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The Influence of Propaganda in the USSR During Brezhnev's Rule on Soviet Citizens' Worldviews

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ABSTRACT

The presented article examines the ways Soviet propaganda continues to influence ex-Soviets' perception of life 30 years after the collapse of the USSR. This article examines to what extent the opinions and values of ex-Soviets align with ones enforced by Soviet propaganda of a chosen time period: the 1970s. The extent and causations of the success of Soviet propaganda of the 1970s are explored through promotional media analysis and interview conduction.

In the article, a set of beliefs, enforced by propaganda is created through the review of propaganda media of the 1970s. These beliefs are compared with ones held by a group of ex-Soviets. The results of the performed comparison indicate that propaganda continues to influence the worldviews of ex-Soviets. Features of Soviet propaganda of the 1970s that made it effective are discussed.

Introduction

The word "propaganda" is defined in several ways. This term is often used pejoratively, even though, in essence, it has no negative implication. Accordingly, The Cambridge Dictionary defines *propaganda* as "information, ideas, opinions, or images, often giving one part of an argument, that are broadcast, published, or in some other way spread intending to influence people's opinions." At the same time, propaganda can be explained as the mere distribution of information to the masses (Smith, 2021). These definitions conclude that the concept of propaganda by itself is neutral – it only gains positive or negative characteristics, depending on the notions it spreads. The Cambridge Dictionary definition implies that the negative associations often linked to the word "propaganda" can sometimes originate from the one-sided characteristics of the information being spread. Consequently, propaganda should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

The stigma around propaganda is built by its inability to present more than one point of view. That inability causes the propaganda consumer to lose the option to evaluate specific situations, forming independent opinions. This research paper seeks to answer the question of how and to what extent one-sided propaganda can change its recipients' way of thinking and personal perspectives.

Most authoritarian states install mass propaganda distribution to reach a high degree of compliance and patriotism in their citizens. A well-known example of such a state was the USSR, which achieved incredible success in creating effective propaganda strategies. The number of ex-Soviets, familiar to the author, who still hold the viewpoints and values promoted by Soviet propaganda thirty years after the state's collapse is considerably high. Moreover, people previously exposed to Soviet propaganda continue to accept the information they are presented with, without questioning its truthfulness until the present moment. This is visible in the context of the propaganda distributed by Putin's government during the Russo-Ukrainian War – the author's acquaintances who have witnessed Soviet propaganda are prone to believe Putin's media's claims. Logically one cannot help but ask: how is propaganda so influential in affecting people's thinking? For this exact reason, the Soviet

Union, as a famous blueprint of the consequences of propaganda distribution, was used as a case study for this research article.

The theory that was proposed at the beginning of this project was as follows: when one is exposed to the constant repetition of certain notions – true or false – for an extended period, perhaps their whole life, they lose the ability to form their own opinions. Propaganda leads to a lack of critical thinking in its consumer and only leaves them to turn to itself for ready answers to every question. Hence, the opinions of ex-Soviets on notions, covered by Soviet propaganda remained constant to the present day. To find out if the stated theory was correct, it was decided to conduct an in-depth analysis of Soviet propaganda strategies at a specific time – the Brezhnev period (1964-1982). This period was close enough to the current time to contact and interview ex-Soviets who lived in the USSR during the chosen period to compare their personal opinions with the notions spread by Soviet propaganda, which they inevitably consumed. Note that most of the interviewees were ordinary people from proletarian families, representing a cross-section of the Soviet propaganda consumers. The analyzed propaganda included media, such as posters, television, literary works, art, and textbooks. Judging from the information derived from this analysis, a set of values spread by Soviet propaganda of the Brezhnev time was constructed and compared to the statements made by the surveyed ex-Soviets on the same topics. The conducted interviews led to a clear conclusion: the propaganda distributed in the USSR had a noticeable effect on the Soviets' perception of the world and the way they continue to perceive the world to this day. The way that was achieved will be discussed in this paper.

Literature Review

Soviet Propaganda in Brezhnev's Time

The period of Brezhnev's rule was and remains extremely difficult to characterize and evaluate due to its multifaceted nature and the variety of factors that need to be considered to analyze and deconstruct it. How Brezhnev's time is viewed by former Soviet citizens significantly varies, depending on the viewer's occupation, societal status, and age (Hanson, 2006, pp. 292–315). Even though many ex-Soviets remember the Brezhnev era as a time of economic "stability" and "peace" (Kertman, G. L, pp. 5-8), the interpretation they give to these terms causes doubt in their choice of wording. Life in the Soviet Union was generally a nerve-wracking period of doubt and never-ending change. When Brezhnev put a stop to constant transformation and brought stability, ordinary people were incredibly relieved. It has to be mentioned that the circumstances in which they lived did not change for the better. Product deficit was still fully intact, salaries of non-working-class professionals (doctors, teachers, engineers, and others) fell, and rural residents' living standards were low (Galimzyanova, 2021). In addition to that, the amount of censorship grew significantly. There was a notable lack of freedom in the community (Sinitsyna, 1998). Consequently, "stability" and "peace" in this case can only be interpreted as the lack of struggle and change for the worse. One of the factors that might have influenced this interpretation and perception overall is Soviet propaganda of that time (Pocheptsov, 2015).

Soviet propaganda allowed the Soviet Union to make the Communist doctrine generally well-received for a considerable amount of time. The role of propaganda in Soviet politics and society was as important as the role of military and intelligence services (Pocheptsov, 2015). The changes brought to Russians' lives by the October Revolution and the establishment of the Soviet Union caused a significant shift in their understanding of the world. Previously held viewpoints and values became irrelevant and outdated. The people who previously held power were deprived of their credibility, if not persecuted. This drastic change had to be justified. Effective tools of persuasion were used to fulfill this task. They gave ready answers to questions that were raised in the Soviet community at that time (Pocheptsov, 2019, pp 6-10).

Three types of Soviet propaganda were implemented during Brezhnev's rule. It has to be noted that all listed types served the same purpose - to show how the Soviet political system and ideology were the only virtuous option, and all other systems were evil and corrupt.

The first type of propaganda applied to Soviet citizens during Brezhnev's rule was informational propaganda which is set to create a particular outlook on the world as a whole in its audience (Lozhkov, 2013, pp. 189-199). Firstly, a continuous narrative was the culture of worship of leaders, not limited to Brezhnev. In the late history of the Soviet Union, earlier rulers, such as Lenin, were remembered and respected to a great extent, maybe even more than the current ones (Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev). Another big theme for Soviet propaganda was the clear distinction between "us" and "them." The idea that was put into Soviet citizens' minds was that the Soviets were the wrongfully accused righteous bearers of truth, targeted by the evil Imperialist countries. This notion grew into the concept of heroes, which were set as examples, and enemies, which were publicly judged and hated. Both heroes and enemies could be external and internal (Pocheptsov, 2015). One example of this mindset working in the 1970s was the encouragement to remember the Second World War, fixate on it, and criticize Western countries for not acting similarly. War as a concept and associated with the Western World, especially the USSR's rival – America. The Soviet government picked an interesting approach to anti-war propaganda. They blamed other countries for giving them no other choice except to participate in military activity. The notion was that everyone was against the Soviet Union, and everything the latter ever did was protect itself and its citizens from external aggression (Lozhkov, 2013, pp. 189-199). The Soviet government blamed the US for initiating the Cold War (Kolesnikova, 2001, pp. 31-35). Another pattern typical of Soviet indoctrination was the rejection of religion promoted by antireligious media. Interestingly enough, the system of worshiping the Communist ideology in the USSR was very similar to the way religion works (Pocheptsov, 2015).

