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# Soiuz and Symbolic Union: Representations of Unity in Soviet State Symbols

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## Defining the Soviet Union

During its nearly 70-year existence from 1922-1991, the Soviet Union was the world's largest country. From the end of World War II through the breakup of the USSR, this vast state spanned an area of 22,402,200 square kilometres (8,649,500 sq. mi.) across 11 time zones in north-eastern Europe and northern Asia. The borders of the country measured more than 60,000 km (37,282 miles) and were adjacent to 12 countries, 12 seas, as well as the Arctic, Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans. In terms of population (285,743,000 in 1989), the USSR ranked third in the world behind China and India. The full name of the country in Russian was *Soiuz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik*, which translated into English as 'Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.' The word 'Soviet' (which in Russian is pronounced 'sovyet') means 'council', 'advice', or 'discussion' and referred to the people's councils that were the basic unit of governance in the country. In the West this was the key word used to describe the country, but within the USSR the word 'Soiuz' was often used as a substitute for the full country name and held much more meaning in terms of political symbolism. To gain further insight into why the concept of *soiuz* was important, it is necessary to have a basic understanding of the cultural geography and demography of the country.<sup>1</sup>

As a state, the Soviet Union was the product of a socialist revolution in a vast multinational empire. After the Bolsheviks consolidated power, the question of how to unite the diverse peoples of the huge territory remained. In December 1922,

representatives of four republics signed the 'Treaty of the Creation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' and the 'Declaration of the Creation of the USSR', officially reuniting the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (Russian SFSR), the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (Ukrainian SSR), the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (Byelorussian SSR), and the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic (Transcaucasian SFSR; comprised of Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan) into one multinational state. Throughout the history of the country some republics were subdivided, others were added, and one became an autonomous republic of the RSFSR, with the total number ranging from four to sixteen. From 1956 through 1991, there were fifteen Soviet republics. In the order they were listed in Article 71 of the 1977 Soviet Constitution, these republics were the Russian SFSR, the Ukrainian SSR, the Byelorussian SSR, the Uzbek SSR, the Kazakh SSR, the Georgian SSR, the Azerbaijan SSR, the Lithuanian SSR, the Moldavian SSR, the Latvian SSR, the Kirghiz SSR, the Tajik SSR, the Armenian SSR, the Turkmen SSR, and the Estonian SSR.<sup>2</sup>

The *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* can provide useful insight into how the country was seen from a Soviet perspective. In the entry for 'Union of Soviet Socialist Republics', several excerpts helped bring clarity both for Soviet readers and foreigners alike:

**The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (the USSR or the Soviet Union) is the first socialist all-people's**

