THE SOVIET UNION AND “NEW MAN” FORMATION IN SOVIET CHILDREN FROM 1962-1972

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The Soviet Union withstood a series of internal and external transformations during the decade from 1962 to 1972. The Cold War shifted from the tensions of the Cuban Missile Crisis to the signing of Anti-ballistic Missile treaty (ABM) as well as the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I). Within Soviet borders, a political transition from the leadership of Nikita Khrushchev to Leonid Brezhnev was another dramatic transformation, even though each man had a similar background, with Ukrainian and Soviet citizenship, experience in the field of metallurgy, and a distinguished military career.

Coming to power in the wake of the post-War destruction, Khrushchev had a special interest in domestic relations within the Soviet Union. He worked to rebuild the infrastructure of cities and rural towns and attempted to provide a sense of “the good life” more accessible to everyday Soviet citizens.¹ Brezhnev, on the other hand, had an almost laissez faire approach to domestic policy.² Except when it came to the growth and

¹For more on the Khrushchev era see William Taubman, Khrushchev: The Man and His Era, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004).

²One of the factors contributing to the difference in leadership styles was the fact the Khrushchev ruled by himself, whereas Brezhnev shared power with Alexei Kosygin. For more on the dual leadership of
production of Soviet military and weapons, the leader believed the domestic situation in the Soviet Union to be acceptable.³ While the world was focused on the dynamic between the Soviet Union and the United States during the Cold War, the struggles and experiences of the Soviet people are often neglected.

The traditional historiography of the 1960s and 1970s has overwhelmingly been focused on foreign policy and the Soviet leadership.⁴ As a result, Soviet society in this era has been largely neglected.⁵ Furthermore, while society has been better studied in the pre-War era, children and the experiences of childhood has been understudied in all periods of Soviet history. What was life like for a Soviet child living through the middle of the Cold War? What types of images were the children exposed to in average media exposure? Could the government have been trying to carry out a continuation of Leninist- Soviet character molding? What was education like for the Soviet child? Did education play a part in Soviet propaganda? This paper seeks to answer the questions presented as well as to provide concrete examples that will help bring the experiences of Soviet children out of the shadow of Cold War diplomacy.


⁴ For more on foreign policy under Khrushchev and Brezhnev see James M. Goldgeier, Leadership Style and Soviet Foreign Policy: Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Gorbachev (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

⁵ While a comprehensive work on Soviet society in the 1960s and 1970s does not exist, there are works that discuss certain aspects of society such as Deborah A. Field, Private Life and Communist Morality in Khrushchev’s Russia (New York: Peter Lang Publishers, 2007).
HISTORIOGRAPHY

Soviet historiography has been at the mercy of the accessibility of sources in the Soviet archives. Prior to the fall of the Soviet Union, scholarly writing was relegated to specific disciplines and eras of Communist leadership. With the increased access to the Soviet archives, some neglected periods and aspects of Soviet life have been slowly addressed, but many issues still remain untouched. Furthermore, during the Cold War, the discipline known as “Sovietology” dominated the scholarship of the contemporary landscape. Sovietology was a mix of social science disciplines, primarily political science and sociology, and its research relied heavily on current media rather than archival data.\(^6\) Therefore, the challenge of current historiography is to accommodate disciplinary differences while trying to address the continuing gaps in our knowledge.

Soviet history, like history writing in general, has experienced an evolution in methodological approaches. Traditional studies of the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras remain dominated by the political science studies that populated Soviet scholarship before, and since, the collapse of the Soviet Union. Scholars tended to look at political and foreign relations aspects of the leaders, with little attention paid to Soviet life. Recently, Soviet historians have made strides in uncovering a new dimension of Soviet

\(^6\) The extent of studies of this era therefore resides primarily in two flawed, if still useful sources, some historical studies plus various social sciences.
life outside of the Kremlin, particularly with a focus on gender. While the picture of Soviet society may be becoming more complete, attention still needs to be paid to the overlooked, “builders of communism,” the Soviet children.  

Though scholarship on children during the 1960s and 1970s is sparse, scholars have provided excellent background information for these decades. In order to better understand the lives of Soviet children, Catriona Kelly’s *Growing Up in Russia* provides a great foundation. Using oral history interviews taken from the contemporary adults who experienced life under various Soviet leaders including Brezhnev, her work demonstrates various aspects of Soviet children’s upbringing and existence. In her work she explains how “Intensive political indoctrination took place from nursery age, shaping the lives of millions of children; representations of children reflected prevailing views of ideal citizenship, from the politically engaged social activist of the 1920s or the Khrushchev thaw to the docile and grateful subject of the Stalin years.”  

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how children may have encountered images of what they were to represent based upon ideals espoused from the regime. While some scholars examine forms of media and its effect on youth and children, for the most part they engage in literature reviews and not examinations of visual media, and especially not television. While children all over the world, including within the Soviet Union, have been studied for their role in various popular protests and uprisings, my research hopes to enrich this picture by contributing the role the government may have wanted Soviet children to play in Soviet society.10

From the work of Soviet education scholars I was able to better understand the Soviet educational system and the ways in which policy and practices had changed during the early years of the Soviet Union. The scholars emphasized how the regime articulated societal norms in addition to their enforcement within the school system. They mention in detail what types of behaviors were encouraged and how pedagogy was entrusted to teach children how to behave as proper citizens of the Soviet collective.11 In a work on education under Stalin, expatriate Soviet citizens stated “while praising the system of free, universal, and mandatory education, however, approximately three-


quarters of respondents in the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System complained about excessive political content in lessons and the use of schools to spread communist ideology.”

My research contributes to the growing trend of looking at the individual in Soviet society. Instead of the more traditional view of looking at Soviet Union from a military, diplomatic, or even Soviet Marxist lens, I examine the images a Soviet child would be exposed to on a daily basis. My approach builds on the more traditional Cold War scholarship that has made lasting contributions to the field of Soviet historiography. Not only do I look at traditional mediums such as school policies and posters but also at emerging popular media in television to show how the regime may have adapted its methods to inculcate the nation’s children. My research shows how, in a selection of media, the Soviet government may have portrayed values and behaviors that may have affected children’s identity formation.

There has been a recent trend to examine Soviet “identity” by intellectual historians. These works contribute to an understanding of how ideology was used by the Soviet regime and its effect upon the individual, which contribute not only insight into the nature of Soviet identity but also demonstrate new methodologies that can be

12 Ewing, Teachers of Stalinism, p.4.

13 For more on the empirical traditions of Soviet historiography see works by Shelia Fitzpatrick, i.e. The Russian Revolution, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

employed in this study. Where my work differs is in looking at the youngest level of implementation and representation and how ideology was taken from the highest level of the government and portrayed to the average Soviet citizen.

From Sovietologists and Social Scientists, my work gained substantial knowledge about who the Soviet New Man was and what he looked like. I was able to uncover the revolutionary origins and portrait of the ideal Soviet person.\(^\text{15}\) While scholars describe traits the government desired in its citizens, it is possible to take the literary representations of the New Man and show how the images manifested themselves as images for Soviet children to see. The Soviet New Man was a widely used term during the decades following the Revolution but, declined in use in the post-War era. My research takes the representations of the original Soviet New Man and looks for his visual representation in media, as well defining what was ideal for a New Man of the 1960s and 1970s.

Additionally, works relating to television and popular culture were crucial to the scope of my research. From the works of previous scholars I was able to engage with the discussion of how Soviet citizens experienced visual media, such as movies and television. While there is a plethora of work regarding Soviet cinema, its relation to

ideology, as well as to the regime, little has been written in a similarly on television.\textsuperscript{16} As motion pictures had been around long before the introduction of television sets, the regime nevertheless saw the potential for political socialization television possessed.\textsuperscript{17} Political socialization is the process through which children learn the political system and political ideology of their country, whereas New Man formation is the process through which the people of the Soviet Union are attempted to be transformed into a Soviet New Man. As part of the educational process for Soviet children, both political socialization and New Man formation are very similar, and often overlapping, processes. New Man formation included transforming the image of children into one of the ideal citizen, but also included forming their knowledge and loyalty to the Soviet government. What my research will contribute to the work on visual media is the inclusion of programs designed especially for the influence of children.

\textbf{SOVIET SOCIETY IN THE 1960S AND 1970S}


Though the Soviet Union emerged victorious from the Great Patriotic War, the joyous mood in the country was stopped short by the realities of everyday life after the War. After the War, the basic economic structures of the country remained untouched, but what had changed was the mood of the Soviet people. Upon experiencing the great victory of winning the War, there was the expectation that society would change to benefit the people, as a reward for the tremendous sacrifices made. Society had expected that with the defeat of the Nazis, the strict Stalinist regime would ease its controls over the population, liberalizing to some extent. The years following the War brought about a crisis of expectations among the Soviet population. The population expected a change from the severe prewar and wartime years, but were disappointed with the lack of changes on behalf of the Stalinist government.18

During the War the Soviet populace experienced deprivations of all sorts, including food shortages, forced migrations, and remarkable property and housing destruction. Despite the wartime sacrifices, the populace generally believed it to be a short-term effect of the war. Even when the country experienced a terrible famine from 1946-1947, coupled with inadequate housing, and the inability of numerous regions to obtain bread for its people, Soviet citizens believed the conditions were temporary and soon to be relieved now that the War had ended. Though by 1947 the country had all but restored its prewar industrial output numbers, abolished the food rationing system, and demobilized the army, conditions in the Soviet Union were eerily similar to those of

wartime. Finally, in 1947-1948 the boundary between wartime conditions and expected peacetime conditions was reached. While the war had been over for some time, the government refused to make changes, and the people began to demand reforms that would amend the dire situations the Soviet people still faced.19

In fact, the first examples of dissent came from Soviet youth who were not witness to the horrors of Stalin’s early years and who, seemed most unlikely to disobey the regime. Like other sectors of Soviet society, youth realized life inside the Soviet Union and the regime’s propaganda was discordant. Feeling deceived, youth began to lash out at the Stalinist government.20 Teachers and leaders began to notice youth acting in ways that were unfitting of socialist citizens like speaking of matters that were personally important as well as becoming involved in counter culture movements.21 As a result of the dissatisfaction with the Stalinist regime, the government implemented political repression from 1948-1952. While the rampant political repression managed to stave off criticism of the regime, it also managed to suppress the voices that could have be used to bring about social change and revitalize the post-War state. Perhaps not the

19 Zubkova, *Russia after the War*, 102.

20 Zubkova, *Russia after the War*, 114-115.

manner in which citizens expected it, when Stalin died in 1953 the Soviet Union went through an unexpected change.\textsuperscript{22}

With the death of Stalin, the strongest connection between the government and the people was lost. The interests of the government and the people no longer seemed to coincide, thus creating a great sense of disaffection among the people.\textsuperscript{23} The government worked at maintaining the status quo that had been in place before Stalin’s death, but when the 1955 elections were due to be held, some people voiced their disappointment with the government by refusing to vote. The basis for their refusal stemmed from the fact that the Soviet government refused to fulfill promises made to the people from as far back as 1930. Living conditions of the majority of citizens had not improved, and people still had no access to the consumer goods they had been assured would be made available after the war. Worse still was the apparent disjunction between how the majority of the population lived and how party apparatchiks lived. Average citizens felt the injustice of the Soviet system was becoming too much to take and even went so far as to call for a \textit{chernyi peredel}’ where citizens would steal from the rich and give average citizens what the government had promised them.\textsuperscript{24}

Following an internal power struggle, Nikita Khrushchev emerged as the new leader of the Communist Party in 1953. His time in power and the corresponding changes

\textsuperscript{22} Zubkova, \textit{Russia after the War}, 148.

\textsuperscript{23} Zubkova, \textit{Russia after the War}, 153.

\textsuperscript{24} Zubkova, \textit{Russia after the War}, 162-163.
within Soviet society would later be described as the “Thaw” in the system, borrowing the name of a book written by Ilya Erenburg in 1954.\textsuperscript{25} The Khrushchev “Thaw” publicly began in 1959 when the leader spoke of implementing change within society. In 1959 at the Twenty-First Party Congress a measure was passed that called for a dramatic change in the living conditions for Soviet society. The Seven-Year plan stated there would be a ‘gigantic leap into the radiant future of a Communist society’ by 1965.\textsuperscript{26} At the Twenty-Second Party Congress in 1961 Khrushchev publicly denounced Stalin and removed his body from the mausoleum at Red Square. Khrushchev declared that society would return to Leninist principles calling for a break from the harsh repressive political ways under Stalin’s leadership. Khrushchev’s Thaw was intended to allow for more freedom of speech, an overall more humane way of treating the Soviet people, and an end to the political oppression that had come to symbolize Stalin’s years in power.\textsuperscript{27} The removal of Stalin’s body from the Lenin mausoleum was a symbolic move which helped to change the way society viewed their leaders. No longer were the leaders seen as invincible, as if the system of fear that Stalin had worked hard at implementing had been removed along with the leader’s body.\textsuperscript{28}

While the Thaw saw a relaxing of political oppression, it was not a time of peace and stability within Soviet society. The Khrushchev era saw citizen unrest as a result of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{25} For more see Ilya Erenburg, \textit{The Thaw}, trans. Harari, Manya Enrenburg (London: Macgibbon & Kee, 1961).
\item \textsuperscript{26} Matthew Cullerne Bown, \textit{Socialist Realist Painting} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 305-306.
\item \textsuperscript{27} \textit{Ibid}.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Zubkova, \textit{Russia after the War}, 190.
\end{itemize}
society trying to adjust to the changes and reforms that were being carried out in the Soviet Union. The protesters were believed to be lashing out at those in the government who they felt were not staying true to the original communist principles.\textsuperscript{29} Beginning in the early 1960s Khrushchev’s regime was attempting to transform the system by implementing reforms, some of which were incredibly unpopular with the populace. In trying to modify the Soviet economy the government experimented with price increases and a decrease in worker’s wages, which led to increased popular outcry. The Soviet people expected positive changes to come as a result of the reforms the government promised, but instead goods became harder to purchase on the paltry pay given to the people. The dissonance between the great life socialism promised and the real life circumstances during the economic reforms created a crisis of expectations among society. 1962 was the climax of the frustration the people had with Khrushchev’s government, being a year filled with numerous instances of popular protest across the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{30}

The food shortages and general restrictions implemented by the government in 1961-1962 led to an onslaught of anti-regime activities. In the few years of economic reform, the Soviet Union saw a rise in the crime rate ranging from basic hooliganism to an increase in prostitution, alcohol and drug abuse, theft, and “parasitism.”\textsuperscript{31} In 1962 the


\textsuperscript{30} Kozlov, \textit{Mass Uprisings}, xiv.

\textsuperscript{31} Kozlov, \textit{Mass Uprisings}, 178.
reactions of the people to the recent actions of the government came to a head with numerous calls for uprisings and protests in Novocherkassk. The uprising at Novocherkassk marks the apogee of discontent with the Khrushchev government, but it is also an example of a number of Anti-Khrushchev uprisings that took place across the Soviet Union. Overall, uprisings were not an uncommon characteristic of the Khrushchev Thaw. Compared to the tenure of Leonid Brezhnev, uprisings under Khrushchev occurred two and half times more frequently. Furthermore, the majority of the uprisings that took place during the Brezhnev era took place in his first two years in power, 1966-1968.

Upon ousting Khrushchev and assuming power for himself, the failed reforms of the Thaw were quickly replaced with a coordinated attempt to stabilize society which ultimately produced stagnation and slow decline. In 1967 the Brezhnev regime altered the relationship between the state and the people in part by making administrative controls more powerful and by focusing on education to prevent crime and anti-Soviet uprisings. Instead of suppression to combat crime, the regime turned to education as its method for correcting the uprisings and organized anti-Soviet groups that had become common during the Thaw. When society again began to show signs of discontent with the government in 1969, the regime turned to financial methods to prevent uprisings. The

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government enacted a number of arbitrary increases in worker’s wages, turned a blind-eye to the growing black market economy, redistributed money into consumer goods, gave freely to help the economies of border countries, all contributing in the end to a grossly inflated Soviet economy.35

The uprisings that had become more common in the years following the Great Patriotic War, and had become a hallmark of the Khrushchev era, abated with the state’s adherence to “pure” Communist ideals.36 In place of Communist collectivism and the idea of one day abolishing all private property came individualism and consumerism that was popular under Brezhnev. The lack of popular uprisings against the actions of the Brezhnev government may have marked the decline in belief and support of the ideological principles that once comprised the Soviet system. The Brezhnev era marked a great change in Soviet society: where people had once chosen to stand together against anti-Soviet reforms, many now chose a quiet life of apart from the Soviet collective.37

No matter the leader, life in the Soviet Union experienced great changes after the death of Stalin. For example, under Khrushchev there was an easing of restrictions over artists and authors, the acknowledgement of the rights of an individual, as long as they did not interfere with the government and/or the collective, and most importantly for the purpose of this paper, Khrushchev focused on improving the material conditions in which


the Soviet people were living. By taking some of the focus away from production of military goods, Khrushchev began to focus more on increasing the production of Soviet consumer goods that would improve the daily lives of Soviet citizens. As an important part of improving their daily lives, Khrushchev even went so far as to promise Soviet families separate apartments as opposed to the collectivized living Stalinism. The move from collectivized housing to separate apartments meant that families could experience less social control enforced by the government. The surveillance that could have been carried out by living in collectivized apartments with strangers may have had strong implications on the conformity of citizens. The move out of collectivized housing was also symbolic of the end of the sacrificing families had to do on behalf of building the groundwork for a socialist country.

Separate apartments also meant that families were inclined to have a private sphere away from the prying eyes of neighbors and the government. New consumer impulses came as a result of moving to separate housing. Some of the most desirable new consumer products were furniture and domestic products all mass produced by the government. Propaganda reinforced the public’s need to purchase certain consumer goods, was an idea that became a mainstay of the Khrushchev era. By producing propaganda projecting the best consumer goods to purchase, the government may have

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40 Harris, “Moving,” 7.
been attempting to enforce what goods were most important to the new separate domestic lifestyle.\(^{41}\) While the majority of reforms started by the Khrushchev regime were halted upon his removal from power, the Brezhnev regime kept the separate housing and consumer goods drive in place.\(^{42}\) Though the governments of both Khrushchev and Brezhnev stated their goal of providing separate housing for families, the quality of said housing was cause for great disappointment for families across the Soviet Union.\(^{43}\)

Families receiving the new separate apartments were thankful at first, but their appreciation to the government was soon changed to contempt when the obvious poor quality of the housing was revealed. With the apartments’ great number of faults, people demanded the government fix their poorly constructed housing. Adding to the defective housing were the problems that accompanied them: lack of transportation to the new housing complexes, slow pace of new developments, and desire of people to purchase household goods for their new home coupled with the constant lack of availability of consumer goods. The tenants wanted attention to be called to the housing issue and the issues that complemented the new buildings quickly, but the government showed itself to be incapable of addressing either of the needs of the tenants.\(^{44}\)

\(^{41}\) Harris, “Moving,” 19.

\(^{42}\) Harris, “Moving,” 14.

\(^{43}\) Harris, “Moving,” 347.

