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**CHILDREN'S IMAGE AS A MEANING-FORMING CONSTRUCT  
OF THE SOVIET ADVERTISING POSTER**



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**Abstract**

The image of a child in a soviet advertising poster is the key to interpreting social phenomena occurring in soviet society, a kind of “mirror” that reflects the objective reality of the past. The children depicted on the soviet advertising poster live according to the laws of the adult world: parents, teachers, peers, which expands the possibilities of interpreting the child's image. The image of a child on a Soviet poster allows you to implement the following functions: Patriotic, communicative, advertising, social, educational, motivating, propaganda function, thereby enhancing the impact potential of the advertising message. The subjects of soviet posters using the image of a child are diverse: political, patriotic, medical, dedicated to a healthy lifestyle, and propaganda posters that draw the image of an ideal child, highlighting the most striking features necessary for the ideological portrait of the younger generation. A child assistant who performs public tasks, helps parents, grandparents, and represents a positive image of a friend turned out to be a frequent participant in the study material. A rebel is a contradictory image that clearly indicates its position. The image of the defender is traditional, as the boy always protects the weak. The image of an excellent student supported the ideology and embodied the ideal features of the child. To enhance the impact of the advertising poster, children's images were supplemented with slogans that included a variety of speech figures: lexical, morphological, syntactic; proverbs, motivational, interrogative, exclamation sentences, and rhetorical questions.

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*Keywords:* Advertising poster, image, children's image, poster artist, history, soviet period



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## 1. Introduction

For a long time, the soviet people formed a myth about the state managing material values, ideas about the past and future, based on the principles of equality and justice. It was believed that the state was the main value of the USSR, which was adapted to the propagandized ideological postulates. As a means of social advertising, the advertising poster was used by the authorities as a mechanism for managing society (Baburina, 1984, 1990). The political system formed the values of the soviet era, which were a reflection of real life in the context of social ideological dogmas. In many ways, the system of values of the soviet man was based not only on the ideas of socialism and communism, but also on the role of the state, state policy, moral principles and human rights (Bibikova, 2002) The principles of complex harmonious development aimed at the formation of intelligence and creative abilities, the principles of social responsibility to society were laid as the basis for the correct upbringing of a child.

Social values for the common good became the leading principles of creating the soviet advertising poster (Arkhipova, 2017, 2019) Education by including the image of a child on a soviet advertising poster was aimed at instilling in children ideological human values-kindness, honesty, justice, respect for elders. The comprehensive development of the child was facilitated by the country's secondary education, the availability of opportunities for preparing a young person for work, and public concern for the health of people. So, the child on the Soviet poster embodied a clean, bright, perfect image. It is a curious fact that the Soviet poster rarely depicted a child in the family circle.

Patriotic values are the basis of an advertising poster using a child's image. For the soviet people, patriotism was the leading concept, since there was no private property, and all forms of ownership were state-owned. Any events taking place in the state were perceived as personal, and people expected the state to participate in solving their own problems. This extended to all expectations: improvement of living conditions, justice in punishing offenders, expectation of state awards on the occasion of anniversaries, solemn dates and achievements. Children attended kindergarten, school, Institute, received scholarships and apartments from the state, worked at a company, received a pension, etc. This connection between the individual and the state was manifested in a sense of human security, and public sentiment was reflected in posters using a child's image.

The image of a child on a soviet poster is inextricably linked to the tool for forming the moral qualities necessary for subsequent work. Efforts to form these character traits were constant, because they were perceived in society as the basis of a person's spiritual appearance. The process of labor education was connected with school education, which made it possible to prepare children for future work. Images contributed to the education of respect for work, understanding of responsibility for the results of work, perception of the interests of the team as personal.

Promotion of a healthy lifestyle in Soviet times became a form of mass agitation. For several decades, posters promoted the norms of RLD, healthy lifestyle, addressing younger representatives of the target audience: "Pioneer! Be ready to work and protect the Motherland!", "All on skis!", "Do water sports", "If you want to be healthy – harden up", etc.

