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**“SOFT POWER” OF THE WEST IN THE “COLD WAR” WITH SOVIET MYTHOLOGEMES**

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**Abstract**

A very significant distinguishing feature of modernity is the formation of a general Western super-ideology, which claims to establish control over the entire ideosphere of mankind. The beginning of the formation of this global ideology can be considered the end of the Cold War, which allowed the West to defeat the USSR. This victory was won not so much due to some superiority in the level of social organization of Western countries, but due to a more perfect mechanism for applying soft power (using one's ideas through propaganda tools). In fact, the confrontation between the West and the communist bloc led by the USSR was a typical competition between two different “soft forces”. The most important success of the West in the ideological struggle against the USSR was a victory in its own “rear”, by winning the sympathy of its intelligentsia, which made a turn - began to view the USSR not as a defender of the working masses, but as a totalitarian state encroaching on freedom and democracy. The “soft power” of the West, backed by economic successes and the power of the propaganda machine, ensured a much more effective promotion of Western ideas around the world, starting in the 1960s, compared to the Soviet mechanisms of forming its own global “attractiveness”.

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## 1. Introduction

In this article, we would like to analyze the application of “soft power” by the Soviet Union and the West during the so-called “Cold War”. The problem with modern research on this topic is that “soft power” is viewed mainly from the standpoint of the effectiveness of propaganda tools. We would like to analyze it from the point of view of interaction with ideology, showing the limits of the effectiveness of this phenomenon in specific historical realities. There is every reason to believe that ideology is one of the three pillars on which any large social association rests (the other two should include management and organized systems of economic, military, commercial, etc. activity). The main task of ideology is to form people’s understanding of the surrounding reality. The second most important function of ideology is its ability to integrate large masses of people based on values shared by the majority, which ensures the mobilization of the social energy of individuals to solve certain problems facing society. In this case, we interpret ideology more broadly than just a collection of certain political views and theories, ordered into a certain system. This understanding of ideology, entrenched in modern science, is too narrow and does not reveal the fullness of this phenomenon. The structure of ideology includes all components of the spiritual sphere, which in one way or another interpret the existing social order and shape the consciousness of people (Slavin, 2010). In this regard, “soft power” relies on ideology in those situations when it comes to the distribution of power resources. Ideology exists in all countries, although, over time, its very form can change significantly under the influence of various social, cultural, and historical factors.

A noticeable trend of the modern era is the formation of a general Western super-ideology, which claims to establish control over the entire ideosphere of mankind. Complex governance (Zurn, 2020) must be duplicated by an equally complex ideology. The first step towards such control was taken because of the USA victory in the Cold War, which marks the “decline of history” (if we mean the competition of different, alternative options for the development of mankind by “history”) and the entry of the world into a new era of “postmodernism”. In fact, the confrontation between the West and the communist bloc led by the USSR was a typical competition between two different “soft forces”. The struggle between these antagonistic systems was fought in the economic, military, and technical spheres, with the involvement of a large number of countries (Zhiltsov, 2018), but the main confrontation unfolded precisely on the symbolic plane, where communist ideas had to compete with the Western ideology of democracy, liberalism and free market (Ward, 2020), with the ideology of “flexible” political institutions (Gailmard, 2020), promoted by the West at the global level. As we know, the beginning of the “Cold War” was set by the famous “Fulton” speech of Churchill, delivered in 1946. And already at this stage, the West won the first small victory in the “power” competition with the USSR. “From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended on the continent <...>. Almost all these countries are run by police governments, and to this day, except for Czechoslovakia, there is no real democracy in them”, - Churchill said (Charmley, 1995, p. 121). Thus, the British politician made it clear that the struggle between the USSR and the USA is not so much a clash of two geopolitical blocs as an attempt by the “free world” and “democracy” to prevent the fall of the “iron curtain” over the “free part of humanity”.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The phenomenon of “soft power” can be understood more fully if we look at it through the prism of the application of this instrument in the context of real political practices. There is every reason to believe that the West won a victory over the Soviet Union during the Cold War solely due to more advanced propaganda and myth-construction mechanisms, and not due to some superiority of its own social organization. The problem of “soft power” and ideology is very widely represented in domestic and foreign literature (we will talk about this a little below). Hundreds of works are also devoted to the Cold War as a certain political and historical phenomenon. However, we have not yet come across studies where the Cold War would be viewed precisely through the prism of the application of the “soft power” toolkit, which, in our opinion, may be a certain novelty of the study.

