

Digital Grey Soviet Science

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Abstract

The article examines Soviet science representation on the leading Russian scientific and educational network platforms. Thematic dominants in the appropriate GL materials are considered.

Key words: *Soviet science, popular science digital, grey literature.*

Relevance

In the global pandemic context, public science becomes primary important, being represented, among other things, on the various network platforms. The lack of this kind relevant scientifically grounded information was clearly manifested all over the world and totally negative contributed to the COVID-dissidence moods. Russian pandemic situation specificity correlates with the fact that Russia was the first country created the vaccine, where everyone could freely and quickly have been vaccinated. However, such a unique achievement encounters a certain opposition of the population, caused mainly the distancing from the social institutions of society. Crisis of confidence in official science is especially typical for the former USSR countries (with the different political regimes). COVID-19 topic is extremely politicized, still little implemented in the field of public science communication. To contradict this situation, in Russia, the last 2021 year, was announced as The Year of Science and Technology.

For all advantages, digital environment has tendency to destroy value hierarchy, authority as such, and the opinion of the honored leaders. On this background, occurs institution of trust and authority (key for the Russian culture) destruction, the general tendency towards the variability of historical memory escalates (for example, “history on demand” phenomenon).

In the aspect of continuation, it must be stated that the modern people world view (for instance, in the U.S.) paradoxically remains in some way Soviet. Recently, sociologists recorded the increase sympathy for the Soviet project among Russians. It's noteworthy that the USSR was mainly constituted by the cult of science The Soviet social and scientific projects, leadership position in the world make the USSR attractive today. However, over the 30 years that have passed since the USSR had collapsed, some groups of people, unfortunately, have lost confidence into fundamental scientific knowledge.

Russian vaccines effectiveness (first of all – “Sputnik V”) is provided by the rich Soviet virology legacy. So, into this context, various digital publications about Soviet science appeared, including successful Soviet experience in combating pandemics.

Organization of Research

The goal is to reveal Soviet science modern digital media representation. The primary task is to compare the main Soviet popular science thematic areas with their manifestation on the most popular modern scientific and educational network platforms due GL materials. The GL materials genre composition includes digital articles, podcasts, lectures, essays. Different science communicators has been involved into such popular science projects, partly (on some platforms – mostly) – scientists themselves.

The research method is associated with problematic and thematic analysis of the Russian popular science digital media, in which Soviet science is being updated. The main areas of semiotics (considering semiotic project importance in the USSR) in relation to the Soviet

science media representation are observed. Syntactic aspect of the media representation includes Soviet science organization; semantic aspect relates to the Soviet science symbolic potential; pragmatic aspect connects to the socio-political agenda.

Popular science and educational network platforms: *PostScience (PostNauka)*, *Arzamas*, *Diletant.media* – created in Russia as independent media, not based on the Western franchise, were selected as the sources.

Historical digital archives importance repeatedly indicated in the modern scientific literature (4).

Discussion

As we know, science claims to create a matrix of the 20th century human consciousness. The Soviet regime considered one of the priority tasks to develop people's scientific world outlook. The Soviet scientific project turned out to be extremely successful, among other things, due to the comprehensive and deep science mediatization. Since the USSR formation, the mission was to raise Soviet people mind to the scientific. This task was successfully solved; in the late Soviet period of the 1970s and 1980s, the level of scientific thinking among the population was extremely high. An integral system of science mediatization has developed in the USSR. All possible communication channels were included into the process of the Soviet science mediatization (5). First of all, there were such institutions of society, as education, enlightenment, and media. Soviet scientists were obliged to engage in scientific popularization, this was considered their public duty. Academicians have written articles for the press, provided public lectures. A number of famous scientists were at the same time the most prominent knowledge popularizers (like the physicist *Sergei Kapitsa*). Science become a part of mass culture and everyday life of the Soviet people.

Syntactic aspect of the media representation.

In the USSR, an effective science policy has been formed. Thanks to this strategy, subcultural niches appeared, represented "state within a state", alternative to the dominant ideology. The academy could contradict the authorities. The unique environment of research institutes and "science cities" was created. The modern actionist and scandalous art project "Dau", named after the Russian physicist *Leo Landau*, successfully held in Europe, also reconstructed this unique matrix with its own methods. So, to form his own school of physics, Landau invented the author's exam, the "theoretical minimum". For example, he took the "Physical Review" and marked an article for his student to analyze. The articles were from absolutely different areas of physics, and it was necessary to prepare in a week (see: "Landau was the only encyclopedist for the entire time of science development", 6).