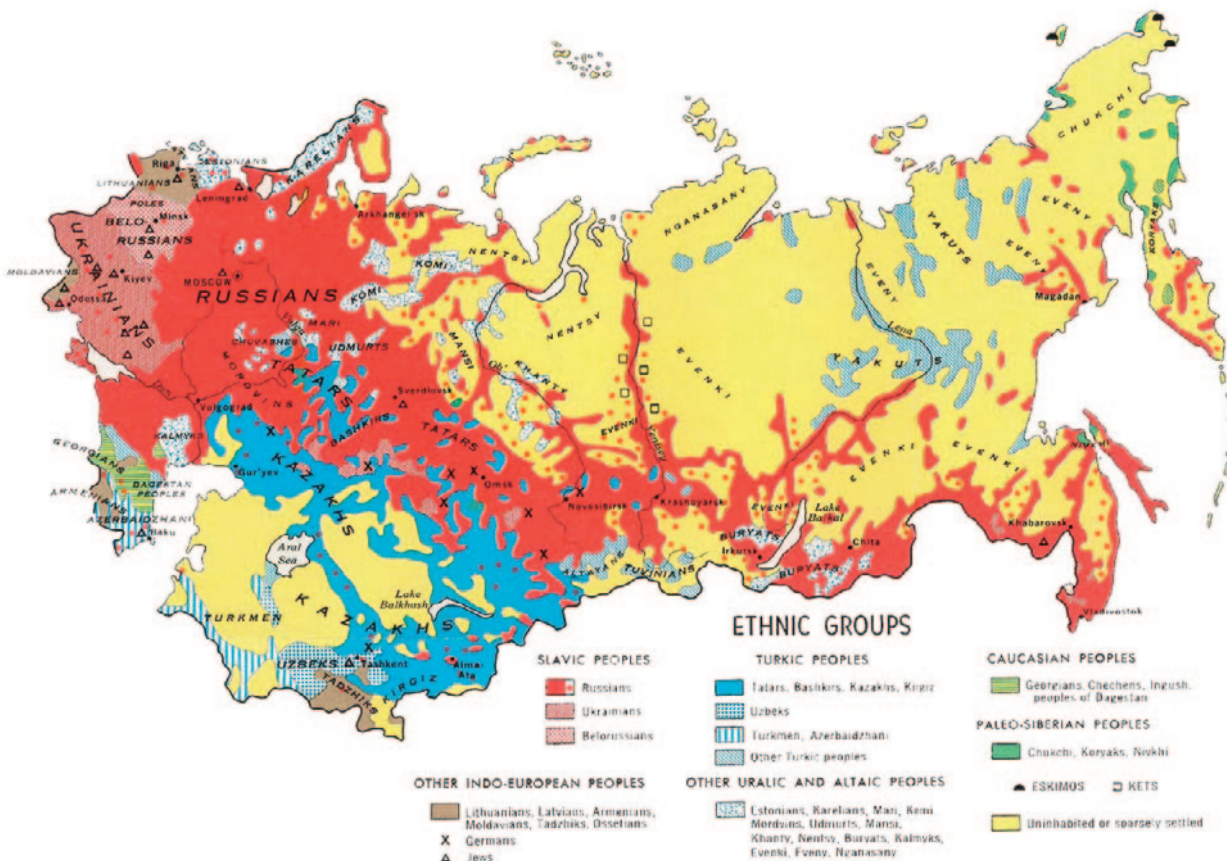


Figure 1. Ethnographic map of the Soviet Union showing the diversity of the peoples in the country and their geographic distribution. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

state in history, expressing the will and interests of the working class, peasantry, and intelligentsia and of all the nations (natsii, nations in the historical sense) and nationalities of the country.<sup>3</sup>

The encyclopaedia stressed that, in contrast to the Russian Empire in which Russians dominated all other nationalities, 'The peoples and nationalities of the USSR enjoy true equality'. The entry then explained how the conditions of all categories of people in the country had evolved and improved as they worked together to achieve a mature socialist society in their country.

All these circumstances have fostered the constantly increasing social homogeneity of Soviet society, continued strengthening of the invincible alliance of the working class, *kolkhoz* peasants, and people's intelligentsia, closer ties of friendship among the peoples of the USSR, and development of the new historical community made up of the Soviet people.<sup>4</sup>

Officially, the Soviet Union was a state comprised of multiple nations. As clearly shown by census data, the populations of the fifteen republics were far from homogeneous. Every republic had significant populations of ethnic Russians and nationalities from neighbouring republics and countries. Numerous other groups were formally recognized as distinct peoples by the Soviet authorities. A Soviet geography text noted that:

According to the nationwide census of 1970, there were 91 peoples in the USSR numbering over 10,000, and many smaller nationalities and ethnic groups listed as 'other nationalities'.

The numerous peoples of our country speak different languages and have marked cultural distinctions, but their common historical heritage stretching back over several centuries and their close economic and cultural links brought these peoples closer and closer together.<sup>5</sup>

These many peoples varied dramatically linguistically and culturally, but shared intersecting histories in that most were subjects of the historical Russian Empire.

### Three Types of Unity

Considering the complex demographic situation in the Soviet Union, it becomes obvious why the idea of unity was so important in the governance of the USSR. A careful examination of the Soviet symbol set reveals that there were three different types of unity that were important to convey symbolically: 1) the unity of all Soviet republics and peoples; 2) the unity of the working class (alternately phrased as 'workers and peasants' or the 'proletariat'); and 3) the socialist brotherhood of the people in all communist countries. While there were distinctive symbols for these concepts, it is particularly interesting to see how the concepts were combined in a variety of ways. This interrelationship of the three concepts of unity was quite evident in the official state symbols of the Soviet Union which comprised three symbols - the state (national) flag, the state emblem (coat of arms), and the state hymn (national anthem). Through a careful examination of these official symbols, it will be possible to identify the meanings of their parts and thus begin to grasp not only the vocabulary of Soviet symbolism, but also the grammar of how those ideas were combined to convey meaningful messages of union and unity both at home and abroad.

