

HISTORICAL REVIEW OF RUSSIAN POLITICAL WARFARE

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Introduction:

“ Watch your thoughts, they become your words; watch your words, they become your actions; watch your actions, they become your habits; watch your habits, they become your character; watch your character, it becomes your destiny.” (Tzu, 2019)

After reviewing my notes on the Soviet experience, I began debating how I was going to open this paper; as I sit here now, I have decided that there is no citation more fitting than Lao Tzu’s when attempting to broadly describe how Soviet governance, operations, and influence tactics developed a legacy within the political organs of modern-day Russia. As will become clear throughout this paper, the Soviet experience was deeply rooted in the thoughts and ideas of Karl Marx, turned into words by Lenin, adapted into heinous actions by Stalin which typified the regime’s character, and ultimately became its destiny – or in this case its demise. Despite the atrocities committed by the Soviet Government, the Soviet Union stood for nearly 70 years. I have long grappled with the question of how a system of governance that systematically relegated, deported, arrested, starved, enslaved, tortured, and even murdered its own people could continue to command popular support and endure. This question lies at the core of my interest in the Soviet Union and Russian Federation; almost like the allure of Kurtz’s voice in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, I am captivated by the mysterious appeal of Soviet psychology. After extensive research into the actors, institutions, and legal framework of the USSR and the Russian Federation, I argue that political warfare, which includes information operations, as employed by Russian Intelligence Agencies since the early 1920s has allowed the USSR and present-day Russia to persist.¹

Political warfare shall refer to state-sponsored programs which have enabled disinformation, propaganda, deception, sabotage, destabilization, and espionage. In the Soviet Union, political warfare was primarily carried out under a program called *активные мероприятия* or Active Measures. The Active Measures program was operated both domestically and internationally for the purposes of furthering the Politburo’s national objectives by establishing front organizations, engaging in media manipulations, counterfeiting official documents, and persecuting political dissidents. (Alexander, 2017; Andrew & Mitrokhin, 2018) Domestically, Active Measures’ programs inundated the Soviet public with a single narrative about party benevolence, which disincentivized plurality of thought and strove to artificially induce cultural, linguistic, political, and ideological unity. Internationally, Active Measures sought to induce societal instability by both rousing about questions of the legitimacy of Western States’ form of governance and seeding highly controversial narratives in mainstream media which pitted entire portions of the populations against itself causing deep internal fractures among ideological, religious, and partisan lines. For nearly 70 years, the Active Measures program was the papier-mâché used to cover up the otherwise crumbling foundation of the Soviet system. In 1985 so called “grave-digger” Gorbachev ushered in *гласность* (glasnost), or policies of openness and transparency. The Soviet people were finally shown the blemishes of

¹ The list of intelligence agencies includes Cheka, OGPU, NKVD, KGB, and the FSB

the Soviet Union which confirmed their suspicions about the blood-thirsty monster that was the Soviet government. On 26 December 1991, the Soviet Union had finally dissolved – the truth had finally set it free.

But the collapse of the *Unbreakable Union of Freeborn Republics* was not the end of the story. When Vladimir V. Putin was given Boris Yeltsin's blessing to be the next president of the Russian Federation in 2000, the former KGB officer restored the words, actions, habits, and character of the Soviet Union. The misinformation state was reborn, and this time it returned with a biting vengeance. In 2017, Putin established a new branch of the military dedicated exclusively to maintaining an advanced cadre of information warfare and malicious cyber actors to further Russia's geo-political ambitions under the Active Measures program; this information warfare group is housed under the Russian General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) 85th Main Special Service Center (GTsSS) military unit 26165, hereafter referred to as the GRU 85th GTsSS.² (Isachenkov, 2017; National Security Agency & Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2020) Active Measures under Putin is now more robust, calculated, and effective because it is armed with the vast power of the internet which both intensifies and accelerates social exchanges between peoples across the world in real time. (Steger, 2013, p. 11) And with striking advances in artificial intelligence, specifically in the domain of natural language generation – whereby a machine can generate nearly-identical human-like text – it is not unreasonable to also infer that this process of micro-targeting people with tailored propaganda can be automated, too.³ (Barbu, 2014; Barocas, 2012; Endres & Kelly, 2018; Murray & Scime, 2010; Papakyriakopoulos et al., 2018; Ribeiro et al., 2019; Zuiderveen Borgesius et al., 2018) The Russian federation is now able to operate on a global scale instantaneously and at a fraction of the cost. Active Measures lives on today.

This paper will attempt to explain the Russian Federation's use of political warfare as a continuance of Soviet tradition following from a thoughtful historical examination of means of control. Gioe et al state that there exists ample literature in the domain of political science pointing to Russian political warfare being a problem, but it fails to contextualize it in the broader historical context. (Gioe et al., 2020) This paper, thus, will examine various known Russian political warfare attacks both in Russia and against the United States and situate them in front of relevant historical context (see the Definition 1 before the Appendices). The following analysis will also attempt to identify the exigence for a given attack, how the attack fits into Moscow's international priorities, and reveal how the attack has affected the United States and its citizens. By understanding the history of the Active Measures program and being fully conscious that it continues today, the very palpable internal division felt in the United States can be finally understood as the byproduct of external puppeteering instead of organically grown hatred towards fellow Americans; at this juncture society could collectively decide to no longer perpetuate such discordant narratives and thus ameliorate the yawning chasm between the many

² For those interested, this group is also known publicly as Advanced Persistent Threat 28 (APT28) or Fancy Bear

³ For instance, if small scale marketing companies can automatically generate the most effective advertisement for a customer, provided nothing more than their Facebook profile, why should it be unreasonable that a nation-state equipped with an entire cadre of information officers should be unable to? Also see advances in NLG technology such as Generative Pre-processing Transformer 3.

feuding factions in contemporary America. The only way to exit this vicious cycle of seemingly interminable infighting is to call attention to the fact that they were roused about by Russian information operations. Still, this sort of education will be widely criticized as an attempt to ‘re-program’ and might never be taught simply because peace is not profitable.

One thing is certain. Regardless of the path that we choose to remedy the problem of Russian interference in the discourse of the United States, we must never compromise our resolve to the Civil Rights as enumerated in the United States Constitution. The elegance of aggressive political warfare – unfortunate as it may be – is that Russia can cripple its prey using information operations while being fully protected by the democratic guarantee of rights in the United States. Worse still, should these democratic rights be violated in pursuit of squashing Russian political warfare attempts, these politically motivated attacks will be strengthened due to the perception of hypocrisy. Holding the American society captive incentivizes incremental changes to the domestic institutions of the US – a key goal of the Active Measures program – which effectively hands a victory to the Russian Federation.

Setting the Stage | 1904-1914

Propaganda’s Purpose

Central to the employment of propaganda is the willful desire of the artist to evoke a certain emotion, seed a certain thought, or even exhort a certain crowd for the purposes of amplifying and perpetuating a gripping narrative with which to brew unrest, seed discordant narratives, and foment politically-ideologically-and-racially-charged violence. Successful propaganda then, by necessity, is catered towards and centered around the salient thoughts of the masses – and there is certainly no feeling more palpable than that of society-wide discontent. In this section, I will identify the sources of discontent that existed in pre-revolutionary Tzarist Russia for the purposes of illustrating how early Marxist-Leninist and Bolshevik propaganda was centered around negative public sentiments about the Tzar. As will be clear throughout this piece Russian information operations simple mirror past behavior, or to borrow a metaphor from Gioe, Russia is brewing *new vodka* from *old stills*; therefore, the best way to identify, prepare for, and cope with modern day Russian information influence operations is to understand the habits and patterns of influence of times past.

The Intelligentsia

The intelligentsia was a social group that was comprised of educated professionals to include academicians, doctors, pharmacists, teachers, engineers, and lawyers. The first generation of the intelligentsia responded to the backwardness of Russia by “going to the people”⁴ – that was the newly emancipated peasants⁵ -- in the summer of 1874, which marked a “fateful turn in the history of the Russian revolutionary movement”. (Field, 1987, p. 415) Most education that focused on the modernization of peasant society – by way of language, culture, and technical agricultural processes failed; attempts to convey sophisticated arguments about the faults of the ruling class from a morality standpoint also fell on deaf ears – these peasants were

⁴ This refers to the Narodniks who were frequently crushed by the Okhrana (the Tzar’s police).

⁵ These peasants were freed from serfdom in 1861.

“utterly unresponsive” and were blindly obedient to the Tzar. (Edele, 2018, p. 8; Field, 1987, p. 416; Yarmolinsky, 1962, pp. 186–204) But one method of education was effective – effective enough to not only cut through existing attitudes towards the Tzar but also *invert* them – and that was through social organization.

Upon organizing a revolutionary party, which introduced and constantly reinforced verbal and written propaganda that appealed to the peasant’s discontent about serfdom and land ownership, it was easy for the members of anarchist groups such as *the People’s Will* to activate the “weapon of the weak” – reckless displays of political violence, otherwise known as terrorism. Indeed revolutionary violence was hypodermically infused into the blood of these peasants; post 1874, “revolutionary violence engulfed the country” to include bombings, shootings, and daggering down political elite such as Tzar Alexander II in 1881. (Clawson & Oxley, 2016, p. 89; Edele, 2018, p. 8; *Who Were the Intelligentsia?*, 2020) When the educated professionals turned into propogandists they were able to both captivate and transform many of the weak-minded members of the Russian countryside into extremists. Propaganda was their tool, weak-minded people were their targets, and the creation of terrorists was the result.

Propaganda is a powerful tool that has been used throughout the ages to control the habits, actions, attitudes, and behaviors of poorly-educated people that do not possess a high resistance axiom as defined by Zaller’s Receive Accept Sample model. (Zaller, 1992) As will be more fully described in part II of this work, the reasons why social organization and propaganda are so effective is because of the psychological implications of social identities and attitude formation and change. (Clawson & Oxley, 2016, pp. 118–132)

Fallout under Alexander III: Russian Chauvinism and the Export of Russian Culture

After Tzar Alexander II was assassinated, his successor Tzar Alexander III began to impose extreme Russian nationalistic policies. Russification campaigns swept the nation aiming to remove, replace, and subvert any non-Russian cultural elements in Russia including teaching minority languages, the Jewish religion, and non-Russian reading materials. Further, in an attempt to curtail violent groups such as *People’s Will*, arbitrary arrests, military courts for the purposes of political trials, and false imprisonment were commonplace. With the immense ethnic, linguistic, and cultural stratification across Russia and its territories, Alexander III’s policies struck at the core of their identity, which not only called attention to the fact that there existed a minority, but also invalidated them by issuing an edict that stated the majority’s way of life was now *normatively superior*. Pointing out these disparities and subsequently penalizing many different groups people for simply existing brewed both discontent and further thoughts of revolution. (History, 2020; “Russia from 1801 to 1917,” 2021) To gain deeper insight into the true plurality of cultures, languages, and people – as to why the nominal “minority” may actually have been the majority – please reference map one. (Map One) Shortly after the implementation of these policies, Alexander III died of a kidney disease and Tzar Nicholas II was named successor. (King, 2008, p. 325)

Rhapsody of Tzar Nicholas II: Distance, Neglect, and Indifference toward the Russian People

“God is high above, and the tsar is far away” (J. S. Simpson & Speake, 2008)

Life under Tzar Nicholas II was miserable. On the heels of Tzar Alexander III's political ostracization of "minorities" – which accounted for about half of the empire's population – and in the wake of newly centralized industrial labor many changes to Russian society took place. The Russian legal system became severely outdated, laborers were exploited by a spinning system of legally defined estates, and the Orthodox Church's highest function was to legitimize the reign of the otherwise weak, withering, and whimsical tzar. Non-Russian minorities grew restless, unhappiness increased, and nationalism became a "serious ideological alternative to autocracy". (Edele, 2018, pp. 3–11)

In the middle of this chaos, Japan further accentuated the flaws of the Tzar's reign when they decided to invade Russia on 26 January 1904. Inadequate leadership, poor communication, a lack of proper functional and modern armaments, and logistical problems quickly led to the slaughter of 400,000 Russians at the Tzar's behest by 1905. (Steinberg, 2008) Worse, during the war, Russian fighters came to recognize these flaws and began to fall out of favor with the Nicholas II. For example, Russian telegraph infrastructure was so inaccessible that members of the Tzar's army entrusted the aggressing Japanese with transmitting personal communications; specifically, a Russian soldier tied money and a note to a stone, threw it to the Japanese side, and asked them to please "telegraph his mother and let her know he was alive and well". (Kowner, 2001, p. 26) To soldiers risking life and limb for a "far away" leader – whom they trusted less than their enemy – wariness of the Tzar's leadership among the ranks was prolific. To families of the 400,000 sons, fathers, brothers, uncles, cousins, and husbands that would never return, an acute awareness of the failed leadership of Tzar Nicholas II set in. This social energy, in the form of animosity towards the Tsar, began to build capital. This social energy would continue to gain charge and be retained by the members of society until they could release this charge.

To yet another group, Russia's crushing defeat at the hands of a small island state in the Pacific, unreasonable working hours, unsafe working conditions, and a stark difference in lifestyle drove them to violent action (see Appendix 1). They were Russia's working class led by priest Georgy Gapon – and they would soon be responsible for igniting revolution indeed the first release of this built-up social energy.

1905: Priest Georgy Apollonovich Gapon, Commanding the March to Revolution

"The restlessness of the working-class people communicated itself to the country side where the overwhelming majority of the people still lived." (Edele, 2018, p. 10)

The revolution came about on January 9, 1905 at the winter palace in Saint Petersburg. Georgy Gapon delivered the demands of the Russian striking workers, signed by over 150,000, to the winter palace along with around 100,000 other protesters, most of which were women and young children. (Kaun, 1930) Though the protesters processed peacefully, the Tzar's guard shot down the citizens and estimates of deaths range from official state records of 95 to more radical 4500. (Bushkovitch, 2011) Despite the violence, strikes and revolts ignited around the nation and Tzar Nicholas II was left with two choices: order more troops to put down the rioters or make concessions. Nicholas II choose the later and issued an imperial edict called the October Manifesto. The October Manifesto of 17 October 1905 promised freedoms of speech, conscience, assembly and association, male suffrage, a body of representatives to a legislative

body called the Duma, and the inviolability of citizens. But shortly after the October Manifesto was put into effect, it was clear that the implementation of those promised rights was riddled with contradictions. Consider, for example, the ridiculous assertion that there would exist a “parliamentary autocracy” – sure the newly formed Duma could pass laws, but these laws had no meaning in an autocratic society where the Tzar’s word was final. Thus, strikes persisted and were focused on the abuses of power inherent in the Tsarist political system. (Edele, 2018, p. 12) Political breakdown was well underway, and as the people identified these contradictions the social energy against the Tzar once again began to build capital.