Soviet popular culture reflected many elements within Soviet society, including attitudes towards family, art, the world outside the Soviet Union, the government and the Soviet system. The association between politics and popular culture was a uniquely important feature of the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{45} Popular culture was developed with the intentions of satisfying the goals of the Soviet state and the interests of the people. During the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras, popular culture became more diverse and the push within Soviet youth for a distinct youth culture began.\textsuperscript{46} Consumer culture in the Soviet Union was an evolving feature of Soviet life. Under Khrushchev, consumerism attained a higher position in government policy and in ideology. During the Brezhnev era consumer culture began to be altered by the changes occurring in Soviet society. Under Brezhnev, consumer culture in the mass media and even within policy took on a much more gendered appearance.\textsuperscript{47}

In the 1960s and 1970s fashion became increasingly popular as a form of consumerism for women and especially youth in the Soviet Union. Fashion was a relatively affordable and accessible way for people to express themselves. Under Brezhnev, children were known to dress like models outside of the Soviet Union, mimicking foreign styles of clothing. Purchasing clothes also became a way for individuals to appear to belong to a specific social group. Many may have believed that

\textsuperscript{45} Stites, \textit{Russian Popular Culture}, 2, 4.

\textsuperscript{46} Stites, \textit{Russian Popular Culture}, 205-6.

\textsuperscript{47} Natalya Chernyshova, “Consumption and Gender under Late Socialism,” \textit{European Social Science History Conference}, (Lisbon: 7th European Social Science History Conference, March 2008), 1-2. The gendered appearance in mass media began to take shape in the form of advertising certain products towards one gender or the other. Kitchen appliance, for example, began to marketed towards women.
dressing similarly to a certain social group must be accomplished before one can be considered for membership to the group.48

The Soviet Union experience changed after winning the War and following the death of Stalin. The Khrushchev government did ease controls over its people and the people of the Soviet Union began to not be afraid of one another. Though citizens could not openly criticize the government, they were able to speak less fearfully among friends, and even feel safe to make new friends. The Soviet people demanded change for themselves and society after the great sacrifices of the War, and while the government did make concessions to the people, it did not experience a radical change from pre-War conditions. The post-war Soviet Union seemed to be caught in the middle of pre-War conditions and real openness and change, but it would never be able to return to the conditions of pre-War society.49

WHO WAS THE SOVIET NEW MAN?

After the success of the Revolution in 1917, the Bolsheviks were confronted with the image of a “backwards” nation of mostly peasants. In order to carry out the ideals promised in their revolutionary rhetoric of being the “vanguard of the people” the Bolsheviks had to devise a plan on how to modernize their citizenry while simultaneously modernizing the entire former Russian empire. As admirers of the French Revolution,

49 Zubkova, Russia after the War, 201.
the Bolsheviks were familiar with the promises of putting the power into the hands of the people, but the French Revolution also provided an example of how the success of a revolution could be used as a national turning point. While the Russian Revolution marked the end of the reign of the tsar, the Bolsheviks used the Revolution as the beginning of a socialist society. A society whose success depended on the very presence of someone who was both modern and distinct from other national citizens, from which arose the model of the Soviet New Man.

Immediately upon assuming power, Lenin and the Bolsheviks began the all important tasks necessary to create a great socialist nation. Foremost was the task of creating the new builders of socialism, the “Soviet New Person.” The new government needed to create a society where each individual was focused on the task of building and achieving socialism. A Soviet New Person would be someone with a well-rounded personality with traits which were completely embedded. Such traits would include: committing and adhering to the ideology of communism, prioritizing the collective and the wants of the nation above those of the individual, and being of high moral character.\(^{50}\)

The development of a new person specific to Soviet society had grounding in the historical materialism of Marxist theory which emphasized human beings as social and in the continual state of change in which the historical world exists. In the Soviet interpretation, Marxism provided a favorable view of the creation of new people

\(^{50}\) Attwood, *New Soviet Man*, 33.
specifically designed for socialist society.\textsuperscript{51} With the regime’s desire to produce new traits in its former tsarist subjects came a focus on the progression of behaviors and morality within children especially within the study of Soviet psychology.\textsuperscript{52} The focus on creating a Soviet New Person extended itself to include the creation of a Soviet New Woman. The regime’s New Woman was a combination of traditional femininity with traits of the emerging women’s professional movement. The Soviet New Woman would be recognized by her traditional traits like emotion, delicateness, and desire to help and take care of others. The traditional traits were combined with her more modern qualities such as her selflessness, national pride, personal accountability, and self-assuredness.\textsuperscript{53}

While the Bolshevik government led by Lenin were committed to the goal of refashioning the tsarist Russian subjects into Soviet New Men, the inspiration for creating a new society on the shoulders of a changed Russian citizen can be found in the writings of Nikolai Chernyshevsky. In \textit{What is to be Done?} Chernyshevsky discusses the development of a changed Russian character by taking elements that were part of Russian culture and combining them with more modern cultural elements, as well as cultural features that were traditionally more a part of Western cultures. In addition to the blending of cultural features would be a more modern education centered on science and technology. Together the new education and culture would create “new people” who,

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{51} Attwood, \textit{New Soviet Man}, 34.
\textsuperscript{52} Attwood, \textit{New Soviet Man}, 56.
\end{flushleft}
through their strength of character, would be able to change the Russian people by being a model by which others would turn to for education and whom the population would look to as a source for emulation.\textsuperscript{54} The new people, with their excellent character, education, and new culture, would be capable of producing a successful and long lasting change within Russian society.\textsuperscript{55}

Chernshevsky’s work became the basic ideas of the New Soviet Man. The New Man was someone who functioned under the direction of party policy and class consciousness, never concerned with individuality. With key features such as party loyalty, strict adherence to socialist principles, ideological obedience, and selflessness, the New Man would be the groundwork upon which a strong communist nation would be build. Above almost all else, the New Man was to act accordingly with what the government wanted, to obey and act unconsciously, and loyally.\textsuperscript{56}

Under the leadership of Lenin, the Soviet state employed numerous methods to ensure the often unruly traditional elements of the Russian character were replaced with predictable, safe New Man traits. By utilizing fear, economic motivation, didactic and propaganda materials the government hoped to create a solid foundation for the New Man. Using the combination of methods, traits such as discipline, strength, and a desire to work in industry were the desirable creation that was necessary to usher the Soviet

\textsuperscript{54} Chernshevsky, \textit{What is to be Done?}, 2.

\textsuperscript{55} Chernshevsky, \textit{What is to be Done?}, 20.

\textsuperscript{56} Cheng, \textit{Creating the “New Man,”} 220.
Union onto the world stage as a modern industrial power. Using a variety of techniques the Soviet government may have intended to replace the individuality of the Russian people with the planned program put forth in official propaganda to create the Soviet New Man. The government’s desire to impose New Man traits upon the people of the Soviet Union can be thought of as a form of political socialization. Political socialization is the process of developing political consciousness and loyalty, usually within the educational system. More on political socialization and New Man molding will be explored in Chapter II.57

Early on the Soviet Union tailored its educational practices in part to help suppress individuality among its citizens. The Soviet educational experience was one of the main instruments the government exercised to shape and control the behavior of the population. 58 The educational system was said to have been committed to achieving the goal set forth for it by the government, to create a character that would be in line with what ideology had defined as key traits for the New Man to embody.59 The leaders of the Soviet government stated that the New Man needed to possess the impressive qualities necessary to help develop the Soviet Union. The New Man was a man made of a steel will, the builder of socialism capable of prevailing over all difficulties, saintly in his personal disposition, and who is able to succeed in expectations set forth by the

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57 Mehnert, Soviet Man, 31.


government. The New Man was expected to be loyal to the Soviet Union beyond all else, be willing to defend the nation uncompromisingly, all the while being a devoted party man. The Soviet New Man was envisioned by the government to be a Soviet “superman” capable of anything and everything the government demanded.  

Remaking society on the backs of the New Man may have begun in the Revolutionary era under the leadership of Lenin, but it continued under Stalin. His regime continued to endorse the creation of Soviet New Men and the transformation of the citizens of the Soviet Union. Stalin’s New Man was part of producing a specific Soviet form of modernity within the Soviet Union. The Stalinist Soviet New Man would be free of dependences on undesirable substances, presentable, an ideal worker, and devoted to the socialist cause. The New Man would believe in the good of the collective before his own, and would overall be the anticapitalist antithesis of Western liberalism. The New Man was to be the embodiment of the values espoused in Marxist socialism. At the same time, he was supposed to show compassion for his fellow citizen, be a caring and nurturing parent, be honest, and uncorruptable in a society where corruption ran

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rampant.\textsuperscript{64} Most uncharacteristically of the New Man would be individualism, concern for the needs of oneself above those of the whole of Soviet society.\textsuperscript{65}

The development of the Soviet New Man required a lot of preparation and thought on the part of the regime. In order to project the ideal image upon society for the former tsarist subjects to embody required conscious refinement of ideas, desired personal characteristics, physicality, and even of psychological state. Designed not just to facilitate directives given by the communist party, the New Man was not to be another example of historical oddity in the experiment that was the Soviet Union, instead the New Man was to be the alternative to all other humans that came before and the model of what modern humanity should resemble. Later, within the Soviet Union, pamphlets would hail the Soviet New Man as a superior \textit{Homo sapiens}, \textit{Homo sovieticus}.\textsuperscript{66} In an attempt to characterize \textit{Homo sovieticus} and the New Man the Writer’s Union of the Soviet Union wrote:

But we do have something to say about what sort of man \textit{Homo sovieticus} is…

He is, first of all, a Man of Labour…he regards work as the most important thing in his life…

He is also a man of the Collective…


\textsuperscript{66} Bernard Emmanuilovich Bykhovski, \textit{The New Man in the Making} (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House 196-) 3.
A man infinitely loyal to his socialist multinational fatherland…
He is a man who feels responsible for everything…
There is nothing does not concern him, be it an event of global significance or simply the life of his neighbors on the same landing…
He is a man of lofty ideals…
He actively champions the ideas of the Great October…
He is a harmoniously developed human being…
He is a man about whom the state cares a great deal. He is aware of this concern and feels its results everywhere.
His children go to kindergarten or school, his parents are treated by the best doctors; he himself has just received a new apartment…
Cities grow, green parks abound, new goods are put on the market, scientists are concerned about clean air—and all of this is for him, for Soviet Man, and free of charge or at very little cost to himself.67

While the Soviet New Man has remained a constant model to which the regime has turned throughout the decades of the existence of the Soviet Union, the model has undergone changes according to the decade and/or leader in power. In the 1920s the New Man was who destroyed the tsarist regime, a revolutionary. Next, he was he who helped usher in the new modern world, he was an industrial man. He was simultaneously a man whose actions would bring about a communist utopia, and the ideal communist party man, from whom the party demanded strict ideological adherence. Stalin said the ideal Soviet Man was a “cog” in the giant wheel that was the state. Khrushchev said that by 1981 the perfect Soviet “cog” would be produced though the efforts of “high ideological commitment, broad education, moral purity and physical perfection.” Though the model looked different at different moments in Soviet history, the constant features of the Soviet

67 Heller, Cogs in the Soviet Wheel, 47.
New Man remained: being a member of society’s collective, desire to belong to the state, and the ability to act as a successful and obedient “cog” in the wheel of the Soviet state.68

During the twentieth century, “modern” states such as the United States became more preoccupied with citizens’ nationalism. In this sense, modern states, in pursuit of more modern citizens and overall nation, began to control the behaviors and activities of individuals more closely. While the Soviet Union was desperately trying to close the modernity gap and become a modern nation, its investment in the lives and behaviors of its citizens was much more than trying to imprint a national sense of identity. The degree to which the Soviet government monitored and affected the lives of its citizens was both more invasive and more stringent than its counterparts. Additionally, the resources the government spent in order to achieve modernity, but most importantly, a “modern” Soviet New Man was unlike anything any other nation had undertaken. While other nations may have used similar methods and mediums, propaganda posters and radio, etc., what made the Soviet Union unique is the also tied to the uniqueness of the Soviet Union itself and its message of creating a distinctly Soviet, while also modern, New Man


The changes Soviet society experienced in the post-War years brought to the attention of the state the necessity to provide ideological guidelines through which to

68 Heller, Cogs in the Soviet Wheel, 28.
adapt the increasing amount of leisure time to be more in line with the development of the Soviet New Man. In order to counter non-government sanctioned leisure activities like rock and roll music and dance, Khrushchev’s government had to make alterations the New Man program, in order to make him a more appealing model to the Soviet citizens of the 1960s who had experienced an increase in personal freedom. The government was interested in the development of Soviet children because children contained no vestiges of the previous tsarist system. Children were raw material through which the ability to create Soviet New Men and New Women held the most potential. The lives of children were closely monitored and often influenced by the actions of the state and the Communist party. The lives of children were guided in the school system, as well as during leisure time, to achieve the goal of properly socializing the New Man. The Soviet New Man of the 1960s was a diligent worker, often pursued by the long arm of the government, and who had modest desires such as a single family apartment and leisure time away from work.

In 1961 the Party Program renewed its commitment to the development of the Soviet New Man as its official ideology. The New Man would be the direct product of the Soviet education system, complete with a highly developed Marxist-Leninist

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70 Furst, Stalin’s Last Generation, 9.

71 Furst, Stalin’s Last Generation, 24.

72 Furst, Stalin’s Last Generation, 26.
background. Through education, the New Man’s former ties to the Russian empire had been replaced with ties to the entire world. The New Man of the 1960s had a personality strengthened and fine-tuned by his relationship with other Soviet citizens, as well as of other socialist societies, through relationships with aspects of local soviets, and through his continued commitment to the successful building of communism within the Soviet Union.73

At the Twenty-Second Congress the same year, 1961, the party outlined the ideological commitments the New Man of the Soviet Union should be expected to uphold. The ‘Moral Code of the Builder of Communism’ was the assurance to strive for the perfection of citizens in order to build a communist utopia. The Code remained in use until the fall of the Soviet state in 1991. The desirable traits to be exhibited by the New Man were:

1. Devotion to the cause of Communism, love for the Socialist Motherland, and for the Socialist countries in general.
2. Commitment to conscious labour on behalf of society. Whoever does not work does not eat.
3. A concern on the part of everyone for the preservation and proliferation of public property.
4. An elevated consciousness of social duty, an intolerance of any disruption of the interests of society as a whole.
5. Collectivism and mutual aid. All for one, one for all.

6. A humane relationship and mutual respect between people. Man is the friend, comrade and brother of his fellow man.

7. Honest and fairness, moral purity, simplicity and modesty in one’s social and personal life.

8. Mutual respect within the family, concern for the proper upbringing of children.

9. An intolerance of injustice, parasitism, dishonesty, careerism.

10. Friendship and brotherhood of all the peoples of the USSR, an intolerance of nationalism and racial hatred.

11. An intolerance of the enemies of Communism, of peace, and of the freedom of nations.

12. Brotherly solidarity with the peoples of all countries, and with all nations.\textsuperscript{74}

The New Man was to be distinguished by his tidy appearance, proper speech and etiquette, as well as his knowledge of the newest technology industrial and household.\textsuperscript{75}

It was under the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras that the government began to place more emphasis on the New Man’s ability to self-educate through printed word as well as through television.\textsuperscript{76}

During the same time the government began to look to the television as a method for political socialization, the hero within Soviet literature who stood as the model for the New Man in the stories changed. The New Man in literature was now a collective farmer living in the Soviet country who embodied a love for the land and nature as well as a

\textsuperscript{74} Kelly, \textit{Refining Russia}, 314-315.

\textsuperscript{75} Kelly, \textit{Refining Russia}, 321.

\textsuperscript{76} Kelly, \textit{Refining Russia}, 320.
strong affinity for hard work. It is through such representations in literature and in television that the task of educating oneself to become a proper New Man was thought to be more a duty of man himself, with supervision and regulation by the party. The changing values of the New Man were reflected in Soviet mass media. From the ever importance of the collective to what was often call neo-Leninism, or a return to revolutionary values, the New Man of the 1960s and 1970s had a number of representations of his ideals to educate and model himself after.

In 1971 there was an effort on behalf of the Twenty-Fourth Party Congress to utilize psychological practices in addition to the political methods employed to shape the New Man. The belief was that additional methods would be beneficial to better understand the behavior of the individual and the collectives and to best produce New Man within all of Soviet society. Psychological studies conducted within the Soviet Union during the late 1960s confirmed what was presented about the New Man in official literature. The studies stated that the New Man’s work ethic is directly tied to his well-being that success at work, and relationships among the work collective and individuals

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77 Heller, *Cogs in the Soviet Wheel*, 64-65. The image of the collective farmer was also prevalent in the Soviet Village Prose Movement. While the collective farmer was often the protagonist of the stories, he was used as a symbol of resistance by the authors, who used the collective farmer to show how the Soviet government was destroying the traditional ways of the village. For more on the Village Prose movement see Kathleen F. Parthe, *Russian Village Prose: The Radiant Past* (Princeton University Press, 1992).

78 Heller, *Cogs in the Soviet Wheel*, 166.


correlates directly to his ideological consciousness.\textsuperscript{81} Under the leadership of Brezhnev in the 1970s, it is important to recognize the changes occurring within society, greater urbanization, greater access to education, more modern household amenities, and see the effect societal changes had on the depiction and expectations of the Soviet New Man.\textsuperscript{82}

The attempt to form a New Man in the Soviet Union is a process that began after the success of the Revolution and continued until the fall of the state. Armed with a distinct communist morality the government continued to see the New Man as its best chance to build a successful communist nation in the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{83} Though the Soviet New Man model may have changed with the leader in power, he was the constant hope for the bright future. Devoted to the party and the collective, honest and humble, the Soviet New Man was the representation in mass media sources from cinema, television, and within literature. With the dedication of the government, the model of the New Man was a pervasive element which penetrated into almost all aspects of life within the nation. Taught in schools, discussed in leisure time and visible all over the Soviet Union, the New Man was the embodiment of perfected socialism.

\textsuperscript{81} Rahami, “Social Psychology,” 235.
\textsuperscript{82} Chernyshova, “Consumption and Gender Under Late Socialism,” 13.
CONCLUSION

Life within Soviet Union after the Great Patriotic War is a subject rarely researched in Soviet historiography. Why, when on the international stage of the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the United States were battling over nuclear weapons and arguing for the superiority of each nation’s way of life would anyone pay attention to domestic relations within the Soviet Union? Though the situation was dynamic on the international scale, so was the situation within the Soviet Union itself. Tasked with rebuilding much of its country in the wake of war devastation while simultaneously readjusting to peacetime conditions, the domestic situation within the nation was changing. The population of the Soviet Union, so ravaged by the war, felt it deserved rewards for the great sacrifices made during the war.

In order to placate its citizens the Soviet government set out to improve the lives and accessibility of material goods of its people. Soviet citizens saw a relaxing on personal freedoms with the death of Josef Stalin and a small improvement in material conditions with the ascension to power of Nikita Khrushchev. As Soviet society was undergoing change, so was the model citizen the government aspired all its citizens to become. From the development of the Soviet New Man model under Vladimir Lenin, to the industrial cog of the Stalinist years, and finally to the alterations made during the 1960s and 1970s, the Soviet New Man may have changed in specific desirable features, but never in intent or purpose. The New Man remained the shoulders communism would be built upon and the model to which all within the nation should seek to emulate.
While Soviet historiography during the socially dynamic years of the 1960s and 1970s remains scant, using an interdisciplinary approach, combined with original accounts of Sovietologists who traveled and wrote about social conditions within the Soviet Union during the decade, the gap may begin to be filled. Though international politics may forever eclipse Soviet society during the Cold War, how Soviet citizens were coping with fighting at home and abroad is an important aspect to examine. Without examining the domestic situation and how the Soviet population was living life it is impossible to fully understand the Soviet experience.
CHAPTER II

SOVIET EDUCATION AND EDUCATION OF THE NEW MAN

September first was a day of much excitement and celebration for children of the Soviet Union. It marked the first day of the new school year for elementary and secondary schools across the Soviet Union. Children would carry with them bouquets of flowers for their teachers, and the principal, who was awaiting the students’ arrival in front of the school, would give a speech about the upcoming academic year. With so much pomp and circumstance surrounding the beginning of each new school year, it is clear that the Soviet school held a significant place within society. In a state so determined to create a new communist society and its “New Men,” what was the role of education in achieving the state’s goals?