## **3. Research Questions**

In this paper, we will characterize the mechanism of application of “soft power” during the Cold War. This task will be solved at two levels - theoretical (we will show the connection between “soft power” and ideology) and practical (a number of examples from history will demonstrate why the USSR lost in the confrontation between “soft powers”).

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

The article is devoted to the analysis of the role of the “soft power” strategy in the context of the ideological confrontation with Soviet influence during the “Cold War”.

## **5. Research Methods**

The concept of “soft power”, introduced into scientific circulation by the American researcher J. Nye, set new horizons in the study of the theoretical and practical aspects of the phenomenon of “power” in relations between states. Considering military methods as a “stick”, “soft power” is usually interpreted as a “carrot”. This topic is of great interest to both domestic and foreign scientists. Most Western scholars have focused mainly on criticizing and refining the original Nae concept. Russian researchers, for example, Torkunov (2012), for the most part, focus on the analysis of various models of “soft power” in the modern world (American, Chinese, European, Russian, etc.) from the point of view of value “fullness” of these models, mechanisms of their application and limits of effectiveness. In the context of the stated topic, it is interesting for us to consider the works of those authors who considered “soft power” through the prism of its historical functioning. These include, for example, Zheglova (2017), which analyzes the application of soft power in the context of political and historical practice, but without reference to the Cold War. Thus, our methodology will be based on historical (consideration of ideological practices in retrospect) and axiological (analysis of values in the context of confrontation between Western and Soviet ideologies) methods.

## 6. Findings

The most important success of the West in the ideological struggle against the USSR was a victory in its own “rear” - the left intelligentsia, which initially sympathized with the Soviet Union, finally fully adopted the ideology of liberalism, and abandoned the idea of building communism in Western countries. Already in the mid-1970s. the two largest communist parties in Europe - the French and the Italian - opted for so-called Eurocommunism and European values (Hage, 2020). The Italian Communist Party, even though it received financial assistance from Moscow all the time, openly declared that the prospect of building socialism in Europe under the wing of NATO is more desirable than under the wing of the Warsaw Pact Organization controlled by Moscow. In addition, it openly condemned the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and criticized the “illiberal” methods of government in the USSR (Matyukhina, 2018). Eurocommunism is understood as the strategy of the left parties, proclaiming the rejection of the revolutionary struggle against the bourgeois classes, and affirming the desire to integrate into the already existing system of power on the basis of a compromise with the ruling elites (Telo, 1995) and a system of European values common to all classes (Maxwell, 2020). After the introduction of Soviet troops into Afghanistan and the political crisis in Poland in the early 1980s, the communist movement in Western Europe finally broke with the CPSU, announcing the end of the driving force of the October Revolution (Telo, 1995). It can be argued that the mood of the left intelligentsia in the West has undergone significant evolution. After the October Revolution, the Soviet Union, which successfully carried out the modernization of industry without the need to resort to plundering other countries, as was the case with the Western “industrial revolution”, resolved several social contradictions (unemployment, crises, alienation of workers from the means of production), abolished inequality, was a model for the population of many capitalist countries. The victory of the USSR over the fascist states in the Second World War, the rapid restoration of the destroyed economy - all this further contributed to the growth of the influence of communist ideas in the world. Then it seemed to many that the Soviet system was more progressive than the Western one, and far ahead of the capitalist model of the development of society in all aspects. The growth of Moscow’s influence on the mentality of citizens in different countries was colossal. Any form of cooperation with “bourgeois governments” seemed unacceptable among the left intelligentsia. However, after the XX Congress of the CPSU, which exposed the “personality cult” and Stalin’s “crimes”, after the WP forces entered Prague in 1968 and, especially after the start of the Afghan war, the influence of Soviet ideology on Western society began to rapidly diminish. Let us take Prague Spring as an example. As you know, reform-oriented forces came to power in Czechoslovakia. However, the Soviet leadership in Moscow, not without reason, feared that the actions of the new government could lead to the loss of control over Czechoslovakia and the split of the Eastern European bloc. Such fears were reinforced by speeches by local social forces, who put forward demands for the introduction of a multi-party system, the creation of private enterprises and the abandonment of a planned economy. Against the background of these events, the united command of the Warsaw Pact Organization decided to send troops into Czechoslovakia to establish control over the country. The purpose of this action was to replace the political leadership of the country who had “compromised themselves” with his “anti-socialist” course and replace the government with a person more loyal to Moscow. From the point of view of real politics,

the removal of disloyal politicians from power in a country that is in the sphere of influence of one or another superpower is a common practice. However, we are interested in how this event was interpreted by the intelligentsia of different countries. So, Dashichev (2010), analyzing the fundamental work “Prague Spring”. Historical retrospective”, which collected materials created by Russian, Hungarian, Czech, Slovak and Serbian researchers, concludes that in the eyes of the European intelligentsia, the Soviet Union was clearly an aggressor. Let us quote one of the theses of the author, who is in solidarity with the aforementioned researchers:

*Having liberated the countries of Eastern Europe from fascism, the Stalinist leadership imposed their own domination on them, turning the Soviet Union into a threat and a frightening factor for the outside world. It seriously upset the balance of power in Europe in favor of the Soviet Union, thus unleashing a completely unnecessary and unpromising “cold war” for it with a much superior coalition of all Western powers. (Dashichev, 2010, p. 191)*

By the way, the Cold War was unleashed by the West.

Let us note that similar actions by the Americans aimed at protecting their geopolitical interests (the war in Vietnam, the aggression in Panama, support for anti-democratic regimes around the world) did not cause such a negative reaction from the intellectual circles as the policy of the Soviet Union. We can state that at this stage the “soft power” of the West won a complete victory.

## **7. Conclusion**

The West’s victory in the “soft power competition” was due to two factors. First, it must be admitted that in terms of the power of indoctrination, Western countries were far superior to the USSR with its “Marxism-Leninism” (Slavin, 2010). As a few authors rightly point out, the greatest propaganda opportunities “are possessed by the Western media, which carry out information expansion in relation to states that do not share their values” (Baranov, 2018), although at the same time they constantly postulate the openness of their institutions (Schnell, 2020).

Secondly, from our point of view, since the criterion of truth is completely inapplicable to any ideology, the effectiveness of ideological influence on people’s consciousness is determined only and exclusively by the degree of ideology’s adequacy to existing social realities. For example, in the Middle Ages, the religious worldview was quite adequate to the level of development of social relations that existed in Europe. Until about the mid-1950s Marxism quite adequately described the socio-economic reality of the capitalist world, which was characterized by constant crises in the economy, rather harsh exploitation of hired labor by entrepreneurs, the lack of decent living conditions among workers, massive impoverishment of some strata of the population and the rapid enrichment of others. The way out of this was the proletarian revolution, which was supposed to abolish the capitalist system, transfer production into the hands of the working people and create a “superstructure” adequate to this economic “basis” in the form of a new ideology, a proletarian state and “popular culture”. The Western bourgeoisie, seeing that the Marxist ideas after the October Revolution, and especially after the successes of the Soviet Union in building a socially oriented state, are beginning to take possession of the population of their own

countries, decided to share part of the national wealth with their masses, creating a system of the so-called “state welfare” or, as it is called in another way, the welfare state, the essence of which is described in detail in many foreign studies (Haber, 2020). Citizens have a certain basic income in this state, among other things (Martinelli, 2020). The welfare state system, created in capitalist countries in the 1950s and 1970s, largely copied the Soviet model and included the following components: elimination of unemployment, the construction of social housing, and an increase in funding for education and medicine (Henry, 2020). And, since the West, in the conditions of military confrontation with the USSR, due to its prevailing superiority, spent much less funds on defense than the Soviet Union, forced to “drag” its WP allies on its own shoulders, there were much more conditions for increasing the production of consumer goods in the Western countries. As a result, the Western worker in the 197s “lived” much better than the Soviet one, which gave people around the world to question the truth of the Marxist doctrine, which portrayed the position of the wage earner within the capitalist system as oppressed and bleak. Of course, soft power includes not only spiritual resources, but also material things (Makarevich, 2017). While economics is generally referred to as “hard power”, an attractive economic development model is still “soft power” (Lebedeva, 2017). In this case, we see that the “soft power” of the West, backed by economic success, has ensured a much more effective promotion of Western ideas around the world, starting in the 1960s, compared to the Soviet mechanisms of forming its own global “attractiveness”. Since the Soviet Union, in view of this, ceased to be perceived as a defender of the “oppressed” peoples and a fighter for the interests of the working people, all its actions in the international arena began to be interpreted at best as an attempt to defend its selfish national interests, at worst as a desire to impose a “communist dictatorship” on all “free peoples”.

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