Russia: a Veritable Mosaic of Cultures, Ethnicities, Languages

Russia spans across 11 time zones and encompasses a diverse array of cultures, languages, peoples, traditions, music, food, and dance (Reference Map One). In the wake of the 1905 revolution, social divisions were more apparent than ever before – and urban centers became the *de facto* cultural melting pot. Soviets, or councils of worker’s deputies, began to dot the Russian landscape and provided a means to mobilize coordinated strikes and other revolutionary action. Unlike the centralized state run by the Tzar, these Soviets provided close support to the needs of the workers and the people of Russia. Due to the confusing structure of governance, voluntary associations also emerged which provided many life-sustaining services to peasants including financial services, healthcare, and orphanages. By 1912 the central state responded to the visible discontent and adopted a rights-based welfare provision which guaranteed food allowances, universal pensions, rights to disabled soldiers, and war widows. In the background of all these processes, revolutionaries were sitting in prison, studying up on the works of Engels and Marx, and conversing with other radical revolutionaries. On the outside of these “universities”, the Bolsheviks made “every effort to disrupt links to the outside world, resulting in an intellectual, economic, and social isolation unheard of in Russian history”. (Edele, 2018, pp. 13–17)

The Last Straw: The Tzar’s Monumental Failures During World War I

The Tzar’s leadership during World War one was – unsurprisingly – also non-existent. Instead of erring on the side of caution, he again gambled with his subjects’ lives *and lost big*. Up until the end of the war in 1918, the Tzar was responsible for the death of over two million people, or nearly 5% of all working-age people in Russia. Now, Nicholas II’s chronic ineptitude was even more apparent, and thus the social, political, and ethnic divisions were revived. (Lohr, 2006) What was even more clear was the wariness of the soldiers, the hunger of the people, and the discontent felt by the masses towards the Romanov empire. Soon the military would revolt against the Tzar, and the people would protest for food. Although these concerns were temporarily ameliorated when war broke out in 1914, which I attribute to an early example of rally-round-the-flag effect, come 1917 both cities and rural landscapes gave way to spinning revolutions. (Oneal & Bryan, 1995)

Contrasts, Weakening Industry, and Pleas for Help

In 1915, Tzar Nicholas II’s soldiers were encircled in both Poland and Galicia with no choice but to retreat. And so the “Great Retreat” was ordered by the Tzar and resulted in massive territorial losses, lawlessness in the army, and the creation of an internal diaspora. (Hagen, 2007)

Just a year later in 1916, General Aleksei Brusilov implemented a different strategy: sit back, monitor encroaching Austrians, and then use those data to coordinate a planned attack. Brusilov was tremendously successful, and it showed “what could be done if military professionals, supported by the necessary hardware, were allowed to do their job without interference by indecisive monarchs”. (Edele, 2018, p. 27) Note that appropriate hardware was an increasingly sparse resource, because the war machine demanded that skilled workers from factory jobs join in the war effort – industrial productivity dropped tremendously. With less workers in industry and a lack of men to provide for their families, pleas for welfare abounded. These cries resulted in local self-governments which provided all the necessary functions to support life; meanwhile the Tzar fled the political limelight and was identified by the Russian society as being personally responsible for all of the military disasters he presided over. (Edele, 2018, p. 29; Pipes, 1996)

Section Wrap Up

We have begun to develop a baseline understanding of the sources of discontent felt during the Russian empire and have followed the action of Russian citizens using the metaphor of gaining and releasing social energy. At multiple points throughout this historical rhapsody, we have seen these citizens’ social energy discharge at multiple different points in time. The first discharge of social energy was present in the form of the revolution following the failures of the Russo-Japanese war.⁶ The second discharge occurred after the Russian citizens were presented with contradictions at the beginning of World War one, where the weak leadership style of the Tzar was juxtaposed against a heroic foil like General Brusilov. Again and again, Russian citizens were shown such contradictions and it only continued to fuel their hatred towards the Tzar – indeed building social energy. Starved, the women of slaughtered families called for peace and food; eight months later the army also desired revolution. Revolutionary zeal – indeed social energy – was now prevalent across Russia.

But one man was especially driven, and he would tap into these long-brewed sources of discontent and like a sorcerer command people to action with his words. He was Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, better known by his revolutionary alias as Lenin. With the many fractured bases of support within the country, Lenin would need to unify a base of support, legitimize his rule, and delegitimize any opposition. We will see how early political warfare, including propaganda, was employed to create and sustain a uniform narrative by which Lenin was able to control society.

Unify: Revolution, Civil War, and Coercing National Support

Lenin’s strategy was simple: promise to give supporters and *potential supporters* everything that they want and deny opposition of everything, to include their freedoms of speech and even in many instances their life; thus, promises of peace, power, bread, and protection abounded. Using various methods, including violence, suppression, and rhetoric, which will be more fully explored in this section, Lenin achieved this goal masterfully. Everything would seemingly be carried out in “the name of the people, the workers, the class of the oppressed”.⁷

⁶ because the Tzar was far away and couldn’t care less about the men who, effectively, he was sentencing to death.

⁷ Worse, political factions in the United States are still influenced by – and sometimes endorse – these tactics today. As you continue reading actively make connections to how such tactics are used today in the realm of politics for the purposes of persuasion, targeted acts of violence, and suppression. But bear in mind that rhetoric is just that –

Indeed it was not. Political warfare during this early period sought to create a uniform narrative and deny opposition the means to challenge it. This process was cyclical. Any dissent would then be turned around and used against the dissenters for the purposes of informing additional political warfare strategies. Please see appendix two for a conceptual example of political warfare during this period before continuing with this section. (Appendix Two)

The Dual Revolutions

It started with women in February 1917 – women who were unable to feed their families or see those who likely perished during the onslaught of war. And thus, massive anti-war demonstrations had dotted industrial cities across the Russian empire. As the hungry, underpaid soldiers heard the pleas of these women to “join the people”, they expressed sympathy for the strikers cause, set aside their remaining allegiance to the Tzar, and began a mutiny.⁸ (Keeling, 1919, p. 77) The Tzar and his family were then imprisoned in Alexander Palace under the close watch of revolutionary guards. Fellow onlookers also joined forces in these anti-imperial movements. Social and ethnic confrontations and interstate wars would engulf every land in Russia and rage on over the course of the next seven years, until 1923.

Revolutionary spirit was widely endorsed –the social energy was quite high. The next big event took place in October 1917 in the heart of Russia, the city of Petrograd. By this point in time the Romanovs had been expelled to Ekaterinburg, and without a common enemy, moderate socialists and radical communists started feuding with each other because they maintained two different approaches to governing Russia. Chief among these groups were the extreme Bolshevik Reds, moderate Menshevik Whites, and Agrarian Social Revolutionaries. Other revolutionary splinter groups existed – they indeed fought amongst themselves but were never clearly at the fore of the revolution. Now many violent skirmishes took place in the urban streets between these factions. After many hundreds of deaths, the Bolsheviks claimed victory.

Lenin knew the Bolsheviks could never truly hold the majority share of Russian support and that a coup d'état would only further erode the Bolshevik image. In response, Lenin decided to establish an election through which they could legitimize their rule by popular mandate. The

rhetoric. See it for what it is, analyze it, and combat it – for the reckless displays of violence, nullification of civil liberties, and desecration of freedom in contemporary America is unbecoming of who *we* are as a nation. American democracy has and will continue to adapt to our needs in society – but at no time should we strive to suppress others' perspectives, deny civil liberties, impose our views on others, or resort to violence if we can't have our way. Democrat, Republican, conservative, liberal, white, black, LGBTQ+, straight, and any identity that is in seeming “opposition”, at the end of the day we are all American and above all else, human. In a sentence, let your impression of others be based 1% what they say and 99% on *what they do*.

⁸ Please stop and watch the movie “Battleship Potemkin” to see the conditions that these soldiers had to face at the hand of Tzar, including rotting meat, horrific leadership, and methodical slaughter at the steps of Odessa. This is an artistic interpretation of historically suffered events for the purposes of propaganda. The exigence behind this propaganda was to set the message that moving away from the Tzar's system was a favorable thing – especially by illustrating the grueling conditions endured by soldiers and showing the public *why* the Tzar's army organized mutinies. Please recall that one of the core concepts behind political warfare is mobilizing a group of people away from old standards, ways of life, ideals by eroding their faith and support of that system. Battleship Potemkin achieved those goals, and should be considered a means of recognizing early success from a political warfare perspective.

election was set for November 1917 and was to be run by the Constituent Assembly. Much to Lenin's chagrin, he and his party lost to the Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs) – which makes sense because the SRs drew support from urban peasants which composed more than half of Russia's population. But failure and embarrassment were not an option for Lenin and the Bolsheviks. This was Lenin's time to seize control of Russia – his scheme to set up a successful sham election didn't go as planned, so he simply went forward with an alternate plan. Before the election results could be verified in January 1918, Lenin commanded his men to *dissolve* the Constituent Assembly. Indeed as Edele writes, Russia “would not hold another democratic election until 1989”. (Edele, 2018, p. 31) And so, without democracy, or even popular legitimacy for that matter, Lenin had to resort to other methods to coerce and maintain support for his Party. The methods that Lenin would employ have existed since the beginning of written history. They are violence, suppression, rhetoric, and perceived support.

Smoke and Mirrors: Creating the Perception of Support

“[The Bolshevik's] converts were confined to the most ignorant part of the people”. (Keeling, 1919, p. 106)

Domestic Promises

We already saw what happened when the democratic election processes failed to favor the Bolsheviks – Lenin simply nullified the results and took power anyway. With illegitimate rule, Lenin achieved the support of the people by giving them exactly what they had been crying out for since the 1905 – “[in] a country suffering as Russia was, there was not need to waste time explaining theories of Communism”. It was much more fruitful to cut to the chase and implement communist policies. And Lenin said in effect, “Do you want the land? Then take it. Factories? – they are yours. Money? The banks belong to the people. Peace? – Certainly peace at once” (Keeling, 1919, p. 104) He started swooning over members of groups and classes of people in order of the numerical quantity of people that could offer him support. In this way Lenin assumed the role of vanguard of the new Russian government until “full communism” would “permit the members of Russian society to govern themselves”. Most of Russia's population was still illiterate meaning that any orator – including Lenin – could sway the masses by simply putting into words – speaking – on behalf of how the group felt. The agenda was to appeal to peasants, minorities, and people that were wary of conflict.

Since peasants held strong discontent towards their estate masters, never owned land, and constituted the majority of Russia's population, Lenin decided to start with them. Lenin issued a decree which would foment revolution in the rural countryside. This decree came in the form of a *carte blanche* – a free pass – to all peasants to seize land from their former owners (of the gentry) and truly do what ever they wanted as free people, to include violence, burning, and looting. And for those peasants that found work in urban centers, they would be offered a spontaneous minimum wage increase. When soldiers heard about these sanctioned land-grab free for all, they scurried home from war to ensure that they themselves would also have a piece of land; an unintended consequence that led to the near complete disintegration of the Tzar's army, a major win for the Bolsheviks.

Since Russia was of extraordinary ethnic, linguistic, and cultural composition, Lenin decided to make these minorities – indeed a silent majority – the next target of his provisional government. The Bolsheviks abolished legislation restricting the civil right of non-Russians (hereafter referred to as titular republic or titular minorities) and minority religions. (Edele, 2018, p. 34) For the first time in the history of the Russian empire, expression of political views was actually free – for the time being. National morale – that is being excited to be Russian – was as high as the beginning of the Russo-Japanese war.

Since by in large, the Russian people were tired of war, Lenin made ending World War One a priority, too. Lenin signed the treaty of Brest-Litovsk on 3 March 1918, which effectively ended the war with Germany, but subjected the Russian land to a “punishing peace” of German occupation, loss of land, and a loss of factories. (Jones, 2010) But nonetheless, peace was now upon the Russian people. Lenin made a promise and his followed through, which bolstered the people’s confidence in him as a leader – especially after the lackluster performance of the Tzar.

International Pressures

Abroad, Lenin had a different strategy to gain support. Because Lenin could not maintain democratic support at home, he *assumed* the powers of a *legitimate* state actor, ratifying treaties, to provide him with an air of legitimacy on the international stage. Before Lenin signed the famous peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk on 3 March 1918, the provisional government signed numerous other armistice agreements with the High Command of the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey) between 4 December 1917 and 3 March 1918.⁹ In addition, Lenin managed to ratify additional treaties about regulating telegraphs, postal, and maritime service,¹⁰ boarder agreements with other states like China,¹¹ reparation of wounded soldiers,¹² and “friendships and brotherhoods” with socialist states abroad.¹³ (Slusser & Triska, 1959, pp. 1–7) Treaties that followed in this vein continued under Lenin until his death in 1924 because further appealed to the longings of the masses. (See table 1)

| 1917 | 1918 | 1919 | 1920 | 1921 | 1922 | 1923 | 1924 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 8 | 43 | 11 | 65 | 97 | 69 | 24 | 54 |

Table 1: Number of Treaties Passed by Lenin’s Provision Government Between 1917-1924¹⁴

The Red Army and the Cheka: Political Policing Enables the Warfare State

“The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is power secured and sustained through coercion of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat, a power unrestricted by any laws” – Lenin (5), Volume 38, p.245, October 1918.

Everything was subordinated to the Red Army and the Cheka, Lenin’s secret political police, which allowed the warfare state to control everything within its purview.

⁹ (17/xii/4/Ger, 17/xii/5/CP,17/xii/15/CP/a, 17/xii/15/CP/b)

¹⁰ (18/ii/14/T, 18/ii/14/AH, 18/ii/14/BUL)

¹¹ (18/iii/ / China)

¹² (18/i/31/AH, 18/ii/7/CP, 18/ii/9/Ger, 18//ii/10/AH)

¹³ (18/iii/1/FSWR)

¹⁴ Table created by author after an analysis of Soviet Treaties in Slusser & Triska, (1959, pp. 1–48)

The Red Army

“The official name of the new body was to be ‘The Red Army of the Workers and the Peasants’. As its name indicated, it was the army, not of a nation, but of a *class*.” (Garder, 1966, p. 32)

And so, the Red Army of the Workers and the Peasants was born. Despite being called an army, it was much more well positioned to be a political or party enforcer. With an entire corp of psycho-political *politkoms*, or political commissars, and newly established military regions, wards, and districts, the Red Army was well poised to enforce party policies. Political commissars were revered and selection to this role was strictly controlled; *students* and many *agitators of revolution* were prime candidates. As Red Guards, they were charged with mobilization of the masses. (Garder, 1966, p. 35)

The political commissars, then, exhorted the masses by using simple slogans such as “Death to the Rich and to the Bosses”, “Land to the Peasants”, “Death to the Counter-Revolution”. Without much additional context, the commissars looked towards negative experiences endured by the proletariat and the peasantry and crafted these simple slogans in those veins. These messages did not directly link *why* all bosses were bad, nor did it attempt to reason through *why* the counter-revolution was unfound, nor reconcile the differences about perspectives of different communists, nor think about the implications of a free-for-all land grab on the economy – it didn’t need to, because, again, the “[communist] converts were confined to the most ignorant part of the people” (Garder, 1966, p. 35; Keeling, 1919, p. 106).

On the psychological front these “party activists” methodically exploited the mistakes of the Whites by calling attention – via propaganda – to existing “internal contradictions”. “[The psychological] factor played a much more important part in the victory than [the conscious affiliation to the Soviets].” By constantly calling attention to the flaws of the opposition and how their views simply don’t make sense provided the current political reality (whatever they may be), led to the generation of angry and distrust toward the opposition. These socially propagated and recycled narratives were so powerful in fact that every other function of the army was subordinated to its psycho-political functions. The army was set in its ways, “ready to seize power, realise [sic] the social revolution, and to participate in the vanguard of the only real war: the class struggle.”

“The army’s purpose was to ensure the ‘triumph of historical truth’ ... [and it] did not have to resort to artificial depictions used by the capitalists ... to conceal the real motives for fighting. To the bourgeois morality and the religious and nationalist myths that this army opposed, its own proletarian morality and a staunch faith in the proletarian evolution was based on scientific certainty and class hatred. The foundations of this new morality were proletarian solidarity, springing from class consciousness.” (Garder, 1966, pp. 47–48)

As for the external protection arm of the Red Army, false promises of land and goods were made to those that would join the standing army, while a suite of well-defined punishments was listed not only against military deserters but also their families. Using coercive techniques

such as these “dual-benefit-punishment” rules, the Bolsheviks were able to effectively control any dimension of society that they chose – examples include “convincing” farmers and peasants to produce for them, and having people fight against one another.

Militarily, the Bolsheviks had control of the railway system which allowed them to be able to ship their army across the vast expanse of Russia with incredible haste. *Most importantly*, the Bolsheviks were unified in their mission and had many enemies that never seemed to unify ideologically or politically against them.¹⁵ “[T]hey were busy fighting each other. At the same time the forces of domestic counter-revolution... did not possess a sufficient quantity of armed forces to strike against the Soviet power”. (Sofinov, 1960, p. 8) Recall that the Bolsheviks were well outpolled during the November 1917 election, meaning that they were in the minority of national favor. Therefore, if Bolshevik opposition would have unified against them, it is almost certainly the case the Bolsheviks would have been decimated. However, the use of “dual-benefit punishment” and political subversion via political commissars, who created and disseminated false narratives, led to the creation of a society exclusively controlled of Bolsheviks; while Lenin claimed that the proletariat sustained the revolution by “coercing the bourgeoisie” it was really he who controlled society and legitimized that control through the use of rhetoric – because he tapped into unhappiness and purported to act “on behalf of the people”.¹⁶

While the Red Army and the political commissars were of incredible importance to the Bolshevik movement, it was even more important to weed out all the freethinkers – those that thought and fought through the rhetoric and stood for the capital “T” truth – and so the Extraordinary Commission, the Cheka, was born.¹⁷

The Cheka

The Cheka was Lenin’s secret police run by Felix “Iron Fist” Dzerzhinsky and was deeply embedded as a critical function of the Soviet Government. Originally, the Cheka was provisional and roughly resembled the “Committee of Public Safety” (Garder, 1966, p. 36) To provide some perspective on just how active the “Committee of Public Safety” was during the civil war (1918-1922), 750,000 people were murdered because of their political belief, 34,000 perished due to hard labor in concentration camps, 2,500,000 starved to death, and still another 1,410,000 as a result of war with the Bolsheviks. (Rummel, 1994, p. 83) After these murders the official statement was that the, “Red Terror was directed to the defense of the interests of the great majority of the population of the Soviet Republic from the yoke of an insignificant group of exploiters”. (Sofinov, 1960, p. 153) Again we see that Bolshevik’s official position was that they were acting on behalf of the majority to put down the ruthless – cold hearted minority (which

¹⁵ Think about the many ideological factions in the United States that seem to be subject to endless infighting with each other. If we are always fighting with each other, we are blind to the common enemies that exists between us. The key should be to look at who is dividing us and for what purpose, so that we may coalesce against that common foe.

