# Development And Manifestation Of Patriotic Ideas In USSR

## Introduction

According to website Britannica.com patriotism is a “feeling of attachment and commitment to a country, nation, or political community”. It comes from the Greek word “pater” (father) considering a country as a Motherland or Fatherland. A similar definition is given by Online Etymology Dictionary: “the passion which moves a person to serve his country, either in defending it or in protecting its rights and maintaining its laws and institutions”. This paper is devoted to patriotism as a national value in the USSR and its reflection in movies and posters of that period. Our grandparents, who were born and grown up in the Soviet Union, remember that patriotism was an inalienable and one of the main features of ideology of that period. The notion of patriotism had a great positive and encouraging influence on the society and that was patriotism that united people during the harsh periods of the Soviet time and helped them to survive and develop the country into a world superpower. It is worth mentioning that the idea of patriotism is still essential for modern Russia and patriotic education is one of the main aspects of president Putin’s policy. Nowadays a lot of attention is paid to the development of this feeling: government arranges various events such as concerts, fairs, festivals, exhibitions and parades, and provides support for filmmakers and directors producing patriotic movies. What is more, all other types of mass media are widely used to nurture patriotism among citizens along with school education that is directed to bringing up a patriotic generation. Thus, patriotism has been an important value both for the Soviet period and modern country, that’s why the analysis of the tools used by the USSR government is necessary to understand how they can be and are applied now.

The aim of this research is to assess the use of visual tools such as posters and cinema in the development of patriotism in the Soviet period. To achieve the aim the following tasks were set:

1. To analyse results of research carried out by Russian and foreign scientists on the development of patriotic ideas in USSR;

2. To analyse the use of visual tools in strengthening patriotic ideas in the mind of Soviet people.

While preparing this course paper the author studied works of such foreign scientists as D. Branderburger, G. Hoskings, D. Lieven as well as a number of Russian scientists, for example A. Ivanov, I. Rodionova and others. Some abstracts from the Party Report of 1927 “Results and Prospects of Cinematography of the USSR” were read and analysed. As for the case study, 18 posters and 10 movies were chosen for analysis.

## Chapter I. Development of Patriotic Ideas in the USSR.

Soviet period is one of the most significant periods in the history of the state. It was the time when the country showed its military might and became a superpower. It is obvious that patriotism was the key factor which helped to achieve these results. However, patriotic ideas were not widespread until the 1930’s as they didn’t match Marxism ideology. The post-

revolution period is mainly characterised by the ideas of proletarian internationalism as “Bolsheviks were patriots of revolution, not a specific country (Rodionova)”. Official propaganda of that period used the term “revolutionary patriotism”, which didn’t reflect ideas of love of the country.

Patriotic ideology got its development in the second half of the 1930-s. The attitude to patriotism changed when Joseph Stalin became the ruler of the country as it became clear that it was the only way to unite and mobilize population of such a vast and diversified country. “Stalin was visibly rejecting a multicultural history of the region in favour of a historical narrative which would implicitly focus on the Russian people’s state-building across time.” (Branderberger, 2000)

In the 1930-s patriotic rhetoric became a part of both political leaders and ordinary citizens of the country. It was the period before the World War II and it was necessary to unite and mobilize people. Patriotism became a crucial element of education and everyday life. As a result, national patriotism and such notions as “motherland (fatherland)” and “native land” were widely used by the people and became the basis of soviet ideology of those times. It was clear that people needed a strong leader to idolize, thus, another bragging right was the image of the “Grand Chief” and “Father of the Peoples” Joseph Stalin and other main outstanding citizens of the country, such as military officers, aviators, scientists and explorers. Some Russian scientists guess that it was the change in the attitude to patriotism that helped to consolidate society and made the people accept totalitarianism (Ivanov, 1997). Military might and power of the country was also used as a fundamental patriotic value. In the period of Great Patriotic War patriotism played a crucial role in the course of history. People were ready to fight for the country to sacrifice everything including their life. Due to the bravery, heroism and love to the motherland of the people USSR became a superpower in a short period of time. Patriotism as a part of official ideology demanded support of socialism, soviet system, party and its leader. To achieve this objective a specified curriculum for educational institutions and public organisations was developed. Mass media and cinema played a great role in the formation of patriotic consciousness as well. Later, under the ruling of Nikita Khrushchev idea of soviet patriotism was further developed. However, due to serious economic and political crises in the 1970 80-s patriotic ideas were undermined. Ultimately, when Michael Gorbachev was the head of the country Soviet people were dissatisfied and anti-soviet ideas spread widely in the country and beyond its borders, which became one of the reasons of the collapse of the USSR.