During the tsarist era, primary school education for the population of Russia was not compulsory or available for all. In part due to the high illiteracy rates within tsarist Russia, tsarist education ministers did not believe that a system of universal childhood education could be implemented until the final years of the 20th century. In 1914, just

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1 O. Leonova, Public Education in the U.S.S.R (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1939), 10. Original pamphlet accessed in the Social Movements Collection, Hamilton Library, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Olga Fedorovna Leonova was a Moscow elementary school teacher in the 1930s. Attending an All Union Congress of the Soviets in 1936 she impressed the delegates with her pledges to increase her student’s productivity. With her student’s outstanding progress, Leonova was elected to the Congress of Soviets. After which, she became a “celebrity” teacher in the Soviet Union. For more on Leonova see Thomas E. Ewing, “A Stalinist Celebrity Teacher: Gender, Professional, and Political Identities in Soviet Culture of the 1930s,” Journal of Women’s History, 16:4 (2004): 92-118. The Foreign Languages Publishing House (FLPH) was a Soviet publishing house that was in charge of publishing translated
three years before the Bolsheviks came to power, there were only a little more than 8.1 million Russian children in schools. With the creation of the Soviet Union, and with the new government’s desire to attain compulsory education, the number of children in schools jumped to 47.4 million by 1939. Soviet propaganda proclaimed that universal elementary education had been achieved by 1931. While it is difficult to rely on Soviet evidence, there is no doubt elementary education was considered a vital goal for the new state.

Children of school age, starting at age seven, were guaranteed in article 121 under Stalin’s Soviet Constitution seven years of universal state provided education in their native language. Education in the Soviet Union entailed numerous different elements beginning with pre-school education for children from three to seven years of age. After pre-school, there were a number of general education schools, extra-school materials about the Soviet Union to be distributed in the West. Controlled by the government, the FLPH would have wanted to promote the best aspects of the state. While propaganda pamphlets of this type are difficult to rely on as fact, it does not necessarily discount the information contained within.

2 Teachers in tsarist Russia were early supporters of an amended Russian education system. Teachers in the country side were supporters and active in the 1905 peasant Revolution in Russia. With their ideas on education coinciding with those of the Bolsheviks, the two formed an alliance. The inclusion of teachers with the Bolsheviks helped make education reform a priority after the Revolutions of 1917. For more on schools and teachers under tsarist Russia see Ben Eklof, Russia Peasant Schools: Officialdom, Village Culture, and Popular Pedagogy, 1861-1914 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), and Scott J. Seregny, Russian Teachers and Peasant Revolution: The Politics of Education in 1905 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

3 Leonova, Public Education, 11.

4 Leonova, Public Education, 10.

5 M. Deinko, Forty Years of Public Education in the U.S.S.R: Facts and Figures (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1957), 8. Original pamphlet accessed in the Social Movements Collection, Hamilton Library, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Deinko was a member of the Pedagogical Sciences of the R.S.F.S.R and was published on educational maters within the Soviet Union from 1955-1964.
establishments such as the Komsomol and the Young Pioneers, secondary schools, vocational schools, in addition to educational establishments for adults. The basis of the compulsory educational system in the Soviet Union was the general education schools, which may also be broken into different categories. Within general education schools were elementary with a four year curriculum, secondary with a ten year curriculum, as well as an incomplete secondary school that offered seven years of study.\(^6\)

The school system was regulated as a branch of the government in the Soviet Union, which required adherence nationwide to a uniform curricula, and promised all schools equal distribution of educational resources and supplies.\(^7\) The structure of the Soviet education system was not solely the Ministry of Education, but the Ministry of Education and Propaganda. Though the Supreme Soviet was officially in charge of the entire system it tasked the various republics within the Soviet Union’s education ministers to supervise day-to-day decisions and enforcement.\(^8\) Elementary school was made up of four classes, determined by the government, but with some flexibility if necessary by the republic.\(^9\) Within the schools the various approaches to a child’s studies were by teacher explanation, talks, introducing and familiarizing children with textbooks and books in general, in addition to a child’s writings and/or drawings. Schools required

\(^6\) Deinko, *Forty Years*, 9.

\(^7\) Deinko, *Forty Years*, 10.

\(^8\) Deinko, *Forty Years*, 13.

\(^9\) Y. N. Medinsky, *Public Education in the U.S.S.R.* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1950), 37. Original pamphlet accessed in the Social Movements Collection, Hamilton Library, University of Hawai’i at Mānoa. Professor Y.N. Medinsky was an educator and a member of the Academy of the Pedagogical Sciences of the R.S.F.S.R.
that students have an understanding of the Russian language so as to appropriately express themselves in writing and so as to be able to comprehend lessons and works of Russian and/or Soviet literature according to their corresponding age. Grammar rules were introduced in elementary schools, as are lesson in mathematics, science, creative arts, geography, history, and physical education.\(^{10}\)

Moral education was also a hallmark of the Soviet school system. The Soviet schools claimed to instill important qualities in its students such as a commitment to duty and honesty. The schools taught its pupils to be respectful to all people and to be mindful of their parents. Students were taught to acknowledge and obey the wants and needs of the “collective” and try to align their own interests as best they can. Individual needs were therefore taught to be suppressed, unless they coincided with the needs of the collective. The only way individual needs were allowed to be considered, was when they were also the needs of the collective. Teachers utilized work as one of the primary methods through which to impart moral education in students. Through work, with and for the collective, character and will of the student was developed.\(^{11}\) Teaching peace and friendship amongst all peoples was also an important aspect of the Soviet curriculum. A component of a student’s moral education in school was instruction in proper manners

\(^{10}\) Medinsky, *Public Education*, 38.

\(^{11}\) Deinko, *Forty Years*, 53.
and “conscious discipline”. The appropriate manners and duties to be taught to school children were set forth by the Soviet government in the Rule for School Children.  

In partnership with Soviet teachers in instructing moral education were children’s organizations such as the Young Pioneers. The Leninist-Communist Organization of Young Pioneers was a national organization of Soviet children from ages 9-14. Upon joining the Young Pioneers the student took an oath to stay true to the teachings of Lenin and to act in a manner appropriate to a model citizen of the Soviet Union. Leaders of the Young Pioneers worked closely with teachers and were also members of the school’s pedagogical council. Young Pioneers were told to behave, whether in school, at home, or in leisure time, as models for other Soviet children.

It was the vision of Anatoly Lunarcharsky, the first Commissar of Enlightenment, that Soviet schools should become microcosms of Soviet society in its structure and education. Lunarcharsky believed the restructuring of the Soviet education system

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12 Deinko, Forty Years, 54.
13 Deinko, Forty Years, 55.
14 For more on the organization of school’s pedagogical councils and the overall organization of the Pioneers see Allen Kassof, The Soviet Youth Program: Regimentation and Rebellion (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 67-68. The organization of the Pioneers was as follows: an individual classroom of Pioneers was called a link, all of the links of a single grade come together to form a detachment from which three to five of the best students are selected to form a council that is in charge of group activities and peer review of Pioneers who may not be meeting standards. The grade level detachments from a school form an all-school brigade. The older Pioneers in the brigade are elected to a council and are in charge of organizing all Pioneer activities for the entire school.
15 Deinko, Forty Years, 56-7.
would inspire the creation of the Soviet New Man. In order to most successfully create the New Man, the People’s Commissariat for Education worked on a special commission that would combine the once uncoordinated work of the psychological, physiological, clinical, and educational facilities to come up with a cooperative blueprint for his creation. In 1924 when speaking about the government’s plans for the education of children, Nikolai Bukharin stated: “The fate of the Revolution now depends upon the extent to which we of the younger generation will be able to train the human material capable of building the socialist economy of a Communist society.”

“Political socialization” was an integral part of the creation of the Soviet education system. Political socialization was the means by which children were instructed on ideological and political expectations necessary to be a productive member of the nation. The process of political socialization was a well-planned process that varied depending on the age and life situation of the recipient. Loyalty to political leaders and the communist party was part of the goal of the education process. Ideological


19 Political socialization is a term commonly used in political science and psychology. It is the process through which children learn the political system and political ideology of their country. For another example of the use of political socialization in the Soviet case see Robert W. Clawson, “Political Socialization of Children in the USSR,” *Political Science Quarterly* 88: 4 (1973): 684-712, or for a more general overview of political socialization see Robert D. Hess and Judith Torney-Purta, *The Development of Basic Attitudes and Values Toward Government and Citizenship During the Elementary School Years* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1965).
formation took place through dynamic participation where the individual was expected to be involved in political processes. The education process took place through repeated action and participation which began in early childhood.\textsuperscript{20} Model emulation was utilized frequently as a method through which to achieve New Man socialization. The government manufactured numerous models which were to serve as physical symbols of ideological adherence and policy, war heroes, and scientists, all working on behalf of the Soviet state.\textsuperscript{21}

Shortly after coming to power, the Bolsheviks focused the attention of the state on the Russian school system. They quickly began to transform the schools from a system that had once helped to cement the domination of the bourgeoisie, to a system which would abolish class division in society and bring about societal rejuvenation on the backs of socialism.\textsuperscript{22} It was in part because of the newly formed Soviet educational system that new generations were able to attempt to build and create socialism. Schools and the lives of Soviet children had an undeniable connection, as did children’s engagement with communist practices. Public organizations, such as the Young Pioneers, had an association with Soviet schools and with the overall education and political socialization of children. While the Soviet sources often remarked on the ability of schools and the

\textsuperscript{20} Yinghong Cheng, \textit{Creating the “New Man”: From Enlightenment Ideals to Socialist Realities} (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 27.

\textsuperscript{21} Cheng, \textit{Creating the “New Man,”} 33.

Pioneers to come together in an effort to educate children in socialist principles, there is no doubt that there was a connection between the two establishments.\textsuperscript{23}

\textbf{THE SOVIET SCHOOL AND NEW MAN IDEOLOGY}

While the education of children had been important in the Soviet Union since its origins, in 1961 Nikita Khrushchev’s government reaffirmed the importance of education. The ideological purity of the youngest generation took on significance with Khrushchev’s announcement that the Soviet Union had begun ‘full-scale communist construction.’ An education based on the teachings of Marx and Lenin was still the foundation of the Soviet system, was now considered the most crucial factor in achieving communism. In addition to the weight placed on the school system, Khrushchev also called for a renewed emphasis to be placed on the control of children’s leisure time. Instead of joining a “counter-culture Western-style” group, the \textit{stiliagi}, the regime pushed to increase the active participation of Soviet school children in approved leisure time groups such as the Young Pioneers. Its membership changed from a small portion of Soviet children to virtually all Soviet children in the 1960s and 1970s. From this

dominant position, the government tasked the Young Pioneers with the task of controlling all Soviet children’s leisure time by the government.\textsuperscript{24}

After assuming power, Leonid Brezhnev voiced his commitment to placing growing importance on the educational system. At the 24\textsuperscript{th} Party Congress, in 1971, of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Brezhnev addressed why education was so important for the children of the Soviet Union: “The moral and political make-up of Soviet people is moulded by the entire socialist way of our life, by the entire course of affairs in society.”\textsuperscript{25} Brezhnev confirmed that resolutions made at the earlier Twenty-Third Congress of Soviets that addressed the requirement for ‘conscious discipline and cultured behavior’ by children. The solution was found in the form of educational materials as examples of how to best raise their children on the radio and television. The Congress of Soviets also called for the production of didactic material for children to view, such as plays, films, and television programs.\textsuperscript{26}

In 1966 the government released the decree ‘On the Further Improvement of the Secondary School’ which outlined the two most important tasks the Soviet school was to accomplish. It also described what the desirable traits children were to possess upon graduating from school. The primary purpose of schools was to ‘furnish pupils with the elements of learning’ followed by ‘the formation of an elevated Communist


\textsuperscript{25} Smirnov, \textit{Soviet Man}, 153.

\textsuperscript{26} Kelly, \textit{Children’s World}, 143.
consciousness.’ Upon graduation, students were to have acquired ‘an elevated sense of Soviet patriotism,’ a ‘readiness to defend the socialist Motherland,’ as well as a solid understanding of ‘the revolutionary and laboring traditions of the Soviet people,’ and ‘the laws of social development.’ A report on the state of Soviet children conducted in the 1970s reaffirmed the success of the ideals taught by the school system. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union report found that there were a large percentage of children who participated in organizations such as the Young Pioneers. Children were shown to choose constructive leisure time activities such as studying, sports, and self-education.

Schools were a place where Soviet ideals could really be ingrained upon children. Aside from the Moral Code of the Builders of Communism, which was a persistent reminder of expectations for the children, political socialization was one of the most important features of a child’s time in school. Which illustrates exactly how, the idea of the Soviet New Man was a conscious construction of the Soviet state. While the Moral Code of the Builders of Communism was ever present during the school day, in organizations, and in government propaganda, political socialization was presented primarily within the schoolhouse walls. Schools were the focus of the government


28 Hilary Pilkington, “Youth and Popular Culture: The Common Denominator,” in *Russia and Western Civilization: Cultural and Historical Encounters* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 325. The stiliagi were Soviet youth who dressed in Western-inspired fashions, most notably during the 1950s. The relaxations of strict Stalinist regulations in the post-War era lead to the emergence of the fashionable youth.

29 The Moral Code of the Builders of Communism was adopted in 1961 as the official ideological guidelines of the Soviet New Man, see above.

because of the accessibility of children to schools. In schools, the government would be able to reach virtually all children from across the Soviet Union for extended time periods and during the ages when they would be most receptive to outside influences and character building. Additionally the school was an organization which is easily manipulated by the government, because its curriculum was largely put in place by the Communist Party. Trusted partners in the political socialization process, schools were believed by the government to coordinate ideological reinforcement activities those who work closely with the school, such as families and organizations for children’s leisure time. Coordinating with families and organizations also allowed for schools to monitor and counteract any effects that may derail the planned moral and educational rearing of children.\textsuperscript{31}

Communist party officials asked that the leadership and teachers of the schools serve the ideological and political needs of the government. A former director of a Soviet school remembered being told by an official that “the school is, above all, a political institution, that it cannot be outside politics, that the whole educational process is based exclusively on the Communist spirit.”\textsuperscript{32} When asked about their experiences within the Soviet education system, a group of Soviet émigrés in the Harvard Project of the Soviet Social System praised the mandatory, free, universal education, but seventy-five percent remarked on the excessive lessons on ideology and political content used to politically


socialize the students.\textsuperscript{33} Sometimes called \textit{vospitanie}, or moral and social development, Soviet schools utilized and organized and all-encompassing process that was designed to influence a child’s perceptions and knowledge of the world. For the child this knowledge will help him or her to develop into a motivated, loyal member of Soviet society, through patriotism, atheism, opposition toward the imperialists and capitalist governments, communist morals, and a “socialist” attitude toward labor. While classes were not necessarily taught on the exact topics mentioned above, they were pervasive among the school subjects and often the principle objective of many coordinated outside school activities.\textsuperscript{34}

Upon entering school at the age of seven, Soviet children were taught to respect authority and to act appropriately. There was great attention paid to the swift memorization and recitation of a thorough array of Communist Party history, Marxist-Leninist teachings, and current Soviet politics.\textsuperscript{35} In primary and middle schools, teaching children to identify with the appropriate elements of the Soviet system was the primary focus of education. The children were to acknowledge themselves as a member of the nation (or appropriate political community), a member of the Communist party, and as

\textsuperscript{33} Ewing, \textit{The Teachers of Stalinism}, 4. The Harvard Project of the Soviet Social System (HPSSS) was a study conducted by Harvard on Soviet émigrés from after the Revolutions until the Cold War. The project consisted of interviews on various aspects of Soviet society. For more on HPSSS see <http://hcl.harvard.edu/collections/hpsss/>.


part of the Soviet government. A student’s work and progress was subject to the evaluation of the peer group, all grading was done orally to involve the entire class, in an early attempt by the school to harness pupil’s connection and belonging to a collective. In addition to being subject to evaluation by ones collective, students were also taught morality, both social and individual, from the members of the collective.

A ‘Summary of Stated Objectives of Upbringing for Youngest (7-11)’ age group elucidates the expected norms the school children were to accomplish in various categories. In the category of ‘Communist Morality’ children should be able to differentiate between bad and good behavior, know self-discipline, and know the basic principles of Atheism. The children were taught to be honest, truthful, and kind students. Another important feature in this category was the identification with ones collective in classroom friendships and love for ones Motherland. In the category of ‘Responsible Attitude Toward Learning’ students were to have an interest in acquiring knowledge and skills, an interest in industry, and the ability to prioritize schoolwork and physical activity. The goal of this category was for a student possesses the drive to apply his or herself in life.

The third category was ‘Cultured Conduct’ and was composed of benchmark expectations for a student’s manners, including “cultured speech, proper behavior on the street and in public places, courtesy and cordiality, care, accuracy, and neatness.”

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was ‘Bases of Aesthetic Culture’ expectation category. In this category children were expected to have developed an appreciation for the arts and creativity, as well as an appreciation for nature’s beauty and the beauty of human nature. The final category was ‘Physical Culture and Sport.’ This category illuminates the government’s desire to have healthy children, who are active in sports. The expectations include attentiveness to personal hygiene and interest in one’s physical appearance in strength and conditioning.³⁸

Even within the textbooks of school children were the elements of political socialization that the government may have stressed. The courses of study were broken down by the year of the student, first through seventh, some courses not being taught until the student reaches a certain grade and some subjects not being taught when a student reaches a certain grade. Singing for example was only taught for the first three years, whereas a foreign language was only taught in the last three years of schooling. The only two subjects that were taught universally for all seven years of the compulsory education process were physical education and Russian language and reading, although the number of weekly lessons does vary according to the grade of the child.³⁹

By examining the textbooks printed in the Soviet Union for Soviet school children, it is possible to see the subjects the government may have wanted to be taught. History, as a subject in school, began to be taught to the students in the fourth year and continued until the seventh year. The number of weekly history lessons alternated

³⁸ Bronfenbrenner, Two Worlds of Childhood, table 1.