Another type of propaganda primarily used by the Soviet government in the 1970s was political propaganda, which was derived from informational propaganda. The only difference between them was that the former was more focused on politics and more professionally conducted. It was usually an in-depth analysis of the Communist ideology's advantages compared to other existing doctrines. In the years 1975-1976, a period of tensions between the USSR and the US caused by the rise in American Imperialist propaganda targeted at the Soviet citizens, the newspaper "Pravda" issued roughly 130 articles highlighting the successes of CPSU and Leonid Brezhnev (Lozhkov, 2013, pp. 189-199).

The last type of propaganda implemented by the Soviet government in the Brezhnev era was counter-propaganda. It was essentially counter-advertising of other parties through discussing, in detail, the characteristics of these parties and criticizing them. Counter propaganda created an effect of contrast – to realize that they are in an advantageous position, one has to see what others' positions look like. When the American government launched its propaganda campaign in the 1970s, as mentioned earlier, the Soviets ran their counter-propaganda campaign criticizing Capitalism (Lozhkov, 2013, pp. 189-199).

All mentioned types of propaganda could be implemented in numerous ways, such as political demonstrations, political lectures and lectures in universities, and propagandistic narratives in media. In the case of the latter, the propaganda was not necessarily blatant. One could not always feel that they were under the influence of propaganda when consuming this media. However, it has to be mentioned that because of its repetitive, monotone nature, propaganda was more noticeable in the 1970s than earlier, for example, during Stalin's time. Nevertheless, the described types of indoctrination continued to influence the Soviets' worldview ever since they were children, which points to the fact that they could be affected by it to a certain extent. Propaganda deprives people of their individuality and the possibility of analyzing the world around them and making logical conclusions. Instead, propaganda gives carefully constructed answers to every question and outlooks on every subject. This paper will discuss how Soviet propaganda was designed to infect the human mind.

Soviet Propaganda Through Posters

Posters were one of the main instruments of Soviet political propaganda. The idea that the human mind and perception of the world can be affected by political posters was not exclusive to the Soviet government. Almost every other totalitarian state used or continues to use posters to create a particular image and public perception of the government. Consequently, dictators become proficient at the art of manipulation through visual aspects of propaganda. For example, Adolf Hitler used to say that, to cause a strong reaction or make an impression on a person, one needs to focus on the viewer's emotions rather than their thoughts (Gojčeta, 2019). Essentially the logical conclusions derived from a political poster are less relevant than the feelings said poster causes in an observer.

How can a poster cause an emotional response? There are certain techniques used in the design of Soviet promotional posters to achieve this effect. For a poster to catch the attention of the people it was directed at, which were mostly part of the working class, it needed to be clear and understandable to a relaxed mind. The posters' colors were either bright and lively, in case their topics were related to the USSR and its heroics, or dark and repulsive, if they were showing and reflecting on something disliked and criticized, such as an enemy's actions. Such enemies could be external – Americans, Nazis, Zionists, – as well as internal – traitors that are working for Capitalist countries (Gudkov, 2004).

Another strategy used to make a poster elicit emotion was its creation of pleasant or unpleasant associations. Propaganda posters often portrayed Soviet heroes, surrounded by the attributes of the USSR, which were, in turn, supposed to connect to good impressions and memories. Many posters feature Lenin with the Kremlin or the Soviet flag as a background. Other times he was depicted with a child. All listed things connect Lenin and the novelty of the Soviet state, happiness, protection, and a bright future. Enemies, on the contrary, were usually depicted with negative images, such as, for example, in the case of America, weapons, bullets, explosions. That made a connection between the enemy and violence, misfortune, misery.

The posters' captions were also composed in a way that helped them attract attention. While simple and mostly short, they included words and slogans that made a big imprint on one's memory. These slogans were bold and distinctive. If a poster bore a positive meaning, it could include such words as "happiness," "peace," and "freedom." If the poster was meant to show something negative, the word used in it included "death", "insanity," and "stop." All mentioned words, no matter their meaning, were used in order to capture the audience's attention.

According to an interviewed artist who worked as a promotional poster designer, starting in 1980, the posters he created were composed and controlled strictly by party leaders. They stated what the captions and drawings should include, specifying every detail. The topics of these posters were numerous, including critiques of alcoholics, truants, disobedient people, ideological posters, and portraits of leaders – the mentioned artist once had to create a portrait of Lenin, which was eight meters in height – or party members, and many more. The artist did not always agree with the notions his art spread, but he still made it (Anonymous informant #2).

The main subjects of posters created in the USSR in the Brezhnev period were directly linked to the propaganda topics described above. Examples of posters from that time will be outlined and analyzed below. It has to be noted that the authors and creators, same as most other posters created in the 1970s in the USSR, were nearly impossible to find. The disconnection between the person and the results of their work, which in the Soviet Union instantly became a patrimony of society, caused the authors of such works as political posters to become unimportant after completing their job. To emphasize this, it was decided to use the authorless posters that had little details accompanying them, except the fact that they were made between 1970 and 1980, recognizing their topics (Brezhnev, the Cold War, religion, and others) as ones that were most probably discussed in the 1970s, which made it possible to assume that they were truly made in the said period.

The Personality Cult of Leaders

Figure 1. 1970-1980 Soviet Poster. The caption reads: "The Unity of the Party and the People is Unbreakable."

One frequently repeated pattern for Soviet propaganda posters was the portrayal of Soviet rulers – current or previous, accompanied by objects or symbols that created pleasant associations in Soviet citizens. The poster above implies the existence of a clear connection between Lenin – a person of undeniable credibility at that time, even a somewhat paternal figure – and Brezhnev and his associates, the promotion of whom was the goal of this poster. Brezhnev and other party members are situated below Lenin. This placement suggests that the depicted Communist party is following the footsteps of Lenin, which means that the Soviet Union is going down the right path. The caption reads: "The unity of the party and the people is unbreakable," which proposes that the mentioned party cares about Soviet citizens. The word unbreakable provides a sense of security. The audience feels that their leaders protect them and if any threat to their well-being were to appear, said leaders would do anything to ensure that their citizens' lives are out of danger. The faces of everyone depicted are solemn. They are intent on doing what it takes to complete their job.

The belief that Soviet leaders were serving for the comfort and convenience of Soviet citizens gave these citizens a reason to be grateful to the party leaders. According to the doctor of psychology, Robert Cialdini, people usually tend to believe that a provided service requires reciprocation, which means that this poster is, to an extent, supposed to motivate citizens to reciprocate their rulers' love and support.