¹⁶ Lenin’s narratives and promises ultimately inflated the veritable ball of social energy and gave Bolshevik rhetoric potential to self-propagate. But if one were to dissect these promises into their fundamental parts and compare them against the fact that they seldom, if ever, came to fruition, these people would have been able to write off Lenin’s rhetoric as incredulous – that he was lying for his own benefit.

¹⁷ As we will see later, some people were brave enough to try to stand up to the propaganda machine, but they were subsequently punished. The cost of speaking up? Their life.

again was materially false, the “minority” was indeed the majority, but they never *aligned* with one another).

Mass Arrests of Political Opposition

Lenin encouraged the Cheka to engage in mass arrests of political opposition such as the Leftist Social Revolutionaries as to remove them from local Soviets across Russia. “A bloodthirsty mockery of the souls and bodies of men, torture and treachery and then—murder, murder without end, without inquiry, on denunciation merely, without waiting for proof of guilt” underscore added by author for additional emphasis.¹⁸ The Cheka went around the countryside to gatherings of the LSRs, RSRs, and Mensheviks, informed by a vast network of thought informants, often using forged documents, and arrested them in mass.¹⁹ Thus, surviving members of these revolutionary groups needed to be on the lookout for Cheka “agents of provocation”, who later would found guilty without trial, and be assassinated on sight.

As time progressed, the Bolsheviks simply scapegoated the blame of these murders on the other revolutionary factions to further their narrative about their opposition’s instability. (Leggett, 1987, pp. 304–323) For example, a propagandized account of these events typified the Mensheviks, and other counterrevolutionaries as engaging in “sabotage, drunken riots, speculation, and other anti-Soviet acts. Indeed these events were organized, inspired and financially supported”. (Sofinov, 1960, p. 9) In a sentence, the strategy included “I will pursue total power for the Bolsheviks, claim credit for those things which the people believe were done well, and blame the opposition for anything that did not produce a popular reaction”.

An Abrupt Farewell to the Tzar’s Systems: Erode Internal Sources of Power

“Freedom only for the supporters of the government, only for members of one part – however numerous they may be – is no freedom at all. Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently.” – Rosa Luxemburg, while in Breslau prison, summer 1918, (Luxemburg, 1940, p. 45)

“Lenin, Trotsky, and their companions have already become poisoned with the filthy venom of power, and this is evidenced by their shameful attitude toward freedom of speech, the individual, and the sum total of those rights for the triumph of which democracy struggled ... Does not Lenin’s government, as the Romanov government did, seize and drag off to prison all those who think differently?” Maxim Gorky (1917)

Civil liberties were moot for those who opposed the Bolsheviks and the “proletariat” – any and all remaining sources of power that existed previously under the Romanov empire had to go. The Cheka coerced conformity throughout Russia with the Bolshevik party. The Iron Fist’s *modus operandi* was to erode existing sources of power from which Bolshevik opposition drew

¹⁸ Note the commonality to modern press reporting in the United States, slanted media coverage presumes guilt before innocence, which violates this core tenant of Democratic societies. In addition, the advent of social media provides the ability for the masses to pass judgment, to presume guilt, without inquiry, without waiting for proof of guilt, simply on the basis of denunciation – “I said you did it, therefore you did it”.

¹⁹ Again note the parallels seen today – it seems like many people in today’s society are looking for things to judge especially for things like partisanship.

their support. Under the Cheka, subversion, coercion, and murder would all be endorsed as a valid means to maintain power for the Bolsheviks.

The Church

The church legitimized the rule of the Tzar. The church's pealing bells would draw people out of their homes across the Russian countryside to worship. Russian Orthodoxy was widely respected and revered as a national institution. And that was the problem, it had too much power over people – the Bolsheviks stated it had to go. The decree of 23 January 1918 separated church and state, made religious education in school illegal, and nationalized all church-owned land. To further ensure that the clergy would not speak up against these blatant violations of religious liberties which Lenin had years earlier promised to the masses, the clergy were then officially disenfranchised by the 10 July 1918 constitution. Many members of the clergy protested and then were drug to Cheka prisons and concentration camps – and were often publicly executed as seen in the Vcheka's²⁰ anti-cleric propaganda (Leggett, 1987, p. 308-309). In this propaganda it depicted the church as power hungry, money-driven, inhuman monsters. Again, we see the theme of scapegoating blame, labeling the opposition, with terms that are common to how the Bolsheviks *actually* operated. Nonetheless, this political warfare was widely circulated and made the masses capitulate. No more church, no more marriages, no more church celebrations.

Trade Unions

Strength undoubtedly stems from the masses. The reality was that trade unions quickly grew in numbers during the Russian civil war. Between 1917 through 1920 trade union memberships grew from 1.5 million to over 6 million. Thus, when Menshevik-led trade unions for railway workers took up strike and “all but unseated” Lenin and Trotsky, these groups quickly became the next target of the Iron Fist. Indeed, the Menshevik-leaders who spoke up about the political suppression of rights that they endured, were sentenced to concentration camps. Lenin insisted that trade unions continue to be monitored by Cheka implants to ensure strong communist values – and perhaps more importantly high industrial output – were prioritized and prevalent in these organizations.(Leggett, 1987, pp. 323–324)

Political Trials

“Physical resistance has its limits. A man resists for five years, eight, ten; then he begins to weaken, for he can do no more.” Victor Serge, former member of the executive committee of Communist International (Serge, 1937, p. 116)

Counterrevolutionaries were oft the target of political trials and seldom – if ever – did they result in a favorable ruling for the defendant. Courts could dispense with evidence as it saw fit, again that seldom mattered because for some reason people *always* tended to plead guilty spontaneously during these private sessions of court. People that were believed – even if not actually – to have committed treason were indicted almost immediately for the purposes of squashing the oppositional network. These defendants had nominal rights at best – however one cares to typify these rights, a description would be incomplete without stating that they are riddled with contradictions. Consider article 136 of the Soviet Criminal Code which states “the

²⁰ the name of the political wing of the Cheka.

examining magistrate may not procure evidence or confession by violence, threats, or similar means”; now, consider the means of violence employed by the Cheka and its successors to coerce confessions. Consider also how political trials could be used to “deprive [a sentenced person] of political rights including the right to vote, stand for election, any elected post, or state decorations” per section 58(II) of the Soviet Criminal Code.²¹ (Collard, 1937, pp. 8, 14, 34–35, 39)

These political trials in and of themselves were propaganda, for they coerced confessions which accentuated how they defendants were erred in their ways and that they have come around to see the true greatness of the Soviet system. Consider, for example, the following confessions which best exemplify how a sentenced person changed their behavior and their feelings for the purposes of confessing to the court. First, “My comments against the central committee party were unfounded and that the Five-year plan was a program for a great step forward ... therefore I must confess [that my former assessments] were not based on complete concurrence of my views with the party”. Second, “I appraised wrong because I looked at this problem through a different lens [the Trotskyist (opposing) view of NEP]”. Third, “I went to the GPU [successor of the Cheka, secret police] to make my statement of wrongdoing”. (Collard, 1937, pp. 114, 117, 118) These three excerpts from Soviet trials demonstrate that oppositional thought was wrong, views that contradicted official party narratives would not be tolerated, and then after a more thorough review the defendants also found favor in the Soviet’s ideology or narrative, “[h]e writes to the Central Committee that he abjures his mistakes, condemns his comrades of yesterday, admires above all the gifted leader who ... asked of him: become an informer. Then he is given a small job. Peace.” (Serge, 1937, p. 116) (Not for long, as we shall see)

This seemingly complete control of society, through purportedly just means was then amplified to the broader society for consumption by others – to include oppositional leaders – thus controlling them with fear. In these ways the Soviet justice system was constructed to strategically strip away the rights of freethinkers that did not simply agree with the party’s line. In other words, these trials communicated “if you are a free thinker, you are wrong and moreover *you are next*”.

Internal Passports

“The constitution of the Soviet Union provides for the right of an asylum for those persecuted for political activity or religious persuasions”.²²

Since the dawn of history people have been moving about, settling, resettling, and moving some more. Traveling about in Russia could provide a citizen a means to derive the power of self-governance, to flee violence, and worse still to the Bolsheviks, communicate information about acts of suppression to a wider audience which directly contrast officially endorsed narratives. Thus, citizens 16 and older were required to possess a special identification certificate issued by the Commissar of the Interior. This certificate enabled the citizen to obtain

²¹ Not that stripping the voting or election rights of someone away really mattered considering there were no elections...

²² Constitution of the R.F.S.F.R, article 12.

food, be compensated, travel within 60 miles of city limits, engage in social activities within city limits, and claim compensation for disability.

These special documents were issued based upon an applicant being of “proper social origin,” and being “employed in a useful occupation”. Additionally, attempting to leave Russia was also nearly impossible without cause of official business or exorbitant bribery. To anyone attempting to exit Russia without a proper exit visa, the punishment was set at 500 rubles or forced labor for one year. In these ways the Bolsheviks were able to control the flow of both people and ideas. (Edele, 2018, pp. 105–106; Maxwell, 1935, pp. 217–220; Serge, 1937, pp. 65–67) Limiting the diffusion of real information, or predicating travel or activity based upon possessing a special identification certificate, one which was only granted to those the regime deemed qualified, further disenfranchised any oppositional actors. With these passports, every facet of society was locked down; internal passports controlled the flow of people around the country to control the dissemination of information and for the purposes of allocating privilege to others based on social origin.

The Great Terror and the Purges of 1937-1938

The purpose of examining the purges is to illustrate just how distanced the Soviet society was from the actions being undertaken by the Soviet government. As will be reviewed below, Soviet citizens would be fed narratives in the form of propaganda for the purposes of suppressing the true operations of the government – for this reason, it is clear that this too was political warfare taken against its own people. By artificially instilling the notion that everything is well in the USSR – that people were not only content but truly satisfied – and that children’s futures were secure, the Soviet government could sidestep the court of public opinion and take whatever actions that it wanted – up to and including the mass detention, enslavement, imprisonment, and slaughter of millions of its own people.

People were so reliant on the government for news that at times they would feel lost without it – interestingly this phenomenon is also predicted in the field of political psychology (Hogg, 2007). Below I have selected three posters from 1940 to accentuate the fact that the Soviet people used in-group identity heuristics to simply go along with – if not accept – the uniform narrative that was being crafted by the Communist party. I will then present the reality of what was happening in 1940, to exemplify how the messages that were portrayed on these posters were incongruent with reality.

Forgotten Origins: Military Restructuring After World War One

Many scholars often submit that Stalin’s paranoia was the chief motivation behind the Great Terror and the Purges of 1937-38. This explanation has always left me unsatisfied, for it fails to identify wherefrom Stalin’s paranoia stemmed. In Garder's 1959 review of the history of the Soviet Army, he notes that after World War One between 1924 – 1930, the Red Army underwent dynamic reorganization. Among thing to change were: methods of army recruitment, expectations of service, redistricting of military regions, incorporation of military theory, tactics and organization of forces, and political indoctrination. The political branch of the Red Army, PURRKA, was charged with political organization, mobilization, literary publications, and agitation and propaganda. A second reorganization called the “Tukachevsky Plan” took place

between 1933 and 1936 and was a secret tightly held by the Soviet government. “Tukachevsky Plan” called for the reorganization of the high command, a reorganization in the army to include bulking up aircraft defense, and a relaxation of political education – with the intent of returning to the traditions of the old regime – to accelerate the process by which recruits would be transformed into mobilized soldiers (Blackstock, 1969; Stone, 1996).

“While getting stronger and more nationalistic the army was becoming a force increasingly independent of the party. The political apparatus of the army, which was more and more militarized, was no longer a real instrument of party control, but one more service among the others.” (Garder, 1966, p. 93)

As was already discussed at some length in the preceding section, the military and secret police were enmeshed as core organs of the Soviet Government. I argue that the sensation of the coming independence of the Red Army, as illustrated by Garder’s quote above, had caused Stalin to fear that *he was losing control of the controlling forces of his society*, which serves as an articulable source of his paranoia. In addition, Stalin feared that the leaders of the “increasingly independent” military possessed the ability to take his role or his life. Stalin would start methodically killing off members of the military to reclaim primacy over his army.

Military Purges

Stalin’s military purges demonstrate just how important control over the political apparatus of the Red Army was to maintaining control over Soviet Society. Recall that up to this point in Soviet history, control over the narrative and enforcement of laws of uniformity were the adhesive which bound together the otherwise crumbling Soviet society. When these means of societal control were at risk of being compromised – that is becoming independent of the central party – Stalin took it upon himself to ensure that no one would question his authority by:

- Decapitating 90% of general officers (also known as commissars);
- Making 80% of colonels disappear;
- Slaughtering the entire high command cadre;
- Either deporting or liquidating another 35,000 officers; and
- Turning the attack on the civilian “co-conspirators”²³

The total death count from the Great Terror and the purges totals around 900,000 casualties from both the military and the civilian sector (Ellman, 2002; Rummel, 1994, p. 83). In terms of military morale, these purges hit hard; panic struck survivors, relatives of victims, and other adjacent parties especially hard. In addition to inducing panic and diminished morale, the Soviet Army was now in a state of disrepair. With only remnants of the military command structure and no officers to fill the empty roles, leadership positions were now run by un- or underqualified persons. For example, the Red Army now had recent enlistees with no prior military service placed in the active role of military strategy.

With the purges decimating the military ranks, sincere communists and sympathizers were among the minority in Soviet society circa 1941. Contrary to Stalin’s aim, the purges struck

²³ Estimates differ on exact figures; these five bullet points were derived from Rummel 1994 and Garder 1966.

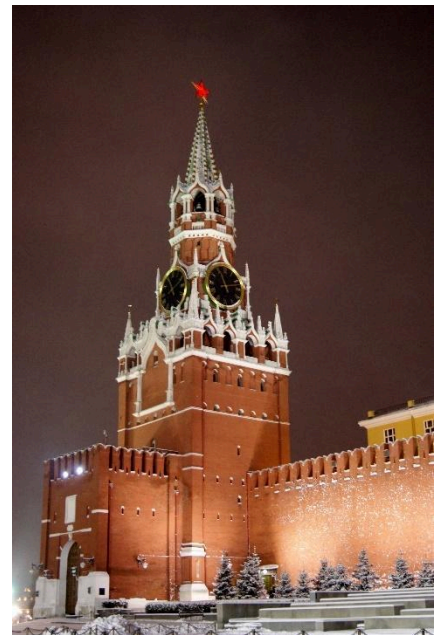
the party the hardest. Loyal party members who had demonstrated their allegiance to the communist party were the first to be purged. With very few true believers in Communism and a freshly weakened army, the Soviet Union was not especially well poised for military success in World War II.

Civilian and Prisoners of War Purges

Civilians and POWs were also not left untouched by the Soviet's methodical consolidation of those in the USSR. Anyone that was tangentially related to a suspect – whether real or imagined – could also be predestined to meet their demise. This section will touch on how propaganda posters, which bore the party's official narrative, stood in sharp contrast to the gruesome reality that nearly one million people suffered.

First, consider Poster One, which is located at the end of this document in the “Posters” section. Poster One is from Leningrad in 1940 and says in Russian, “Thank you Comrade Stalin for our happy life”. Depicted are children dressed in red, waving on a banister to a crowd of people processing in the street celebrating Stalin. In total there are two pictures of Stalin in the work, one mounted as a mural / drawing on the side of an apartment, and the other being held up by the processing people. Also pictured is Lenin who is placed ahead of Stalin in the processional line. Poster one would make it seem as though the people of the Soviet Union are having a wonderful life and that Stalin is directly responsible for providing that life for them.