³⁹ For example, children in the first year of education receive fifteen lessons a week in Russian language and reading and by the seventh year that number reduces significantly to only six.
between the years, starting with three weekly lessons in fourth year, dropping to two weekly lessons in fifth year, back to three lessons in sixth year, and ending seventh year with two weekly lessons. In the seventh year, advanced socialist educational training takes place in the addition of two new weekly classes: mechanical drawing and the Constitution of the U.S.S.R.40 The study of the Soviet constitution was designed to introduce the student to the government structures and show the superiority of the system, as a so-called higher form of democracy, compared to its Western capitalist counterparts. This course also traced the role of the Bolsheviks in organizing all aspects of economic, political, and social life in the Soviet Union. The course also taught the strengths and achievements of the people of the Soviet Union.41

The history courses that were taught in Soviet schools were designed to allow each pupil to see how the different social orders that have existed throughout time have been constructed. For each social order the course examines the conditions for material life in a specific historical timeframe. History courses taught in Soviet schools include: Ancient Greece and Rome, the Ancient Far East, the Middle Ages, early-modern history up to the success of the French Revolution of the 18th century, and modern history with the success of the Russian Revolutions. The history courses were taught in order to

40 Medinsky, *Public Education*, 40. In his pamphlet, Medinsky does not provide specific examples of the types of history being taught to the different grades/years of students. Instead, his statics discuss history as the general subject. Medinsky also does not provide specific examples of the types of text in which Western democracies and Soviet Communism were compared. The pamphlet merely asserts the authors belief that the superiority of the Soviet system to democracy was discussed in Soviet curriculum.

41 Medinsky, *Public Education*, 44. Medinsky’s belief that the inevitable failure of societies based on class struggle is not elucidated upon more, nor does he provide specific examples for his belief within the pamphlet.
convey the hostile nature of “bourgeois” class society and show how a society based on class struggle is doomed for failure. There was special attention in the history courses to revolutions by “bourgeois” societies, such as the French in the 18th and the Dutch in the 17th century, in which the curriculum compared the inadequate success of “bourgeois” revolutions when compared to the great socialist revolutions that occurred in the Soviet Union.42

In a history of the Soviet Union textbook published in 1962 for students in the fourth class various aspects of Ancient Russia are discussed.43 While for the most part the textbook approaches Ancient Russia in an ordinary manner, discussing the lives of the Ancient Slavs and the invasion of Russia by the Mongol-Tatars, its chapters carry the trademark of the Soviet government. Such an example comes from chapter eleven which is titled “Enslavement of Peasants,” in the section on the development of Moscow. The textbook continues into current Soviet history at the time and gets progressively more political when discussing events of the twentieth century. There is an entire chapter devoted to the life and teachings of Lenin as well as chapters titled ‘Lives of People Under Tsarist Rule,’ and ‘the People Overthrew the King.’

After the Russian Revolution, the textbook devotes an entire section to the creation of the Soviet Union. Aspects such as the individual Soviet Socialist Republics, industry, collective farms, and how culture is ‘flourishing’ within the Soviet Union were


all important socialist elements of this section. What made the Soviet history textbooks significant was their inclusion of recent socialist aspects that was more likely to have been an attempt by the government to teach Soviet culture desired of the New Men, instead of a strictly apolitical history lesson. With the discussion of the Great Patriotic War come stories of patriotism and how the Soviet people are building communism. There is also the inclusion of post-War science and culture and how it continues to thrive after the defeat of fascism. The textbook concludes with a section of the struggle of the Soviet Union for peace. By looking at the section and chapters that were included in a Soviet child’s history textbook, it is possible to get a glimpse into the specific curriculum that the Soviet government intended for its children to learn. While the textbook included historical facts about the history of Russia as a nation and people, it also contained significant aspects of “political socialization” that would have been a common aspect of Soviet education.

To contrast the material provided above to children at different stages in the socialization process, it is helpful to compare the fourth class history textbook with a history textbook of a child in the seventh class. In a history book of the same focus, history of the Soviet Union, and published shortly after the version for the younger students, in 1966, the textbook for the older class has some notable differences.44 In the

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44 N.I. Novikov (1744-1818) is often considered the representative for the Enlightenment in Russia. A writer and a philosopher, Novikov actively championed elevating the education and culture of Russian society. A.N. Radishchev (1749-1802) was a writer and critic of Russian society under Catherine the Great. Radishchev is often thought of as bringing radicalism to Russian literature. In 1790, he published his critique of society in his work *Journey to St. Petersburg to Moscow*. Both Radishchev and Novikov were imprisoned by Catherine the Great for their critique of societal conditions under the tsarina. For more on the thinkers see Solomon Volkov, *Romanov Riches: Russian Writers and Artists Under the Tsars* (New
textbook for the seventh class, while it begins with the same time period, Ancient Russia, does not include modern history, ending in the early 19th century. Another difference is the numerous references made to slave systems. Specific references include the discussion of slave society in the Caucuses as well as a more general overview of slavery and ancient Slavs. Another difference in this textbook is the references to class struggle begin much earlier than in the fourth year textbook. As early as the 12th and 13th centuries there is an entire section on ‘Peoples Struggle for Independence in Our Mills.’

Throughout the centuries examined within the textbook, there is always an examination of culture and science, always together as one chapter, displaying how important as aspect culture was to the education of Soviet children. The textbook concludes with a section on the early 19th century and contains numerous references to developing socialist culture. There is a chapter on the ‘Struggle Against the Tsarist French Revolution,’ ‘Industrial Absolutism of Catherine II,’ and the final chapter, ‘Great Freedom Fighters N.I. Novikov and A.N. Radishchev.’ A feature not included in the fourth year textbook is the appendix which contains a list of history related books for home study. An ever important feature of Soviet education was the government’s desire to have children continuing their studies while at home during leisure time, an aspect that is apparent in the inclusion of extra reading lists. While not as broad an overview as the fourth year textbook on the history of the Soviet Union, the seventh year textbook contains a higher level of socialist political socialization. By making references to the

terrors of the slave system under feudalism and the glory of freedom fighters, the government is showing how corrupt and despicable feudal systems of government are and how socialist systems are the only fair and free system for the people.45

Closely tied to children’s education in the Soviet school system was the school’s affiliation with the Soviet Young Pioneer organization. A significant aspect of the Pioneer organization’s program was outside the academic sphere of the school, to continue student’s civic and character training. By using prescribed rituals and activities targeting the collective, the Pioneer organization was able to direct the energy of children to achieve government set goals. Non-academic organizations, such as the Pioneers, were able to affect the behavior of children, in some cases better than within academia.46 As an active partner in the educational system of the Soviet Union, the Pioneers were to help shape ideological views of children. By getting children used to living within a collective and helping to develop a sense of social unity and devotion to his or her fellow Pioneer, the organization was doing its part to reinforce socialist teachings. While different in design than the basic Soviet school, the Soviet Young Pioneers were a large part of helping to shape Soviet children into Soviet New Men.47

An early focus of Lenin was the desire to convert “spontaneity” in children with “consciousness” while at the same time ensuring that younger generations would join


47 Smirnov, Soviet Man, 162.
become loyal party members. In order to do this, Lenin believed the government needed to create a youth and children’s organization separate from but connected to the party. In 1918, the Soviet government created the Russian Communist Youth League, or the Komsomol.48 Though initially developed under the patronage of older Komsomol members, the Young Pioneers was made its own separate organization for younger children in 1932. The decree separating the two organizations stated that the Young Pioneers needed to be independent of other organizations so as best to provide exemplary political education for school children.49

As an organization the Pioneers boasted a membership of twenty million school children from ages ten to fourteen by 1965.50 As an effort to try to make sure all children across the Soviet Union have access to similar political socialization, the government has tried to control as many aspects of raising the younger generations as possible. Thus the Pioneers developed increasing importance as a method through which to control the spare time of children outside of school and home.51 While the majority of the Pioneer activities take place outside of the schoolhouse, work for and with the organization is a significant portion of classwork.52

48 Cheng, Creating the “New Man,” 28.
49 Cheng, Creating the “New Man,” 30.
50 Kassof, The Soviet Youth Program, 1.
51 Kassof, The Soviet Youth Program, 4.
Upon entering school children experience their first prolonged exposure to teachers and other childcare workers. From seven to twelve the children must develop until, at the age of twelve, they are deemed ready to undergo the extensive communist training that takes place within the Pioneer organization. It is necessary for school children to obtain educational information, but also must develop socially and personally in order to prove they are ready to progress onto the next step into becoming a Soviet citizen. The twelve to fifteen year olds are said, in Soviet theory, to have reached a level of political awareness making them best able to understand the requirements of Soviet society.\textsuperscript{53} The government and the organization make sure that membership to the Pioneers is something children look forward to, and work hard to ensure that membership is regarded as something fun. The Pioneer organization is constantly providing games, activities, and even the much touted Pioneer Palaces, which serve as a large recreation facility for the Pioneer members. The large resources may account for the popularity even while coupled with an outwardly political philosophy.\textsuperscript{54}

The Communist Party was actively engaged in the programs of the Young Pioneers. By appealing the recreational time away from the pedagogical atmosphere of the school, the Pioneer organization was able to impress additional ideology where children were not expecting to learn. The Pioneer organization presented a seemingly open approach to acquiring communist knowledge, though sports and activities.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{53} Kassof, \textit{The Soviet Youth Program}, 34-35.
\textsuperscript{54} Kassof, \textit{The Soviet Youth Program}, 70.
Lenin’s widow, N.K. Krupskaya, who was intimately involved in the development of Soviet children’s organizations, spoke of the relationship between the Pioneers and schools: “The school needs the Pioneer movement to help the students develop positive characteristics such as independence, ability to work in collectives, organization, and inner discipline.”

PROPAGANDA POSTERS AND EXTRA CURRICULAR EDUCATION

At its most basic form a Soviet propaganda poster is a picture and every picture tells a story. The posters were known for transmitting messages to the viewer(s) concerning numerous topics important to the government such as power relations and gender. Every modern state in history has utilized “propaganda”, maybe not in poster form, to achieve desired outcomes. The difference between the Soviet Union and other states is that information contained within Soviet propaganda was always regarded as fact and not just information. Soviet propaganda messages were truth, to never be thought of by citizens as invented. Posters are an important window into life within the Soviet Union because they are some of the few remaining sources which literally illustrate the ambitions of the government. By utilizing clear language and images in vivid colors the leadership was able to portray appropriate behaviors in accordance with its ideology. Along with gaining insight into the behaviors the government desired in its citizens,

56 Matt, Soviet Young Pioneers, 22.
posters also showed behaviors that were in opposition to government ideology and teachings. In the “bad behavior” posters the viewers were able to see the appropriate way to correct the behavior. In either case, Soviet posters present clear insight into the government’s expectations for its citizens.58

For an ideology to be most effective in the Soviet Union it needed to be supported by propaganda. Posters were, for the Communist party, an important medium through which to project ideology.59 The party may have seen the tremendous potential posters possessed in the posters ability as a form of mass medium to reach large numbers of people and illuminate the features of the new Soviet culture, ideology, and appropriate behaviors.60 While posters were a constant feature throughout the entirety of the Soviet Union’s existence, the specific messages and images portrayed were in part determined by the current shift in ideology as well as the leader in power.61

The 1960s in the Soviet Union was a time when the traits of the emerging new generation were attempted to be portrayed by authors, artists, and directors. Many authors portrayed the new generation of Soviet children as resilient, physically active, loyal communists. However, the new generation of Soviet children was not a carbon copy


59 For more on the ability of posters to effectively portray propaganda under Lenin and Stalin, see Victoria E. Bonnell, Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).


61 LaFont, Soviet Posters, 8.
of previous generations. Children of the sixties had been exposed to more Western
popular culture which resulted in a greater degree of spontaneity. Propaganda posters of
the 1960s reminded its citizens of the important values of socialist society: family,
respect for authority figures, obedience to the government, ideological adherence, as well
as the necessity of quality work.

A poster printed in 1962 (image 2) showed a group of four school children, two
boys and two girls, all dressed in their brown school uniforms complete with red Young
Pioneer scarf, handing bouquets of flowers to their teacher. The teacher, a conservatively
dressed stoic woman stands smiling with one arm open to greet the students and the other
arm full of colorful bouquets of flowers. The text message on the poster reads: В
gorodakh, stanitsakh, selakh zalivaetsia—samyi pervyi nynche v sholakh nachinaetsia
urok! [In the cities, villages, towns filled with [the] bell—now the very first lesson begins
at school!] The poster depicts imitable actions the government may have wanted Soviet
school children to duplicate. Not only are the children overjoyed and anxiously awaiting
their first day of the new school year but also they have shown great respect for their

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62 Much of the exposure of Soviet children to Western culture took place in the World Youth Festival that
took place during the 1950s and whose location rotated amongst the different Soviet bloc capitals. For a
detailed description and background on the World Youth Festival in the Soviet Union see The World
Festival of Youth and Students see Michel Julian, “The World Festival of Youth and Students,” The Drama

63 LaFont, Soviet Posters, 10-11.
teacher by bringing her a gift. The gift of flowers symbolizes the feeling of gratitude the
students’ have for the teacher training and shaping them in the upcoming school year.⁶⁴

Printed in the same year, 1962, was a poster prominently featuring a blonde
female Young Pioneer (image 3). In the foreground stands a stern-faced young girl with
blonde hair and rosy cheeks. Around her neck, her red pioneer ribbon, clutched in her
hands, and displayed in front of her, is a biography of Vladimir Lenin. Set before a deep
crimson background and with red text, the poster proudly boasts the red commonly
associated with the Soviet Union. The text below the image reads: Klianemsia tak na
svete zhit’, kak vozh’d velikii zhil, i tak zhe rodine sluzhit’, kak Lenin ei sluzhil![Swear to
live well in the world as the great leader lived, and also serve the Motherland as Lenin
served her!] The message this poster conveys to its audience is one of devotion to the
original ideals of Leninist communism. The text calls to the oath of the Young Pioneers,
and the allegiance the young children were to make to uphold the ideology of the Soviet
Union and Lenin’s memory.⁶⁵

A poster published in 1964 features a young school boy in the foreground and a
prominent clock in the background (image 4). The clock is different than usual clocks in
that where each hour would normally be there is a drawing of a different childhood
activity. The school boy is dressed very tidily in a blue school uniform, matching beret,

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⁶⁴ G.Shubina, V gorodakh, stanitsakh, selakh zalivaetsia (Leningrad: Committee of Council of Ministers of

⁶⁵ Klianemsia tak na svete zhit’ (n.p., 1962). Original poster accessed at the Wende Museum, Culver City,
California.
backpack, and tied together with his red pioneer scarf. Behind him is the yellow-faced clock with red pictures on every red hour mark. Instead of an hour and minute hand, the clock features two words where the hands would normally be. Rasporiadok, [schedule], and dnia, [daily], are situated on the quarter-till and quarter- past marks on the clock face, respectively. Below the clock in the lower right corner of the poster the text reads:

Shkol’nik, dorozhi minutoi, verryi schet vedi chasam, rasporiadok dnia ne putai, on vo vsem pomozhet nam [Schoolboy, every minute is precious, be faithful to every hour, a daily schedule will not confuse you, it will help us all.] This poster depicts an excellent example of new man modeling in that not only does the schoolboy present a positive responsible looking image to the viewer, but each of the twelve images on the clock convey positive activities that the regime may have wanted its children to undertake. From activities such as cleaning up after one’s self, to reading, and playing outdoor sports, all were character building tasks the government may have wanted its children to participate in.66

Also published in 1964 is a poster of a schoolboy proudly walking, looking mid-stride toward the front of the poster (image 5). Wearing a blue school uniform and matching military cap, the little boy smiles in his read pioneer scarf and backpack. On either side of the boy are two different scenes both taking place is similarly framed red brick buildings. Through large windows, both scenes can be well made out. On the left, the inside of the building is inside a schoolhouse where a meeting between a female

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teacher, the young schoolboy, and his mother is taking place. The boy and his mother, while shaking the teacher’s hand, stand behind the small wooden desks listening intently to the words of the teacher. In the other scene on the right side of the poster, the boy and his mother are sitting at a table in their apartment, the mother’s arm hugging the shoulder of her son, while the look respectfully to the boy’s teacher seated at the head of the table.

The text on the poster reads: *Sem’ë shkole nuzhno vesti rabotu druzhno: oni vdvoem v otvete, kem v zhizni stanut deti* [Families and schools need to work together: they both are responsible for who the children will become in life.] This poster depicts images that the government may have wanted children to emulate in that the schoolboy in the poster is obedient and respectful to both his teacher and his mother. The boy is shown being proud of his work at school and at home in the foreground as his enthusiastically smiles mid stride.\(^6^7\)

Published in 1965 was a poster which depicts a round black and white picture of a curly haired toddler in a large bright red star (image 6). The background of the poster is stark white and the only images of color are five splashes featuring a drawing of children’s activities on each side of the red star. Starting clockwise, the top right color splash is yellow and contains a drawing of two school children sitting at their desks working on their schoolwork under the watchful gaze of their school teacher. The next splash is purple and features a drawing of a young boy receiving his Pioneer scarf from a more senior Young Pioneer. The little boy stands at attention while an older school girl

ties the scarf around the boy’s neck. The purple splash is followed by a green one which features a drawing of three young children, two boys and a girl, planting and tending to newly planted trees. In the picture there is a young sapling freshly put in the ground to which the girl is watering, while one boy directs the other carrying a new sapling to be planted. The next color splash is blue and features a drawing of a young boy and girl playing outside. The little girl is jumping rope while the boy bounces a ball. The final color splash is red and features four school children. The children stand together, crowded together in a group focusing on an important piece of work for their Pioneer organization. Each of the children is dressed in their Pioneer outfits and stands concentrating on the work of the group.

Below the images, in the lower right corner of the poster reads the text:

Vyrastaite druzhnymi, smelymi, pravdivymi i trudoliubivymi! [Grow with friendliness, courageousness, truthfulness and hard work!] The poster illustrates numerous examples of images the government may have wanted its children to embody in that each image portrayed features an aspect of childhood desired by the government. From doing well in school, to becoming a Soviet Young Pioneer, to helping the collective community by planting trees, all the activities were phases and actions the ideal child was to complete on his or her way to becoming a New Man.68

In 1969 a poster prominently featuring the exploits of the Young Pioneers was printed for children (image 7). Largely dominating the poster is the tan background

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images on the left. On the tan background are the black tip of a bayonet and the barrel of a rifle to which it is affixed. Curving behind the rifle and coming out to its right is a large red-orange arrow. Above the barrel of the rifle is a green leaf and large red-orange star. On the right of the bayonet is another green leaf. Slightly overlapping the tan background are three groups of Young Pioneers. The top group of Pioneers features two boys practicing shooting with the bayonetted rifles, one kneeling and the other standing beside his comrade. Just below the marksmen is a single young boy who is practicing throwing a large brown baton, and below him is a Young Pioneer girl who is running alongside the trained German Shepard working dog. In the top right corner of the poster is the logo of the Young Pioneers: flames behind a red-orange star containing Lenin’s face with a banner across that reads the Pioneer motto, “Always Ready!” Below Lenin’s seal is the text stating “Lenin’s precepts are true.” The text on the bottom of the poster reads: “Zarnitsa pioneer, tebia zovet “Zarnitsa”—igra, gruzhnykh, sil’nykh i smelykh!” [Lightning pioneer, we call you “lightning” in play, friendliness, strength, and courage.]