# Chapter II. Visualisation of Patriotism in the USSR.

Visualisation of patriotic ideas was widely used in the Soviet period to form new ideology of the citizens. According to V.Bonnel, bolshevists’ propaganda was mainly based on visual methods because of two reasons: lack of literacy of soviet people and “visual traditions” formed by Russian orthodox church (Bonnel). In a country whose population for the most part was not able to read or write, cinema and posters were regarded as the best possible tools for propaganda and education.

## 1. Posters as a tool of propaganda in the USSR

The message of the Soviet propaganda posters mainly reflected ideas of the ruling party. In the 1920-s they propagandized ideas of Marxist-Leninist ideology. That time they were mainly directed to the abolition of illiteracy and fight with unhealthy habits (especially alcohol addiction).

Later, in the period of World War they were aimed to encourage people to fight for their motherland. Posters of that period had three main goals: 1) raising the military spirit; 2) uniting people in front of a common enemy; 3) making them an invincible whole. Among the most famous artists of that period were Efimov, Cheremnykh, a team of artists “Kukrynnksy” (Kuprijanov, Krylov, Sokolov) and others. The posters were bright, caught the attention with the red-yellow-orange colors, which, among other things, were the symbols of the Communists. Moreover, the slogans themselves were easy to understand for poorly educated people. They were short but loud, sometimes even provocative.

## 2. Cinematography in the USSR

Soviet propagandists realized that cinema as a media was greatly important and influential. Films are longer and more expensive in production, but they are more encouraging as they show the entire history of characters, their inner strength and emotions. With the help of cinema, the Bolsheviks tried to nurture preferable ideas about the country and educate people in the spirit of communism and internationalism. According to Trotsky, cinema became the ideal tool used by the Bolsheviks in the fight against religion and widespread alcohol addiction. According to Party Report of 1927 'Results and prospects of cinematography of the USSR' the main task of filmmakers was to lead the masses to communism. Thus, cinema was the main competitor of the church in the Soviet state and the main conductor of communist ideas. In 1928 the government gained control over the entire Soviet filmmaking industry, and since 1930 all the films were closely scrutinized and controlled by the government bodies. As a result, the State Department of the Film and Photographic Industry was formed and became the supreme control body in February 1933. The state wanted all the films produced in the country and watched by people to meet the ideological expectations of the party, so there was a strict control over the plots and scenarios. Later, in January 1935 All-Union Conference of Cinematographers of the USSR was held which was the outcome of a process that led to the final formation of the Soviet film industry, based on Soviet patriotism and the doctrine of socialist realism.

Calling cinema 'not only the most important, but also the most popular of the arts,' Stalin almost literally quoted Lenin's speech. Stalin was seriously interested in cinema issues and from the mid-thirties even became the main censor of the Soviet film industry. He personally controlled, read and edited all the scripts. No film could be released without his approval. As it was mentioned earlier, the image of a strong leader was necessary to unite people, that’s why Stalin attached great importance to cinema in spreading the cult of his own personality. However, he rarely allowed to shoot him (unlike many other political leaders, for example, Hitler). It was entrusted to professional actors to represent Stalin in movies. For example, in a legendary film “The Fall of Berlin” (1949) the role of Stalin was played by Michael Gelovani. The Ruler is presented as a wise, strong and unconquerable leader against a villainous and mischievous Hitler.

