

# Perpetuating the Soviet Myth in Children's Television, 1960-1990

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LG 480: Senior Seminar

An analysis of several popular post-1960 USSR children's programs to determine how this medium was used to indoctrinate children in the Soviet mythos, encompassing the following:

- The military and its heroes
- The Worker
- The future of communism
- Sport and competition
- *Creative talent – art, music and theater*

The latter will be the focus of this presentation.

# Socialist Realism

*“Art belongs to the people.” – V. I. Lenin*

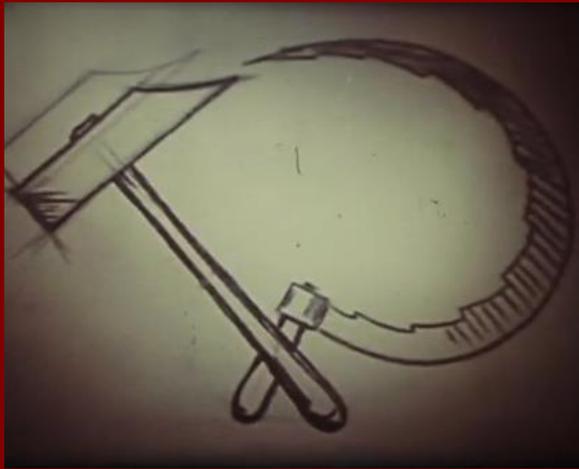
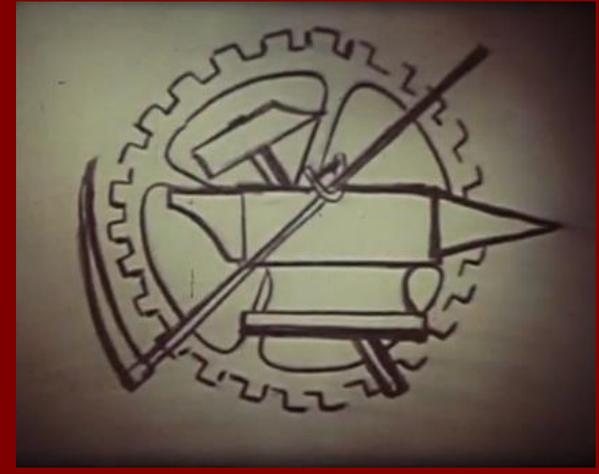
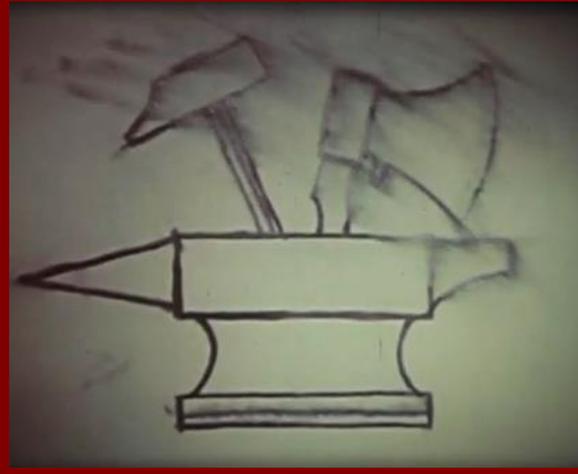
Soviet artists should “express the principal ideas of the time” and “portray reality in its revolutionary development”. - Elena Kornetchuk, *The Politics of Soviet Art*

Socialist Realist art was intended to depict things as they *should* be, not as they really were. The style that resulted was figurative, graphic, and aesthetically pleasing. The idea was to create art with a plain and simple message, so that it could be understood by everyone.



1961 propaganda poster by Oleg Savostyuk

# Portrayal of art and the artist in television



A series of stills from children's show *Khochu Vsyo Znat'* (I want to know it all), no 147 (1981), showing Evgeniy Kamzolkin and the creative process behind the hammer-and-sickle emblem. Kamzolkin is portrayed as the ideal career artist, having created something so vital to the symbolism of communism.

# Animation



*“Peace to children around the world” (Czech/Russian)  
– 1958 poster by Galina Shubina*



*Still from a 1976 animated short in children’s program  
Khochu Vsyo Znat’ no. 108*

Animation, being generally reserved for children’s media, naturally captured the eye and imagination of any child watching. Politically charged Soviet animation can be compared to Soviet propaganda posters both in aesthetic and message.

# Music in television

- The last media stronghold for Soviet music: by the late 1970s, Western music had become relatively easy to access and widely enjoyed
- Sergei Lapin - conservative, ideological chair of the State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting
- *Song of the Year*: A holiday song competition closely overseen by Lapin, who used it as a way to promote Soviet music
- The Big Children's Choir of All-Union Radio and Central Television Network: A children's choir operated by the Central Television Network. They sang patriotic songs, Young Pioneer songs, and songs arranged from famous Russian composers' works, including some by Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff.



*A still from a 1972 performance by the Big Children's Choir, aired on the Central Television Network*

# Theater in television

- “Television works in unison and for similar goals with theatre because television programmers honor both the traditional and the revolution-bred concepts and standards for professional theatre.” - Miriam Morton, *Soviet Television and Theater in Mutual Enhancement*
- A tradition developed of showing kindergarteners a televised theater production on their first day of school
- Television provided access to theater for those who lived in small or rural towns with no local theater
- Channel 4 – devoted to the performing arts

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