The images in this poster could have been used to illustrate the joys and duties of the Soviet Young Pioneers. This poster may have been appealing to Soviet children because it showed the fun outdoor games able to be played by the Pioneer organization as well as the ability of Pioneers to “play” with things such as rifles and military working dogs. This poster may have been attractive to the government because not only did it draw interest into the Pioneer organization by showing the fun it provided but also it demonstrated the military training the organization provided. By playing military
training games, the Pioneers could have, in the event of war, used their training to defend and protect the Soviet motherland.69

Patriotic themes continued to make appearances in posters. A 1972 poster shows a black and white photograph of two Soviet peasants in its top half, one an old man with a long white beard and the other a young boy (image 8). The two are shown wearing their heavy quilted coats and holding guns. The old man and boy appear to be partisans fighting against the Nazis during the Great Patriotic War. Beneath the photograph are current Young Pioneers, a boy and a girl, smiling in their red hats, red Pioneer scarfs, and tan blouses. The text on the poster reads: Dorogo ottsov my idem nepreklonno! [We are going steadfastly on the road of our fathers!] The poster may have been utilized by the government to show the appeal of the Pioneer organization as a heroic organization that does deeds akin to those done by the brave partisans during the Great Patriotic War. The Young Pioneers depicted are joyous at the opportunity to participate in an organization that could defend the Soviet Union. Using Soviet patriotism was a common feature of the Brezhnev era within cinema and the arts in a possible attempt by the regime to replace dissatisfaction with the regime with the nostalgia of the great victory over the Nazis.70

Though the posters discussed above are only a selection of the propaganda posters from the 1960s to 1970s, they provide a glimpse into some of the issues the government


may have promoted among its youngest generation and their families. One of the benefits of examining propaganda posters when it comes to looking at views on Soviet education was that anyone viewing the posters was able to see the desired image the Soviet government wanted its children to embody. Posters allowed viewers, including the Soviet children at the time, to see which types of behaviors were expected, which were frowned upon, and how the ideal Soviet child should present themselves within society. Whether in school, at home, or during leisure time, Soviet children were to act in accordance with the images presented to them on the propaganda posters. A poster was a present and comprehensible form of political education for children well before learning how to read or entering school.

CONCLUSION

The desire of the Soviet government to create a new socialist person capable of constructing socialism within the nation brought into acute focus the regime’s ability to create such a New Man. Through alterations to the Tsarist educational system, the government endeavored to fashion the new generations of builders of communism. Implementing universal seven-year education beginning at the age of seven, the Soviet government set out to develop its new educational system. In addition to its schools, the government continued to utilize resources outside the classroom, including youth
organizations and propaganda. Posters, for example, promoted socialist activities and educated children on new socialist behaviors and laws.\textsuperscript{71}

In addition to education and propaganda posters, children’s organizations had a significant role to play in the education of the Soviet New Man. If a lack of cooperation existed in any aspect of the educational organization, the government may have believed the creation of a politically conscious and morally aware New Man was significantly compromised.\textsuperscript{72} Observers of the Soviet model of education admitted to the apparent success of the system for creating New Men in its schools. One observer noted that schools had the ability to produce in children feeling of patriotism, civic duty, dignity, and morality, appreciation of nature and art, as well as physical prowess in sports.\textsuperscript{73} In the 1960s and 1970s, the growing leisure time within Soviet society lead government leaders to become increasingly concerned with character development outside of the school. Brezhnev spoke of leisure time by stating “a person’s behavior in everyday life is not his personal affair. Free time is not free of responsibilities to society.”\textsuperscript{74}

Through the web of interconnected educational methods targeted at children, from the school curriculum to the images contained on propaganda posters and the activities of


the Young Pioneers, the education of Soviet children was a crucial process of socialist education. In order to teach children what being a Soviet New Man entailed the government relied on schools. To reinforce these teachings, the government turned to the Young Pioneer organization, and to ground the teachings with an image to which to emulate, propaganda posters were turned to. While the system of all-encompassing education was developed under Lenin, increasing leisure time and dissatisfaction with the government from 1962-1972 lead to the leaders recommitment to the education of children. Khrushchev and Brezhnev both were aware, that without the ideological support of the new generation of children in the sixties and seventies, the dream of developing communism in the Soviet Union would never become a reality.
Image 1: Literacy is the Path to Communism, 1920.


Image 4: Shkol’nik, dorozhi minutoi, vernyi schet vedi chasam, rasporiadok dnia ne putai, on vo vsem pomozhet nam, 1964.

Zarnitsa pioneer, tebia zovet “Zarnitsa”—igra, gruzhnykh, sil’nykh i smelykh!, 1969.

Dorogoı ottsov my idem nepreklonno!, 1972.
CHAPTER III

TELEVISION AND CHILDREN’S TELEVISION CARTOONS

On the streets of the Soviet Union a fruit vendor is selling oranges. Replenishing his stock the vendor opens a fresh crate. Much to his surprise there is something other than oranges inside. Amidst an orange crate lined with the peels of the eaten oranges lies a small animal resembling a teddy bear. With prominent round ears, large black eyes, and a delicate soft voice, Cheburashka (the little animal unknown to science) became the furry face of Soviet children’s animation.¹ In only four short episodes, Cheburashka and his best friend Gena, the crocodile, captivated the Soviet audience and helped to usher in the television era in Soviet animation.

While Cheburashka may be Soviet animation’s most famous character, animation’s story does not start or end with them. The story of Soviet animation and its studio, Soyuzmultfilm, has been compared to its western rival, Walt Disney Studios, but this comparison does not account for the unique domestic context of Soviet culture.² In particular, Soyuzmultfilm operated within strict ideological guidelines that accompanied the Soviet state, but still succeeded in making popular cartoons that would interest its young audiences. Animators often had to struggle with the expectations from the


government while at the same time reconciling them with what they believed would be best culturally entertaining for audiences.³

The introduction of the personal television set also brought about significant changes for citizens as well as for the “agitation industry” in the Soviet Union. Television was a media that was unlike any other at the time. The rise of television in the Soviet Union was not without its limitations, but its potential to serve the state’s needs were also promising. While television sets were not as easily accessible in the Soviet Union as they were for the counterparts in the United States, television had the potential of offering programming that would appeal to a wider span of generations than say the ballet or theatre.⁴

Though often associated with the Soviet film industry, the story of television in the Soviet Union is very different.⁵ What sets television apart from film were the types of programming it offered to its viewers, especially its youngest viewers. Television cartoons aimed specifically at child viewers have become some of the most remembered and iconic images of the Soviet Union. From the well-known and loved Cheburashka

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series, to a *Tom and Jerry*-like classic, *Nu Pogodi (I’ll Get You!)*, television offered many choices for the viewing pleasure of children. One of the main differences between television programming in the Soviet Union and countries in the West was the overt messages the Soviet Union portrayed to the viewers. While the Soviet Union may have had entertainment in mind when creating shows for its audiences, it is clear in the entertainment may have played a backseat to other goals and desires for television.

This chapter takes a closer look at television within the Soviet Union. From the introduction of the television set, to the images portrayed within specific cartoons of sixties and seventies, this decade saw the rise of television within the Soviet Union. I will begin by examining the scene onto which the television first appeared, and explore the early phases of television programming. By looking at the demographics and the types of shows that were produced in order to satiate those demographics, the evolution of television programming becomes clearer. While television was the newest form of media during the middle of the 20th century, it was also different than any other type of media the government had utilized. Television is different than periodicals, novels, and theatre, but the government needed to find a way to use this new form of media for

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6 For more on *Nu Pogodi* see *I’ll Get You! / Nu Pogodi*, DVD, dir. Vyacheslav Kotyonochkin (2001; Malibu California, CA: Jovefilms, 2001). *Nu Pugodi* was originally broadcast in the Soviet Union from 1969-1986. Due to the popularity of the show, episodes were made soon after the fall of the Soviet Union.

ideological purposes, just as it was using the others. What made television different from the other media was the ways in which television programming could reach the citizens of the Soviet Union. I will show not only how television was unique as a media form but also how it differed in its desired function by the government. Finally, I will end the chapter by giving specific in-depth examples of the cartoons which were shown to children from 1962-1972. In the examples, I will describe each individual cartoon as well as interpret the images that were contained within. By illustrating the situations in which Soviet children would have been exposed to in viewing television cartoons, it will be possible to see the types of messages and values the government and/or Soyuzmultfilm may have wished to impart.

THE RISE OF TELEVISION IN THE SOVIET UNION

In 1950 there were little over 10,000 television sets within the entire Soviet Union.8 After the death of Josef Stalin, and well into the years of Nikita Khrushchev’s time in power, the amount of television sets available for purchase reflected the leader’s interest in increasing the quality of life for the people of the Soviet Union.9 By 1960, the

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number of television sets increased to an estimated 4.8 million.\textsuperscript{10} The government specifically pushed the manufacturing industry to dramatically increase its output of television sets, so that during a short five-year span, the output grew to twice the previous five-year output.\textsuperscript{11} The increase in television output was met with obstacles with signal transmission. In Moscow, for example, the Soviet government had some initial success in the early experimental years of television broadcasting, but a tower that would be capable of reaching a great proportion of citizens was not planned until the mid-1950s. After a series of construction delays, the powerful Ostankino television tower was finally completed a decade later. With the completion of the Moscow tower, the Soviet Union’s television broadcasting had made marked transmission improvements, with the help of satellites, increasing its signal range to the far reaches of the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{12}

Consumerism, as a phenomenon, grew increasing more popular throughout the modernized world. The citizens of the United States, for example, had a great deal of material prosperity to show off to the rest of the world after the success of the Second World War. With the most advanced household appliances such as refrigerators and washing machines, the citizens of the Soviet Union grew envious of the appliances the United States had. As instrumental in the success of the War for the Soviet Union, its citizens felt they deserved material spoils of the victors. The main problem with


\textsuperscript{11} Mickiewicz, \textit{Split Signals}, 3.

\textsuperscript{12} Roth-Ey, “Finding a Home,” 278-9.
consumerism in the Soviet Union was not ideologically based, but based on the inability of the government to provide its citizens with the material goods they desired. Lacking both the quality and production capabilities for goods such as washing machines, the Soviet government tried its best to satiate its citizens need to indulge in consumerism. The government made refrigerators and television sets available for purchase and hoped to pass its meager attempts at providing modern household appliances off as “communist” consumerism.

The Soviet people, for their part, were reportedly greatly excited with the increasing availability of television programs and television sets. In research conducted on the purchasing habits of Soviet citizens in the 1960s, Soviet social scientists showed that people of all professional, educational, and income level were rushing out to purchase televisions. Families with children were more likely to buy than childless families. Families who had to decide between purchasing “modern” home appliances such as a vacuum cleaner invariably chose the television over the other, perhaps more sensible option. Overall, the Soviet people gravitated toward television quickly and in large numbers. The appeal of television was irresistible.

13 For specifics on how Soviet Sociological research was conducted see B.M. Firsov, Puti razvitiia sredstv masssovoi kommunikatsii (Moscow, 1977), 114-115.


Television was introduced into the Soviet Union in 1945.\textsuperscript{17} From the time of its introduction to the early 1960s, television was more commonly found in cities’ public viewing sites, such as in parks, clubs, children’s homes, and even museums.\textsuperscript{18} By the 1970s, television had morphed into Soviet TV, an enormous social, political, and cultural institution.\textsuperscript{19} Even before the widespread ownership of home television sets occurred in 1970, Soviet journalists began referring to television as a “vital mass phenomenon.”\textsuperscript{20}

Indeed, the viewership of television by children alone in the 1970s spoke to the popularity of the new medium. Of a study conducted of school-aged Russian children, three-fourths watched anywhere from two to two and half hours of television on weeknights.\textsuperscript{21} For the parents, the importance attributed to television programs by their children made television a real factor in everyday life. When the programmers tried to move the popular children’s program \textit{Good Night, Little Ones!} to a later time, parents became all too aware of television’s new place in life. Without seeing \textit{Good Night, Little Ones!} some Soviet children had refused to go to bed.\textsuperscript{22}


\textsuperscript{18} Kristin Roth-Ey, \textit{Moscow Prime Time: How the Soviet Union Built the Media Empire that Lost the Cultural Cold War}, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 208-209.

\textsuperscript{19} Roth-Ey, \textit{Moscow Prime Time}, 176,178.

\textsuperscript{20} Roth-Ey, \textit{Moscow Prime Time}, 199. Roth-Ey cites the Soviet sociologist Firsov, \textit{Razvitiiia sredstv massovoi kommunikatsii}, III.

\textsuperscript{21} Roth-Ey, \textit{Moscow Prime Time}, 207. Roth-Ey cites the survey results, \textit{Televidenie i deti}, (Moscow, 1974), 20-21.

\textsuperscript{22} Roth-Ey, \textit{Moscow Prime Time}, 212-213. Roth-Ey cites an interview with Kseniia Marina, 2002 (Gosteleradio Oral History Project).
Gosteleradio, the department in charge of television broadcasting in the Soviet Union, had to make adjustments to the evolving status of television. In 1968-1970 employees of Gosteleradio began retraining to ensure their commitment to the ideological and educational duties of television for the Soviet government. The Central Committee charged Gosteleradio with “ensuring control” over television broadcasting and reaffirming the educational role by a move to “strengthen educational work.”

Under the leadership of Sergei Lapin, Gosteleradio implemented a ban on criticism of television by members of the press. Lapin was quoted as saying, “to criticize Soviet television is to criticize Soviet power.” In a matter of a decade, Soviet television went from being a medium that was mostly shown in public places, to one in which people could watch broadcasts in the comfort of their homes, as well as a media in which the growing influence drew the attention and strict stewardship of the Soviet government.

Initially, the Soviet choices for national television networks fell in between the United States and the United Kingdom with only two national networks. The Central Committee of the Communist Party also began to take notice to the draw television was having on the people. In 1965, the committee created a third national channel whose goal was education. Though the channel would offer programs for children and adults alike, the purpose was to serve as an extension of the state school system and to include

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25 The United States had three national networks, ABC, NBC, and CBS whereas the United Kingdom had the BBC. For more see Michele Hilmes and Jason Jacobs, eds., *The Television History Book*, (London: British Film Institute, 2008).
political and ideological education to viewers. Of the programming channels that were available for viewers, there were obvious demographics which specific programming was designed to appeal. Of the programs on television on a weekday basis, close to ten per cent was targeted at children. Apart from news broadcasts, the majority of offerings were believed to have distinct occupational and political themes to them. Programmers often relied on common themes when it came to selecting shows, some of which include the threat of Western rivals, patriotism, and character building. What was left-over for children in the available broadcasting time was a small portion of television cartoons and game shows.

Weekend programming had more attention paid to the entertainment of the viewers. Of the programming offered during what the regime considered weekend leisure time, sixty per cent was considered entertainment. Children’s television shows had more focus on entertaining their young viewers during the weekend as well. While political education was still a feature during the leisure hours of the weekend, there were also Sunday morning cartoons and films that appealed particularly to children. Taken together, the children’s films, cartoons, and so-called “play shows” contributed to

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27 Mickiewicz does not attribute such observations to any official source. The themes discussed are observations of the author. Occupations themes can be attributed to what the author classifies as non-public affairs genre of broadcasting. In this genre she sees programs which can be classified as “political or career education.” Mickiewicz, *Split Signals*, 154.

28 Mickiewicz considers all non-new programming to be for entertainment purposes. Types of programs she includes are: sports, films, children’s programming, science, culture and science. She also includes the official position on the necessity of entertainment value in weekend programming by the deputy director of Gosteleradio, V.I. Popov. Mickiewicz, *Split Signals*, 160.
significant increase in children’s programming, up to twenty-five per cent of a weekend
day’s programming.  

By the 1960s and 1970s, television had become the primary entertainment
medium for the majority of the Soviet population. By the end of the 1970s, television was
considered almost a universal medium. Soviet television shared some common traits
with its European counterparts, the low level of communication based on emotions, lack
of American-style sitcoms, and overall lack of violence in adult and especially children’s
television programs. What set Soviet programming apart from the West, was the total
control the state had from the time shows were broadcasted, to the ability of a show to be
broadcast at all. The original authority over television in the Soviet Union was under the
Ministries of Culture and Communications, who were in charge of supervising
programming and technical issues, respectively. Once television became more popular in
1957, the party’s Central Committee reorganized the supervision of television to be in a
division of the Department of Propaganda and Agitation. In 1970, instead of being
responsible to the Council of Ministers as the State Committee for Radio and Television
was renamed the State Committee of the USSR Council of Ministers for Television and
Radio, also known as Gosteleradio. The change meant a change in the hierarchy, where

29 While there is no official statement accounting for the purpose of the shows, Mickiewicz observes the
purpose to be for the political education of the audience. Mickiewicz, Split Signals, 161.

30 Richard Stites, Russian Popular Culture: Entertainment and Society since 1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge
Fomichev “Ekran obshchestvennogo mneniya.” Televidenie, ’89, 124-34.
television was now before radio. The Soviet people had a desire to watch and own television sets, but they had little control over the programming. In surveys, respondents showed an affinity toward any type of television that did not deal with economics or politics. What Soviet people did express interest in were sports, news, cultural programming, and programs which addressed morality.

The Soviet government ordered the production of more television sets in order to establish a feeling of “living the good life” within the Soviet population, but this was not the only function the government had in mind. For the first time, television had created a mass audience within the Soviet Union. The casual, possibly intimate setting in which people typically viewed television broadcasts meant the messages being received were being sent outside of areas in which the public had grown accustomed to hearing ideological messages. Television could transmit messages to a large audience the same way a political rally or gathering could, but without the auspices of political messages. While radio had been a staple in the Soviet Union for decades, serious flaws had inhibited messages from being received on the same mass scale as television offered. In 1960 the


32 When discussing the lack of control Soviet citizens had over programming options, which is when compared to Western counterparts who have the benefit of market demand influencing television programming. Stites is comparing Soviet television to its European and American counterparts, in comparison he says the Soviet government has complete control over programming. Stites, Russian Popular Culture, 168.

Central Committee of the Soviet Union stated the use of television for propaganda efforts would enable the party to reach “those strata seldom reached by mass-political work.” Ownership of television seemed to reinforce that the scale and diversity of audiences the government desired would be guaranteed. Television would allow for people of different age groups, children, adults, and elderly, occupational backgrounds, and perhaps the most important factor, the highest completed level of education to view identical political messages. As preeminent media scholar Ellen Mickiewicz argues, total ideological saturation had never before seemed as close as it did with the assistance of television.

The introduction of television into the Soviet Union brought about what Ellen Mickiewicz has called a “revolution” for the traditional Soviet propaganda machine. The whole structure of the propaganda machine was disrupted by television; from the basic transmission of material to the overall absorption by the public, “revolutionary” changes to the ideological system were put in place. At the same time, the government was being influenced by the changes: there was now, more than ever, a greater chance of successfully conveying ideological messages. Television could also boast additional, perhaps unintended possible benefits, for the government such as reducing the rate of

34 Powell, “Television in the USSR,” 287. For specifics and more information see Partiinaya zhizn , 4 (1960) 31; and Kommunist, 13 (1965) 71.

35 The Soviet government undertook surveys of viewers’ television preferences in order to, as accurately as possible, understand the tastes of the Soviet people and rationalize the tastes to better conform to Party policy. For more on the survey discussed see Boris Firsov’s Television Through the Eyes of a Sociologist (Televideniye glazami sotsiologa), (Moscow, 1971). Firsov surveys the adults living in Leningrad about their viewing habits and attitudes. The survey variables and possible factors to influence viewing attitudes were education, age, and sex. Survey finding reproduced in Powell, “Television in the USSR,” 290-300.