Respect for elders is a behavioral modulator in the formation of the soviet child's personality. The soviet poster supported the principle of intergenerational relationships: you need to respect the old age of

people who have passed the hard tests of life. Friendship in a team and friendship of peoples is one of the most common soviet ideologemes. The essence of the value was realized through the translation of images based on the principles of universal equality and fraternity, and in soviet society it acquired shades of literality.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The image of a child functioning on an advertising poster removes the barrier in the perception of the message, contributes to the rapid fixation of the image as an advertising one, and contributes to the fact that a person begins to believe the stated statement. Currently, researchers are turning to the study of the pragmatic function of children's images, for example, the work of D.A. Dontsova "Children's image as a factor of advertising impact highlights the problem of the influence of children's images in television advertising on the consumer needs of the adult child population", T.G. Utrobina "Children's image as a factor in the formation of meaning in social advertising", etc. The use of the child's image as a construct of advertising messages of soviet values occupies a special place in the soviet visual poster: on the one hand, the child's image acts as a mirror in the transmission of political and public opinions and decisions, on the other – an active tool in the history of the struggle of mankind for the ideals of social justice. This is its viability and relevance at the present time. The relevance of the research is to determine the role of the child's image as a meaning-forming construct of the soviet advertising poster.

## **3. Research Questions**

The image occupies a dominant position in any work of art or literature. Researchers are faced with the ambiguity and complexity of defining the term. The image is a symbol of the connection between the real and the reproducible, it is the author's vision of existing problems. In a broad sense, an artistic image is understood as any form in which an artist embodies ideas, phenomena, events, facts and interprets them through the author's perception (Sel & Aktas, 2019) An advertising image is not only an image set by a specialist designer, it is also a copy of an artistic image that meets the needs and ideas of the target audience (Thompson, 2017; Zhang et al., 2018)/ It is based on knowledge of basic categories: historical facts, social problems, life values, etc. The image of a child in the context of a function is the ability to express the cultural meaning of ideas, objects, and ideals associated with the USSR value system.

Any visual images in an advertising poster of the soviet period play a huge role in the perception of the advertising text. Thanks to the visualization of information, children's images in an advertising poster perform various functions: aesthetic, communicative, advertising, patriotic, social, educational and motivating. A child's image in a soviet poster is intended to convey the expressiveness of agitational thought or political/social idea, which gives the poster's visual range the energy of activity. The internal form of the child's image is concise and natural, so that it appears plausible, corresponding to cultural, ideal and historical values. Based on these positions we can define the aesthetic function of the child's image (Safavi & Gumus, 2019). The patriotic function of the child's image in the soviet poster is to establish the principles and norms under the influence of which certain personal qualities are formed in the child.

The communicative function of the child's image is realized through the ability of the visual object to initiate contact with society through the channels of visual perception and attitude to the image. This is due to the sign-communicative essence of things and their social symbolism, the ability to be carriers of certain utilitarian and aesthetic information and transmit information "encoded" by artistic and figurative means in the design form of objects. The advertising function of the children's image in the soviet poster is based on the statement that advertising is a financial and economic phenomenon that has a direct impact on the market situation, competition, market participants and the target audience. The advertising function of the children's image is to stimulate the consumer, generate demand and supply by informing consumers about products and services (Klyukanov, 2016)

The social function of using a child's image is expressed by embodying in this image the opinions and positions of the state in the field of social policy. At the same time, the state of the USSR paid special attention to the living standards of the population, the implementation of state programs, etc.

The educational function of the child's image is given a special place in the soviet poster. Children's images teach their peers important moral and moral values. Unobtrusive, but quite confident and systematic measure of education of the soviet schoolchild/child gives the child's image the ideal features that a soviet child should have. Shortcomings, negative actions and traits are ridiculed and subjected to public censure, which was depicted on the advertising poster.