Second, consider Poster Two which is also from 1940. It says, “Stalin takes care of each of us from the Kremlin”. In real dramatic lighting, the poster depicts Stalin hard at work in the late hours of the night either filling in official paperwork or responding to letters from the people. The poster may suggest to the audience that completing work on behalf of the USSR brings Stalin pleasure no matter the time of night, as evidenced by the smile on his face. In the background is *Спасская башня*, the famous Russian clock tower in the Red Square of Moscow (pictured Right) (Rodovnichenko, 2009). On top of the clock tower is the illuminated Red Star of the Soviet Union which symbolizes both power and progress.



Third, please reference Poster Three, “Thank you beloved Stalin for our happy childhood”, which is from 1936. This poster is from Izogiz, the Soviet Union's state publishing house for fine art, and it is currently archived in the Russian State Library. The poster depicts Stalin embracing ethnically diverse²⁴ children who are smiling

²⁴ See Discussion in the Unify section regarding the composition of the USSR's population. Inclusivity of Ethnic identity is an incredibly important characteristic of Soviet propaganda, for the revolutionary logic was that the people (all the people) could only be liberated if they worked together. Soviet propaganda included this diversity to suggest progress towards achieving equality, although like most everything else, this was far from the truth. For a discussion of Russian chauvinism and the imposition of the Russian culture, language, and norms into other SSRs, consider reading *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan*, by Adrienne Lynn Edgar (2004).

and showing Stalin pictures of Red Square and new advancements in technology, such as airplanes and boats. Besides the children which are prominently featured in the foreground, the background is green and full of life. In the far distance there is a park, and presumably a ride or an observatory.

These three posters were generally circulated across the USSR and featured the “New Society” which was without classes and other barriers. As is to be expected, these posters drastically deviated from reality. The truth of the matter is that during this same time:

- Suspected conspirators and their associates were rounded up, detained, and either deported to the Gulags or Executed. (Alexopoulos, 2008)
- In the same year as these posters (1940), many Prisoners of War were simply exterminated. The best-known example is the Katyn Forest Massacre, where nearly 22,000 Polish military officers and intelligentsia were liquidated by the NKVD, Stalin’s secret police. For an accurate glimpse into the morbid reality of the monster that was the Soviet State, please see Appendix Three [WARNING: DISTURBING CONTENT, GENOCIDE].
- Stalin was too preoccupied with creating a cult of personality – the export of his likeness for the purposes of conflating Soviet greatness with personal greatness – to, in the opinion of the author, create any effective policy for the citizens of the USSR. The idea that he was embracing the next generation of Soviet Citizens is greatly disqualified by the mass democide that he authorized during the great terror (Rummel, 1994).
- It is a stretch for the posters to claim that citizens were happy. The mass hysteria that was caused by the detainment of even strong party members is well captured in Chukovskaya’s realistic fiction *Sofia Petrovna* (Chukovskaya, 1994). At best, average citizens were simply complacent with the directives of the state.

The next section further explores how means of free and fair thought were managed / controlled by the Communist Party and how they preordained the continuity of this narrative by targeting and inculcating kids from a young age.

Truth No More: Managed Science, History, Literature, and the Informant State

“Social wars can never be favorable to scientific research and literary creation”. (Serge, 1937, p. 45)

Literature, to include newspapers, books, academic and medical articles, was one of the most wide-reaching methods of communication. Thus, literature became a critical vehicle through which every group in Russia disseminated their messages and propaganda. Not only did Lenin and the Bolsheviks spread propaganda in their own newspapers, such as *Izvestiia* or *Pravda*, but the names of these papers were also propaganda. The name “*Izvestiia*” and “*Pravda*” command attention and purport veracity, for they translate to “bring the news” and “Truth”. With a name such as “Truth”, Bolshevik newspapers deceitfully called attention to the not-so-true fact that everything did not contain their paper was “falsehood”. This was just one strategy to control any literature which was not officially sanctioned by the Bolshevik party. The

first newspapers to go were those which contained counterrevolutionary narratives, which attempted to deviate away from the Red's official "line". "Literature in uniform" was the new goal. The only authors permitted to go forth were those that advanced the party line, as "engineers of the soul" in the vein of "social realism". In reality social realism was neither realist nor socialists since it "rests on the suppression of all freedom of opinion and expression". (Serge, 1937, pp. 46, 54)

The Cheka also sought to control legitimate scientific inquiry, history, and dissenting literature, which Russian authors described as a "progressive suffocation" of their art. Authors were told that no matter how many masterpieces they write, they will likely never be published due to heavy censorship. Writing anything that possessed even a flavor of dissent would be squashed by censors. These censors regularly combed through, teared, and burned books in publishing houses and libraries. This made one author remark, "[t]o work you hardest to create requires a tenacious courage that contrasts with the absence of any civic courage; and extraordinary faculties of adaptation and mimicry."²⁵ (Serge, 1937, pp. 46–47)

Oppositional Newspapers

The Cheka in conjunction with the Russian Military Revolutionary Committee (VRK) shut down many oppositional newspapers. Examples include the newspapers "Speech", "Day", "Market News", and the "Petrograd Leaflet" all of which made use of their ostensible freedom of speech to come out against Soviet authority. These papers attempted to organize strikes and protests, which the provisional government clearly interpreted as "inciting riots and sabotage". Shortly thereafter the Council of People's Commissars issued a decree that all anti-Soviet publication in all of Russia would be illegal. (Sofinov, 1960, pp. 10–11) VRK members stated that the reason for such a decree was to "strengthen the revolutionary order without unnecessary bloodshed, which could ensure if we give the (opposition) the chance to continue its pogrom agitation by means of the press". (USSR, 1938, p. 192) In modern terms VRK stated, we disagree with you therefore in order for you not to disseminate your message, we will cancel lest we deport you, send you to jail, or kill you. At this point, the Cheka was charged with identifying these sources, their publishers, and burn them down. Any narrative that dared to question *the* narrative adopted by the Bolsheviks would be punishable up to death.

History and Encyclopedias

As for history, "political fortunes have been made by rewriting it to suit the taste of the day." For instance, despite Trotsky being an integral part of establishing the Red Army, there came a point in time where the regime deemed Trotsky to not be "communist enough". Thus, he

²⁵ Compare this sentiment, extracted from a book written in the 1930s, to that experienced by many in contemporary America. We have been conditioned to abide by the norms and customs of political correctness that should one pose a dissenting view, they are immediately the subject of attack *en masse*. As was shared with me, many students feel that they must adapt to their teacher's (in high school) and their professors (in college) political perspectives when writing papers, lest they be docked significant marks. This quote resonates with me because it shows that these students share experience of pupils and writers during the revolutionary period in Russia. Day in and day out, they command the energy to work their hardest to mimic their environment as opposed to being freethinkers – ones which scrutinize every source and document before arriving at a conclusion, rather than just accepting a narrative provided to them. If the education system functioned properly, it would allow these pupils to express their beliefs, so long as they were well argued and supported by material fact.

was either written out of Russian history books completely or these books typified him as a saboteur. Yet other “history books” stated that Stalin was *the star* of Georgia – a kind guy. Even Lenin’s wife was not able to keep written records of her husband without oversight. Encyclopedias which described former leaders and political situations, were torn up entirely in Leningrad as part of the ongoing library purges. (Brunovsky, 1931, p. 150; Serge, 1937, pp. 52–53)

Sciences

Probes into political economy to measure the effects of inflation, circulation of commodities, standard of living of workers, per capita consumption, distribution of national income, and exploitation of labor were expressly forbidden. Those academicians, such as Rubin and Finn-Yenotayevsky, which dared to raise these questions or begin research into these topics of political economy would be censured and sent to prison. As for the natural sciences, geologists were imprisoned if their analysis of subsoil samples deviated from the expectation of those in leadership positions. For similar reasons bacteriologists, physiologists, and physicists were deported, shot, thrown in jail, or died under mysterious circumstances – and so did their “collaborators”. The logic was, “ignorance of the natural wealth of the country, [equals] sabotage, [equals] treason”. The further removed sciences were from the public sphere the better chance that they could carry on unimpeded – however the moment that they became politicized, or even tangentially related to the Party, the Cheka did not hesitate to stop the inquiry and punish any of their readers, collaborators, or followers. Doctors were not allowed to keep up with modern advances in medicine; “[s]o many years have gone by, and I have been able to keep yep abreast of anything”. These pleas were complemented by cries of “don’t send anything; they would think that I have connection abroad, you know how dangerous that is...” The postal system was infiltrated by the Cheka for the purposes of identifying and destroying material that did not emanate from official state-run publishing houses. (Serge, 1937, pp. 52–55)

Students

“But the greatest evil is not the poverty of means and of men. It is the bureaucratic spirit that prevails in the schools and is translated into suspicion, informing, the repetition of formulae devoid of all content, the lesson of pure Stalinism crammed into children eight years old, the stifling of any critical spirit, the repression of all thought, and the hypocritical dissimulation to which the child accustoms himself out of necessity.” (Serge, 1937, p. 56)

The experiences of students were also controlled. Pupils were required to wear uniforms, students’ committees were suppressed, and discipline greatly stiffened. State-defined education was instituted. Student meetings or the organization of protest was outlawed. The schools focused on scientific and technical studies as opposed to social ones (for obvious reasons) and no history manuals could be found in sight, for history was not prioritized under the regime – finding food was. Thus, one potential “track” for a student was undergoing managed studies, being admitted to a secondary school to learn about agriculture for three years, and then be shipped out to a state-controlled collective farm. However, if a student were to act suspicious in

the slightest – however defined – their education would be permanently cancelled. (Serge, 1937, pp. 28–35, 55–56)

“[K]omsomol students [will] astonish you by their feigned or genuine inability to think differently from the editorials of *Pravda*.²⁶” (Serge, 1937, p. 33)

In their endeavor to retain the power of the Soviet State, the Bolsheviks encouraged students join the Komsomol, or the Communist Youth. Through extensive employment of propaganda, these Communist Youth were told that they were the Vanguard for the party and needed to become intimately familiar with communist ideology and culture. Upon entry, Komsomol members would be the most active portion of society in social and “civic” work. In return for their dedicated service to class-based social causes, membership in the Komsomol made it easier for children to get jobs, get access to education, and be in good graces with professors. Access to quality educational institutions, that is ones with notoriety, required good standing. (Maxwell, 1935, p. 59)

From a philosophical-psychological standpoint the youths’ active engagement in the Communist Youth ensured wide-scale and early indoctrination into the party ideology – this way in the future these students would not question the system that they were born into, but rather perpetuate it with great vigor. Therefore, the Komsomol was a strategic institution through which the Bolshevik party pre-ordained the future of their society. By conditioning student’s success and wellbeing in life by active participation in this system, parents would seek to enroll children post haste. If a child was not fighting for Red Communism, they would not have the luxury of realizing their highest good; everything revolved around ensuring the preservation of the single narrative about the benevolence of the Soviet Government and Communist ideology. (Serge, 1937, pp. 28–35)

Empowering Informants from a Young Age

Soviet law rewarded informing on other members of society – meaning telling the secret police on people that acted suspiciously. Everyone was expected to watch everyone else and to inform on them should anything seem off. To express the goal, the Bolsheviks disseminated propaganda where children would be rewarded for informing on their parents. The most widely known example is of that of Pavlik Morozov who at just 13 years old informed on his father to the secret police for underproduction. Across Russia, Russian publications circulated Morozov’s likeness noting his “bravery”. Statues also emerged and began to dot major industrial centers.

²⁶ Recall this is the state-run magazine that is tactfully named “truth”. Take a moment now to think about how people in this country behave the same way. They either do not have the cognitive capability or the care to read beyond headlines, to perform research into the rhetoric to dispel them. In many ways we as a society have become complacent to the narratives that suit our biases, without taking even a minute to reason through the facts to arrive at a well thought out answer. In this way, many among our society are so quick to forward or share narratives, which they have not thought through the secondary and tertiary implications; we must put our heads together collectively to think through such problems and help advance the safety and security of the United States. At the end of the day, hopefully, our goals align around the preservation of our great land, and this disagreement truly stems from differences of means – as opposed to a difference in goals. Know now that Russia has continued to divide us through a perpetuation of divisive rhetoric. Do your own research before trusting news channels which are making money by publishing sensationalist news headlines.

Like other forms of propaganda, these works served a purpose – Morozov’s purpose was to serve as a constant reminder to the Soviet people of their Oath to Inform. (See Appendix Four)

Informing led to the immediate nullification of that person’s rights. They would be detained, arrested, sentenced to hard labor, or even death for perceived treason. Informing also took on a different role whereby people could exact revenge with no repercussion done unto them by the state. Indeed “informing” could be based on many reasons that had nothing to do with treason against the state – to include petty things. For example, a student might be jealous that their peer is in a relationship with someone else and decide to inform on them strictly out of envy. This would lead to the other persons detainment, nullification of rights, and automatic presumption of guilt. The police would then seek out incriminating before exculpatory evidence, pressure their loved ones into provided additional compromising testimony, cherry picking evidence, or using tactics to elicit self-admission – to include keeping handcuffs too tight, or other forms of torture. Students in the Komsomol, party members, or even high-ranking military officers were not immune.

The effect that the process of informing had on the psychology of citizens is masterfully captured in Chukovskaya’s *Sofia Petrovna*. Chukovskaya walks the reader through how even a devout Komsomol party loyalist, Kolya, working a “very important project for the government”, was imprisoned because of an informant. What was the informant’s motivation? He was either jealous of Kolya’s high-ranking job or that Kolya was friends with Alek Finkelstein, a resented religious minority. The novella describes how it was difficult for Kolya’s mother to piece together that the government had done something wrong, that Kolya’s arrest was all a big misunderstanding, and that comrade Stalin would certainly rectify it. Alas, the mother was cast into this mentality that the regime could not do wrong because of years of propaganda and psychological conditioning on behalf of the regime. (Chukovskaya, 1994) The party could never not be that of the “benevolent father” – ask for what you need and you shall receive, depend on the party, for if you attempt to make your own way you shall fail drastically and be condemned in the harshest terms. (Verdery, 1996)

Section Wrap Up

“I didn’t ask for you to do this operation” political commentary about the implementation of a communist system to replace the Tzar’s system. (Bulgakov, 1994), *Heart of a Dog*

Between 1918 and 1924 civil war burned white hot in Russia. The many different competing factions fought to maintain control of different parts of Russia; but the Bolsheviks wanted to have it all for themselves. In the end they won because they had strong social bases in cities, united territory, growing institutional backing in a developing warfare state, and a clear vision of the future. (Edele, 2018, p. 89) By subordinating everything to the secret police and the army, the Bolsheviks were able to implement a suite of control mechanisms over the society which would strangle the opposition. The cost of killing off the opposition was the decimation of personal rights, traditions, and culture. The spinning ring of informant networks generated distrust in the Soviet society. By targeting kids early



on for enrolment in the party, they ensured the preservation of the party and communist ideology. Now that the internal threats were taken care of, the Bolsheviks now had to monitor threats that may have abounded from the international stage. Thus, these political warfare tactics started to be employed abroad.

“The captain of the Soviet Union leads us from victory to victory!”

(Efimov, 1933)

Propagate: The Birth of a Superpower and the Export of Communist Ideology

Introduction:

The end of World War II was a spectacular time for the USSR. With most of Europe decimated by the hand of fascism, the many politically insolvent nation-states on the western boarder of Russia were prime for communist conversion – these states include Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. For the first time since the October Revolution of 1917, Russia broke out of its isolationist bubble and was prominent on the international stage. The energy from the Great Patriotic War²⁷ provided an organic political high for Soviet Society – to the point where the USSR had possessed about one-third of the power of the United States.²⁸ Stalin capitalized on this opportunity to vie for global hegemony.²⁹ Becoming hegemon of the international order would mean that the international *status quo* would lend favor to the communistic institutions present in the USSR. To achieve this goal, Stalin would not opt for a direct battle with the Western Order, but instead utilize a more subversive approach – Stalin would employ the very same tactic used in times past to subdue his own population. This tactic was the export of political warfare. Political warfare during the post-war period was three-fold.

²⁷ Russia’s moniker for World War II fought on the Eastern fronts.

²⁸ Per the Correlates of War’s National Material Capabilities measure of power.

²⁹

1. Continue repressing political dissent domestically in the USSR.
2. Accentuate the ostensible affordances, successes, and benefits of the Soviet System, while hiding the failures of domestic programs.
3. Typify Western Ideas [religion, education, media, culture], Structures [law and order, social relations, security, internal politics, foreign relationships], and Life [family, society, health, race, population, labor] as corrupt, manipulative, not moral, antagonistic, unfair, unsafe, unfree, and un-American.