### National Flag of the Soviet Union

The national flag of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had a red field with official proportions of 1:2. At the upper hoist in gold (usually shown as yellow) was a crossed hammer and sickle. Above the hammer and sickle was a five-pointed red star, fimbriated with the same gold or yellow colour used in the other device. The flag was a conglomeration of three basic symbols that all gained popularity during the October Revolution and the Civil War. Each of these elements also stood as symbols on their own and were used throughout the national symbol set of the Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup>

There can be little doubt that the most important symbolic element of the national flag was the red banner - *Krasnoe znamia* - of revolution. Red banners have long been a symbol of protest and were prevalent during the French Revolution of 1789-1799. As such, many revolutionary movements in Tsarist Russia adopted this colour as a primary symbol used in their protests. The 'red banner of revolution' had no set design specifications other than the general colour of the field. Typically, within the context of the Russian Revolution and Soviet usage, they took the form of long banners bearing Revolutionary slogans or simple flags with writing. Red flags and banners were pervasive in the Soviet Union. In the form of the national flag they would have been displayed on public buildings and in schools. However, because the field of the national flag was 'the red banner of revolution' the wide variety of red flags and banners used throughout Soviet society would have served as substitutes for the official national flag. Red flags and red banners would have instantly signalled a patriotic message subliminally, without the presence of the star, hammer, and sickle.<sup>7</sup>

It is also important to recognize the importance of this colour in Russian culture. The word for red - *krasnyi* - shares the same linguistic root with, and is often synonymous with, the word *krasivyi*, which means 'beautiful'. For this reason, red has long been associated with the concept of beauty in Russian culture. While the name of Moscow's Red Square originally meant 'beautiful square', it took on a unique double meaning during the Soviet era when red became the colour associated with communism and the Soviet state. In addition, it should be noted that red has a strong psychological impact on the observer, making it an especially powerful colour in civil religious contexts. As Wolfgang G. Jilek noted in his discussion of the psychophysiological effects of totalitarian symbols, red 'has several unique physiological and psychological characteristics.' He explained that because red is the colour of blood and fire, it is thus linked to basic survival instincts of the human species. As a result, 'red is



Figure 2. National Flag of the Soviet Union.

Source: *Flags of the World* website.

the first colour to which infants react and which they recognise.' Jilek contended that as a consequence of the relationship of red to the positive and negative emotions associated with blood and fire, the colour 'will elicit ambivalent emotions in humans but its immediate effect on the central nervous system is one of stimulation, excitation and arousal with transient increase in blood pressure and pulse rate.' In terms of the concept of unity, the red banner could have been interpreted as a symbol of all three types of unity: 1) the unity of all the Soviet peoples within the boundaries of the USSR; 2) the unity of the workers and the peasants who, under the revolutionary red banner, established the first socialist state in what had been the Russian Empire; and 3) the brotherhood of the Soviet people with all the working people of the world under the red banner of socialism.<sup>8</sup>

When referring to the hammer and sickle, the Soviets used the phrase '*serp i molot*', which translates as 'sickle and hammer'. In Soviet symbology, the hammer and sickle represented the union of the workers and peasants who were often described in Marxism using the word 'proletariat' (for the collective noun describing all members of the working class) or 'proletarian' (as an adjective or as a noun describing a single

member of the proletariat). The symbol was based upon a badge worn by soldiers of the Red Army. On the badge, the hammer and sickle were centred on a red five-pointed star.<sup>9</sup>

The Red Army hat badge was also the origin of the Red Star – *Krasnaia zvezda* – as a symbol of the Soviet Union in particular, and of international communism in general. The five points of the star represented the five populated continents – Eurasia (considered one continent in Soviet usage), Africa, North America, South America, and Australia. According to Marxist-Leninist theory, through the natural progression of social evolution all nations would eventually become communist and the proletariat of all nations would eventually be victorious in their struggle.<sup>10</sup>