The motivating function is realized through children's images that encourage adults and children to take some action, guide them in specific life situations, and support the child in the chosen position of behavior. Motivation-stimulating the viewer of a soviet advertising poster, activating and directing their actions and thoughts for the benefit of the state.

The soviet advertising poster changed along with state and public events: war, economic UPS and downs, political unrest-were undeniably reflected in the content and slogans of the posters, and, of course, the children's image was transformed, which reflected the public mood.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the article is to study the image of a child in a Soviet advertising poster, typology of images and highlight key characteristics. The work is an attempt to understand the tools for creating a child's image in a soviet advertising poster and identify the features inherent in the child's image of the soviet poster, analyze its functions, and give a typology of images.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The research methodology of the advertising poster is presented by the method of continuous sampling and typological analysis aimed at studying the typological characteristics of children's images depicted on soviet posters. We analyzed 200 posters with the inclusion of the image of a child. The classification of children's images in the soviet advertising poster was determined by images of children, taking into account aesthetics: the image of a child has a specific socio-age characteristic, while it has a limited set of functions that are characteristic of a child's image; it has a variety of types, depending on the

subject of the poster and the story composition; it is characterized by external features, clothing, attributes, and belonging to a social group.

So, in the soviet advertising poster, the image of a boy (65% of the analyzed material) is directly related to the formation of a future factory worker, and the image of a girl (35% of the analyzed material) is associated with hard work, wisdom and motherhood.

In the soviet posters you might encounter the following children: rebellious; defender; lazy, losers, mischief-maker; excellent; patriot; pioneer; assistant; handyman.

The most frequent in our material was the image of a child assistant (37% of the analyzed material) performing certain tasks, support for parents and older generation – the ideal image that is found in the Soviet poster. The duties of the assistant included mandatory assistance to my mother and grandmother in everyday life, helping the younger ones in the learning process, and supporting people who found themselves in a difficult life situation. And this was part of the ideal ideas about the formation of the country's younger generation.

Quite representative in the material is the image of the defender (27 % of the analyzed material) - an image designed to form the boy's ideas about honor and justice, about good and evil. The main goal of such a poster is to educate the future fighter and defender of the Motherland.

Common in our material is the image of an excellent student (18 %), which is revealed by giving the image of the child characteristics that correspond to the concepts: a student who works hard in the learning process, gets excellent grades in all major subjects, and who performs the task assigned to him with special diligence, “excellent”. As a rule, the image is ideal, corresponds to the ideological concepts of education, and is endowed with courage, valor, intelligence, skills, etc.

During the reign of Stalin, the political and social situation in the country has a direct impact on the image of a child in a poster. Now they are not just rosy-cheeked inhabitants of the world of childhood, they are octobrites, pioneers and komsomol members who perceive education and help in working for adults within the framework of due and mandatory.

The social attitude of the child and his faith in the state and a bright future are the main goals of the party and society. Often the poster claims that the young generation owes a happy childhood to comrade Stalin. Octobrists and pioneers-members of the all-union pioneer organization named after V.I. Lenin. These are images that were created to demonstrate and promote the ideals of the communist party.

This explains why the image of a pioneer child (9%) was so widely spread- it is an image that confidently and boldly looks at the future of the country, obeys the laws and rules dictated by the organization, is true to the ideals and brings up the best features that correspond to an adult and the ideology of the country.

Less represented in our material was the image of “rebel” (6 %) – the image of a child protesting against the current situation or social problems. It demands change, sets the rules, a defiant image that calls for decisive action.

The most striking and less common was the image of a lazy, two-faced, mischievous person (3 %) – a type of hero of the soviet poster, pointedly devoid of the heroic and aesthetic features that are given to children in the soviet poster. His image was created in order to emphasize the negative qualities of the hero, to convince the Soviet child that it is necessary to comply with the norms and rules of education.