The Soviet science structure and organization has been deployed in sufficient detail on the modern network platforms. Basically, this is about the Academy of Sciences, nuclear and space projects, mainly in the aspect of relationship between the scientific environment and the government. A number of materials are related to the anniversary of the creator of the hydrogen bomb and human rights activist *Andrei Sakharov*.

Semantic aspect of the media representation.

Soviet science was called to replace the repressed religion in the public consciousness. During the Soviet era, scientist itself was a cult person, and the space (cosmos) was

something like new religion. Science popularization was interpreted as a scientist's social duty (at the same time, certain standards of popularization were formed), and the status of scientific knowledge was cultivated as elite and closeness (closed to the uninitiated) at the same time.

The Soviet media propaganda entire system (newspapers, radio, TV) constantly broadcasted thesis about priority position of science into the Soviet society. The role of science in the modern Russia, unfortunately, cannot be even compared with the Soviet era, although efforts have been made to fix the situation. The first human flight into the space still interpreted as one of the main factors in uniting the nation. Anniversary of the first human to fly to space is widely represented, and *Yuri Gagarin* himself becomes a media celebrity.

The popularization of knowledge was carried out through the press: there was a science heading in almost in each edition (newspaper, magazine). In the 1960s – the first half of the 1980s, the iconic brand of Soviet popular science journalism, the magazine with millions of circulations, "Science and Life", has been extremely popular among the Soviet intelligentsia.

The surviving Soviet popular science magazines have lost their influence, and their history mostly hadn't represented by the digital popular science (one of the notable exception: "Novelties of inventions in the magazine 'Science and Life', 1893", 2), but dissertations about them have being written from time to time.

The symbolic status of science was ensured by cinema (movies) and fiction. Initially, in the early 1930s, the Soviet communist party leaderships formed an order for the science coverage by fiction (literature). The scientific agenda became organic very quickly to the Soviet literature and art. Avant-garde art corresponded to the avant-garde science, searching immortality for the political elite, rejuvenation experiments, the abolition of the sexes, and so on.

Science as metatext associated also with the popular culture, the most in demand within modern digital popular science.

Pragmatic aspect of the media representation.

Science was almost the only single legal channel for avoiding state ideology. It is really noteworthy that *Khrushchev's* "thaw", began with the popular science literature. Sci-Fi provided social engineering. There was a real cult of *Ivan Efremov's* novel, named "Andromeda Nebula", the exploration of the galaxy has been closely connected with the planetary communist society idea. At this time, against the background of de-Stalinization, a return was made to the ideas of the theorists of the socialist state (*Lenin, Trotsky*), who called for the world communism. The construction of world communism was transferred to the open space, or the ocean depth. The unity with movies and literature (fiction) is especially important in the science mediatization process. Famous *Andrei Tarkovsky* movie "Stalker" was based on brothers *Strugatsky* novel, as "Solaris" based on the novel of the same name by the Polish science fiction writer and futurist *Stanisław Lem*. Brothers *Strugatsky* are some of the most frequently mentioned characters on the digital platforms (see: "Revived wolds of *Strugatsky* brothers", 3).

Scientific publicism role was extremely high during *Gorbachev's* perestroika (reconstruction). Leading social and humanitarian scientists, academicians spoke publicly about ideological and economic renewal of the country.

The ideas of social responsibility of the science and scientists in the situation of networked civilization and artificial intelligence establishment are becoming the most popular.

A number of materials are devoted to the futurological projects, including social engineering, which have arisen as a consequence of cybernetic development (see: "How dissidents used cybernetics tried to change the world", 1).

Results

Science enjoyed absolute authority into Soviet society. The level of the Soviet science mediatization can be described as really deep, and success efforts have been contributed by:

- 1) Comprehensive state support for the scientific knowledge promotion, which determined the comprehensive communication channels;
- 2) Focusing not on scientific PR, or monetization, but on the audience's scientific worldview development;
- 3) Symbolic potential of science was based on its unity with literature and art;
- 4) Correlation with the public agenda and moral searches of the Soviet intelligentsia.

Soviet experience in the science mediatization demonstrates a constructive meaning that supplemented (and is some ways – not duplicate) the Western system. In today's pandemic context and closed societies, this experience becomes relevant again. Pandemic has revealed significant problems in communication between science and society. And this problematic is connected, among other things, with the superficial, not deep nature of science mediatization general process, what is clear on the example of the Soviet science digital grey. Political and ideological agenda replaces meaningful conversation about science as such.

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