Peace-Promoting Propaganda

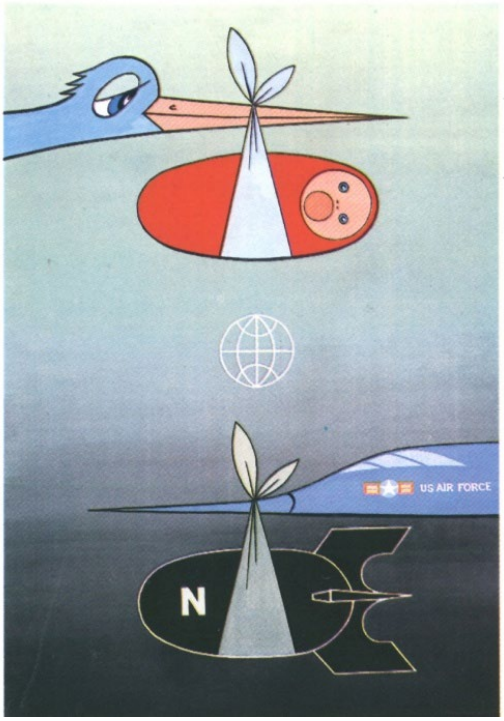


Figure 2. 1970-1980 Soviet Poster, Depicting a Stork Carrying a Child, in Comparison With a US Military Airplane Carrying an Atomic Bomb.

The poster presented above is an example of Soviet anti-military propaganda media mentioned earlier. During Brezhnev's rule, capitalist countries were heavily criticized for their military actions. One of the countries, most frequently mentioned in that context was America. In addition to denouncing America for being violent towards other countries, the USSR blamed it for initiating the emergence of the Cold War (Lozhkov, 2013, pp. 189-199).

This poster essentially outlines the contrast between Soviet and American values. The viewer sees the stork carrying a child on the Soviet side, compared to a military aircraft carrying a bomb on the American side, and concludes that the USSR cares about the future, education, children, and peace, while the US is pursuing its own self-serving goals. The color choice also supports the previous statement. On the Soviet side of the poster, the sky is blue and clear. On the American side, on the other hand, the sky is dark. This poster provokes powerful feelings in its audience. The idea of children is highly pure and gentle. Children are fragile and need to be handled with care. When children are placed next to something as appalling and cynical as an atomic bomb, a substantial feeling of contrast is created. If the child is somehow associated with one country and the bomb with another, the viewer has no other choice than to side with the former.

Anti-Religious Propaganda

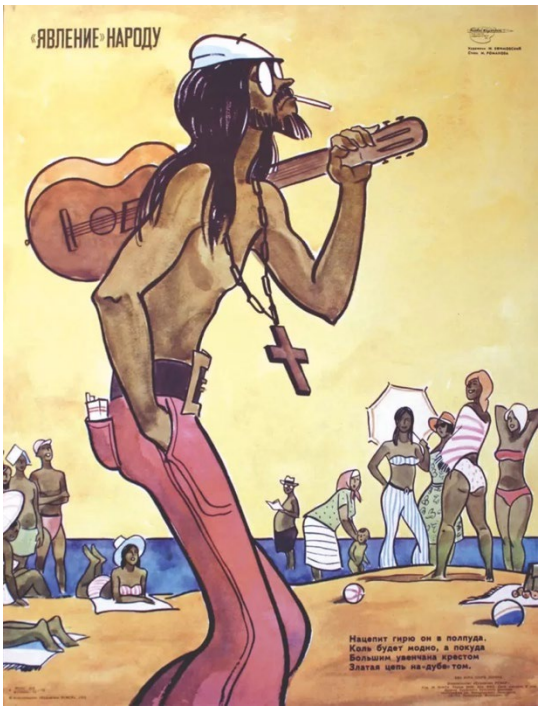


Figure 3. 1970-1980 Soviet Poster "Appearance" to the People". (Efimovskii, 1970-1980) Caption reads:

"He will wear a heavy dumbbell,
If it comes into style,
He wears a big cross meanwhile,
And a gold chain on this "oak" is bound."

The Soviet critique of religion was motivated by the idea that if the latter in its often fundamental form existed in the Soviet Union, it would interfere with the promotion of the Communist ideology. Karl Marx stated: "Religion is the opium of the people". The Soviet government wanted to eliminate any type of "opium," except for Communism. The Soviets wanted Communism to become religion, and that could not happen without the elimination of every other kind of religion beforehand (Berdyaev, 1955, p. 129). Interestingly enough, this idea of total belief in one teaching conveniently aligns with one of the ten commandments: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image" (*King James Bible, 2008,* Exodus 20:2–17).

The poster presented above portrayed the image of a religious person of the 1970s. At that time, religion was gaining popularity among young people, hence the connection between fashion and religious tendencies in the caption. The purpose of this poster is to devalue religion and make fun of it, make it something irrelevant and frankly ridiculous, to reduce its popularity.

The included poster topics are the most common types of Soviet poster propaganda. The Soviet government has figured out a way to influence the perception of numerous other fields and areas by ordinary people's lives with propaganda posters composed using sophisticated techniques. The posters that were displayed were just the most vivid examples.

Soviet Propaganda Through Television

Another highly effective propaganda media type is promotional cinematography. Information broadcasted in movies is usually consumed by the masses, including uneducated people, who do not read history books or pay attention to political lectures. This popularity allowed movies to spread propaganda among all layers of society. It was not a coincidence that Lenin said: "The cinema is for us the most important of the arts" (Lenin, V. I. (1922), quoted by Boltyansky G. M.).

Movies can adjust their audience's perception of a certain situation in the needed way. Cinema is another great example of propaganda media that can cause emotions. Suppose a situation in which the main character of a movie finds themselves is well-described, and the character's emotions and actions are justified. In that case, the viewer automatically sides with said character. That allowed the Soviet government to create a particular picture in their citizens' minds and make them have a positive attitude and respect towards, for example, the Soviet leaders. The most important part of this is that the main character's worldview and values can be very different from those of the viewers. However, the effectively depicted motivation of these views makes said viewer accept and sometimes adopt them (Sorochenko, 2002).

Another advantage of indoctrination through movies is that it provides a suitable method of rewriting history. The rich, intricate detail in which movies are created helps build a seemingly realistic image of an event, person, or story. It is an instinct of the human mind to mistake anything that is well-described for the truth (Sorochenko, 2002). Soviet propaganda movies filmed in the Brezhnev period will be analyzed below.

"I Serve the Soviet Union" (1968)

The movie "I Serve the Soviet Union" ("Служу Советскому Союзу") is based on the major military training exercises event that went on in 1967 in Ukraine, in honor of the 50th birthday of Soviet Armed Forces. Footage from these military exercises was included in the movie. In addition to that, the movie also featured recordings of the Soviets taking over the Reichstag in 1945, The Nuremberg trials, a military parade on the Red Square, the war in Vietnam, and other wars in which the US participated, and many other types of military footage. All the tapes were narrated by actor and broadcaster Leonid Khmara. The movie starts by going over the numerous Soviet military achievements. Then the narrator states: "When Berlin fell, and the people's court pronounced its sentence to fascism, humanity was hoping that reason had prevailed, and that a time of peace had come. However, abusing people's hopes and breaking the laws of rationality and moral conscience, acting in their interests, American imperialists are trying to institute the policies of their so-called "free world" with the use of bullets, bayonets, napalm, and bombs" (I Serve the Soviet Union [Служу Советскому Союзу].) After that, recordings of American aircraft in Vietnam and Israeli aircraft flying above groups of fleeing Arabs, followed by a depiction of a swastika. The rest of the movie is mostly filled with footage from the previously mentioned Soviet military exercises.