Note that each group of selected images of a child in a soviet advertising poster is characterized by the processes and phenomena that function in them, the distinctive features and character of the hero, objective and subjective factors of the surrounding reality, the subject-object environment, belonging to the activity, etc.

## 6. Findings

Children's images were decorated with a medical poster, an educational poster, posters from the period of the Great patriotic war, political posters, posters dedicated to educational and security topics. Advertising posters using a child's image – posters that offered products and services to the soviet society: clothing and shoes, food, services, hygiene products, etc. As a rule, children in such posters were depicted quite closely and in detail: rosy-cheeked, happy, happy to use the advertised product or used as an addition or decoration to the advertised product.

Posters advertising the field of medicine depicted children in order to promote medical services and promote a healthy lifestyle. The theme of the posters is: a call to citizens to observe hygiene and check the health of the child, the need for vaccinations, etc. In soviet times, medicine was at a good level, and its availability made doctors respected people who listen to their opinions.

Some posters are dedicated to the rejection of bad habits by adults, promotion of a healthy lifestyle, the need to do gymnastics, cultural education and overcoming illiteracy, etc. In some ways, the educational poster in the USSR was a kind of political one, since it reflected the policy of the CPSU in relation to many social problems. With the onset of the civil war, the number of posters aimed at overcoming illiteracy and developing interest in reading increased.

Creating posters about the safety of children in high-risk situations was a matter of fundamental importance, since preserving the life of a child is the way to the health of the nation. Soviet posters told the child about difficult situations and gave a complete picture of the possible consequences.

Posters from the period of the great patriotic war tell about the tragic events that took place in wartime. Children's images here are inextricably linked with the image of mothers and orphans whose parents died during the war. The child's image conveys the pain experienced by the soviet people.

The political poster was widely distributed after the October revolution and was devoted to various topics: agitation and election. So, from the point of view of our research, posters of a political orientation using the image of Stalin become interesting. The image of the child on these posters corresponds to the idea of a happy childhood, of a child who is taken care of by the state, of a small citizen on whom the future of the country depends.

Posters on the educational theme taught the younger generation of morality and morals, served as a reminder of how to act in a particular situation. The image of a child can be found on posters where the key aspects of propaganda – love and care for children (not only for their own, but also for children left orphaned), explained the responsibility for children's education.

A lot of posters are devoted to the child's education, this is due to the fact that soviet education was the best, and learning “excellent” was a priority value of the student, which was greatly facilitated by mass agitation. Soviet posters served as a reference point for children and adults, the images depicted on the posters-the ideals that every soviet child had to look up to.

According to the theme of the soviet poster and artistic characteristics, you can trace how the values of the USSR and political ideas changed. The tools for informing the public had to be perfectly working and closest to the people. This is what the Soviet propaganda poster has become, and that is why it is becoming the most important tool for humanizing soviet society. Children's images and their functions are diverse in their nature and specifics of impact, but each poster acquired the character of an independent force.

## 7. Conclusion

Thus, the image of a child is a meaning-forming construct of the soviet poster, as it attracts additional connotations, activates mental representations in the interpretation of the message. A child in a soviet advertising poster is a citizen who has individual characteristics that allow him to belong to a certain social group. The formed image of a child in a soviet poster is a generalized image that transmits a model of patriotic behavior to the younger generation. In the course of interpreting representations, children are guided by generalized images known to them, and are included in the process of identifying these representations. In our opinion, the success of education and understanding of the General civil identity directly depends on how children perceive and evaluate the image, what content they put into this concept.

Children's images in the Soviet advertising poster characterize the processes and phenomena that function in them, the distinctive positions of the hero, objective and subjective factors of the surrounding reality, subject-object environment, belonging to a characteristic activity, environment, etc. The image of a child makes a soviet poster interesting, harmonious, and attractive for both adults and children. On the one hand, a child's image satisfies several psychological needs of an adult, as a mirror, reflects public opinion, and on the other hand, it acts as an active tool for creating an advertising message.

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