The coming sections will discuss how the Red Army was becoming independent of the party, Stalin's response to this perceived independence in the form of the purges of 1937-1938, the demobilization after the war, the impact of the West establishing an international framework, and the psychological-political tactics used by the USSR to both consolidate the communist bloc and break apart the "capitalist encirclement".

World War II and the Europe Question

There were three phases to Russian involvement in World War II. The first was making a secret non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany, the second was being attacked by Nazi Germany and fighting a war on the home front, and the third was German expulsion before a conquest straight to Berlin. (Edele, 2018, p. 124) During all three of these phases, political warfare was imposed to cement a sense of strong national identity, while also clearly portraying the Nazis (and later the imperial West) as monstrous, weak, and evil. Political warfare would bifurcate into both internal and external approaches.

Domestically, there existed a continuity of political repression and the use of information operations, especially during phase two of Russia's involvement in World War II – when Nazi Germany was making considerable advances on major Russian cities; externally, the promulgation of propagandized material outside of the USSR was undertaken towards the end of World War II. Stalin and his party did not view the end of WWII as defeating the final ideological foe. As Stalin's army moved westward and to expel the Nazi's, the Soviet Union would impose tremendous Sovietization efforts in the lands that they were marching through in an attempt to induce "revolutions from abroad". The purpose was to nudge the many politically insolvent states to accept their communistic regime type before Western ideologies could solidify.

When the liberal world order was starting to be established by the West, marked by the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty being signed in 1949, the objective of Soviet political warfare was to sew institutional doubt about the western regime type by eroding the electorate's confidence in the legitimacy, capability, and honesty of their government. A key theme that will be seen throughout the "propagate" section of this theme is Russia's ability to use propaganda posters and leaflets to instill an artificial sense of association and assimilation. It is worth noting that these same psychological principles were also used to instill an artificial sense of disassociation and dissimulation in western states – this is such an important phenomenon that it will be the central focus of Part II of this thesis, the political science approach.

Phase One: The Molotov-Ribbentrop Compact

Briefly, the Molotov-Ribbentrop compact was a secret non-aggression treaty between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in which both parties agreed that they would not encroach on each other's soil. Of specific interest, the 1939 document fully outlined the borders of each of these states spheres of influence to include Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Finland.

Phase Two: Operation Barbarossa and Stalin's Scorched Earth Warfare

Much to no one's surprise, Hitler reneged on the Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression compact which he made with the Soviet Union during World War II. Shortly thereafter, Hitler launched so called operation Barbarossa, in which his army would invade the Soviet Union. During these advances, Hitler's army was met with light military resistance (principally due to Stalin's purges of the Army); therefore, the Nazi's three-pronged attack enabled expeditious advancements (blitzkrieg) towards encircling (kesselschlacht) Russia's three main cities, particularly Moscow.

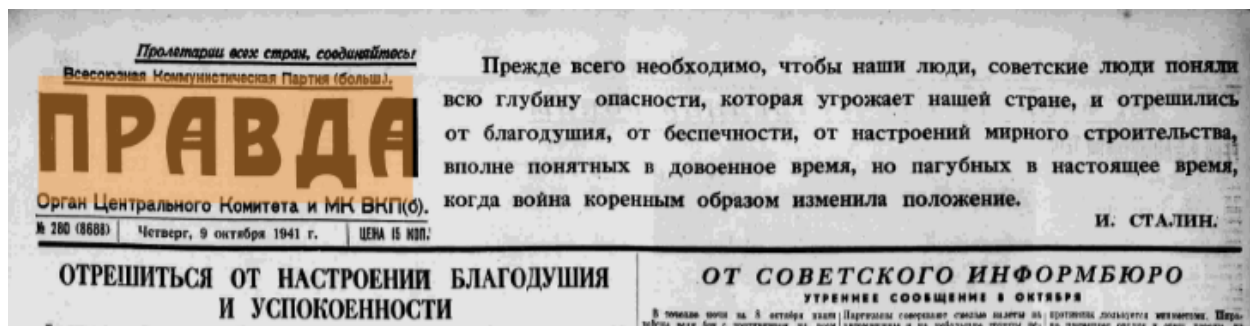
To counter, Stalin decided to engage in scorched earth warfare whereby the Red Army burned useable land, buildings, and goods which the Nazis may have been able to utilize in their warfare against the Red Army. The byproduct of scorched earth warfare, freezing temperatures, and times of bad roads (распутица) significantly retarded the speed of the Nazi's progression. When word got to Hitler about the efficacy of Stalin's scorched earth battle style, he ordered his army to also employ this strategy across the European theater of war (Glantz, 2011; The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2016). The byproduct of Hitler's decision to implement scorched earth warfare was catastrophic; consequently, most of Europe was left decimated by the end of the war (See Appendix Five). One thing is certain: despite Hitler's army quickly encircling major cities including Leningrad, Smolensk, Moscow, and Stalingrad, Stalin decided to leave his citizens in that dark about what exactly was going on. For when the truth finally broke – not by the Soviet government, but rather by people witnessing their cities being decimated – the Nazi's lightning warfare had played tremendous psychological effects on the Russian army and the Russian people:

1. In October of 1941 a British historian working on a project at the Russian Academy of Science in Moscow noted,
 - a. “[t]here is a feeling of approaching catastrophe in the air and endless rumours [sic]. The mood is particularly bad today”;
2. a Russian soldier stated,
 - a. “Don't believe the papers or the radio; the things they say are lies. We've been through it all and seen it all, the way the Germans are driving us—our own people don't know where to run; we've nothing to fight with; and when the Germans catch up with us, our men have nothing to escape in. We've got no fuel, so they abandon our cars and tanks and run for it”;
3. A citizen who was inundated with Soviet propaganda stated to a member of the Red Army before the arrival of the Nazis,
 - a. “Excuse my crudeness, but who are you running from?”

Quotations sourced from (Dimbleby, 2021).

It is clear that the ability of the Soviet government to set the narrative was very strong. By inculcating the masses with unifying propaganda posters, which had the psychological effect of provoking a common ingroup response to solidify the Soviet Identity, Stalin could manipulate people to more easily believe whatever version of reality he wanted to air (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). By the end of the first week in October 1941, Stalin recognized that he could no longer feign the party narrative – so he decided to tell the people of Moscow by blasting Hitler’s deceleration of war over loudspeakers strategically positioned around Moscow (See Appendix Six for Muscovites gathered to listen this declaration). At this time propogandists, especially in the war department, ramped up production of posters which would encourage (truly inspire) Soviets to help the cause against common foe. Below we will explore a statement made in Pravda – the primary outlet for disseminating domestic news and propaganda – as well as two propaganda posters that followed after Stalin’s statement.

In addition to the declaration of war which Stalin played on the loudspeakers in Moscow, he also published a statement in Pravda. Please reference the following message from Joseph Stalin found in top left of the 9 October 1941 issue of Pravda to the people of the Soviet Union:



A rough translation of Stalin’s message shows that for the first time since Hitler’s invasion of Soviet territory, Stalin is coming clean to the people of the Soviet Union regarding the state of the war with the Nazis:

“First of all, it is necessary that our people, Soviet people, understand the full depth of the danger that threatens our country, and renounce complacency, carelessness, the mood of peaceful construction, which were quite understandable in the pre-war period, but pernicious at the present time, when the war radically changed position.”

In addition to that quotation, the headlines translate to:

“RETRACT FROM THE MOOD OF GOOD-HEALTH AND COMPLETENESS”; and

“[Information] FROM THE SOVIET INFORMBURO”

Scan of newspaper courtesy (Pravda, 1941)

After Stalin's message was published in Pravda, propagandists started releasing posters to encourage the people to join the war, as shown in Poster Four. This poster was developed as a part of an ongoing recruitment effort by the Red Army. After the Red Army was "cleansed" by Stalin and in the wake of the new siege on domestic soil, it was necessary to amplify the need for new recruits to protect the homeland. In the poster, "The Motherland is Calling", the sharp red color on the mother's dress subliminally calls attention to nationalistic fervor that is associated with the Soviet Union's flag. As the mother raises her hands, the Army also follows by raising their *винтовка Мосина* (Mosin-Nagant bayonet rifles). The power of the motherland in the poster is commanding all those citizens to fight – including the viewer. With the mother's right eyebrow slightly raised, holding the Red Army Oath of Allegiance, and with her eyes locked on the viewer, the poster asks "will you join along with us in this fight against the enemy"? One interesting outcome of posters such as this is that they cut through the gender barrier to also encourage women to join the war effort as well. Specifically, women picked up shovels and started to dig a series of anti-tank trenches for the purposes of preserving their homeland – just as the poster was beseeching (See image to the right) (Sovfoto, 1941).



Please reference Poster Five. The poster "Napoleon was wiped out, Hitler will be wiped out" makes use of numerous visual techniques to portray the enemy (Hitler) as weak. The poster places an incredibly small version of Hitler regaled in traditional Napoleonic French clothing in the foreground of the previously defeated Napoleon's shadow. In addition to this, Hitler is represented as roughly twice the size of an average rifle buttstock. This buttstock is shown in sharp red relief symbolizing the Soviet Union stomping out little Hitler. Remember, this poster came into circulation roughly the same time as the siege on Moscow and Leningrad were taking place. The poster evoked a feeling that Hitler's small gun was no challenge for the Red Army and the Russian people that defeated invading enemies in times past. This likely led to feelings of hostility towards the Nazis, even if the Russian people were not privy to the attacks on their country before – because it is drawing off of the ingroup v. outgroup identify model, which posits that there will exist feelings of animosity towards these outgroups (Tajfel, 1970). Additionally, social identity theory suggests that these feelings of anger simply mean that the Russian people harbor a desire to reach resolution, which will bring them back to a feeling of

stasis (Ball, 2008, p. 16; Christensen, 2017). These posters implant viewers with the notion that the only way to return to that feeling of stasis is through the slaughtering of the enemy.

Based on Stalin's announcement plus the two posters reviewed here, it should now be clear how the Soviets exhorted people to action, including taking up arms and otherwise preparing for war, against foes (see image below). Through the psychological principle of using group identities to motivate these Soviet citizens, the Soviet's successfully defended their homeland – a decisive win not only for the Soviet Union but also for the Allies. The Nazi's defeat at Moscow was instrumental in the changing landscape of World War II. Political warfare and instilling artificial divisions were ultimately responsible for that. In addition, the truth – when Stalin finally decided to show it the people – proved that it was able to set the USSR free.

Phase Three: The Yalta Conference and German Reunification after World War II

The question that lingered both during and after the war was whether and how reunification of Germany (as part of the greater picture of Europe) would take place. Throughout World War II, leaders of the allied forces met three times to discuss prospects of re-establishing war-torn Europe. The first was at Tehran in 1943, the second at Yalta in 1945, and the third at Potsdam in 1945. The Yalta conference, code named “Argonaut”, provided the proper conditions for reaching agreements on how to best approach these problems. Franklin Roosevelt from the United States, Winston Churchill from the United Kingdom, and Joseph Stalin from the USSR, came to the agreement that the people of Europe should be allowed to “to create democratic institutions of their own choice”, which have “free elections” where the people have the right “to choose the form of government under which they live”. (The Staff of the Committee and the Department of State, 1950) At this point Germany was divided up into four sections, a portion to the US, USSR, Britain, and France. With Stalin's signature on a global treaty, for the first time since the October Revolution in 1917, the Soviet Union was visible to the world. (Blunden, 1993)

Emergence as a Global Superpower in a Liberal World Order

“Over the last decade, numerous scholars ... have posited anarchy as the single most important characteristic underlying international relations” (Milner, 1991, p. 67).

This paper is to serve as a historical analysis of political warfare, information operations, and disinformation strategies of the Soviet Union; with this goal still in mind, I feel that it is incredibly important to touch on a bit of international relations theory. The theory of anarchy will clarify *why* I argue that Stalin was motivated to employ political warfare and why I argue that his only chance of exporting communist ideology depended upon the active subversion of Western institutions and ideologies which defined the international system.

A Brief Note on Conditional Anarchy

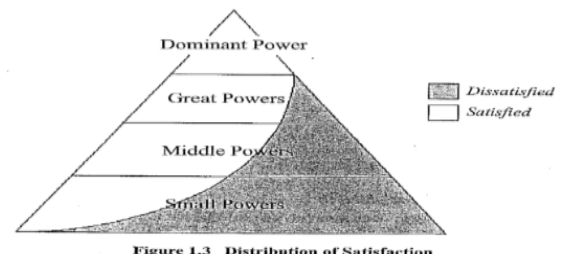
Put in the simplest of terms, the international system is composed of both strong and weak states.³⁰ The hegemonic power – or strongest state – in the international system is charged with establishing the international *status quo*. The international *status quo*:

1. governs the social, political, economic, and militaristic standards between state actors in the international system;
2. projects the hegemon's domestic institutions, norms, values, and tendencies on the international system; and
3. advances the long-term social, political, and economic interests of the hegemon.

Since the end of World War II, the United States has maintained the greatest share of world power and thus serves as the hegemon of the international order (Greig & Enterline, 2017; Singer, 1987).³¹³² As hegemon, the United States has specifically crafted the international *status quo* to lend favor to its own liberal domestic institutional values and norms. For example, consider how:

1. the United Nations follows from the democratic value set which sits at the core of the US democracy,
2. the WTO proceeds from American Gilded Age laissez-faire (free market and limited government intervention) economic thought,
3. the International Criminal Courts proceed from American norms of upholding defendants' rights, ensuring fair trials, and an independent prosecution.
4. Etcetera. Choose another international institution and examine the lasting legacy that the United States has had on its composition.

Conditional Anarchy posits that there exists a distribution of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the international status quo. [see the illustrated distribution of satisfaction in the international system in the figure to the right] (Organski, 1968). This can be best understood when we consider that the *entire* international system is centered on the values, norm, institutions, and tendencies of one state – the United States. It logically follows, then, that some states such as Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand will benefit from that international system, while others such as the USSR, China, and North Korea, will not. The reason for this distribution of satisfaction lies in the reality that some state's domestic institutions



³⁰ While the debate over how to measure the strength of states looms on, it is not the focus of this paper – but if you are interested, please consider reading material on Power Transition Theory and Composite Index of National Capabilities score from the Correlates of War dataset.

³¹ Based upon the Composite Index of National Capabilities score.

³² Scholars have made convincing arguments that China has taken over the majority of the world's power share after the late 1990s. I have written another report detailing the reason why I, too, have made this argument. Feel free to read this if you are interested.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mC8a7M5kVW3BG4o9-qOvir-kBNINCY_BPSvYm-ntEfw/edit?usp=sharing

organically comport with the western liberal democratic norms and values of the international status quo, while other states stand in sharp contrast to those norms and values.

Stalin's Reasoning for Employing Political Warfare Abroad

My argument as to why the USSR had no other choice but to resort to subversive political warfare, information operations, and sending propaganda abroad after World War Two is conditioned on three premises:

1. The USSR was not satisfied with the international *status quo* that was put forth by the United States after World War II.
2. The USSR did not have the desire, nor the military strength (infantrymen, military leaders, strategists) to fight an attrition-based war against the liberal international order – to include not only the United States but also all other states that enjoyed benefit from the international status quo.
3. Stalin was a rational actor who wanted to expand the influence of the Soviet Union.

The USSR was Not Satisfied with the Newly Developed Liberal Status Quo

For the Soviet Union, living amongst other nations governed by a new Liberal International order would mean that they too would be subjected to Western norms. Among the norms which the USSR would be required to follow was economic structure of capitalism and free trade. The values and institutions of the USSR were positioned to command a planned economy and eradicate any remnants of capitalism by returning to the heart of the values of communism. For example:

1. Overthrowing capitalism (through political warfare – subversion) was a main priority of the Soviet Union. This is attested to not only by the structure of governance found in the USSR but was often present in propaganda posters. Poster Six shows Stalin proudly, smugly, looking at the viewer stating that “we have overthrown capitalism”. Other posters, such as Poster Seven, anthropomorphized or caricatured capitalists and the theory of capitalism as monstrous.
2. The existence of a command economy within the Soviet Union are ample, and therefore not worth extensive discussion (Birman, 1988; Bornstein, 1966; Brown & Hinrichs, 1931; Connolly, 1952). To best understand why the imposition of a capitalist system in this otherwise communist system, consider that the USSR had been pouring great resources into crafting a narrative of success and pride in their planned economy (see Poster Eight). Because the USSR was inculcating its masses with the idea that a planned economy offered by communism was superior to Western ones, it can be seen why accepting and introducing the standards and norms of free trade and capitalism would run contradictory to the desires of the Soviet regime.