This movie is another example of Soviet anti-war propaganda media. American imperialists, in this case, are seen as the enemies, opposing individuals who are in the wrong and who need to be set straight. This movie contains counter-propaganda, which was mentioned earlier. The Soviet government hoped to strengthen the Soviet citizens' love and appreciation of their state and ideology by showing how the world could look like for another country inferior to the USSR. To emphasize the disgracefulness of the American armed forces, they are even compared to Nazis through the association with a swastika. The Nazis are an example of a widely judged group of people. However, one can only imagine the amount of detestation a Soviet citizen - especially one who went through WWII - feels for fascist symbolism. When a connection between such a negative symbol as a swastika and a country is created, one cannot help but feel hate for this country, starting to respect their own country to a greater extent. This idea of "love through hate" is frankly paradoxical and hypocritical, but it works. People like to be right, morally correct, good. What can make one feel like a good person more than comparing themself to a person they consider flawed and thus inferior to themself?

The hypocrisy of this movie is even more visible, considering it features recordings of Soviet military exercises. Why can the Soviets use weapons while continuing to stay on moral high ground and criticizing

Americans for "instituting the policies of their so-called "free world" with the use of bullets, bayonets, napalm, and bombs." The only answer is that the USSR considered itself superior to other countries and encouraged its citizens to believe the same notion.

"The Brave Five" (1970)

"The Brave Five" ("Пятерка отважных") is a children's movie, the events of which take place in Minsk, Belarus in 1969. The main characters – five thirteen-year-olds – are exploring a museum dedicated to the memory of the Second World War. As they listen to the horrific tales about the events of the war, they become so invested in the story that they can travel through time and end up in the year 1942, in the middle of WWII. The children decide to fight against the Nazis, making an oath of loyalty to each other. Together, they complete challenging missions designed to counter and weaken the enemy. They succeed at their task. At the movie's end, the kids come back to the museum.

This movie is an example of many Soviet war movies that make a powerful impression on their viewers. It is the feeling of terror and hostility directed at the enemy, in this case the German army. This condemnation for a foreign group of people again creates the separation between "us" and "them." This separation is beneficial for a totalitarian government. Common hate for something external causes a more profound sense of unity in a group of people. The existence of a "them" automatically implies the existence of an "us."

"The Brave Five" causes a feeling of excitement and pride in a Soviet or Russian person. The way "we" once again manage to beat "them" creates an illusion of belonging to an entirely indestructible state, and war starts to seem almost romantic. The romanization of war was a widespread occurrence in Soviet cinema and literature. It has to be noted that the peace-promoting campaigns that were implemented in the 1970s did not interfere with the creation of "The Brave Five." This existence of contradicting values points to the fact that the Soviet government was often bordering on hypocrisy in its propaganda ideas. They essentially changed the morals they were preaching, depending on what seemed most suitable in a given situation.

The analyzed movie is an excellent example of how children's minds were filled with propaganda from early childhood. The children in question were exposed to and encouraged to participate in xenophobia and hate at an age where their perception of the world only started developing, which essentially means that some Soviet citizens' mindsets and values were formed partially by propaganda.

The two analyzed movies were designed to cause an emotional response in their audience. In both, said emotional response is a condemnation of an enemy, followed by a deepened sense of unity with the Soviet government and its attributes. However, if the first movie was directed towards adults, whose minds and views were more or less developed, the second one was made to influence children, who often tended to consume and internalize their information. It can be concluded that the Soviet government forced its beliefs on people, no matter their age.

Soviet Propaganda Through Literary Works and Art

Soviet indoctrination was widely spread by literature during the Stalin era. Stalin viewed literature as an essential form of art, and, naturally, that meant that he wanted Soviet literature to spread the Communist ideology and other beliefs of the Soviet government (Bondarenko). Not coincidentally, during Stalin's rule, specifically in 1934, Socialist Realism was declared the only style of literature allowed and encouraged in the USSR (Morson, 2013). Socialist Realism had characteristics that are usual for Soviet propaganda – for example, the description of countless Soviet and Communist heroes that gave rise to the feeling of pride for the USSR the Soviet reader (Mahajan, et al, 2013).

The rise of the propaganda literature industry occurred during the Stalin era, and the most influential Soviet promotional books were written well before Brezhnev came to power. One example of such a book is "How Steel was Tempered" by Nikolai Ostrovsky - a tale of a model Soviet citizen who sacrificed everything

for the sake of his country. Another propaganda book worth mentioning is "Young Guard" by Alexander Fadeev – a description of the history of the self-titled anti-fascist organization organized by Russian youth during WWII. These books and many other similar ones were very successful among the Soviets. Some of them were included in school curriculum mandatory reading lists. It can be suggested that these books were still being read in the 1970s and had an effect, Soviet propaganda aimed at, on their readers. This effect not only implied the development of national pride in Soviet citizens but also included an ethics lesson for the readers. These books preached a set of behavioral patterns and values that was endorsed in the USSR (Ponomarev, 2017). This pedagogical approach to literature directed not only at children but also at adults points out that these books were an attempt to reconstruct the human mind.

The Brezhnev period was more notable for its repressive approach to literature than its production. After the era of Khrushchev's reforms, which caused a weakening in censorship, Brezhnev decided to implement harsher rules considering literary work. In fact, at the very beginning of his rule, Brezhnev ordered the arrest of two "anti-Soviet" writers – Andrey Sinyavsky and Yuly Daniel (Morson, 2020). Censorship of literature was one of the Soviet repressive strategies used to reduce individuality. The most talented writers of 20th century Russia suffered after hitting the brick wall of Soviet censorship. G. Revzin said: "It is a story of people, with three years of formal education, being ordered to censure cultural geniuses of the 20th century…." Essentially one was not allowed to express their opinion if it did not perfectly align with that of the government, which led to the consumption and acceptance of information promoted by the Soviet ruler - other information was hard to access.