### **State Emblem of the Soviet Union**

In Russian, the state emblem of the Soviet Union is usually described using the traditional word for 'coat of arms' – *gerb*, even though the design intentionally deviated from the heraldic standards for coats of arms. The Soviet emblem signalled a new style of socialist heraldry that had evolved beyond the coats of arms traditionally used to represent the nobility and their domains. In place of an escutcheon (shield), the Soviet arms used the globe of Earth depicted above the rising sun,

symbolizing the dawn of a new era. The globe showed Eurasia, the location of the Soviet Union, with Africa below. A gold (or yellow) crossed hammer and sickle emblem covered the landmasses of the globe. The red star served as a crest, in the position once reserved for the royal crown in the heraldic tradition of the Russian Empire. Instead of the traditional supporters on either side of the shield, the Soviet emblem used a wreath of grain, tightly wrapped in a red ribbon. The appearance of the ribbon changed several times – twice when additional Republics were added to the USSR, as well as in 1956 when the Karelo-Finnish SSR was renamed and became an autonomous republic within the Russian SFSR. All four versions of the arms had ribbons bearing the final sentence from *The Communist Manifesto* in each of the titular languages of the Soviet socialist republics. The languages were arranged beginning with the Russian language at bottom and progressing up the ribbon on both sides, alternating left to right across the globe. Versions used after 1936 had the Russian-language inscription at the base where heraldic mottos are traditionally displayed on a banderole (or speech scroll). In the final version, used from 1956-1991, the languages were arranged in ‘constitutional order’ – the order in which the republics were listed in Chapter 8, Article 71 of the Soviet Constitution: Russian SFSR, Ukrainian SSR, Byelorussian SSR, Uzbek SSR, Kazakh SSR, Georgian SSR, Azerbaijan SSR, Lithuanian SSR, Moldavian SSR, Latvian SSR, Kirghiz SSR, Tajik SSR, Armenian SSR, Turkmen SSR, and Estonian SSR.<sup>11</sup> The slogan in Russian read “*Proletarii vsekh stran, soediniates’!*”, which literally translates as “Proletarians of all countries, unite!” In English, this famous phrase is usually expressed as “Workingmen of all countries, unite!” or “Workers of the world, unite!” State emblems of the Soviet republics used the Soviet arms as a model, while autonomous republics used arms based upon those of their republic. Many other communist nations adopted this new style of socialist heraldry as the basis for their own national emblems, incorporating and modifying this basic symbol set to match their own political and

cultural contexts. In addition, many Soviet cities had emblems that conformed to the socialist style of heraldry.<sup>12</sup>

There were multiple forms of unity represented in the Soviet state emblem, as demonstrated in the following passage from the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*:

**The state coat of arms of the USSR symbolizes the basis of the entire people’s state – a union of workers and peasants, the voluntary association of Union republics with equal rights in a single Union state, and the equality of socialist nations. It also expresses the idea of the international solidarity of the peoples of the USSR with the working people of the world.<sup>13</sup>**

First and foremost was the prominent hammer and sickle emblem, displayed against the background of the global sphere, symbolizing the unity of the workers and peasants. This unity was also mirrored in the motto from *The Communist Manifesto*. In addition, the motto served as a symbol of the socialist brotherhood of all the working people of the world. The international symbolism in the arms was multifaceted – the Soviet Union was shown prominently on the globe, but more importantly the continents were portrayed without international boundaries. In Soviet symbolism, this emphasized the unique status of the Soviet Union as the first socialist state, but also its role in championing the aspirations of the working people of all countries in the brotherhood of world communism. This role was also signified in the 5-pointed red star, where the points represented the populated continents. These symbolic elements all served to reinforce the concept of the unity of the Soviet peoples. Because the red star and the combined hammer and sickle were general symbols of the Soviet Union, they came to represent the entire country. The unity of the Soviet republics and all the peoples of the USSR were further symbolized by the ribbon wrapped around the sheaves of grain, and by the motto which was repeated in the official languages of each Soviet republic.





Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

### State Emblems of the Soviet Union

Figure 3. State Emblem of the Soviet Union, 1923-1936, 4-7 republics. Source: Wikimedia Commons created by user 'TheSign 1998'.

Figure 4. State Emblem of the Soviet Union, 1936-1946, 11 republics. Source: Wikimedia Commons, created by user 'Pavliko1'.

Figure 5. State Emblem of the Soviet Union, 1946-1956, 16 republics. Source: Wikimedia Commons, created by user 'Frédéric Michel'.

Figure 6. State Emblem of the Soviet Union, 1956-1991, 15 republics. Source: Wikimedia Commons, created by user 'C records'.

## State Hymn of the Soviet Union

The third official state symbol of the Soviet Union was the national hymn – *gimn*. Prior to 1944, *The Internationale* – an international Socialist anthem, was used in the USSR in lieu of a national anthem. That anthem (originally written in French) had been popular during the Revolution and, in translation, adopted as the official hymn of the RSFSR in 1918. The first USSR state anthem was introduced on 15 March 1944 as Soviet troops were advancing westward through eastern Europe, eager to avenge the losses that they had suffered during the fascist invasion and occupation of their country in what Soviets called ‘The Great Patriotic War’ (the Soviet name for World War II). While officially titled the State Anthem of the Soviet Union, it was also known as *Slav’sya, Otechestvo nashe svobodnoye!*, meaning ‘Be Glorious, Our Free Homeland!’. This new distinctly Soviet hymn celebrated the *Soiuz nerushimyi* or ‘Unbreakable Union’. The original lyrics reflected the time in which they were written, when Josef Stalin was in power and the country was still in a state of war.<sup>14</sup>

After Stalin’s death in 1953, Soviet leaders announced a period of destalinization during which Stalin’s status as a symbolic figure was significantly reduced. As a result, the lyrics of the anthem fell out of favour because one verse mentioned Stalin by name and others seemed too militaristic for the post-war peaceful image of the USSR that Soviet leaders wanted to project to both domestic and international audiences. During this period, the anthem was performed as an instrumental piece without lyrics. It was not until 1971 that one of the original lyricists was commissioned to revise the words, with his revisions officially adopted in October 1977.<sup>15</sup>

## Revised Lyrics of the State Hymn of the Soviet Union - 1977

Great Russia has united forever  
the unbreakable union of free republics.  
Long live the united, mighty Soviet Union  
created by the will of the peoples!  
[Refrain]

Be glorious, our free homeland,  
Reliable stronghold of friendship of the peoples!  
The Party of Lenin, the people’s strength,  
leads us to the triumph of communism!

Through storms the sun of freedom shone to us,  
And the great Lenin illuminated the way for us,  
He raised up our peoples to the righteous cause,  
He inspired us to labour and great feats!

[Refrain]

In the victory of the immortal ideas of communism  
We see the future of our country,  
And to the red banner of our glorious homeland,  
We will always be selflessly faithful.<sup>16</sup>

In a review of both versions of the lyrics, it is significant that the first verse of the song was the only section that was retained without change in the updated version:

Great Russia has united forever the unbreakable  
union of free republics.  
Long live the united, mighty Soviet Union created  
by the will of the peoples!

The verse touched on concepts that were vital to Soviet symbolism. First, it described the Soviet Union as an ‘unbreakable union of free republics’. Additionally, the first verse explained that the unbreakable union had been ‘united forever by Great Russia’. This emphasized the relationship of many of the territories as part of the Russian Empire and recalled that the revolutionary might of the Russian people led to the dissolution of that empire, allowing the newly-freed peoples to join willingly to form the Soviet Union. The lyrics further emphasized the idea of a voluntary union by noting that it was formed through the will of the peoples (with the use of the plural referring to the many nationalities in the USSR). Finally, the last line of the verse tied it all together so that the listener understood that it was the unity of the Soviet peoples, following the leadership of the Russian people, that made the Soviet Union a mighty state.