Since the liberal international order did not lend favor to the domestic institutions of the USSR, the Soviet Union had to look to other alternatives in order to gain favor with the rest of the world.

The USSR did not have the Military Strength nor Desire to Fight Against the Liberal World Order

To gain this favor, the USSR would not engage in direct militaristic pursuits against the United States. Instead it would create the conditions necessary for the court of international public opinion to judge the United States. One such example is evident in Stalin's instigation of war on the Korean Peninsula in 1950, where Stalin purposefully sought to entangle the US in a proxy war. Stalin decided to withdraw from the United Nations Security Council during the time when the US had motioned to intervene in the Korea conflict; this move effectively paved the path for the United States to enter into the war. Stalin stated that his goal for boycotting the UN Security Council was, "to give the American government a free hand and give it an opportunity to commit more foolishness using a majority in the Security Council so that public opinion can see the true face of the American government" (Kim & Stueck, 2020). In a Top-Secret³³ telegram sent on August 27th 1950 from Joseph Stalin to Soviet Ambassador in Prague, Stalin outlined his four reasons for taking this action at the UNSC:

1. To demonstrate solidarity of the Soviet Union with the new Communist China.
2. Underscore the "foolishness and idiocy" of the United States.
3. Naturally all the United States to overextend itself;
4. thus, leaving it unprepared for a potential world war III.

To read the original and translated copy of this letter please reference Appendix Seven (a) and Seven (b) respectively. Stalin's object fits in line with the expectations of a state actor employing political warfare, because he was weaponizing public opinion for the advancement of his cause. Stalin did not want to go into a head to head war with the United States, but instead opted for an approach which would *naturally* diminish the strength of the US Army and provide the conditions under which the world would start to question the liberal international world order and Western institutions, ideologies and values.

The USSR Wanted to Expand its Influence on a Global Scale

As was noted by Garder, Stalin did not view the end of WWII as even a pause in the continuity of warfare – especially in the wake of the establishment of alliances (GATT, NATO, etc.) centered on western principles such as capitalism. Stalin continued Lenin's march towards a complete communist revolution by continuing to circulate posters one of which stated, "[w]ithout a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement" (Poster Nine). Alone in an international system that was ideologically stacked against it, the Soviet Union would need to protect and catalyze new communist movements to provide a basis of support. Indeed, after World War II communist movements were seeded across Europe (specifically in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania and East Germany) and in China (See Map Two for a visualization of the Eastern Bloc). In his book entitled "Stalin and the

³³ Soviet Union designated Top-Secret, publicly available at these two sources:

1. Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), fond 558, opis 11, delo 62, listy 71-72. Published in: Andrei Ledovskii, "Stalin, Mao Tsedunh I Koreiskaia Voina 1950-1953 godov," *Novaia I Noveishaia Istoriia*, No. 5 (September-October 2005), 79-113.
2. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112225>

Fate of Europe, the Postwar Struggle for Sovereignty”, Norman Naimark, a historian at Stanford University argues that,

“Stalin saw Europe with the eyes of an ultra-realist, meaning he saw opportunities he could exploit for expansion and influence. But he was also wary of getting the Soviet Union in any kind of clash with the Americans and British on the continent. Thus, he frequently discouraged the more radical aims of European communists.”

“Stalin’s long-term ambitions no doubt were related to the spread of communism throughout the continent. He was hopeful that the Americans would withdraw their troops from Europe, return to their prewar isolationist policies and allow him maximum room for maneuver. When this did not happen, he sought to forward the interests of communism, especially in those areas under his control, but always with the view of not antagonizing the West to the point of being drawn into a military conflict.”

(Naimark, 2019)

It is no question that the global export of soft power would prove to be a priority of the Soviet Union. Every state that the USSR could flip to communism would increase its ability to become the hegemon of the international system – or even go on to create a regional hegemonic system in which it would be able to operate as the leader over all of the other communist states. In addition, each new country served as a signal to the rest of the world that communist revolutions were possible, could command public support, and would be very powerful.

Therefore, the imposition of the liberal international order on the Soviet Union had caused them to look to other outlets to ensure that their world view would inure them benefit on the world stage. Their decision was to implement a program by the name to Active Measures.

Stalin’s Strategy for Employing Political Warfare Abroad

Introduction

Now that the premises of the argument have been laid out lets now turn our attention to Stalin’s strategy for employing political warfare abroad. This introduction will be a very high-level summary, so if you feel overwhelmed or lost please feel free to skip down to the next section to see an analysis of tangible examples, which speak to this process.

The Soviet government, principally guided by the Politburo, engaged in political warfare to ***subvert*** both the social and political institutions of the West, including the United States; the Soviet’s aim was to breed disinformation, sow institutional doubt, and to repress political opposition, in order to alter the behavior of a state’s constituency (Andrew, 2006, p. 8; Laird & Hoffmann, 1986, pp. 207–209). This was achieved via the export of propaganda. In 1978 the Politburo allocated \$500 million dollars to the Novosti news agency (ru: Новости) making it the second largest propaganda house in the Soviet Union, even though global circulation of propaganda was already seen in the early 1950s (Shultz & Godson, 1984).

The political warfare strategy presented in this section of the paper was inspired, in part, by Yuri Bezmenov (ru: Юрий Безменов), a Soviet defector with formal ties to both Nostovi and

the KGB (Bezmenov, 1985, p. 37; Schuman, 1984, p. 11). The use of propaganda has been the most heavily relied on element of Political Warfare to actualize these subversive processes against enemies of communism since the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 (Davison, 1971, p. 4; Ross, 1921, p. 57; U.S. Department of State, 2020, p. 15).

The process of subversion starts with one basic understanding, it is not possible to subvert a closed society, because information not allowed in. Therefore, agents of subversion must find a public which is receptive to being subverted. The objective of this subversion is to change the way that people perceive things of value in their home country. Then the aggressor repeats this process to such a time when their target population no longer views the aggressor as an enemy, but instead looks to the enemy's system, civilization, ambitions, and values set as an alternative – if not desirable – structure to that currently in the target country (Bezmenov, 1984). The expression which Bezmenov, used to explain this change in viewpoints was “Better Red than Dead”. At this point, an aggressing country can control their target society without ever firing a bullet.

“To win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.”³⁴ Sun Tzu 2500 BC (Tzu, Chapter III)

The visible change in a western society may or may not be the direct result of the USSR, but the natural tendencies of a western society – especially those tending towards extremes – were being taken advantage of and capitalized on by the Soviet Propaganda system. For example, when there is a protest, there would be an influx of propaganda, usually through the mass media, which carried extreme ideological content (even if this was not the true basis of the protest). The line that the propogandists try to sell would then be repeated incessantly – especially as to induce a deviation from reality.³⁵ The aim of such political warfare would be to induce tension in the targeted population, to join more extreme groups, and to give up personal rights into the hands of higher authorities / organization (consider giving up personal rights to misguided Trade Unions, extreme political organizations, religious cults, Home Owners Associations, or any other group that takes rights from the individual and uses then to speak on their behalf (especially if the group's leaders do not truly have the consent of the people).

According to Bezmenov, the KGB and the USSR's international propaganda organization – like Novosti – did was “snowplow editorial offices, student organizations, religious groups, with literature about class struggle – if not direct Marxist-Leninist propaganda – and then propaganda of the legitimate desires of a better life, equality.” Bezmenov continues that if “we make people equal by force, the basis of the social political structure is like building a house on sand – sooner or later it will collapse”. But, if the American people wanted equality, even if by unpeaceful means, the KGB and propogandists would extend that tendency.

³⁴ All intelligence officers in the Soviet Union were required to read Sun Tzu's Art of War. Interestingly, this highest expectation of war, destroying an enemy without ever fighting is chief among the USSR's implementation of political warfare abroad.

³⁵ For example, exported propaganda might repeat workers' rights at the outset of a strike, when the real objective of starting the strike was simply the personal inurement of the trade union boss.

When subversion creates the conditions in which a society is unable to function, discern moral right from wrong, or even advocates the use of violence in certain circumstance – that is an indication that the political warfare achieved through subversion was effective. Violence is never the option; especially is it needs to be used as the means by which one achieves social justice in the name of equality; the Soviet experience is a prime example. Bezmenov formalizes Soviet Political Warfare as a four-phase process to subvert the American way of life; these phases include: demoralization, destabilization, crisis, and normalization (Bezmenov, 1984). I will summarize his argument for each of these phases below. For a visual representation, please see Appendix eight.

Demoralization (15-20 years):

This process takes 15-20 years, which is the time to indoctrinate one generation, to develop and instill a new form of personality. This is achieved through influence, propaganda, and direct contact with different ideologies, in places which public opinion is formulated: religion, education system, social life, power structure, law enforcement system and military (law and order), and labor and employer relations (economy).

1. With regards to religion: destroy it, ridicule it, replace with sex cults – any method to slowly erode religious dogma, for the purposes of drawing people away from the supreme being. Create fake entities, religions, for the purposes of drawing them away from the real faiths.
2. Education: distract people from learning something that is constructive, pragmatic, efficient. Instead of physics, mathematics, and foreign languages, chemistry, teach them history of urban warfare, natural food, home economy, your sexuality, anything as long as it takes one away from meaningful studies.
3. Social life: replace traditionally established institutions and organizations with fake ones. Take naturally existing links between people, initiative to keep those links, and insert artificial bureaucratically maintained ones. Instead of social life and friendship between neighbors, establish social workers paid by bureaucrats where the objective is no longer to build social bonds between people, but rather to give them a check. The outcome of the social workers isn't important, but when they come together to attempt to justify why they are of value to society, it goes to show that they are deviating from the natural links of a society.
4. Power structure: natural bodies of administration are typically elected by electorate. They are being actively substituted by artificial ones: groups of people – whom nobody elected – will have power over society. In fact, most people will not like them at all, but they will still be permitted to exist and dictate a monopolized narrative of their choosing (Media). They will choose what is important for you to hear. Journalists will no longer need to be exceptional, they need to be mediocre – there is no competition

for quality journalism. The power structure is slowly eroded by organizations who possess neither qualification nor the will of the people to keep them in power, yet these organizations still do have power.

5. Law and order. 1960s-1980s. Movies portray people using generalities. Military and police are stupid, psychotic, abusing power; whereas, criminals are creative, smart, and acting only because they've been oppressed by society. Hatred, mistrust to people charged with protecting you and maintain law and order, creates a sense of moral relativity. A slow substitution of basic moral principles, whereby a criminal is not a criminal but rather only acting to gain equality from the otherwise oppressing society.
6. Labor and Employment Relations. Destroy traditionally established links of bargaining, replacing trade unions job of compromise for the purposes of advancing ideology. People who disobey get items broken and things burned.

Destabilization:

Destabilize accepted institutions in a target country.

1. Economy
 - a. Radicalization of the bargaining process, where compromise is now made impossible. Even as it relates to family, compromise is now impossible, for instance parents can't even agree on basic things such as where the children will eat. Agreement is only achieved through argument, conflict, violence. Constructive compromises between neighbors are gone. Radicalization of human relations, normal candid relationships are now volatile and destabilized. Relations between teachers and students, schools and colleges, changed. No more acceptance of the desires of the workers; frequent strikes and conflict between customers and workers. Tension between people is normalized.
2. Law and Order + Military
 - a. Used to be able to resolve conflict in a peaceful a mature fashion, now will take even the smallest most insignificant matters to court. Society at large becomes more antagonistic, between members of society, political parties.
3. Media
 - a. Stands to separate society at large. Those that were indoctrinated with these divisive values as being normal (during demoralization period) are ascending to leaders of groups, preachers, elected politicians, prominent public figures – all of whom are engaged in the political process. Gender and sexuality become elevated to political issues, demands for recognition, respect, human rights to large audience, which incites violent clashes between groups of people. Stacking

people against each other “his group against ordinary people, black vs. white, yellow vs. green, it doesn’t matter was the division line goes, so long as the clash – sometimes militaristic clash – between people happens”. These agents of change, some of whom are run by foreign intel services (sleepers) others naturally brought up with this state of society as normal, then rise to prominent political place. These people will be funded by human-, women-, kid-, and prison-rights groups with sympathetic Americans which provide monetary support.

Crisis:

This period starts when the legitimate bodies of power collapse and cannot operate member; starts when artificial organizations are now running the country. Media, non-elected thought leaders, strange groups which claim they know how to lead society forward (while they usually only know how to line their own pockets and export their ideology). If power is denied to them, then they take it by force. Productivity as a society falls. People look for a savior, who claims that they could save the people from this state of miserable existence. This savior will fill the void by injecting ideology, could be Marxist-Leninist, liberal, religious, etc. The outcomes could lead to civil war or invasion.

Normalization:

Self-appointed rulers of society don’t need any revolution any more no more radicalization. Stabilization of the country by force – the rules then will dispense with the liberal narrative, Marxist Leninist ideology, because these rules need stability to enjoy their victory over society. The moment that these agents of change fulfil their purposes they will be dispensed with. “No more revolutions please”, no more equity, just good “democratic proletarian freedom”.

Discussion About These Processes:

Bezmenov worked as a propogandist for the Soviet Union. His job was to spread misinformation globally, for the purposes of destroying Western societies. The description of the USSR’s strategy since Stalin applies to many countries in the world that were targets of the USSR, and not simply the United States. It is also worth noting that this description of events may be political warfare in and of itself – that Bezmenov was not simply a “freedom loving journalist” who fled to Canada for the purposes of uncovering how the USSR seeks to divide people, but instead sent as one of the very agents of change that he described in his process.³⁶ This description seems to comport with the political warfare attacks that we’ve seen, but also this description of events could further exacerbate tensions by instilling paranoia. Either way, this is the guiding framework for political warfare strategy that I have found and that best aligns with the incidences of Russian political warfare in the United States since the end of WWII.

Is all the division in the United States truly a result of Russian Political Warfare? Most likely not. But as Bezmenov explained, political warfare is like the martial art of Judo. It seeks to exaggerate the natural tendencies of a society – especially those with radical ideas about matters

³⁶ Bezmenov, called Thomas Schuman, submits that there would be great consequences for his defection to Canada, including the killing of two-party members who vouched for him to work for the KGB. Although this may be true in other circumstances, who’s to say that the KGB didn’t spin this narrative (as a half-truth) as well?

relating to the above listed things. Political Warfare is not about stopping an enemy's ideology, instead it's about amplifying and encouraging the natural dissenters' voices to grow in the direction that the subverter want them to. Such that subverter's government seem to be a desirable alternative.

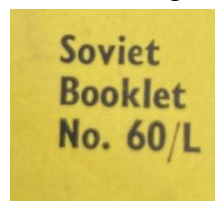
The next section is crucial to the overall argument of this work. Rather than talking about the intricacies of the program, I have instead elected to provide an analysis of the political warfare efforts that were undertaken by the USSR towards Western Institutions. By reviewing real pieces of Soviet propaganda which was disseminated globally, it will more meaningfully portray the objectives and results of these efforts.

Analysis of Propaganda Exported To Western Academic Institutions: Penn State

Deceiving and indoctrinating Western Institutions of Higher Education was an objective of political warfare. This effort was carried out through the global export of multi-lingual, flimsy-backed pamphlets by USSR propaganda houses and press agencies, to include TASS, Novosti, Soviet Weekly, Soviet Life, Soviet Land, Moscow News, and Sputnik. These pamphlets attempted to emphasize what the Soviets thought were important, while hiding contemporary failures within the USSR, as we shall see through examples below. Additional methods of dissemination which will not be discussed at length in this paper – due exclusively to the fact that primary sources for these documents may not be accessible – include publications, periodicals, radio broadcasting, television, cultural organizations, and front organizations. (Active Measures: A Report on the Substance and Process of Anti-U.S. Disinformation and Propaganda Campaigns., 1986)

Within the library at Penn State these pamphlets which, if not direct misinformation, airs how the Soviet Union attempted to spin its own failed policy. Between the beginning of the Soviet Union and its collapse on 26 December 1991, the Penn State Library has accumulated:

- 266 pamphlets from Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow
- 34 from TASS
- 2 from Moscow News
- 2 from Sputnik
- 1 from Soviet Life



Worse, many of the pamphlets from Novosti are designated by the library as “circulates” and was / still are designated as “Slavic Program Reference Material” (see Appendix Nine). The term reference material is defined, by librarians at Berea College in Kentucky, as “various sources that provide background information or quick **facts** on any given topic”. (Peach, 2019) Still other colleges suggest that reference materials are, “**fact** tools ... which contain bits of useful data, such as descriptions, definitions, statistics, lists, quotes or rules” (Western Illinois University Libraries, 2019). Finally, scientists define reference material as that which has, “certified values, which are produced by a technically valid procedure and are accompanied with a traceable certificate and issued by an appropriate certifying agency” (Hu & Qi, 2014). Therefore, the expectation that comes with designating these pamphlets as reference material is that the content

contained in these pamphlets are considered facts, bearing certifiable values, technically valid figures, and originate from an appropriate certifying agency. However, a brief review of even one of these pamphlets disqualifies the assignment of the term reference material to any of these books.