36 Mickiewicz, Split Signals, 4.

37 Mickiewicz, Split Signals, vii.
childhood delinquency. By consuming such a large portion of children’s time watching television shows, children were believed to have less “idle” free time which could be spent getting into mischief.\textsuperscript{38} The state was happy to surround children with approved messages included within television programs, while at the same time providing a barrier and/or counterbalance to anti-government messages to which children may be exposed.\textsuperscript{39}

It was not until the end of the 1950s that the government began to see the power television could possess. In 1957, a group was compiled that would be in charge of television in the Soviet Union. Perhaps as indicative of the responsibilities the group would soon have, the Central Committee organized the television group as an arm of the Department and Propaganda and Agitation.\textsuperscript{40} Even the Ostankino broadcasting tower that was erected in Moscow conveyed elements of the party-state’s mission for television. Dissidents in the city nicknamed the tower the “needle” because of its association with the government’s desire to insert its ideology into the bodies of the people. Television seemed to be the perfect tool in the Soviet Union’s arsenal for mass agitation of the population.\textsuperscript{41}

Part of the appeal of television for the Soviet Union was that unlike other art forms, television, when portraying fictional programs, as well as other mass media

\textsuperscript{38} For more on the effects television had to the leisure time of children viewers see \textit{Semya shkola}, 12 (1973) 40-41.

\textsuperscript{39} Mickiewicz, \textit{Split Signals}, 207.

\textsuperscript{40} Roth-Ey, “Finding a Home,” 286.

\textsuperscript{41} Roth-Ey, “Finding a Home,” 278.
outlets, left barely any room for interpretation of the messages portrayed. With little ability for audiences to engage with messages, the audience was turned into passive consumers of television messages. As passive observers, the audience had to rely on the prefabricated conclusions the creators and government attached to the television programs. As Frank Ellis argued, limiting the viewer’s ability to respond to government messages, television forced similar compromises upon the viewer as did other forms of propaganda.

The setting in which television agitation took place was part of what made it such a unique media outlet. Unlike the press and radio programs, television operated primarily in the private setting of the home. Like most media utilized by the Soviet Union at the time, television set out to commence the ‘socialization of the person’ by changing Soviet citizen’s values and morals. Developing a citizen’s morals and values through television programming can be thought of as New Man ideology formation as well as political socialization. By attempting to alter the consciousness of television viewers, there was a possible attempt to make viewers like the Soviet New Man in morality, such as the desire to think about others before oneself. Additionally, political socialization may have been

42 Ariel Dorfman, *The Empire’s Old Clothes: What the Lone Ranger, Babar, and other Innocent Heroes do to Our Minds* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 179. Dorfman explores popular North American cartoon characters, such as Babar, and shows how the messages contained within the cartoons influence the views and ideas of the audience. The passive state and prefabricated conclusions audiences were faced with when viewing television programs was not unique to the Soviet Union, but shared amongst all television audiences.


44 Ellis, “Media,” 219.
taking place by attempting to form a political allegiance in viewers through use of programming. Political socialization may have been trying to get the viewers to feel loyalty to the Soviet government and communism, with New Man molding was an attempt on both levels, politically and person traits. In the Soviet Union where the government and communism were often tied into every aspect of daily life, political socialization and New Man molding became overlapping processes. ⁴⁵ Television in the Soviet Union was never considered art, and instead had to settle for being part of the everyday, or byt. Byt was all the things that made up the everyday for Soviet people, from the most basic necessities of the people to the most banal aspects of home life. ⁴⁶

As a large part of byt, television programming was set by the government to assist with, and potentially, conduct proper socialist cultural education. Part of the rationale behind television for the government was to foster an individual’s desire for culture. Soviet television’s goal was to not only introduce people to unknown, acceptable culture, but to entice and want to engage in more. Television showed many different examples of Soviet culture while at the same time providing its audiences with what the regime considered to be suitable leisure options. ⁴⁷ Programs showed dance troupes, musical enactments of historical battles, as well as programs prominently featuring sanctioned leisure activities such as the Soviet Young Pioneers. ⁴⁸ The cultural role of television was

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⁴⁵ Ellis, “Media,” 216.

⁴⁶ Roth-Ey, “Finding a Home,” 293.


⁴⁸ Mickiewicz, Split Signals, 161.
two-sided. Television had the ability to inform and broadcast culture to the masses, but the watching of television did not require cultural engagement. The traditional cultural message dear to the leaders of the Soviet Union were no doubt brought into the homes of viewers, but at the same time, watching television in the comfort of the home also precluded many aspects which the government wished to impart in its people.  

**ANIMATION AND CHILDREN’S PROGRAMMING**

During the sixties, state production of cartoons was focused more on younger audiences. The cartoons encouraged ideas of a brighter more positive future within the context of the story, by using primarily emotive characters and stories. Soviet cartoons had distinct features about them. By not relying heavily on discourse, the animation was said to create a sense of unity amongst viewers. The cartoons had little of what would be considered audible propaganda, and in actuality, there was little in the way of dialogue within the plots. Soviet animation was more visual, than anything else. Screenplays were short, conversation was scant, but visually the cartoons were exciting. The heroes and characters were tremendously popular with audiences across the entirety of the Soviet Union, no doubt a feat, based upon the sheer size and diversity of the Soviet Union itself. The sheer size of the Soviet Union and diversity of the Soviet Union was often a problem


50 David MacFadyen, *Yellow Crocodiles and Blue Oranges: Russian Animated Film Since World War II* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 80.

51 MacFadyen, *Yellow Crocodiles*, xvi.
when it came to implementing policies and/or practices country-wide. The Soviet Union had more than twenty official languages. Due to the number of different languages spoken, the lack of dialogue contained within animation helped cartoons to have a broader appeal across the country.52

Animation for children, even works that were initially intended and even shown in movie theatres in the Soviet Union, made their way to television. So many popular animated children’s movies were brought to the small screen, in a trend that was mutually beneficial for television as well as cinema. Popular movies were made more popular by the number of people who would now be able to view the films that potentially could not have in theatres. Popular animation, whether shown on the small screen or the big screen, such as Cheburashka, created tremendous outcry for more of the cartoon characters. Cheburashka spawned books, articles in the press, and even toys were made available for fans.53

Popular children’s programming enabled the state to try its hand at cultural planning. With the introduction of the television into the homes of Soviet families, Taylorism, or the ability to plan the intimate lives of citizens, by the government became more tangible.54 Created in 1964, the children’s program *Good Night, Little Ones*, aired

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52 MacFadyen does not include surveys or numbers indicating popularity of Soviet cartoons. He does mention the popularity in reference to the absence of scholarly attention paid to the cartoons. MacFadyen, *Yellow Crocodiles*, xix.


54 After the success of the Russian Revolution, Taylorism had a strong appeal to the new Soviet Union. For more on Taylorism see Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the*
and immediately received a large following of viewers. The show featured segments of animation with a heavy reliance on imaginary scenarios, as well as its memorable opening animation sequence and catchy song to close the show.\footnote{Interestingly, \textit{Good Night, Little Ones} (\textit{Spokoynoy nochi, malyshi!}) is still a cornerstone of Russian children’s programming. The program survived the fall of the Soviet Union and has been creating new episodes since its initial airdate in 1964.} The state aired \textit{Good Night, Little Ones} at 8:30 every night during the week, right before the broadcast of the nightly news. 8:30 was a strategic time in the evening schedule for a children’s program. Dinner should be served around 7:00, followed by viewing \textit{Good Night, Little Ones}, the children would be put to bed following their show, and afterwards the adults would be able enjoy the nightly news. If the routine was followed as intended by the state, adults would watch the children’s program; allowing for a greater, more diverse, audience base. The viewing of television was meant to be, and often was, a social activity.\footnote{Kelly source information is e.g. Oxf/Lev T-04 PF7A, pp. 9, where she refers to an interview with an informant who was familiar with the television lineup. \textit{Kelly, Children’s World}, 483.}

In 1972, the average hours and minutes Soviet citizens spent engaging in leisure time activities, which were all considered by the state to be cultural, were measured. The activities ranged from reading newspapers or books, self-education, and the newest cultural activity, watching television. Of the surveyed population, only young married and unmarried couples did any other cultural activity more than watching television. Parents and retired people were enthusiastic about their television viewing. Both older citizens and parents spent more than three times the amount of leisure time watching television. For the classic novel on Taylorism see Yevgeny Zamyatin, \textit{We}, trans. Natasha Randall (New York: Modern Library, 2006). \textit{Taylorism} in this context is defined as the use of scientific methods to achieve the maximum productivity in work, etc.\footnote{\textit{Russian Revolution} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) or for the classic novel on Taylorism see Yevgeny Zamyatin, \textit{We}, trans. Natasha Randall (New York: Modern Library, 2006). \textit{Taylorism} in this context is defined as the use of scientific methods to achieve the maximum productivity in work, etc.}

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television than participating in any other activity. Retired men watched a startling eleven hours and fifty-five minutes of television per week. Television had quickly usurped more traditional leisure activities as the most engaging for half of the respondents surveyed.57

The decade of 1962-1972 saw the increased popularity and accessibility of television across the Soviet Union. As part of the overall campaign to increase the living standards of the populace, Nikita Khrushchev ordered increased factory output of household consumer goods.58 While washing machines, refrigerators, and vacuums were made available alongside television sets, the populace of the Soviet Union clamored to purchase televisions.59 Television served the interest of both the party-state as well as the people. In the minds of the government, television sets and broadcasting channels could serve as evidence that life within the Soviet Union was comparably modern with its western rivals. For the people of the Soviet Union, television sets allowed for entertainment to be accessed within the confines of their homes, simultaneously providing pleasure and privacy to viewers.60

As television broadcasting improved, so did the selection of shows for audiences. Television signals could be received across the entire Soviet Union while the state was adding more channels and types of programming at the same time. As television


59 Roth-Ey, “Finding a Home,” 285

60 Roth-Ey, “Finding a Home,” 279.
afforded citizens across the country the ability to view the same programs despite their physical location, the party-state did not take long to acknowledge the unlimited potential to serve the state’s needs television possessed.

Soviet animation had a role to play for the government. The government set out to utilize animation for propagandistic purposes akin to the role the rest of television programming served for the population. Though not verbally pronouncing ideology in cartoons, by using situations and characters capable of creating an emotion within audiences, Soviet animation functioned as political agitation.61 By showing images in animation portraying men using negative traits such as materialism, the government conveyed to audiences that like the young men shown in the cartoons, materialism led to delinquency.62

The Soviet animation studio, Soyuzmultfilm, was created when the Soviet government realized the importance of creating animated film and television on a much faster pace. Walt Disney Studios in Hollywood had begun creating films using a Henry Ford assembly line, enabling the studio to turn out films much faster than their Soviet rivals. The Soviet importation of the western-style animation process means that each individual artist was allowed less self-expression through his/her work. The origins of Soviet and American animation explain some of the differences that viewers encounter when viewing both: American animation was derived from comic books and newspaper

61 MacFadyen, *Yellow Crocodiles*, xii.

comic strips, making their television animation more comedic. Soviet cartoons had roots in satire and propaganda posters. With the increased output and popularity, children’s cartoons replaced more traditional agitation such as political cartoons.

After Disney studios began releasing films that were more realistic, Soyuzmultfilm altered its animation style to be more artistic and creative and less focused on physical humor and other situations designed to make audiences laugh. Soviet animators wanted to distinguish themselves from the Disney-style animation, and attempted to shirk away from animation methods that would be associated or similar to Disney. Instead the studio’s animators changed their intentions to concentrate on educating children in the areas they deemed most important: art and morals. The government saw the large number of audiences that were drawn to the children’s cartoons, and began to make its animation studio diversify. During Khrushchev’s time in power, Soyuzmultfilm began to create animated films not just for children, but additional, more outwardly, political films for adults. Soviet animators saw their work as something crucial and meaningful to the socialist way of life.63

Through its competition with the Walt Disney Studios, the Moscow-based animation studio learned from the Hollywood studios how to use animation in the Soviet Union. For example, Disney cartoons placed a strong emphasis on friendship between the characters. Seeing how a friendship dynamic worked in the western cartoons, Soyuzmultfilm was able to manufacture a similar dynamic to fit the Soviet cultural

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atmosphere. By looking at the specific ways in which Disney assembled a story of friendship, Soviet animators were able to glean what would be most effective in the Soviet scenario.\textsuperscript{64} While Disney heroes were most typically the characters enacting change in the cartoon plot, like standing up to the bad guy or situation; Soviet heroes rarely found themselves in that role. Most often Soviet animated heroes were the ones who were in a sense made to be a more complete person, a more Soviet Man, by learning to change their old ways. The plot of Soviet cartoons was less about the journey of the hero to cause change, and more about the hero’s experience with progress and development.\textsuperscript{65}

The sixties and seventies for animation was distinct from previous generations when it came to what the government allowed cartoons to portray. The sixties was a decade which began with a greater degree of tolerance for allowable images than ever before in media.\textsuperscript{66} The decade also saw a greater move towards modernity in production methods and design aesthetics, displaying the traditions of earlier state-sanctioned socialist realism.\textsuperscript{67} Combined, the new developments led to a greater amount and variety of images, with the inclusion of more women and more Soviet geographic locations as

\textsuperscript{64} MacFadyen, \textit{Yellow Crocodiles}, 32.

\textsuperscript{65} The leniency MacFadyen references is when compared to the Stalin sanctioned Socialist Realism in animation. In the sixties, animation was given more leeway when it came to allowing different geographic locations and genders to be portrayed. MacFadyen, \textit{Yellow Crocodiles}, 44.

\textsuperscript{66} MacFadyen, \textit{Yellow Crocodiles}, 86.

\textsuperscript{67} For more on socialist realism in the Soviet Union see Matthew Cullerne Bown, \textit{Socialist Realist Painting} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).
part of different animation stories.68 The leniency of the government of the sixties greatly influenced the creative atmosphere of the next generation. Beginning in the seventies, the hard-lined socialist ideology in cartoons had been replaced by images of social activity and cooperation. The decade allowed for even more instances of media expression outside the standard socialist dogma.69 Even well into a decade that is described mostly by the inertia of its leaders, Soviet animation managed to take on “burning issues, the pressing problems of today, and life itself-never-ending, eternal, and philosophical dilemmas.”70

The government allowed for greater audience influence over the types of animation programs that would be broadcast during these decades. The combination of state sponsored educational emphasis on cartoons and the animators’ inclination for using imaginary images within stories resulted in empowering circumstances for viewers. In the 70s a Soviet animator, Fedor Khitruk, penned a Soviet remake of A.A. Milnes’ classic children’s stories Winnie the Pooh. The Soviet government did not approve of the animator’s take on the classic stories because of the style in which he drew the characters. Khitruk’s Winnie the Pooh did not adhere to Soviet animation’s tradition of making characters and settings look realistic. The government was weary to show such a novel take on traditional animation to audiences, but the audience undertook a large letter-writing campaign supporting the new cartoons. The audience defended the version of

68 MacFadyen, *Yellow Crocodiles*, 86.

69 MacFadyen, *Yellow Crocodiles*, 159.

70 MacFadyen, *Yellow Crocodiles*, 87.
Winnie the Pooh because of its ability to assist with the “emotional progression of the social self.” Pooh embodied the spirit of the Soviet Man because of his affability and his love for all the people of the world. Though Khitruk’s version of Winnie the Pooh followed the plot lines of traditional fairy tales and contained musical numbers, the Soviet Winnie-the-Pooh was an excellent role model who always displayed proper etiquette and excellent morals.71

The government justified the seemingly entertaining value of its cartoons. Animation did not need to have transparent propaganda and/or ideology within every example; instead there could be instances where entertainment was the more obvious message. Comedy was one of the subcategories within cartoons in which the government defended the entertainment and personal growth potential for viewers. Cartoons, it was argued, were beneficial to home audiences because the thinking patterns evoked were more along the lines of the patterns the government preferred. Comedy had the ability to engage the viewer in associative thinking, which was preferred over the usual causal thinking. It was explained that the relationship between the private sphere and humor was “social and morally relevant.” In relation to improving Soviet citizens or the making of the New Soviet Man, the wit associated with comedic cartoons was crucial to the growth of selfhood and interpersonal relations.72

71 What is telling in the example MacFadyen presents about Khitruk’s Winnie the Pooh, is the language the letter writers used to support the cartoon. The audiences knew the ideals that were most important to stress and presented those. MacFadyen, Yellow Crocodiles, 114.

72 MacFadyen, Yellow Crocodiles, 148.
Television created struggles within the Soviet Union. While having television sets available for citizens to purchase for their homes was no doubt proof that the Soviet Union was capable of the latest technological modernity for the home, allowing television inside the home required situating television with the rest of Soviet culture. The government had to figure out how to allow television in the homes of citizens while also finding a home for television in the Marxist-Leninist culture.\(^{73}\) The story of television is very much a story of the party-state trying to balance their control over media/agitation content and the strong demands audiences made for specific television programming.\(^{74}\) The party-state took on the potential struggles introducing television on a large scale to the Soviet public could cause, because television stood to assist with the overall goal of engaging the people in economic and social issues.\(^{75}\)

Ideological messages infiltrated all types of programming that was shown on Soviet television. Though surveys conducted within the Soviet Union stated that political agitation only accounts for eight per cent of the television broadcasting lineup, what can be considered political could be seen in a wide variety of television offerings.\(^{76}\) Shows that were not intended to part of ideological education of the population contained traces of ideology and references to various New Man molding traits. Sports broadcasts often contained boisterous support and love for the Soviet motherland. Films and other cultural

\(^{73}\) Roth-Ey, “Finding a Home”, 306.

\(^{74}\) Mickiewicz, Split Signals, 5.

\(^{75}\) Mickiewicz, Split Signals, i.

\(^{76}\) Powell,“Television in the USSR,” 287.
broadcasts relied heavily on patriotism and the superiority of the socialist system. The government, on occasion, allowed for Western films to be broadcast on Soviet television. These films were also part of overall communist party agitation because the only Western films that are shown on Soviet televisions tend to focus on some dark, unsettling moment in the corresponding nation’s history. American films shown would often show the conditions in the Jim Crow South thereby speaking to the superiority of the Soviet system over their capitalist counterparts.77

In a nation where revolution was a reality and a not-too-distant memory, the television revolution was a way of modernizing the backbone of the socialist system, the propaganda machine. Though traditionally reliant on radio broadcasts and print medias, newspapers, journals, pamphlets, and magazines, the Soviet Union had familiar methods of educating the public with what the government expected out of them. Political socialization was the party-state’s way of telling Soviet citizens of political, social, and economic obligations. With the introduction of television, the government saw a window into a domain in which susceptibility to messages would be especially favorable. Television broadcasting would allow for the messages the government wanted to be experienced on a much larger scale.

The appeal of television to Soviet people ensured that televisions would be brought into the inner sanctity of the home. Television was the opportunity for the Communist government to saturate citizens completely with approved messages. On a

77 Powell, “Television in the USSR,” 288.
scale never known before, the party-state’s messages would reach the full spectrum of audiences. Television allowed for all age groups to be accounted for, even allowing for special programming where messages could be targeted at audiences, such as children’s television cartoons. Television also did not have some of the limitations that previous agitation media had had. People of all education levels and occupational backgrounds could enjoy broadcasts. As the television was also meant to be enjoyed in the home, the government’s ideology would no longer be confined to the solely public spheres such as the workplace or the speeches. While appearing to promise domestic modernity for the citizens of the Soviet Union, television simultaneously appeared to have endless opportunities for political socialization for the government.