*Little holiday flag*



*Little holiday flag: 'with the holiday!'*



*Little holiday flag: 'USSR'*



*Little holiday flag with revolutionary slogans*



*Little holiday flag*



*Challenge red banner: 'Proletarians of all countries, unite!'*

## Conclusion

In a discussion of national symbols, Whitney Smith emphasized that, 'above all, symbols are employed to induce action by forming and maintaining a belief system'.<sup>17</sup> For the citizens of the Soviet Union that belief system was Marxism-Leninism. As followers of the 'Lenin Path' they were expected to practice collectivism, to work together to build communism, and to value their Soviet identity over their ethnicity. Smith's explanation of the importance of national symbolism in modern states sheds light on why symbols were vital to the unity of the Soviet Union.

Collectively, they constitute an important force for social solidarity, transformation, and renewal. Symbols indeed appear to be necessary for the establishment of social cohesion, the legitimization of institutions and of political authority, and the inculcation of beliefs and conventions of behavior.<sup>18</sup>

Additionally, Smith reminded his readers that a country's civil religion and culture of patriotism:

...uses symbols to define and justify the nation, its political system, its social norms and values, and the crucial questions of individual sacrifice and obedience which every society demands.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, he suggested that 'one definition of the nation state is a group of people accepting a common system of values expressed through symbols'. In this sense, the Soviet people were defined by their symbols - the red banner, the combined hammer and sickle, and the red star. The symbols of the Soviet Union helped to reinforce a sense of Soviet national identity among the population. They were also meant to remind citizens throughout the republics that their similarities were more important than their differences.

Soviet citizens were socialized to understand the necessity of unity at all levels - the unity of the workers and the peasants, the unity of the republics and peoples, as well as the unity of the Soviet people with the working people of the world. Citizens learned these themes in

childhood and in adulthood would have recognized them in the different symbolic motifs illustrated in this discussion. While the word 'unity' might not have come to mind on every occasion when a citizen saw one of these symbols, subliminally the message would have been communicated. In this way the citizen's sense of Soviet national identity was continuously reinforced. The red star, with its five points that represented the working people of all continents, also served as a symbol of the Soviet military, its victory over the fascists, and its ability to protect the homeland. Every time the combined hammer and sickle emblem was used it would have alluded to the workers and the peasants, but also to the many achievements of the Soviet people in the development of their country through socialist labour. Finally, the red banner of the revolution was ubiquitous in banner form or as the state flag of the USSR, where all three forms of unity were represented. For many decades, this sense of Soviet identity and pride in the accomplishments of the USSR were effective messaging tools in the effort to keep the peoples of the Soviet Union on the Marxist-Leninist path. □

