and always decides if the seen is more important than that what was planned to be seen. In other words, he/she decides, is it necessary to react to the seen or is it better to concentrate on that what was planned to be observed.

### Presentations

After each group presentation the students and the teacher evaluate the achievement of the group. The work is evaluated according to the criteria developed beforehand. The teacher provides (1) an analysis of the work process – observations of each participant in the group, especially stressing the contribution of academically "weaker" students; (2) analysis of the academic result, stressing the main ideas and any mistakes in the content.

### Conclusion

Individually students work on an assignment selected by the teacher:

- ★ Answers to a question on the task card (chosen by the teacher or the student);
- ★ A test;
- ★ An essay "My reflections on communism";
- ★ An essay "Communism: Utopia or Opportunity?"

### Possible time schedule

Before starting the unit – at the end of the previous lesson – assigning the homework.

Evaluating the homework, introduction lecture and preparation of the group work (forming of groups, assigning of roles, discussion about skills) – one class period.

Group work – preferably two classes (one class for the work with sources and one class for the preparation of the presentation, it is also possible to accomplish it during one class, assigning the work with materials as homework).

Presentations and evaluation – one class.

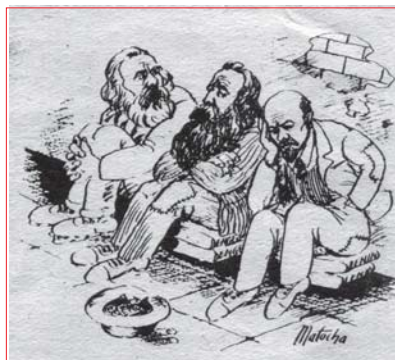
Conclusion – one class or homework (essay).

Total: at least three classes, at most five classes.

### Test evaluation

One point for each correct answer to questions 1, 3, 6, as well as for the correct interpretation of the symbol in question number 5.

Ten points for an exhaustive, justified answer to questions 2, 4, 5 and 7; for an incomplete, weakly justified answer – reduction of the score.



– However, the theory was great, was it not?