In terms of artistic expression, the Soviet government was stringent. An artist interviewed for this project argues that it was very complicated for him to express himself artistically during the 1970s and Soviet time in general. To earn money as an artist, one had to join the Artist's Union of the USSR, being a member of which implied the creation of certain types of promotional artworks. The mentioned artist recalls that he once assembled a philosophical collage artwork depicting religious symbols, such as a drawing of Jesus Christ. This collage was exhibited, and seen by the City Committee, which demanded instantly dispose of the unacceptably vulgar image, as it was promoting values that the Soviet government did not support. Another artwork he made included a joke about Brezhnev. It was not exhibited for the public to see. However, the artist showed it to a person who had much knowledge about governmental repression. The latter was "terrified" because, according to the interviewee, she knew which consequences awaited people who created and presented such artworks. The artist remembers that he, along with other creators, was regularly lectured by the party officials about the criteria determining how art should be made. "Artists were generally a type of people who needed to be controlled. There were days when we were gathered and had a talk with the KGB […] Once, they provided the example of a certain sculptor, who regularly met up with foreign citizens and thought the KGB did not know about his actions. […] To an extent, they were trying to scare us" The interviewee, who seems to have a generally positive perception of the Soviet Union, states that the reason he is content with the Union falling apart is directly connected to the artistic liberties its end allowed. The artist adds that he would not be able to fully embrace his artistic style if not for the collapse of the USSR. (Anonymous informant #2, 2021)

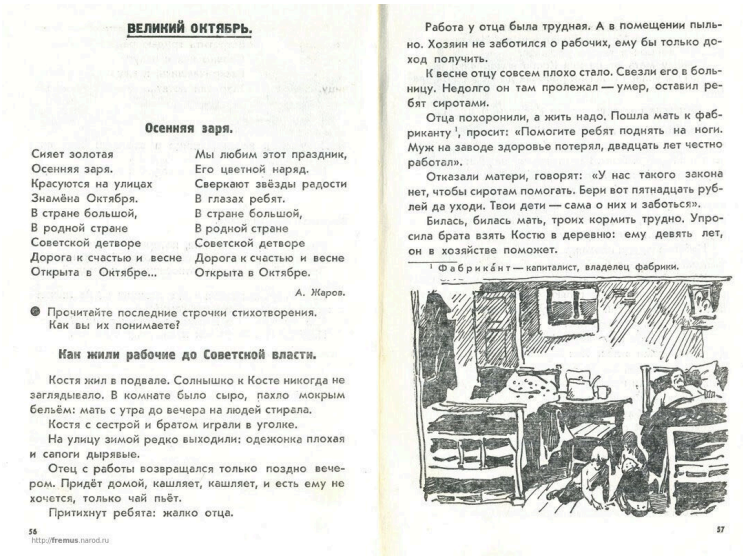
It can be argued that the only two options for the Soviet citizens, in terms of literature and art, were to either consume the information promoted by the government and suffer its consequences or somehow get oppositional literature or art, viewing it on their own risk. Similarly, creators could either make media that was considered acceptable, even if it did not align with their values, or make controversial media, compromising their safety.

Soviet Propaganda Through Textbooks

As was already mentioned, propaganda influenced Soviet citizens since their childhood. Schools were promoting Soviet propaganda. It is easier to change the worldview of a child rather than a grown person who has

already formed a firm set of beliefs. Psychology recognizes this manipulation technique as "imprinting" – lessons and preachings taught to a young child leave a firm impression on their mind, an impression that may last throughout their whole life (Olsen, 2016). The USSR's motivation in brainwashing children can be easily explained. Children are quite literally the future. They make up the new generation, some of whom will become the rulers' successors. Making their future successors similar to themselves in ways of thinking is a vital interest of all totalitarian rulers (Fritz). How propaganda was used on children in 1970s textbooks will be explained below.

Propaganda appeared in Soviet textbooks, not depending on the age of the children the textbooks were created for. Below are two pages from the textbook titled "Flag. Literature for Second Graders" written by M. S. Vasilyeva in 1972.



ВЕЛИКИЙ ОКТЯБРЬ.

Осенняя заря.

Сияет золотая
Осенняя заря.
Красуются на улицах
Знамёна Октября.
В стране большой,
В родной стране
Советской детворе
Дорога к счастью и весне
Открыта в Октябре...

Мы любим этот праздник,
Его цветной наряд.
Сверкают звёзды радости
В глазах ребят.
В стране большой,
В родной стране
Советской детворе
Дорога к счастью и весне
Открыта в Октябре.

А. Жаров.

● Прочитайте последние строчки стихотворения. Как вы их понимаете?

Как жили рабочие до Советской власти.

Костя жил в подвале. Солнышко к Косте никогда не заглядывало. В комнате было сыро, пахло мокрым бельём: мать с утра до вечера на людей стирала.

Костя с сестрой и братом играли в уголке.

На улицу зимой редко выходили: одежонка плохая и сапоги дырявые.

Отец с работы возвращался только поздно вечером. Придёт домой, кашляет, кашляет, и есть ему не хочется, только чай пьёт.

Притихнут ребята: жалко отца.

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Работа у отца была трудная. А в помещении пыльно. Хозяин не заботился о рабочих, ему бы только доход получить.

К весне отцу совсем плохо стало. Свезли его в больницу. Недолго он там пролежал — умер, оставил ребят сиротами.

Отца похоронили, а жить надо. Пошла мать к фабриканту [1], просит: «Помогите ребят поднять на ноги. Муж на заводе здоровье потерял, двадцать лет честно работал».

Отказали матери, говорят: «У нас такого закона нет, чтобы сиротам помогать. Бери вот пятнадцать рублей да уходи. Твои дети — сама о них и заботься».

Билась, билась мать, троих кормить трудно. Упросила брата взять Костю в деревню: ему девять лет, он в хозяйстве поможет.

[1] Фабрика́нт — капиталист, владелец фабрики.

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Figure 4. Fragment from A Soviet Textbook "FLAG. A Reading Book for the Second Grade" (Vasilyeva et al, 1972).

The first section of this segment describes the attractions of the celebration of the October Revolution to its audience. After that, the eight-year-old readers are acquainted with the struggles of the life of the working class before the said revolution. A tale of a boy named Kostya is told. Kostya lived in a cold basement flat with his parents and siblings. Kostya only saw his father in the evenings when the latter came back home after a long workday. Even though he was a hard-working man, Kostya's father could barely support his family. One day, he got so exhausted that he got ill. Later he died. After his funeral, Kostya's mother went to the factory owner, in which her husband worked, to ask him for compensation or a loan that would help her support her children. Even though Kostya's dad worked for him tirelessly for twenty years, the factory owner declined Kostya's mother's request, saying: "Our country does not have a law that obliges me to help orphans." Nine-year-old Kostya's story ended with his being sent to the countryside with his uncle to help the adults with agricultural work.

The story, recited in the presented textbook, tells second graders about the joys of living in the Soviet Union by comparing it with a story of the olden times when the working class was repressed. This is a typical example of counter-propaganda, except the propaganda is written for eight-year-old children.

It is not important in this case whether the described propaganda notions were true or untrue. This discussion merely focuses on the age of the recipients of said notions and the principle of imprinting.

Figure 5. Fragment from A Soviet Textbook "Russian Language in Pictures. Part 2" (Barannikov et al, 1972). Presented above is a fragment from "Russian Language in Pictures. Part 2," written by I. V. Barannikov in 1965, which tells its readers about the jobs and responsibilities of different military officers. It needs to be remembered that this textbook came out simultaneously as the Soviet peace-promoting propaganda campaigns were active. The familiarization of children with war was a common phenomenon in the Soviet Union. It can be suggested that children were being prepared to, in the future, if such need arises, "protect their country."