SOVIET CHILDREN’S TELEVISION CARTOONS

The introduction of personal television sets in the Soviet Union meant the government had to merge desires to use television for its ideological broadcasting potential with the viewer’s desire for entertainment. With regards to children’s entertainment that meant finding a way for the government to entertain children, while simultaneously attempting to convey socialist messages. It was not the only option for entertaining and engaging, but children’s animation was a major vehicle which the government utilized. In order to better understand the images and messages the government imparted on its children, it will be useful to examine some of the cartoons Soviet children would have viewed.
First broadcast in 1962, *Istoriya odnogo prestupleniya*, or *Story of a Crime*, begins by panning around a Soviet-style apartment building (image 9). The audience can see traces of life in the potted plants, balconies, and rows of trees planted in the garden. The beauty and peacefulness of the scene is broken by the shouting and cackling of two women in the building’s courtyard. In the distance, the viewers can see a disheveled looking man storming from inside the apartment to the courtyard with the vocal women. The man, the audience will later find out, is Vasilii Vasilievich Mamin. Mamin sets the cartoon in motion by taking out a concealed frying pan from behind his back and bashes both women over the head, rendering the women unconscious. Quickly, a police investigator appears on the scene in time to stop the angry residents of the apartment from lashing out at Mamin. After quieting down the crowd, the investigator states that Mamin is a modest, 47 year old accountant who has lived a model life, and in order to understand the event that just happened they should look back at the past twenty-four hours in Mamin’s life.

As the events of Mamin’s previous day are replayed, he can be seen using good manners, helping children retrieve lost items, obeying posted signs, and even holding the door into the metro open for a woman with an infant. At work, he is a happy diligent worker. Upon arriving home from work, Mamin waters his balcony plants and quietly sips tea. The quiet respectable activities are contrasted with the loud, dirty, and smoke filled activities of a group of domino players in the courtyard below his apartment. Bothered by the noise and air pollution of the domino game taking place below, Mamin retreats to the inner sanctity of his home, attempting again to enjoy a peaceful evening.
His evening activities are met with obstacles at every turn, changing the once well-manner accountant into a frustrated sleep-deprived tenant.

*Story of a Crime* may appear to be just another narrative depicting the trials and tribulations associated with apartment living, but looking more closely the cartoon may offer more to the viewer. Mamin’s story was part of Khrushchev’s Thaw in arts which allowed for a more realistic depiction of life in the Soviet Union. Life in Mamin’s apartment building was everything but ideal. He experienced a range of unpleasant living situations from littering, inconsiderate smokers, loud neighbors, disrespectful neighbors, and all within a day’s time. The police inspector tells the crowd that it was the rude neighbors who treated Mamin disrespectfully that caused the usually law-abiding citizen to act out. While the police investigator still arrests and punishes Mamin for assaulting the two loud women, he makes sure to scold the residents in the apartment building telling them that although Mamin deserves to be punished for the crime he committed, they need to think about what led to Mamin acting out.

Mamin’s story is filled with visual examples of appropriate and inappropriate behavior of a New Man, reflecting valuable lessons for Soviet children. Mamin’s life before he assaulted the women in the courtyard of the apartment was everything the Soviet government could hope to portray to its children. He used impeccable manners, taking care to take his hat off and say hello to the elderly, young children, and even offered his seat to another person on the metro. During his daily commute, the anti-

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78 For more on the effects of Khrushchev’s Thaw see section IV in Zubkova, *Russia After the War*. 100
Mamin is shown. Where Mamin holds the door open for a woman and baby, the anti-Mamin closes the door behind him, causing the door to strike and knock down the person after him. While Mamin is offering his seat to another person on the metro, the anti-Mamin comes and abruptly takes the seat. Other activities Mamin undertakes could also be seen as New Man modeling. Each time a positive trait and/or activity is being done, the “bad” trait appears to be contrasted by a rude neighbor. Once Mamin’s neighbor upstairs starts playing loud music and television, Mamin goes and politely talks to him in the hopes of getting the neighbor to quiet down. The actions of the individual neighbors that the story focuses on seem to reinforce Mamin’s actions as appropriate and worthy of imitation by young viewers.

_Story of a Crime_ portrayed appropriate activities to the Soviet children watching. By placing a strong emphasis on the collective as opposed to the individual, the cartoon stands by a traditional socialist idea. While Mamin is punished as an individual for his actions, the police investigator takes care to blame the actions of the modest accountant on the poor behavior of the residents of the apartment building. Though Mamin was not the traditional depiction of a Soviet hero, the actions leading up to his violent episode were overall positive images of a New Soviet Man.79

_Mister Twister, or Mr. Twister_, was a Soviet cartoon which also employed similar methods of character comparison in order to point out acceptable behavior, but instead of

depicting both bad and good characters as Soviet, this example compares Soviet citizens against an American family visiting the Soviet Union (image 10). The cartoon begins with the Twister family trying to decide where to take a vacation. Twister’s daughter wants to visit Leningrad so the father, mother, daughter, and pet monkey make the journey to the Soviet Union. The Twisters are quickly shown to be a materialistic family prone to much conspicuous consumption that is characteristic of an American family.

Upon reaching Leningrad the family goes to check into a nice hotel, but quickly leaves the hotel disgusted that the rooms offered to the family had non-white neighbors. Disgusted at the racist attitude of the family the hotel concierge calls other Leningrad hotels and tells them not to rent a room to the Twisters. After an exhaustive search of the hotels in the city, Mr. Twister comes back to the original hotel, humbled and begs for a place for his family to sleep. Pitying them, the concierge allows the family to sleep in the lobby. Dreaming that night, Mr. Twister has a nightmare that he is homeless. Twister wakes up scared and awakens to his terrible actions. The family wakes to find the hotel hosting a Peace Conference. After meeting the delegates and seeing the Soviet way of life, Mr. Twister and family correct their old ways and become accepting people like the Soviets.

The images in the *Mr. Twister* cartoon provide a case study of anti-New Man behaviors: preoccupied with possessions, rude, and especially racist. The Soviets portrayed in the cartoon were more in line with something the government may have wanted its young to embody: accepting, focused on world peace, and forgiving. Despite
the constant bad behavior of the Twister family in the beginning, the Soviet citizens attempted to see the best in the family. In the end, the Soviet concierge was perhaps the best example of a New Man, educating and allowing the Twister family to grow and become enlightened citizens like their Soviet counterparts.80

In Goriachia kamen’ (A Hot Stone) the older Soviet generation finds itself teaching the new generation how to behave as a Soviet New Man (image 11). Unlike the preceding examples, this cartoon takes place in the Soviet countryside on a collective farm. The story begins with an old man guarding the collective farm orchard. A precocious little boy, named Ivanshka, sneaks into the orchard to steal some fruit, but is caught by the old man. Much to the little boy’s surprise the old man does not strike him, but instead asks him to reflect on what he just tried to do. As Ivanshka is retreating from the embarrassment of getting caught he finds a magical stone which can make people young again. Ivanshka thinks immediately of the old man and drags the stone to the orchard. After learning of the stone’s magical powers, the old man surprises Ivanshka by telling him he would never want to relive his youth. Images of the old man’s past appear as he describes them to the little boy. The old man says he lived through the dreadful tsarist times, that he and the Communists won the Revolution and the Civil War by fighting off the capitalists who wanted to destroy the newly-formed Soviet Union. The

old man finishes recounting his life’s stories by telling Ivanshka, “Even though my youth was hard at times, it was clear and honest.”

The old man in *A Hot Stone* was a great model of the Soviet New Man. He was a patriot and a hero, who fought for the Soviet motherland. He fought in two of the most cherished historical moments in the history of the Soviet Union, the Revolution and the Civil War, making him a great patriot. The old man went so far as to say to Ivanshka that he fought and suffered so that the Soviet Union can be as great as it is now. Patriotic images were shown throughout the reminisces of the old man, including the oppressed farm workers under the tsarist system, the people in chains by the tsar, and valiant red images of the communists saving the toilers from oppression. When fighting the Civil War, the images of the capitalist enemies are a sharp contrast to the rugged masculine hero of the Soviet Union. The capitalist villains are cartoonish looking, fat, and easily triumphed over by the far superior New Men. As an old man, he possesses values which he attempts to impart on Ivanshka. By teaching the young boy the value of hard work and honesty, the old man can hope Ivanshka may become a great new man.  

In 1965 another example of potential New Man modeling was broadcast on Soviet televisions. *Vovka v tepdiviatom tsarstve*, or *Vovka in the Never-Ever Tsardom* was the story of a little boy who learns to change the way he lives his life in a trip to the library.

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Vovka is a rude little boy who visits a library to read a fairytale book (image 12). Instead of a fairytale, the librarian suggests that Vovka read a “Do it Yourself” type book where he may learn more than from the fairytale book. Vovka rudely tells the librarian he is not interested, so she retrieves a magic fairytale book which transports the little boy into the pages of the story. The fairytale world consists of several different stories: the first one being a kingdom with a tsar painting a fence. The tsar is singing a song about the importance of work and not being a “bum.” Vovka tells the tsar that he does not want to work, but all he wants to do is eat sweets all day. The little boy ends up being chased out of the tsar’s story because the tsar wanted to chop off Vovka’s head for being a bum. In the next story there’s an old woman who wants her wash basin fixed. In her story, there is a magic goldfish who one is supposed to appeal to for help. Vovka, not respecting the traditional manner in which one is supposed to summon the goldfish for her help, rudely yells at the sea for the goldfish. Once she appears, Vovka orders her to serve him, but the goldfish tells him he must complete some tasks before she will help him. Vovka laughs and refuses, and the goldfish refuses to help him stating that Vovka felt entitled but did not want to do any work for the goldfish’s help. She then makes a large wave throw the boy out of the story.

The next story features three young women performing various amazing feats, such as weaving a picnic blanket out of golden thread obtained from the sun. Vovka asks who the women are, to which they respond, young Vasilisas each from a different fairytale gathered together in a symposium on the topic of wisdom exchange. Vovka tells the Vasilisas that he would like to learn their magic tricks, which the women agree to
teach him. The women begin to teach Vovka how the tricks are performed, but do so using math and science. Vovka refuses to learn because he already has to learn in school and does not want to be taught outside of school. To that the women respond that he needs to travel to the Never-Ever Tsardom where he will meet people who will do anything he asks. Upon reaching the tsardom, Vovka meets his new tweedle-dee and tweedle-dum-like helpers. Vovka asks the twins to bring him sweets. When the duo return they promptly begin to consume the treats in front of the little boy. Frustrated, Vovka walks to find a talking stove who says it will make him all the pastries he wants. All he must do is knead dough and chop more firewood for the stove. Vovka tells the twins to do the work, which they promptly confuse and begin to knead firewood and chop dough. Infuriated, Vovka realizes that if he wants something done correctly then, he must do the work himself. Vovka finds the Do-it-yourself book the librarian had initially wanted him to read and goes back through the story, making a wash basin for the old woman and reading more of the book to try and help the old woman repair her home.

Vovka is a children’s cartoon where, through the trials in the story, the protagonist learned how to be a Soviet New Man. Vovka starts out as the antithesis of all what the New Man could have stood for: rude, bossy, and with no work ethic. Instead of wanting to learn how to do things himself in his leisure time as the librarian suggested, he wants nothing but to be entertained by a fairytale book. The three young Vasilias were models of what Vovka as a New Person should embody. Although the women had magical powers, they came about them using math, science, and technology. They were kind and wise, willing to teach Vovka how they learned to do their tricks. Even when
Vovka resisted their teaching methods with a violent outburst, the women wisely lead him to the tsardom where they knew he would encounter the frustrating duo that were supposed to give him anything he wanted. Once he learned the value of being able to do things for and by himself, the first thing Vovka did with the knowledge that he gleaned from the Do-it-yourself book was to go back through the stories and give the old woman the wash basin he had just made her. He then told the old woman that he would try to learn how to help her repair her home which had fallen under disrepair. While Vovka began the cartoon as a demonstration of bad behavior, but ultimately he evolved into someone more akin to a Soviet New Man, which made him a character worthy of emulation.82

In 1966 a cartoon called Gordyi korablik, or Proud Little Ship, was broadcast for the viewing by Soviet children (image 13). The cartoon starts with the narrator talking to an audience of young boys about the famous revolutionary Baltic cruiser the Aurora. Three boys break out from the audience and talk about wanting to be Soviet sailors like the ones in the narrator’s story. The boys stand in awe as the Soviet army marches past them. The three boys decide to build a wooden toy Aurora, after the ship whose cannons started the Revolution, and painted her red in honor of the Communist nation. The wooden Aurora sets sails and begins its voyage meeting people from all around the

globe. The toy ship is greeted warmly by all people who see it, some even helping the toy when it becomes stuck. During the voyage, the ship encounters a much larger capitalist toy navy which tries to attack the wooden ship. The much larger capitalist navy is no match for the *Aurora* which quickly outsmarts the capitalists and continues, unharmed, in its journey. As the ship returns, viewers can see how much the little boys, and everyone the ship met along its journey, wanted to experience the adventures of the little ship and be in the Soviet navy.

*Proud Little Ship* reflects the Soviet government’s educational concerns as it promoted patriotism. The cartoon showed a great patriotic moment in Soviet history by recalling the exploits of the *Aurora* (both on screen and in history) while also showing how great it was to be in the Soviet navy. The little boys would get to experience great adventures and everyone they met would like them because they were from the peace-loving country of the Soviet Union. The cartoon also modeled appropriate behavior by showing the children that watched it how great an adventure life could be in the Soviet military. Through the journey of the *Aurora*, Soviet children would get to experience a great pride in their country, which was a major part of being a Soviet New Man.83

The first episode of the widely popular Cheburashka series also had clear examples of New Man modeling for Soviet children (image 14). The episode, “Krokodil

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Gena,” or “Gena the Crocodile,” was originally aired in 1969. The cartoon begins with the scene discussed in the opening of the chapter: the orange vendor finding furry Cheburashka in a crate of oranges, bringing him to the zoo to attempt to identify the mystery creature, and after failing to do so, giving him to a man who owns a toy shop where Cheburashka will demonstrate toys in the window in return for a home in the phone booth outside the toy store. Later, the viewers are introduced to Gena who is employed at the zoo as a crocodile. When the zoo closes the rest of the animals and Gena get dressed and go home, Gena dressed well in a hat, coat, and bow-tie. Gena turns out to be a very lonely crocodile, who at home is sadly playing chess by himself. Gena decides to make signs asking for friends and hangs them up all over town. Cheburashka, who is sadly playing with a top, reads the sign and goes to find the crocodile. A little girl and the puppy she found crying on a street corner, also see the signs and go in search of friends. The girl and the puppy are the first to arrive at Gena’s house; Cheburashka arrives shortly after the pair. Upon arriving at Gena’s house, Cheburashka introduces himself and Gena and the little girl look up the strange creature’s name in the dictionary. When they cannot find his name, Cheburashka becomes downtrodden, but they reassure Cheburashka that they will be friends.

Next the viewers are introduced to an older lady who is singing and running around the town getting into mischief with her pet rat. Her song has lyrics such as: “you will never get famous if you are good and not to help people.” She sees Gena’s sign, tears it down and goes to find the crocodile. Gena and his new friends are playing a game of peek-a-boo when the lady, Shapoklyak, or Chapeau-Claque runs into the
crocodile. She releases her rat from her purse to scare the friends. All run away but Cheburashka, who after not running gets called a peasant by the old woman. Chapeau-Claque tells the friends that she would like to be friends with Gena because he could hide on the ground without being seen in order to play tricks on people. After the friends tell her that Gena will not join her in her mischief she declares war on the friends. Once the old lady leaves, Gena shares with the little girl and Cheburashka that there are many more lonely people in their town and he would like to do something to help them all. The friends decide to build a house for all lonely people and quickly begin construction on their House of Friends. During construction, more lonely people join to help the friends. Once construction is finished, Cheburashka is disappointed to learn that now none of the lonely people need the House of Friends because they all became friends during construction. After thinking it over, the friends decide to give the house to a daycare where Cheburashka will work as a toy. As Cheburashka and Gena enjoy their new found friends, Chapeau-Claque submits and promises to be good so she can join the fun.

While there are a number of examples of New Man modeling in the cartoon, Gena may be the best model of the Soviet New Man. Gena is cultured, reading the newspaper and playing chess, and well mannered, apologizing for running into Chapeau-Claque even after she blew powder in his face. Gena cares about the needs of others, which is indicative of his desire to build the House of Friends for the other lonely people in the town. In the cartoon Cheburashka may symbolize an impressionable child. By the end of the cartoon Cheburashka has learned from Gena to be selfless and think of others. The little girl offers to give the no longer needed House of Friends to Cheburashka so he
would no longer have to live in a phone booth. Instead of accepting the house, Cheburashka wants it to be donated as a daycare where he will work as a toy bringing joy to the children. Chapeau-Claque, on the other hand, began the cartoon as the opposite of the Soviet New Man. Even her name would have been obvious to the Soviet viewer that she stood for the evil French bourgeois. Creating mischief and wanting nothing more than to be famous, she did not embody any of the features the government may have wanted in its children. While she did not begin the cartoon as a character to emulate, by watching the good deeds of the friends, she agreed to give up her old ways and become well-mannered like the friends.84

In 1969 another well-loved children’s cartoon aired: the Soviet version of Winnie the Pooh (image 15). The first episode in the Winnie the Pooh series was “Vinni Pukh,” or “Winnie the Pooh,” and it begins following the bear as he went into the forest in search of something to eat. As he is walking, Winnie is singing a song, which the narrator says is something the bear does frequently because he is a poet who also writes songs. Winnie comes across a big oak tree where he can hear honey bees buzzing, and decides to climb the tree in order to eat the honey. Coming close to the hive, the branch which held the bear broke causing him to fall the long way down into prickly bushes. Intent on getting the honey, Winnie goes to enlist the help of his best friend Pyatachok, or Piglet. At Piglet’s, Winnie asks if his friend has a balloon the bear can use to get the honey. After

producing a green and a blue option, and debating the benefits and drawbacks of both choices, Winnie chooses blue so that he may look like a small black cloud and the balloon a part of the sky. Winnie leaves to make another attempt at retrieving the honey, all the while singing a made-up song. Arriving at the tree, covered in mud so as to look like a black cloud, the bear floats to the hive. Realizing his plan was not successful, and the bees are suspicious, Winnie tells Piglet to go home, get his rifle and shoot the balloon down. Once the balloon was shot, Winnie fell to the ground, where he and Piglet decided to go home and get something to eat.