The Penn State Library has material dating back to the 1920s as reference material, as truth, when in reality it is anything but. The implications of this are drastic. Researchers, their research, their students, and any other person that came into contact with this material would be dosed with Russian misinformation as part of their political warfare subversion campaigns of places of higher education. Secondly, any content that anyone wrote with this information would also be incorrect, unless, as I am, they were evaluating these materials for their place in the broader paradigm of Soviet Political Warfare; if Western professors cited this material, then they would be adding authority and credibility to Soviet Misinformation, especially as their colleagues would begin to cite their work. This is how the Soviet Political Warfare, I argue, became so wildly prolific within the spheres of academia. In addition, none of the over 17,000 theses published thesis at Penn State refer to the term political warfare, nor to subversion (as it applies in this context), and only two refer to misinformation. Based on the findings of my analysis of these publications, I argue that content of these pamphlets was not used in thesis publications which attempted to expose the true nature of their content. But with checkout slips still in some of these pamphlets, it is clear that they were used by students / professors / other accessors at some point since their introduction into the library.

Divide:

Since Tzar Nicholas II's abdication of the throne in 1917, the Communist Reds used subversive measures to create the perception of solidarity, prowess, and support. The government's use of propaganda soon teemed every aspect of daily life within the USSR and its effects of instilling coercive compliance through fear became palpable. Later, through what was termed *активные мероприятия* or active measures, this propaganda was circulated on the international stage, both near and abroad, to meet the Politburo's political ambitions.

Future section regarding political warfare employed to divide groups of people / different then instill misinformation. Will cover through Russian Federation and the use of ICTs to achieve these goals.

An ambition of political warfare under the Soviet State was attempting to change perceptions by fundamentally changing human relationship with one another.

"I, a citizen of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ... do hereby take the oath of allegiance and do solemnly vow to be an honest, brave, disciplined and vigilant fighter, to guard strictly all military and State secrets ... I vow to ... be true to my People, my Soviet Motherland, ... to my last breath. I am always prepared ... to come to the defence [sic] of my Motherland - the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics - ... I vow to defend her courageously, skilfully [sic], creditably and honourably [sic], **without sparing my blood**

and my very life to achieve complete victory over the enemy (emphasis added by author). And if through evil intent I break this solemn oath, then let the stern punishment of the Soviet law, and the universal hatred and contempt of the working people, fall upon me.” (Stalin, 1939)

Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin first vowed to this intensely nationalistic oath upon entering office as a counter intelligence officer with the Committee for State Security (KGB) in 1975. (Ray, 2020) The central tenets of this oath have been consistently manifest in Putin’s political and social life since its solemnization some 46 years ago.

Some psychologists attribute Putin’s profound attachment to the Soviet Union’s tradition of control and unlimited power to a “bully” narcissistic personality disorder (NPD); Putin’s NPD may have originated from trauma endured as a child, thus creating a persistent need for him to “prove” that he was dominant and a winner instead. (Burgo, 2014; Gessen, 2013)

has continued to embody the central tenets regards this oath this oath Shortly thereafter, Putin transitioned to a

took this oath took this very same oath This Soviet oath was solemnized by each member of the Red Army

MAPS

Map One: Plurality of the Russian People & the Supposed “Minority”

“More than 120 ethnic groups, many with their own national territories, speaking some 100 languages live within Russia’s borders.” (Wachtel, 2021)



Map Two: The Eastern (Soviet) Bloc after WWII

After WWII, ultra-realist Stalin viewed the neighboring states freshly fractured by WWII as prime for communist conversion.



(Mosedschurte, 2009)

Definition

One: Political

Based on an of relevant science there is a lack consensus as singular of this The definition Warfare is like creature, continuously changes in the international Such changes international include in Internet

Definition Warfare

evaluation political literature, of to a definition concept.³⁷ of Political a living

adapting to

ecosystem. in the ecosystem advances

³⁷ Of note, all the Political Warfare studies which I have reviewed have been qualitative suggesting that there exists a biased choice of research design in the literature.

Communication Technologies (Steger, 2013), development of new informational circumstances, a state's political ideology. Therefore, definitions of Political Warfare are best understood contemporaneously – that is to say that the definitions of this concept simply reflect the scholars' "sampling" or perception of the international ecosystem at that time when a given definition was written. The inherent temporality of this concept makes it seem as though individual scholars are jumping around to different definitions, past and present, making normative evaluations (Carr, 1964), and not building off each other's work. Taken together as a complete literature, however, there are clear commonalities between these definitions. These commonalities aid in this thesis' formulation of a new, comprehensive, yet concise, definition to serve as a baseline for Political Warfare in the domain of political science, which is one of the main contributions of this work to the field.

The hitherto absence of a clear definition of Political Warfare has cause some scholars to lament and petition for the disqualification the entire branch of Political Warfare research (Larson et al., 2008, p. 8; Nichol, 1990, p. 94). Another modern scholar suggests that prior works overestimate the effects Political Warfare has in western societies (Gioe et al., 2020). Although definitions of this concept change rapidly, one characteristic is ubiquitous in the literature: Russian Political Warfare has done "something" in Western societies, and that "something" is not positive for the longevity of Western societies. But one commonality is not enough to properly characterize the entire concept of Political Warfare. This thesis, thus, will establish its own definition of the Political Warfare concept from an exhaustive evaluation of the most common attributes found in the literature.

Political Warfare has been defined in the literature by diplomatic efforts, including proposals and statements, political pressures, and economic warfare (Daugherty & Janowitz, 1958, p. 24; Kintner & Kornfeder, 1962, p. xiii; Lord & Barnett, 1988, p. xv; Shultz & Godson, 1984, p. 13; Smith, 1989, p. 3); the systematic proliferation of propaganda and misinformation, public opinion warfare, and psychological operations (Chau, 2006, p. 115, 2007, pp. v–5; Daugherty & Janowitz, 1958, p. 24; Fanell, 2019, p. 25; Kintner & Kornfeder, 1962, p. xiii; Lord & Barnett, 1988, p. 18; Smith, 1989, p. 3); the delegitimization of one's adversary through incremental success (Fanell, 2019, p. 25); non-violent, legible, tangible, strategies that will induce social change as part of a "grand strategy" (Chau, 2006, pp. 114–115); strategic deception and subversion (Lord & Barnett, 1988, p. 18; Nichol, 1990, p. 94); intimidation, sabotage, terrorism, violence, and war (Jenkins & RAND, 2005; Kintner & Kornfeder, 1962, p. xiii; Smith, 1989, p. 3); cyber operations (Jasper, 2020, pp. 3–4); legal warfare (Fanell, 2019, p. 25); and myriad cross-cutting and interacting variables (Aspaturian, 1980, p. 8). The literature also suggests that PW's propaganda variable can serve as a basis for biased education (Zimbardo et al., 1977).

Therefore, the definition of Political Warfare that I have established for this thesis and to serve as a foundation for the discipline of Political Warfare research is: Political Warfare shall be defined as an instrument of grand strategy which seeks to induce incremental change in the social and political institutions of a target country using an uneven treatment of subversive, measurable, non-violent, and overlapping methods including diplomacy, economic pressure, legal action, cyber operations, perceived military prowess, propaganda, and misinformation which are adapted to meet the historical needs, objectives, and means available to an aggressing actor.³⁸

³⁸ Note the intentional inclusion of the term actor as opposed to nation-state; this covers non-state actors, such as ISIS, that also engage in the practice of political warfare.

Appendices

Appendix One: Contradictions in Living Conditions

I have put together this collage to juxtapose the living conditions of the Tzar versus common countryside peasants. When peasants moved to industrial centers, such as Saint Petersburg they became known as worker-peasants. By late 1914, an overwhelming proportion of citizens (nearly 84 percent) still lived in the countryside; with all the money that they could afford, they maintained simple homes. When these peasants made their way to work, they recognized just how different the Tzar lived as compared to them. Consider also, that the Winter Palace was just one of many palaces and official residences of the Tzar. Beyond every other reason to be discontent with the Tzar, including his dismal leadership style, this dichotomy in living conditions was readily visible – especially after working an average of a 12-hour workday. When I was first introduced to the subject of Soviet History, my professor Catherine Wanner used similar images to convey why the peasant's harbored discontent towards the Tzar.

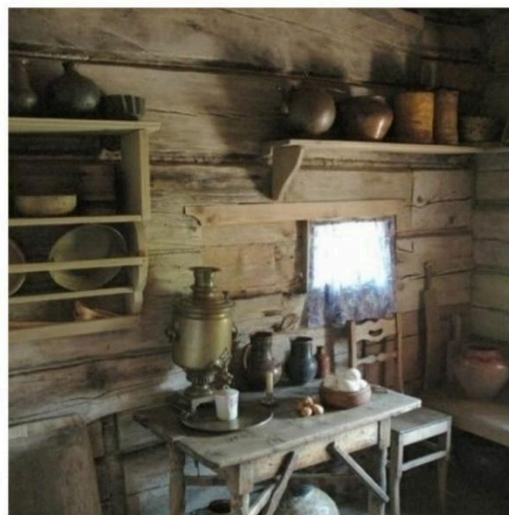
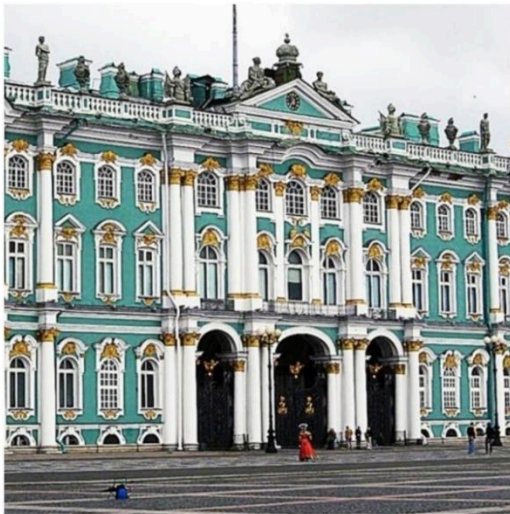
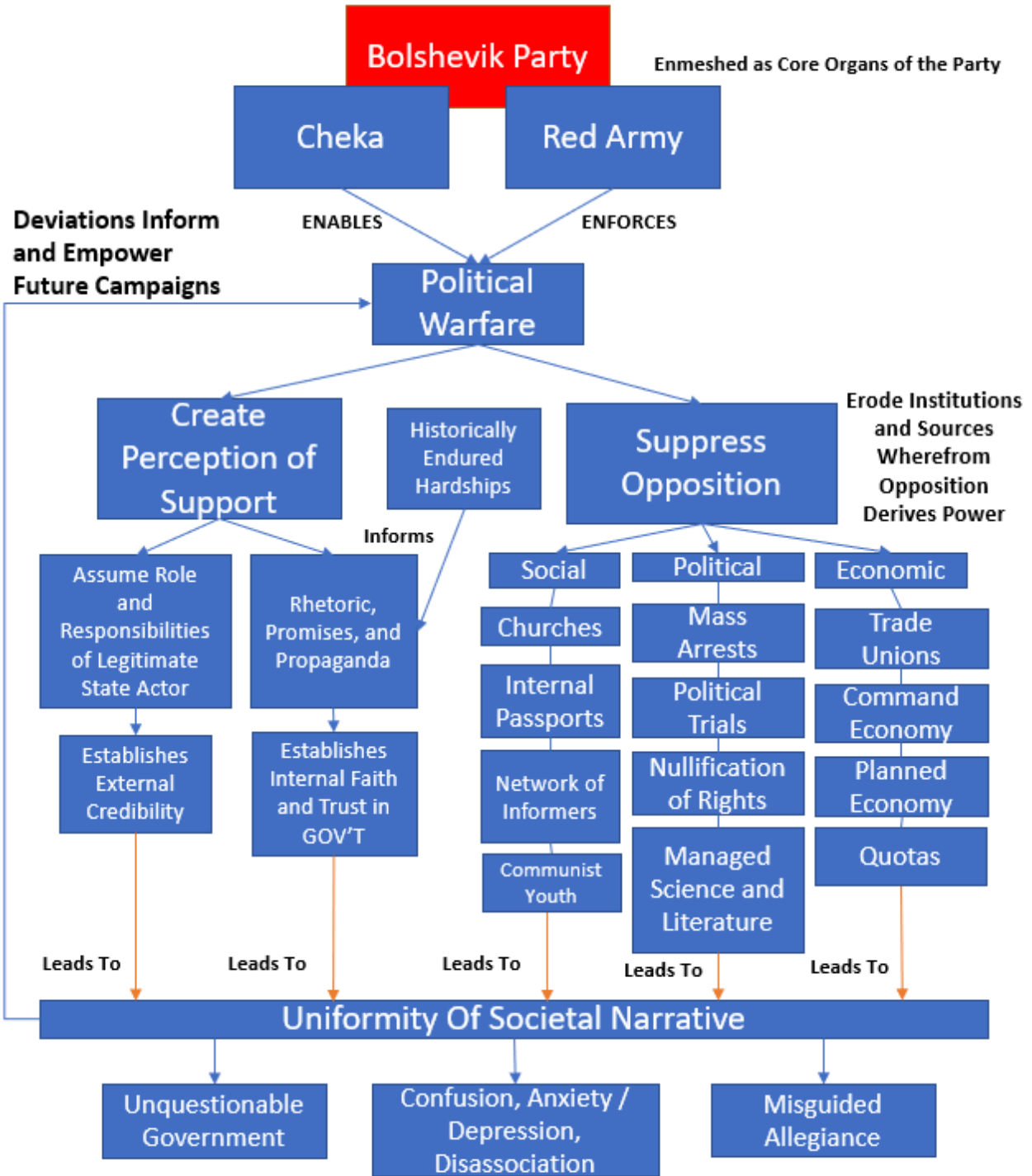


Photo collage compiled using fotor.com from the following sources: (Kgignatyev, 2021; Makovsky, 1890; Tran, 2021; Ukhtomsky, 1862)

Appendix Two: Conceptual Outline of Early Russian Political Warfare



Any deviation away from this uniform narrative can be blamed on the opposition who, without an outlet to publish, cannot defend themselves; this misattribution can inform future iterations of political warfare taken against the society and thus also making the régime incapable of mistakes – to include the methodical slaughter of its own citizens.

WARNING: Genocide

Appendix Three: The Soviet Union Methodically Slaughters Anyone it Chooses

The propaganda posters which Joseph Stalin circulated across the USSR fraudulently depicted the inclusivity, praise for a wonderful life, protection of innocents during childhood – and a promise of a future. However, reality was incongruent with this narrative. Below are some pictures taken during the exhuming of mass graves made by the Soviets during the Katyn Massacre, outside Smolensk, Russia.



Photo collage compiled using kapwing.com from the following sources: (Harding, 2010; Hopper, 2021)

Appendix Four: Pavlik Morozov, the Informer

Pavlik Morozov was just 13 when he exhibited “bravery” by informing on his dad. And thus, statute and propaganda began appearing in Russia for the purposes of inculcating loyalty to the state and informing.



Photo collage compiled using kapwing.com from the following sources: (University of Oxford & Leverhulme Trust, 2007)

Appendix Five: Europe Destroyed

Hitler's use of scorched earth warfare led to the decimation of European land. Below are just some results of this warfare tactic – villages burned, farms destroyed, roads made impassable.

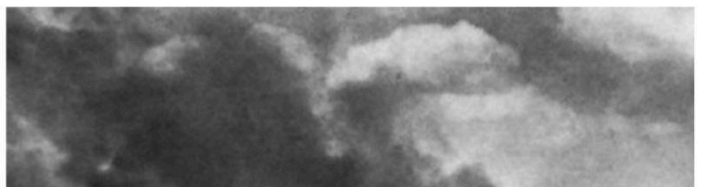
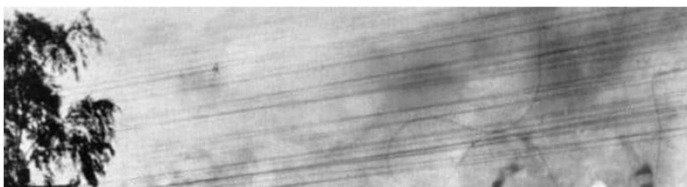


Photo collage compiled using fotor.com from the following source: (Miller, 2017)

Appendix Six: Declaration of War

Stalin decided that he could no longer maintain the party narrative regarding Nazi Germany by 9 October 1941. This image depicts Muscovites listening in to Hitler's declaration of war over loudspeakers on the streets of Moscow.