Children are highly impressionable. Making them believe something, especially if their teachers spread this belief, is easy and convenient. Knowing that the Soviet government made sure that children's school books included the Soviet values and the horrors of Tsarist Russia so that toddlers knew how happy they were to live in such a great state as the Soviet Union.

Findings

The previous discussion has shown that Soviet propaganda was implemented through various media types and was directed at a large variety of people in the 1970s. The values and views forced by this propaganda were as follows:

1. Favorable treatment of Soviet rulers (current and previous)
2. Positive perception of the Communist ideology
3. Separation from religion
4. Detestation of the military actions of every state, except the USSR (because, allegedly, in the case of the latter, participation in wars could only be caused by its necessity to protect itself or others in need)
5. The idea of an "us" and a "them" - separation from the enemy
6. Recognition of Soviet heroes

The techniques used to spread these notions through media included the creation of pleasant associations related to everything promoted by Soviet propaganda, such as Soviet rulers and heroes, which were set next to, for example, the Soviet flag or children. The inverse to this was depiction of things that were supposed to be disapproved of, such as religion and ideological enemies. These were connected to unpleasant images. This influenced the choice of colors in propaganda art, so Communist heroes were usually portrayed in light colors. The concurrent use of red was the symbolic color of Soviet Communism, and ideological enemies were depicted in dark and gloomy colors. Counter propaganda is sometimes aimed at drawing ridicule down on its subjects, which can be seen in the anti-religious poster presented above. This propaganda often created a contrast between the enemy and the ally. All this was used in propaganda, television, and art.

In literature, a slightly altered version of the same principle was applied. Here things promoted by Soviet propaganda were connected to pleasant concepts, such as heroism and integrity. Literature that showed the Soviet Union in a rather unbeneficial way was heavily censored and generally banned.

Such propaganda was used on Soviets from an early age, which leads to the conclusion that it might have been more effective, as children are more susceptible to propaganda as a whole. This can be supported by the discussion of the principle of imprinting which went on earlier.

The next section of this paper will discuss whether the listed values were successfully enforced onto Soviet citizens through the mentioned techniques and how they influenced and/or continue to influence their perception of life.

Research Methodology

In order to find out whether the previously described propaganda techniques worked and continue working to this day, five ex-Soviets that lived in the USSR during the Brezhnev period were contacted and asked if they would be comfortable participating in interviews. They were told that the focus of this research paper is the Soviet Union in the 1970s as a whole, not specifying that the topic was the effectiveness of propaganda of that time, in order to make sure their answers would stay truthful, and they would not try to come across as highly unbiased. The goal was to find out their genuine opinion on concepts, the perception of which propaganda attempted to alter.

The five people interviewed come from various countries, and thus possess different experiences in terms of cultural upbringing. They are predominantly part of the working class. They were all brought up in ordinary families, living in small towns, without any privileges or concessions assigned to them by birthright. This means that they present a cross-section of the ordinary Soviet citizens, the majority, at which Soviet propaganda was aimed. Most of these people have not had major exposure to the concept and strategy of Soviet propaganda. However, one of them was involved in its production and had a noticeable difference from the others in the opinions he held. Therefore, he will be discussed separately. All interviewees' statements will be compared to the value set promoted by Soviet propaganda, stated earlier. The differences between the outlook on the world of people oblivious to propaganda methods, and the one who is not will point to conclusions of the effectiveness of Soviet propaganda.

Results

The Impact of Propaganda on The Interviewees, Unexposed to Propaganda Production

Table 1. Trends in the Perception of Notions Covered by Soviet Propaganda by People Unexposed to Propaganda Production.

Propaganda Notion	%of Interviewees (n = 4), Expressing Agreement	% of Interviewees (n = 4), Expressing Disagreement
Favorable treatment of Soviet rulers	100	0
Positive perception of Communism by itself	100	0
Positive perception of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union	0	100
Separation from religion	50	50

Detestation of the military actions of every state, except the USSR	100	0
The idea of an “us” and a “them”	100	0
Recognition of Soviet heroes	100	0

When discussing Soviet rulers, Stalin seems not to be a person of interest in Soviet propaganda of the 1970s, so only Lenin and Brezhnev will be discussed. Being a staple in Soviet society, Lenin is well-received by all four interviewees. They all state that they think, or thought at the time, that Lenin was a "great man" who built Communism in the Soviet Union from the ground up (Anonymous informant #3, 2021). Interestingly enough, several people used the following phrase (or a variation of it) to support this belief: "As a child, I was a Little Octobrist, at school I was a Pioneer, and as an adult, I became a Komsomol member" (Anonymous informants #1, #3, #4, 2021). Komsomol is the abbreviation for "Kommunistichesky Soyuz Molodyozhi," which translates to the Communist League of Youth, which most young Soviets joined at fourteen. The Little Octobrist Organization and the All-Union Lenin Pioneer Organization were versions of the Komsomol league created for children under fourteen. The former had members aged younger than nine years old, while the latter was created for ages between nine and fourteen years old (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica). One could argue that this implies that these posts are somehow associated with the appreciation of Vladimir Lenin. That indicates that gratitude to leaders was part of Soviet doctrine. However, most surveyed people make the statement mentioned above without noticing said implication. It seems that it is only natural to them that taking these posts should make Lenin an important figure. Some also state that Lenin was a superhuman, an image, rather than a person: "Lenin is more alive than all those living" (Anonymous informant #3, 2021). This makes Lenin similar to a religious figure, a god of sorts, which supports the previously stated idea that the Communist ideology itself was a kind of religion. Note that this aligns perfectly with the famous propaganda poster, which states: "Lenin lived, Lenin lives, Lenin always will live!". Although this was the most popular approach to Lenin, one person perceives him differently and argues that "he destroyed the Russian intelligentsia" (Anonymous informant #4, 2021). However, he adds that he had a more favorable opinion on him in his childhood because Octobrists were taught the merits of Lenin - remember the previously presented textbooks - which forced them to believe in his greatness.

Brezhnev, on the other hand, is perceived well too. Most say that they respected him, mentioning again that "they were Octobrists, Pioneers, and Komsomols" (Anonymous informant #1, 2021), however, with less enthusiasm than when talking about Lenin. One of the interviewees, an artist, recalls being ordered to make customized souvenirs for Brezhnev that were given to him by party members from the artist's town during their visit to Moscow. He seems proud to be able to say that (Anonymous informant #2, 2021). All interviewees call Brezhnev an intelligent, energetic person who has done a lot for the Soviet economy (Anonymous informants #1, #2, #3, #4, 2021).