Films about war and patriotism are still loved and watched by Russian people. We all know these films: “The Quiet Don”, “The Officers”, “They Fought For Their Homeland”. These films describe the feats of ordinary people during the period of hostilities. The first film shows us the time of the Civil War, and the other two - the Great Patriotic War. There we can observe scenes of bloody battles and courage, dedication and heroism. For example, scenes where people are willing to risk their lives for the sake of national interests, vividly prove this. One can observe a wonderful example from the film “The Quite Don” when Grigory Melekhov did not want to

emigrate, although he understood that he was not fit. This showed that he was a real warrior who defended his homeland. A real fighter will never leave his homeland, serving his native land.

Another landmark of Soviet cinematography is the film “Officers”. The authors of the “Officers” managed to show the history of friendship throughout the lifetime of two officers for a relatively short footage. All the characters and stories are revealed. Moreover, it shows three generations of the military, for whom it has always been important to serve their country: father, son, grandson. Service was given to all of them not so easy, various difficulties fell to their lot, but they all passed through this with dignity. The film emphasizes the continuity of generations.

Women, wives and mothers are also mentioned in the films and play a huge role in it. It shows that it is difficult to be the wife of an officer, always support the defender of the Motherland, understand him, go after him to the garrisons. In the context of this, we see the history of women in war. Nurse and employee of the sanitary trains, like Lyuba Trofimova, or very young scouts, like Masha Belkina. This story of two mothers in the war are especially touching. One loses her son in the war, the other leaves a small child to her grandmother to take revenge on the front for her dead mother, but she dies herself. These scenes are the most heartfelt, they show all the horror and bitterness of war when mothers lose their most precious children.

There is a lot of criticism of the movies about the Great Patriotic War connected with the inaccuracy of some historic facts and interpretation of some events. It is worth noting that the task of patriotic films is not to convey historical accuracy, but the spirit and emotions of that time.

## Conclusion

Patriotism is a key factor for formation of a nation, society and a state as it is the main condition for unity, cultural integrity and further development of society and country as a whole. As for Soviet patriotism it was mainly based on the ideas of unity of different nations inside one country, military might and a strong idealized leader. This period is mainly associated with harsh periods of war and instability. At the same time it was the period when the country became a superpower. At the beginning of the Soviet times majority of people were poorly educated, so the best way to get out the messages of the ruling party was through visualization. Among the most useful tools there were posters and cinema. Posters were bright, easy to understand and motivating, sometimes caricatural. What is more important, it was easy to disseminate them, which was crucial in the period of Great Patriotic War. Cinematography was less widespread and not available for every citizen but more influential as films could show emotions, feelings, and background of the main characters and historical moments. Special government bodies were established to control film-production. All the plots and scenarios were carefully scrutinized by the government or even by the ruler, so people were able to get only those ideas which were preferable for the ruling party.

Considering the situation in modern Russia, it should be pointed out that nowadays patriotic ideas or objects are quite the same: unity of the nation (the most notable uniting event was the referendum in the Crimea), military might (we often watch news about new innovative developments in the sphere and bravery of Russian soldiers in different international conflicts) and a strong leader. If we compare the current situation with the Soviet period, we will notice

that cinema is still a great tool of nurturing patriotic ideas in mind of the population. Many important events in the history of Russia are reflected in modern movies. However, instead of posters other tools such as television, Internet and social networks are used. This phenomenon is easy to explain as it is closely connected with the development of technologies. Another tool which can be described as a recent one is arrangement of mass events. Most of them are sport or entertaining, but there is one event which deserves a special attention. As it was mentioned, in Russia patriotism is closely connected with the role of Soviet Union in World War II, often referred to as the Great Patriotic War. For the majority of Russians, the Great Patriotic War is a symbol of unity, heroism and sacrifice. So, one of the most significant modern patriotic events in modern Russia is Immortal Regiment March, which commemorates participants of the war and unites thousands of people. It has been held on Victory Day since 2010. The first parade took place in Moscow but later it has spread to many other cities in Russia and overseas. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs more than one million people participated in this event in May 2018 in Moscow, considering the whole country over 10 million people marched while carrying images of their war dead in parades. In May 2019 there were less participants, about 800 000, but still the number of participants remains great.

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