Picture courtesy (Ernst et al., 1941)

Appendix Seven (a): Russian Letter from FILIPOV (Stalin) to Soviet Ambassador in Prague, Conveying Message to CSSR Leader Klement Gottwald

Совершенно секретно

Прага.Совпосол

Передайте Готвальду на словах следующее.Если он попросит-- составьте ему в письменном виде.

“Мы на вопрос ухода Советского Союза из Совета Безопасности 27 июня и о событиях развернувшихся после этого ухода смотрим несколько иначе , чем тов .Готвальд.

Мы ушли из Совета Безопасности с четверной целью: во-первых, с целью продемонстрировать солидарность Советского Союза с новым Китаем.

Во-вторых, с целью подчеркнуть глупость и идиотство политики США, признающей гомиьндановское чучело в Совете Безопасности представителем Китая и не желающей допустить подлинного представителя Китая в Совет Безопасности; в-третьих, сделать незаконным решения Совета Безопасности в силу отсутствия представителей двух великих держав ; в-четвертых, с целью развязать руки американскому правительству и дать ему возможность , используя большинство в Совете Безопасности ,-совершить новые глупости с тем , чтобы общественное мнение могло разглядеть подлинное лицо американского правительства.

Я думаю, что нам удалось добиться осуществления всех этих целей.

После нашего ухода из Совета Безопасности Америка впуталась в военную интервенцию в Корею и там растрчивает теперь свой военный престиж и моральный авторитет .Едва-ли теперь может кто-либо из честных людей сомневаться в том, что Америка выступает в Корею в роли насильника и агрессора и что в военном отношении она не так уж сильна , как рекламирует себя. Кроме того, ясно, что Соединенные Штаты Америки отвлечены теперь от Европы на Дальнем Востоке. Дает ли все это нам плюс с точки зрения баланса мировых сил? Безусловно дает.

Допустим, что американское правительство будет и дальше увязать на Дальнем Востоке и втянет Китай в борьбу за свободу Кореи и за свою собственную независимость .Что из этого может получиться ?

Во-первых, Америка, как и любое другое государство , не может справиться с Китаем, имеющим наготове большие вооруженные силы .Стало быть , Америка должна надорваться в этой борьбе .Во-вторых, надорвавшись на этом деле , Америка будет неспособна в ближайшее время на третью мировую войну. Стало быть, третья мировая война будет отложена на неопределенный срок, что обеспечит необходимое время для укрепления социализма в Европе.Я уже не говорю о том, что борьба Америки с Китаем

должна будет революционизировать всю Дальневосточную Азию. Дает ли все это нам плюс с точки зрения баланса мировых сил? Безусловно дает.

Как видите, дело об участии и неучастии Советского Союза в Совете Безопасности не такой уж простой вопрос, как это может показаться на первый взгляд.

В силу всего этого мы не можем сказать, что “лагерю демократии нет необходимости уходить из Совета Безопасности”. Уход или неуход зависит от обстоятельств. Мы можем еще раз уйти из Совета Безопасности и еще раз вернуться, в зависимости от международной обстановки.

Могут спросить – для чего же мы вернулись теперь в Совет ,безопасности .Для того, чтобы продолжить разоблачение агрессивной политики американского правительства и помешать ему прикрывать свою агрессию флагом Совета Безопасности. Теперь, когда Америка уже втянулась в агрессию в Корею, легче всего будет добиться этой цели, находясь в Совете Безопасности. Я думаю, что это понятно и не нуждается в дальнейших разъяснениях.

ФИЛИППОВ.

27 августа 1950 г.”

Appendix Seven (b): Translated Letter from FILIPOV (Stalin) to Soviet Ambassador in Prague, Conveying Message to CSSR Leader Klement Gottwald

Top Secret

Prague, Soviet Ambassador

Pass Gottwald the following message orally. Put it in writing if he so requests.

“We view the issue of the Soviet Union's withdrawal from the Security Council on 27 June and the events which unfolded afterwards somewhat differently from Comrade Gottwald.

We left the Security Council for four reasons: first, to demonstrate solidarity of the Soviet Union with the new China.

Second, to underscore the foolishness and idiocy of the United States policy of recognizing the Guomindang puppet in the Security Council as the representative of China and not wanting to admit the genuine representative of China to the Security Council; third, to render decisions of the Security Council illegitimate by virtue of the absence of representatives of two great powers; fourth, to give the American government a free hand and give it an opportunity to commit more foolishness using a majority in the Security Council so that public opinion can see the true face of the American government.

I believe that we have achieved all of these goals.

Following our withdrawal from the Security Council, America became entangled in a military intervention in Korea and is now squandering its military prestige and moral authority. Few honest people can now doubt that America is now acting as an aggressor and tyrant in Korea and that it is not as militarily powerful as it claims to be. In addition, it is clear that the United States of America is presently distracted from Europe in the Far East. Does it not give us an advantage in the global balance of power? It undoubtedly does.

Let us suppose that American government continues to be tied down in the Far East and also pulls China into the struggle for the freedom of Korea and its own independence. What might come of this?

First, America, just like any other country, cannot cope with China, a country with such large armed forces at the ready. It follows that America would overextend itself in this struggle. Second, having overextended itself in this matter, America would be incapable of a third world war in the near future. Therefore, a third world war would be postponed for an indeterminate period, which would provide the time necessary to strengthen socialism in Europe, not to mention that the struggle between America and China would revolutionize the entire Far East. Does all this not give us an advantage from the perspective of the global balance of power? It unquestionably does.

As you can see, the question of whether or not the Soviet Union participates in the Security Council is not as simple as it might appear at first glance.

By virtue of all this, we cannot say that “the democratic camp has no need to leave the Security Council.” Whether we leave or stay depends on the circumstances. We might leave the Security Council again and come back once again, depending on the international situation.

One might ask why we have now returned to the Security Council. We have returned to continue exposing the aggressive policy of the American government and to prevent it from using the flag of the Security Council as a smokescreen for its aggression. Now that America has become aggressively involved in Korea, it will be very easy to achieve this goal while in the Security Council. I think that this is clear and needs no further explanation.

FILIPPOV [Stalin]

27 August 1950

Ibid, Translated by Gary Goldberg.

<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112225>

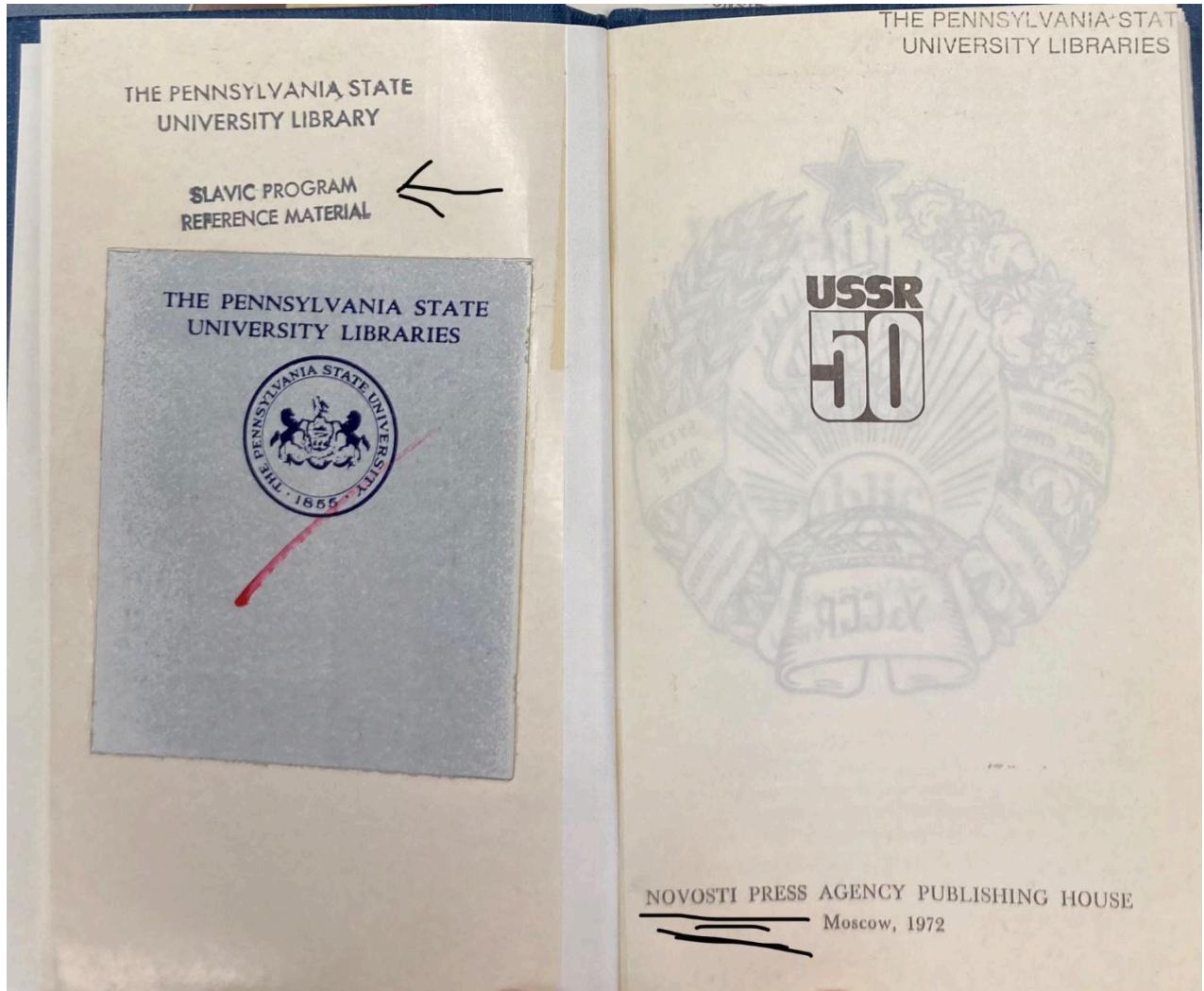
Appendix Eight: Places of Ideological Subversion, KGB Defector Yuri Bezmenov

| THE SUBVERSION PROCESS | | |
|---------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| AREAS | METHODS | RESULTS |
| DEMORALIZATION (15 TO 20 YEARS) | | |
| IDEAS | | |
| 1. RELIGION | POLITICIZE, COMMERCIALIZE, ENTERTAINMENT | DEATH WISH |
| 2. EDUCATION | PERMISSIVENESS, RELATIVITY | IGNORANCE |
| 3. MEDIA | MONOPOLIZE, MANIPULATE, DISCREDIT, NON-ISSUES | UNINFORMED MYOPIA |
| 4. CULTURE | FALSE HEROES AND ROLE MODELS | ADDICTIVE FADS, 'MASS' |
| STRUCTURE | | |
| 1. LAW AND ORDER | LEGISLATIVE, NOT MORAL | MISTRUST 'JUSTICE' |
| 2. SOCIAL RELATIONS | RIGHTS VS. OBLIGATIONS | LESS INDIVIDUAL RESPON. |
| 3. SECURITY | INTELLIGENCE, POLICE, MILITARY | DEFENSELESSNESS |
| 4. INTERNAL POLITICS | PARTY, ANTAGONISMS | DISUNITY |
| 5. FOREIGN | SALT . . . FRIENDS | ISOLATION |
| LIFE | | |
| 1. FAMILY, SOCIETY | BREAK UP | NO LOYALTY (STATE) |
| 2. HEALTH | SPORTS, MEDICARE, JUNK FOOD | ENFEEBLED MASSES |
| 3. RACE | LOWER THE UPPERS, BIBLE? GENETICS VS. ENVIRONMENT | HATRED, DIVISION |
| 4. POPULATION | DE-LAND, URBANIZE | ALIENATION |
| 5. LABOR | UNIONS VS. SOCIETY | VICTIMIZATION |

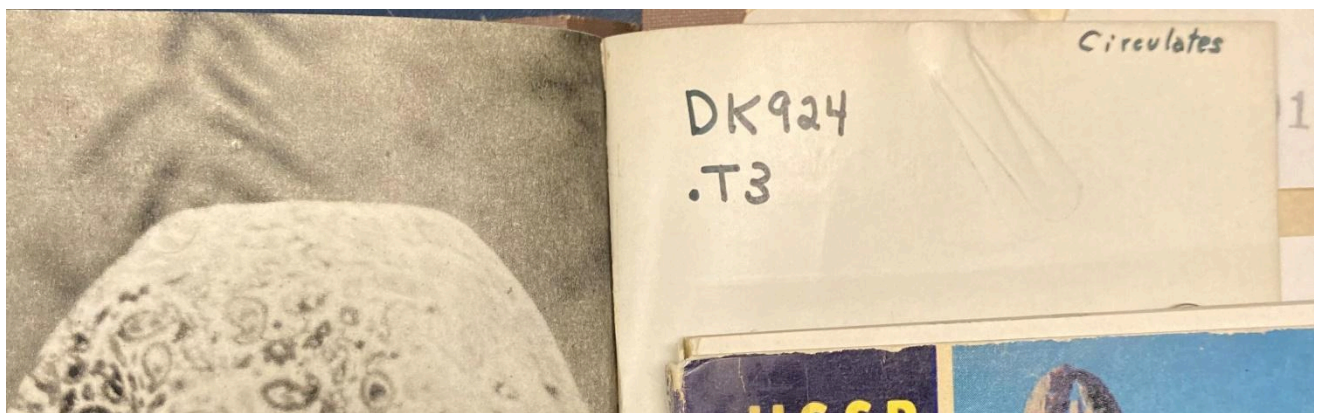
(Bezmenov, 1984)

Appendix Nine: Propaganda Penetrates Higher Walls of Higher Education

The first photo shows that these propaganda booklets, from Novosti, the second largest propaganda house in the USSR was designated as Reference Material for the Slavic Program.



This second photo shows that the propaganda booklets are designated by the library to now circulate.



Appendix Ten: Soviet Technology and Innovation Found in a Propaganda Booklet

These three photos were presented in the 1972 propaganda booklet at Uzbekistan and show progress in water conservation, cotton production, and cotton cultivation technology.



(Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1972)

Posters

Poster One: "Thank you Comrade Stalin for our happy life!"



(Nikolai Zhukov, 1940)

Poster Two: "Stalin takes care of each of us from the Kremlin!"



(Viktor Govorkov, 1940)

Poster Three: Thank you beloved Stalin for our happy childhood!



(Viktor Govorkov, 1936)

Poster Four: The Motherland is Calling

Stalin's continued use of political warfare, including the distribution of posters which calls attention to a unifying national identity, helped mobilize the Soviet People to join in arm.



Poster Five: Napoleon was wiped out, Hitler will be wiped out

Stalin's continued use of political warfare, including the distribution of posters which calls attention to past military successes and the lore of returning to this notion of "greatness" or cultural superiority, which was rooted in the destruction of the enemy. This poster extols feelings of national pride and heroism, which helped mobilize the Soviet People, especially during operation Barbarossa and the Nazi encroachment on Moscow.



“Napoleon was wiped out, Hitler will be wiped out” is a World War II Soviet poster by Koukrynisky which extols feelings of heroism and national pride featuring dramatization of little Hitler as Napoleon (Koukrynisky, 1941)

Poster Six: We have overthrown capitalism!



(Kuprianov, 1933)

Poster Seven: Capital!

This poster in particular illustrated the “web of greed” involved in a capital-based economy.



(Getty Images & Photo12, 1923)

Poster Eight: Out Noble People

This poster exemplifies the “great successes” of industry, innovation, and surplus in terms of raw material. It portrays the values of the communist planned economy as booming with success and prosperity – it also aligns with the narrative that the people (indeed the workers) as being responsible for such great successes. Note also that this poster came out just two years after perhaps the greatest famine in the USSR – the Holodomor – which was responsible for the death of millions of Ukrainians.



(Kharkov, 1935)

Poster Nine: Without a Revolutionary Theory there can be no Revolutionary Movement

(Pikalov, 1933)

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