The interviewees' perception of the Communist ideology is overall positive (Anonymous informants #1, #2, #3, #4, 2021). However, while some seem to have a favorable opinion on Soviet Communism, others state that they appreciate the idea of Communism but dislike how it was interpreted by the Soviet government (Anonymous informants #3, #4, 2021). Anonymous Interviewee #2 states that if one reads the "Moral Code of the Builder of Communism", the statements made in the said book would seem to be correct. He then proceeds to compare them to the ten commandments stated in the Bible, drawing another parallel between the idea of Soviet Communism and religion. The Communist party, however, is received unfavorably (Anonymous informants #1, #2, #3, #4, 2021). Anonymous interviewee #3, who was a member, goes as far as to call it "boring and stupid," which describes how Communism separated from the Soviet Communist Party at a certain point. However, the general good attitude towards Communism implies that Soviet propaganda must have completed its goal to describe Communism as a good ideology. Anonymous interviewee #1 states that the advantages of Communism were described at public events and functions: "We were told about it by party chiefs, secretaries,

agitators at meetings, in schools." Notice the use of language here: "told," not "propagandized." The same interviewee denies that she was biased earlier in the interview after being accused of "being brainwashed" by her husband, who sometimes participated in the interview. That must mean that Soviet propaganda was such an ordinary occurrence that people did not even notice its influence on their lives and minds. The interviewees' generally complementary perception of Communism suggests that this propaganda partially worked.

On the other hand, anti-religious propaganda had a different effect on the Soviets' lives. Two of the surveyed people state that they believe in God and have always believed in him. These interviewees are devout Christians who regularly visit churches (Anonymous informants #1, #4, 2021). When asked about how the ban on religion influenced their faith, they state that the former did not significantly affect the latter. They add that the secret of being a religious person in the Soviet Union lay in being one unnoticeably – "The church in my village was closed, but there was another church in a neighboring village [...] No one really tried to control my faith" (Anonymous informant #4, 2021). The interviewees who identify as Christians come from religious families. Other interviewees, whose families were not religious, state that religion in its original form was not even introduced into their lives - it was not talked about at schools. This brings up the point that the belief in God could only come from one's family. Anonymous interviewee #2 mentions that his first introduction to religion happened through an anti-religious book. Later, when he got older, he gained access to the Bible and read it from cover to cover. He states that he was impressed by it. His words imply that mere access to an ideology, separate from Soviet Communism, was limited. One had to work proactively to familiarize with religion if their family did not perform this function. Some interviewees state that their faith strengthened after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Anonymous informants #1, #4, 2021). The presented information indicates that, even though existing Christians were not largely persecuted, the possibility of one becoming a Christian at all was unlikely if their family was not religious, to begin with.

The idea of war and military actions overall is perceived negatively by the interviewees. They all seem to have fresh memories about World War II, as some of their parents and other relatives participated in the war. The words that are used to describe war are "unnatural," and "frightful" (Anonymous informants #2, #3, #4, 2021). Logically this should imply that war as a whole, initiated by any state, should be seen as something "unnatural," "frightful," and "bad." However, this is not the case. When asked about the degree to which the USSR was an aggressive state, interviewees lean to the statement that it was less aggressive than other world powers, such as the USA and NATO (Anonymous informants #1, #2, #4, 2021). When anonymous interviewee #1 is reminded about the Soviet-initiated wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Finland by her husband, she says, "[The interviewer] does not need that right now". She then calls the Soviet Union a relatively peaceful state. Overall, the surveyed people seem to be very educated about the military actions of every state, except the Soviet Union. When asked about Stalin's interests in the continuation of World War II, some of the interviewees seem offended. They say that "In comparison with Hitler, Stalin was way less violent" (Anonymous informants #2, #4, 2021). Judging by their ignorance about the wars initiated by the USSR, the interviewees were exposed to a certain amount of Soviet propaganda related to the state's peacefulness.

The idea of an "us" and a "them" seems to still be present in ex-Soviets minds. This separation from other states can both have negative and positive implications. When asked about their perception of America in the 1970s, some of the surveyed people state that it was an ideological enemy (Anonymous informants #1, #2, 2021). However, others recall seeing America and Europe as something magical, similar to a fairy tale, almost made up. This created the impression that the USSR was sealed from the outside world, and the Soviets could only imagine what life was like in other countries, outside of the Union. Some interviewees remember reading American literature, and magazines, wearing American clothes, and feeling fascinated by this image of something new and, to an extent, forbidden (Anonymous informants #1, #3, #4, 2021). The Germans, however, are mostly described negatively – note that the word used here is "Germans", not "Nazis". The interviewees talk about Germany as a type of a Hitler state and point out the advantages of the Soviet Union compared to it. Based on all mentioned opinions, it can be concluded that there was and continues to be a specific line between

"us" – the Soviets, and "them" – residents of other states in the Soviets' minds.

When asked about Soviet heroes, most interviewees seem to be lost. They ask for clarification – "What kind of heroes? From which field?" They list war heroes – Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, Aleksey Maresyev, Mikhail Tukhachevsky, Georgy Zhukov, and Alexander Matrosov (Anonymous informants #2, #3, #4, #5, 2021). They name astronauts - Yuri Gagarin, Aleksey Leonov, Valentina Tereshkova, and Andriyan Nikolayev (Anonymous informants #1, #2, #4, 2021). One of the peaceful citizens mentions Andrei Sakharov – the creator of the first Soviet atomic weapon, saying that he "evened the score between the USSR and America" (Anonymous informant #3, 2021). It seems like heroes were a staple of Soviet society. One interviewee recalls having posters of pioneer heroes on the walls of his school hallways (Anonymous informant #2, 2021). Soviets were taught to appreciate their heroes from their childhood.

On average, the views of the four interviewees, unexposed to the production of Soviet propaganda aligned with 78.6% of the notions distributed by Soviet propaganda. 21.4 percent of the interviewees' values differed from those of Soviet propaganda.

The Impact of Propaganda on The Interviewee, Exposed to Propaganda Production

Table 2. Trends in the Perception of Notions Covered by Soviet Propaganda by the Person Exposed to Propaganda Production.

Propaganda Notion	Interviewee (n = 1) Expresses Agreement	Interviewee (n = 1) Expresses Disgreement
Favorable treatment of Soviet rulers	Yes	No
Positive perception of Communism by itself	No	Yes
Positive perception of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union	No	Yes
Separation from religion	No	Yes
Detestation of the military actions of every state, except the USSR	No	Yes
The idea of an "us" and a "them"	Yes	No
Recognition of Soviet heroes	Yes	No

All previously discussed opinions were presented by ex-Soviets, unfamiliar with the principles of Soviet propaganda. Anonymous interviewee #5, who took part in the production of said propaganda, makes different statements. While he still respects Lenin and Brezhnev, his perception of them seems calmer and evaluated than that of other interviewees. He also states that "he did not treat Lenin fanatically, " implying that others did. His opinion on the Communist party, on the other hand, is generally pessimistic. He states that the party officials were very much separated from the Soviet citizens, and the picture created astound them was different from reality. He does not approve of Communism as a whole either. The interviewee's religious beliefs are also similar to the others' – he believes in god, regardless of propaganda notions. The significant differences in the discussed interviewee's opinions from those of the others start when is asked whether the Soviet Union was an aggressive state. He names the wars, which, in his opinion, were initiated by the Soviet Union. He also outlines the benefits Stalin got from the Union's participation in the Second World war. He also does not seem to separate the USSR from other states as much as the other interviewees. Anonymous interviewee #5 considers all major world powers equally aggressive. When asked about America, he calls it "the enemy of the Soviet Union" in a somewhat ironic, trained way of a propagandist. However, he does name and respect Soviet heroes.