Winnie the Pooh modeled appropriate behaviors for Soviet children in part because of how he spent his leisure time. Winnie was a cultured bear who while walking through the forest in search of food, composed songs about various experiences. Instead of activities that may have been considered wasteful, Winnie’s time was spent writing songs and expressing his creativity. The narrator also stated that Winnie was a special bear because of his ability to compose poetry. While going on adventures through the forest, Winnie not only sang songs of his own creation but also made sure to teach them to his friends.85

An episode of Cheburashka that was broadcast in 1971, titled “Cheburashka” featured the children’s organization the Soviet Young Pioneers, and numerous possible examples of New Men as well as New Men actions. The episode begins on a gloomy day

with Gena playing and singing a song about birthdays on his accordion. After the song is finished a delivery driver tells Gena he has a package for him. Cheburashka comes out of the delivery truck, tells Gena happy birthday, and gives him a present. Just then, a group of Pioneers march by on their way to plant trees. Cheburashka is in awe of the Pioneers and expresses his desire to become one so that he may learn how to march. Gena quickly corrects Cheburashka and tells him that being a Pioneer means much more than learning to march, that one must do a lot of good deeds to become a Pioneer. Gena opens his present to find a flying toy helicopter, the friends immediately wind it up but it takes off flying above the town with Cheburashka still attached. Cheburashka and the helicopter land where the Pioneers are building birdhouses across town. The friends ask the Pioneers if they can join them, but after not knowing how to do required tasks such as building a campfire, knowing how to march, and build a birdhouse, they are sent away. The Pioneers say they are the best of the best, and the friends can join only when they become the best.

In order to make themselves better in the eyes of the Pioneers, Gena and Cheburashka go back to Gena’s house to try to make birdhouses. Though their efforts are not successful, the friends are able to save a toddler from falling off a fire escape and into a manhole. The children say they have nothing better to do than the play where they are no supposed to, so Gena and Cheburashka decide to build a playground for the children. The Pioneers hear the commotion from building and ask if they can help with the construction. Gena tells the group no, because they were already busy building birdhouses. Upon hearing that Gena refused the Pioneers help, Cheburashka becomes
sad stating that now the Pioneers will never let them into their troop. Gena and Cheburashka discover the Pioneer troop is competing in a scrap metal recycling contest and decide to find a lot of metal to help ensure the troop’s victory. Gena goes into the harbor and gets as much “scrap metal” as he and Cheburashka can carry. The friends bring the metal to the troop. The Pioneer troop is so delighted because now they are sure to win first place that they invite the friends to join their troop. The Pioneers say that it does not matter if the friends cannot march or build birdhouses, because they have done so many good deeds.

In this Cheburashka episode, Gena was once again the best example of a New Man. Whether it was saving children from falling, building a playground for children with nowhere else to play, or helping the Pioneer’s win their scrap metal competition, Gena was constantly thinking of others before himself. When the children were climbing the fire escape to try to catch a butterfly, Gena scolded the children saying: when I was a young crocodile I never climbed fire escapes. The Pioneers could also symbolize the ideal Soviet man by building birdhouses and caring for the environment by recycling. Because the Pioneer troop only claimed to accept the best of the best, the desire to be part of the troop pushed Gena and Cheburashka to attempt things to become better citizens. Though they failed in the traditional way in which the Pioneers were good, like building
birdhouses, Gena and Cheburashka were already worthy of joining the troop because of their good deeds for the children.86

The same year the second episode of the Winnie the Pooh series was also aired. “Vinni-Pukh idiot v gosti” or “Winnie the Pooh Goes Visiting” was shown in the Soviet Union for children in 1971. In the second Winnie the Pooh episode, Winnie and Piglet decide that they would like to go visiting some friends. Winnie would like a mid-morning snack and believes that visiting would be a good way of getting a snack. Though Piglet tells Winnie that people do not go visiting at 10 o’clock in the morning, Winnie manages to convince his friend of the brilliance of his idea because hosts are usually tired during evening visits. The duo decides to visit their friend Krolik’s, or Rabbit, house and upon arrival at the house, Winnie informs Piglet that visiting is not easy, and there are rules that guests need to follow.

After Rabbit invited Winnie and Piglet into his house, he offers his friends a snack. While Rabbit is preparing the snack of jam and honey for the friends, Winnie washes himself and takes care to help Piglet wash as well. At the table, Winnie begins to eat with his hands but after seeing Rabbit use utensils and napkins he decides to do the same, all the while helping Piglet. Once finished with the snack, Piglet suggests the pair leave, to which Winnie said would be very bad visiting manners. Being the ever polite host, Rabbit continues to feed his hungry guests until there is no more honey and jam left

in the house. Once finished, Winnie and Piglet take their leave, making sure to thank Rabbit for his kindness. While trying to leave, Winnie gets stuck in Rabbit’s burrow entrance. Winnie manages to avoid staying lodged in the hole until he becomes thinner by sneezing enough to be pulled out by his friends. Relieved to be free, Winnie learns the valuable lesson that while visiting it is important not to overstay one’s welcome.

During the episode Winnie exhibits a number of traits that were desirable as New Man traits. When entering Rabbit’s home, Winnie makes sure to use excellent manners bowing and shaking hands with the host. He also makes sure to help Piglet with everything during their visit. From washing his face before eating the snack, to tying his napkin around his neck, Pooh helps Piglet with everything his friend may need. Winnie also teaches Piglet what is expected of him when going visiting: the proper greeting manners, making sure not to leave quickly after eating, as well as not to outwardly ask for snacks when visiting. While not acting like a New Man by taking advantage of his host’s generosity, literally and figuratively getting stuck at Rabbit’s house for too long teaches Winnie the valuable lesson that one must not stay too long at a host’s house. For the most part, Winnie’s actions were appropriate for children to emulate. Practicing good manners, helping friends who may need assistance, and learning from mistakes, were worthy of being part of the journey to becoming a New Man.87

In 1971 *Prikliucheniiia krasnykh galstukov*, or *The Adventures of the Young Pioneers*, was broadcast for Soviet children (image 16). The cartoon begins with three young Pioneers, two boys and a girl, playing in their schoolyard with animals. The children’s playtime is interrupted when the Nazi army invades and turns the schoolyard into their military headquarters. The army takes the school’s books and supplies out and burns them all. Horrified, the children devise a plan to sneak back into the school and take back the books the Nazi army has not already destroyed. Books in hand, the Pioneers are caught by a guard who takes the books from the children and maliciously burns them. In a patriotic move of solidarity, the children take off their red Pioneer scarves and sew them together to form a large red flag which they plan to raise over the Nazi headquarters. Through much effort and constantly outsmarting the Nazis, the Pioneers manage to raise the red flag over the headquarters. Shortly after raising the flag, the Pioneers are caught by the Nazi’s and labeled “Partisans.” As the three children were lined up ready to be shot in front of a firing squad for their crimes, Red Army planes and tanks rescue the young heroes. After the Red Army’s victory over the Nazis, the soldiers stand next to the Pioneer heroes, each with their red Pioneer scarf waving.

The three Pioneers were clear examples of the New Men the Soviet government planned for its children to imitate. Passionate about learning and all that it entails, the Pioneers in the cartoon risked their lives in order to save the books the Nazis were attempting to burn. The Pioneers were also patriotic, making plans to raise the red flag symbolic of the Soviet Union over the seized schoolhouse. The patriotic children fought not only against their Nazi invaders in order to regain what was once theirs, they also
fought against traitors the invading army had brought to their side. Risking serious harm and almost their lives, the Pioneers were willing to do anything on behalf of the Soviet motherland. Proud, brave, and selfless, the three Pioneers in this cartoon were worthy of standing alongside the heroes of the Soviet military after all their valiant efforts.88

Similar to the previous cartoon, Skripka Pionepa, or The Pioneer’s Violin, was released in 1971 and focused on the heroic exploits of the Pioneers (image 17). The cartoon begins with a young Pioneer boy in a picturesque setting in the forest playing happily on his violin. When suddenly the forest is bombed by Nazi planes, the only survivors are the little Pioneer and his violin. Not long after the bombing, the Nazi army invades the charred remains of the forest with their tanks. A tank begins to chase the Pioneer, the driver playing a German song on his harmonica. The tank driver manages to trap the Pioneer and demands that he accompany the harmonica on his violin. Refusing to play a German song, the Pioneer instead plays a selection of Russian classical music to the driver. Because of his defiance the Pioneer is killed by the Nazi tank driver. After the war comes to an end and the Nazi’s have been defeated, a group of young Pioneers gather in the forest playing Russian classical music on violins to honor the patriotic Pioneer and his violin.

The Pioneer in this cartoon once again had similar desirable traits in which the Soviet education system also attempted to impart to its children. The foremost being a feeling of pride and patriotism for the Soviet Union. Even though the Pioneer knew he stood no chance against the Nazi tank driver if he refused to play the German song, the boy preferred to die rather than to betray his beloved country. One of the main differences in this cartoon featuring Pioneers is that this young Pioneer boy was not only patriotic to his nation’s military, but also proud of Soviet culture. The boy refused to play anything on his violin other than Russian classical music because of how proud he was of his country’s culture preeminence. While the boy did not survive the Nazi invasion, he became a martyr because he refused to compromise his belief in the Soviet Union, for which the other Pioneers made him a hero worthy of their imitation.  

The final episode of the Winnie the Pooh series was broadcast in 1972 (image 15). The episode, “Vinni-Pukh i den’ problemy,” or “Winnie the Pooh and the Day of Concerns” begins with the gray donkey Eeyore sitting, looking at his reflection in the lake and “pondering the strangeness of life.” Depressed, Eeyore sadly sits next to the lake. At the same time, Winnie comes marching through the forest singing one of his signature self-composed songs. Politely greeting Eeyore and inquiring about him, Winnie learns that the donkey is very upset about something. Winnie discovers that the donkey has lost his tail, much to the surprise of Eeyore himself. Winnie finally learns the reason

for Eeyore’s depression is because it is his birthday and he has no friends, cake, or presents with which to celebrate. When Eeyore begins to weep into the lake, feeling he must do something to help Eeyore, Winnie takes leave and promises the sad donkey that he will return quickly.

Winnie finds Piglet and tells his friends of the situation with Eeyore. Winnie rummages through his house, hoping to find a suitable gift for Eeyore’s birthday. Winnie decides to give the donkey a pot of honey, and Piglet decides he must go home so that he may give Eeyore his remaining balloon. On his way to give Eeyore the pot of honey, Winnie gets hungry and eats the honey. Deciding that an empty pot is much more useful as a gift than one full of honey, Winnie continues his journey until he reaches Sova’s or Owl’s house. Stopping at Owl’s, Winnie asks if he could write “Happy Birthday from Pooh” on the pot. While Owl is writing on the pot, Winnie notices that Owl’s bell rope looks very much like Eeyore’s missing tail and tells Owl that giving Eeyore the bell rope for his birthday would make the donkey very happy. At the same time in another part of the forest, Piglet is rushing with his balloon, overjoyed with the thought of how excited the balloon will make the depressed donkey, Piglet trips popping the balloon. Arriving at the lake, Piglet sadly tells Eeyore that he had planned on gifting a beautiful balloon for the donkey’s birthday, but popped it, so all he can give him is the remains of the balloon on a string. Winnie arrives at the lake with his gift and tells Eeyore that it is a useful pot that you can put anything in. Eeyore is excited to learn that he can use the pot as a place to store his balloon, but even more excited when Owl arrives and gives the donkey his
bell rope. It turns out that Owl’s bell rope is Eeyore’s lost tail, and the donkey is thrilled that the day was spent not only with great presents, but with great friends.

Like the other episodes of the Winnie the Pooh series, “Winnie the Pooh and the Day of Concerns” also had potential moments of New Man modeling for children. Winnie’s concern and desire to celebrate Eeyore’s birthday, making sure the donkey did not spend his special day alone, may demonstrate selflessness and concern for others. In addition to wanting to help Eeyore, Winnie continued to help his other friends if they are needed. What also stands out were the manners that Winnie uses when speaking to Owl. Winnie took care to apologize for interrupting Owl while she was telling a story, used proper manners, and excused her when she sneezes or when he thought she sneezed.

Winnie also made sure to give Eeyore “proper” gifts that will be useful for the friend. When considering the options of what to give the donkey, Winnie chose the option that was the most practical. Aside from proper manners and concern for others, the overall moral of the episode was another message the government wanted its children to take to heart: while it is nice to give gifts on birthdays, it was more rewarding to be a friend on a birthday, which resonates with teaching children the value of friendship over materialism.90

CONCLUSION

Though the face of Soviet animation may look like the furry face of Cheburashka, the story of animation in the Soviet Union was not just the stories of Cheburashka and his friend Gena. Instead, Soviet animation had elements which entail a foundation based on principles started by Walt Disney studios in the United States, but which later diverged and developed traits that would make their cartoons distinctly Soviet. Soviet animation had the challenge of not only creating cartoons that Soviet children would want to watch but also to create cartoons that were in line with the parameters of Soviet ideology. It was the delicate balancing act between entertainment and agitation, that made Soyuzmultfilm unique.

Though all the cartoons discussed in this chapter present a positive image of the Soviet New Man, this decade allowed a greater degree of freedom of expression within the cartoons. Many of the cartoons feature realistic depictions of what life was like in the Soviet Union, which was not always the positive image the government may have liked to portray. *Story of a Crime*, for example, featured crime, thoughtless neighbors, as well as images of city development that was presented in a sartorial manner. When Mamin arrived at work, he had a view out his window of the city’s skyline. By the end of the day, an apartment building had been built, in a manner akin to the way a child builds with blocks, blocking his window.\(^9^1\) Many of the cartoons discussed engaged in satire that

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\(^9^1\) *Story of a Crime.*
was common in literature of the time. While the depictions of Soviet New Men were positive, animators did participate in the freedom of expression of the 1960s and 1970s, by showing satirical and realistic depictions of Soviet life.

Soyuzmultfilm also had to adjust to the introduction and rise of the home television set. Used to creating cartoons to be viewed within the communal atmosphere of the movie theater, television necessitated a move of cartoons to be appealing when viewed in the privacy of the home. During the 1960s and 1970s, the government ordered the increased production of consumer goods, including televisions. Animation now had the potential to reach audiences that may have never had the ability to go to theaters and watch cartoons. The government may have also seized the increased viewing audience as an opportunity to spread ideological messages to the masses.

The Soviet government could have seen television as a chance to send messages into a sphere where the government had less control: the home. In order to portray images of the ideal Soviet New Man, the government may have used television cartoons as images to model. At times not outwardly conveying an ideological message, Soviet children’s cartoons contain images that could have been used for New Man modeling purposes. By taking a medium that the Soviet public was enamored by, the government

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could use the cartoons of Soyuzmultfilm for didactic purposes as opposed to purely entertainment. Adorable as Cheburashka was, his cartoons carried images intended to display the appropriate behaviors of a Soviet New Man.
Image 9: *Story of a Crime.*

Image 10: *Mister Twister.*
Image 11: *A Hot Stone.*

Image 12: *Vovka in the Never-Ever Tsardom.*

Image 13: *Proud Little Ship.*
Image 14: *Gena the Crocodile.*

Image 15: *Winnie the Pooh.*
Image 16: *The Adventures of the Young Pioneers.*

Image 17: *The Pioneer’s Violin.*
CONCLUSION

Cold War society within the Soviet Union, especially in the decade of 1962-1972, reflected the turmoil diplomatic relations outside of the country. While the United States and the Soviet Union were jockeying for supremacy, inside the country the Soviet people were dealing with their own everyday struggles and despite any claims of whose system of government was the most advanced. Since the victory over the Nazis in the Great Patriotic War, Soviet society struggled to rebuild and restore the country. Exhausted from the great sacrifices of the War, Soviet citizens grew exasperated with the government’s inability to fulfill promises for better living conditions. Expected to be rewarded for wartime rationing and losses with new single family apartments and plentiful consumer goods, society experienced a crisis of expectations during the Khrushchev and Brezhnev regimes. How could Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev re-enlist the people in the task of building socialism in a growing nation ever more distrustful of both the regime’s ability and its ability to create the socialist utopia it promised?

The government sought their answer in the children of the Soviet Union. If the government were to have any hope of succeeding in the future it would have to make sure it had the new generation to be the ‘builders of communism’ that it needed. The model citizen that the governments of Khrushchev and Brezhnev turned to was that of the Soviet New Man. Created following the success of the Revolutions, the Soviet New Man would
be the foundation of the state, an ideal Communist committed to hard work, party enlightenment and the continuation of building communism in the Soviet Union. Instead of the Revolutionary envisioned by the Bolsheviks, the New Man under Khrushchev and Brezhnev took on a distinct appearance unique to the Cold War era. Still a man devoted to the party and the Soviet collective above all, the Cold War New Man had defeated fascism, remained a loyal Communist, but could enjoy the increasing freedoms such as his new apartment and television.

Controlling the educational system was another method by which the government hoped to influence Soviet children. As part of the system of universal education for children, starting at the age of seven until the age of fourteen, political socialization was ever present. Lessons designed specifically to discuss socialist principles were included as the children got older, whereas tidbits of information about the forming of the Soviet Union or the superiority of the Soviet system pervaded textbooks. As part of the education process, the government also reached out to sources of extracurricular education. Propaganda posters reflected the government’s idea of a New Man the children were to embody. The government also turned to the Young Pioneers as another educational resource. As a source of amusement in the children’s leisure time, the Pioneers provided addition political socialization in preparation for joining the larger Soviet collective, society.

The introduction of personal television sets within the Soviet Union provided an opportunity for the government to reach into the homes of people across Soviet society.
Using didactic programming, the government had an opportunity to produce an ideological education where it had scarcely existed before. Children’s cartoons certainly reflected the values of the New Man, even if the government could not control how viewers perceived these images. By including elements of the New Man in cartoons which children may have wanted to emulate, the government may have taken part in New Man character molding. While not espousing ideology and socialist dogma outright, teaching children desirable traits within cartoons may have had the dual effect of entertaining and impressing the New Man mold upon Soviet children.

Together, the various educational methods, including the Soviet curriculum and television, created a cohesive web designed to surround Soviet children with constant images of the model the government desired, the Soviet New Man. Taking place in every aspect of a child’s daily life, in school, on the way to school in the images on a poster, at home watching television in leisure time, Soviet children’s gaze was continuously affixed to the image of what he or she was expected to become. Whether or not effective, the images were pervasive enough to be a common element of every child’s life. No matter the parents, a Soviet child knew the image he or she was expected to embody, the politically conscious, morally upright, active member of the school and Pioneer collective.

Life in the late Brezhnev era, after 1972, began to look increasingly bleaker for Soviet society. New concerns beyond post-War rebuilding efforts took center stage as the Soviet system began to actively decline. Economically, conditions had been getting
worse, consumer goods were still hard to come by and families still waited years before getting the single-family apartment they were promised. With the discovery of oil in Siberia and with the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli war in 1973, the Soviet Union, now exporting oil, experienced a boost to the otherwise downtrodden economy.¹ The environment had also become a subject of increasing concern. Industrial pollution had reached overwhelming levels.² In the industrial toxic zones, the failing health of children had reached epidemic proportions. Incidents of respiratory problems and cancer grew exponentially. Throughout the rest of the Soviet Union, infant mortality increased and life expectancy decreased. Alcoholism was on the rise as was workplace absenteeism.³ While the government invested heavily in the health and welfare of the people during the 1970s and into the 1980s, life expectancy was growing increasingly shorter.⁴

After the great investments in providing ideological education to the children of 1962-1972, the undoing of the Soviet Union was not from lack of belief in the system. Providing children with knowledge of the Soviet system and the benefits of communism over capitalism did not protect the Soviet Union from the United States, it needed protection from itself. No matter how much the children believed in the communist system, it could not protect it from the danger industrial waste or alcoholism posed.

³ Kotkin, Armageddon Averted, 26.
⁴ Bernstein, Burton, and Healey, Soviet Medicine, 5-6.
Domestic situations, be it health or environment, became the unexpected undoing of the Brezhnev era.
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