On average, the surveyed person who was previously exposed to the production of Soviet propaganda

agreed with 43.9% of notions promoted by Soviet propaganda. He disagreed with 57.1% of them.

Discussion

Judging by the gap between the opinions of Ex-Soviets who do not have a lot of knowledge of the techniques of propaganda and those of the ones who did, it can be concluded that exposure to propaganda without an understanding of what it is can lead to alterations in one's world-views. The interviewee who participated in propaganda distribution was aware of the often untruthful nature of what he was spreading and thus did not believe in it. The others, however, were less educated in that field and were susceptible to the influence of Soviet propaganda.

It seems that the discussed propaganda methods were somewhat effective in making the Soviets' beliefs shift and adjust to the requirements of the government, which made controlling them more manageable. A considerable amount of values promoted by this propaganda lined up with the values the subjects of these interviews hold.

The performed interviews show that, to a person not accustomed to their analysis, Soviet propaganda techniques were, if not wholly unknown, then unnoticeable. Ideas such as the "greatness of Lenin", "peacefulness of the USSR", and separation from external enemies seem to come from an elaborate propaganda system that influenced Soviets since their school years, which means that at a certain point propaganda became so mundane that it stopped being visible to Soviet citizens. The notions that propaganda promoted, analyzed previously in the media section, are generally held by most surveyed interviewees.

Some of the notions were promoted more effectively than others. For instance, respect for Brezhnev and rejection of religion were not such common occurrences, as the contradistinction of "us" and "them" and love for Soviet heroes and Communist ideology. Some opinions were altered from the original view promoted by Soviet propaganda. America, for example, was not always seen as the enemy. Instead, it was perceived as something very different from the Soviet Union, something ephemeral, almost magical. However, it can be seen how ex-Soviets continue to hold and embrace certain propaganda viewpoints throughout their whole life, long after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Examples of these are their respect for Lenin and denial of Soviet military aggression.

An interesting pattern that can be observed here is that most of the interviewees mentioned being educated about many of these notions from a young age. One can only imagine how a person should perceive the world if they were continuously exposed to consistent messaging from such an early age. If we refer to the technique known as "imprinting," discussed earlier, we can conclude that impressions taken in by a child can stay with them their whole life, often evolving into their lifelong opinions and views (Olsen, 2016).

One can conclude that if a child had no family and/or access to contradictory knowledge, they had no other choice than to absorb the information distributed by Soviet propaganda. Later on, this information was supported by propaganda media aimed at adults, such as posters, political lectures, and literature. It is interesting how ex-Soviets' views seem to stay roughly the same thirty years after the collapse of the USSR and fifty years after the period under consideration here. It can be expected that the propaganda the interview subjects absorbed a considerable amount of time ago was so influential that it will continue to work throughout their whole lives.

However, there is another explanation for these views staying unchanged. In his book "Influence", Robert Cialdini mentions humans' need to stay consistent. This need can be explained by the overall appreciation of consistency in society. The fact that holding on to their previously obtained values allows one to overlook new information, which might suggest that they were wrong. Being wrong is unarguably unpleasant. This leads to many people choosing to stay oblivious to new factors that can influence their opinion, not feeling like they have been under a false impression for a long time. This can explain why many Soviets continue to believe the notions promoted by Soviet propaganda when they have the chance to obtain new information.

All this can also be linked to the lack of critical thinking created by propaganda. Critical thinking

becomes unnecessary when a person is given processed information all their life, and all this information perfectly lines up into a certain perception of the world. Later, however, when new information resurfaces, the brainwashed person does not have the habit or the capacity to evaluate this information and alter or strengthen their worldview based on this evaluation. Instead, they just ignore this new knowledge.

The collected data supports the argument that Soviet propaganda worked, as it was used on extremely young people and continues to work due to certain psychological conditions of human beings.

Conclusion

Propaganda was widely spread through different types of promotional media in the USSR in the 1970s. The conducted interviews have shown that the propaganda that Soviet citizens were exposed to in the 1970s influenced many important parts of the Soviets' lives, such as their religious beliefs, self-expression, philosophical views, perception of politics, and their viewpoint on their own and other states. This supports the idea that propaganda of that time can be considered substantially effective in many areas. The constant promotion of certain viewpoints and notions, taken in by an ordinary person, evidently harms their ability to think critically and evaluate the proposed information. That is shown when the interviewees use vocabulary and phrases used in Soviet propaganda, sometimes even verbatim. After all these years, the perception of certain Soviet leaders and ideology by ex-Soviets still reminds of a religion.

In order to avoid being manipulated and keep their ability to form personal opinions based on the acquired knowledge, one has to remember the main characteristics of propaganda. One of them is its repetitiveness which leads to the point where the words used in a widely known slogan become so familiar to people's collective consciousness, that they lose their meaning. One must constantly think about what he is hearing and question and analyze it to form an independent opinion.

Propaganda can also make its targets treat the promoted concepts or people with nearly religious love and trust. These love and trust are usually blind. Critical thinking vanishes and the human need for consistency causes the propaganda viewer to continue believing in the goodness of something without occasionally analyzing the validity of this belief. An extension of this is the presence of strong negative emotions towards a thing propaganda opts against. These emotions usually do not have a coherent explanation.

Another specificity of propaganda is its ability to create associations between the people, activities, or organizations it promotes with something that causes positive and often sentimental emotions. Such things are carefully chosen – they are entirely apolitical, not at all controversial. They can include children, animals, nature, death, tragedy, etc. – the simplest, most understandable parts of human life that everyone knows, that most people have the same, defined opinion on (animals – good, death – bad) are easy to use in order to manipulate these people. If a political poster, for example, causes a strong emotional response, its creators might be trying to control their audience's opinions.

If a promoted notion seems sensational, too good to be true, it is probably propaganda. Real good news has a reasonable explanation and always comes with its conditions, some of them disadvantageous but, most importantly, real.

One has to protect their children from propaganda from an early age, teaching them to understand the principles of imprinting. Children are often vulnerable, which makes them susceptible to propaganda. They are often its target. A parent must make it their job to teach their children analysis and critical thinking skills.

Propaganda is hard to avoid fully, but it can be rejected. One needs to be able to analyze and classify the information they consume, making their own choices in what to believe. Questioning everything seems complicated and inconvenient, but it is the only way to avoid exploitation. Mindless consumption is essentially what leads to being brainwashed.

Limitations

The main limitation of this study is its sample size. Because the author wanted to conduct an in-depth analysis of the personal history and opinions of every interviewee, she could not interview more than five people. This could possibly indicate that there are other people, the effect of propaganda on whom has been less than that of the chosen sample. However, the drastic difference between the perception of the world of the surveyed person, who participated in propaganda production from that of all interviewees who have not pointed to the conclusion that there should be a pattern in propaganda perception, even though the sample size is small.

Another limitation of this study is that it only covers the main points promoted by Soviet propaganda of the 1970s. There have possibly been a lot more areas of influence. However, this study's goal was to discuss the most popular and crucial topics of propaganda.

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