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1. "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics", in Aleksandr Mikhailovich Prokhorov, ed., *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, 31 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1973), vol. 31, p. 1; "Constitution" in *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, vol. 31, p. 13; Moisei Filippovich Grin, S. V. Kalesnik, and V. F. Pavlenko, eds., *Soviet Union: A Geographical Survey* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), pp. 8-9; Cole, *Geography of the Soviet Union*, pp. 1-4; Arkadii Aleksandrovich Isupov, *Naselenie SSSR: Po dannym Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1989 g.* (Moskva: Finansy i statistika, 1990), p. 37.
2. "Constitution" in *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, vol. 31, p. 13; "Treaty on the Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics", in *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, vol. 8, p. 650.
3. "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics", in *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, vol. 31, p. 1. It is important to note that this passage emphasizes the definition of the state in Article 1 of the Soviet Constitution, which read "The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is a socialist state of the whole people, expressing the will and interests of the workers, peasants, and intelligentsia, the working people of all nations and nationalities of the country." *Ibid.*, p. 9.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 2. The word 'kolkhoz' is a portmanteau of the Russian words meaning 'collective' and 'household or enterprise'. Combined they mean 'collective ownership' and the blended word was widely used with the meaning 'collective farm'. The *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, defined 'kolkhozes' as 'cooperative organizations of peasants who have come together voluntarily for the joint management of large-scale, socialist agricultural production based on socialized means of production and collective labor.' Not all peasants collectivized willingly during the era of collectivization. However, the ideal of the kolkhoz was a powerful illustration of the spirit of collectivism and the social attitude that was expected of every Soviet citizen. 'Kolkhozes', in *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, vol. 12, pp. 579-584. See also the discussion of the kolkhoz peasantry 'Peasantry', in *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, vol. 13, p. 611-612.
5. Grin, Kalesnik, and Pavlenko, *Soviet Union: A Geographical Survey*, p. 162.
6. Whitney Smith, *Flags Through the Ages and Across the World* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975), pp. 174-179, 130-131; W. G. Crampton, *Flags of the World: A Pictorial History* (New York: Dorset Press, 1990), pp. 99-100; Alfred Znamierowski, *The World Encyclopedia of Flags: The Definitive Guide to International Flags, Banners, Standards and Ensigns* (London: Lorenz, 1999), pp. 126-127, 242-243; Sovetskii Soiuz, "Gerb, flag, gimn i stolitsa SSSR", in *Konstitutsiia*, pp. 44-45; Konstantin Konstantinovich Mamaev, *Flagi rasskazivaiut* (Leningrad: Avrora, 1972), pp. 18-20; Konstantin A. Ivanov, "Soviet Russian Flags", trans. Whitney Smith, *The Flag Bulletin*, 6, no. 1-2 (Winter 1966-1967), pp. 42-51; V. Karpenko, "Nashi slavnye simvol'y", *Vospitanie shkol'nikov*, no. 4 (1986): 59-61.
7. Orlando Figes and B. I. Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution: The Language and Symbols of 1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 41-43; Christel Lane, *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society - the Soviet Case* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 200-201; N. A. Soboleva, "From the History of Soviet Political Symbolism", *Russian Studies in History*, 47, no. 2 (Autumn 2008), pp. 59-91; Ivanov, pp. 42-51; John Cartledge, "Though Towards Flinch: The Story of the Red Flag as a Symbol of Rebellion" paper presented to the Sydney Flag Congress / International Congress of Vexillology - ICV 26 (Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, 2015), publication pending in the conference proceedings; Karpenko, pp. 59-61; Mamaev, pp. 8-21.
8. Iozef Kiblitkii, "Nemnogo o tsвете, o krasnom tsвете...", in *Krasnyi tsvet v russskom iskusstve*, Evgeniia N Petrova (ed.), (St. Petersburg: Gosudarstvennyi russkii muzei, 1997), pp. 6-7; Alexander Pronin and Barbara Pronin, *Russian Folk Arts* (South Brunswick: Barnes, 1975), p. 153; N. M. Shanskii, *Russian Word Formation*, (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1968), p. 39; Havelock Ellis, "Psychology of Red", *Popular Science*, 57 (August 1900), pp. 365-75; Wolfgang G. Jilek, "Nazi and Communist Flags: Semiotic Aspects and Psychophysiological Dynamics of Totalitarian Symbols", *The Flag Bulletin*, #197, v. 40, no. 1 (February 2001), pp. 1-40; Lev Vasil'evich Uspenskii, "Krasā", in *Pochemy ne inache?: Etimologicheskii slovarik shkol'nika* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Detskaia literatura, 1967), p. 150.
9. Figes and Kolonitskii, pp. 61-62; A.V. Ivanchenko, *Soiuz serpa i molota: Gosudarstvennye simvol'y RSFSR* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1987); Soboleva, "From the History of Soviet Political Symbolism", pp. 74-77, 83-86; Ivanov, pp. 45-51; Karpenko, pp. 60-61.
10. Smith, *Flags Through the Ages and Across the World*, pp. 174-179, 130-131; Crampton, *Flags of the World*, pp. 99-100; Znamierowski, *The World Encyclopedia of Flags*, pp. 126-127, 242-243; Sovetskii Soiuz, "Gerb, flag, gimn i stolitsa SSSR", in *Konstitutsiia*, pp. 44-45; "The Emblem, Flag, Anthem, and Capital of the USSR", in *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, vol. 31, p. 19; Nikolai Dmitrievich Chernikov (ed.), *Nasha kra-*



Postcards

'Peace, labour, May'



'Glory to October!'



'With the New Year!'



'With the holiday 1 May!'

*snaja zvezda* (Moskva: Detskaia literatura, 1987); Soboleva, "From the History of Soviet Political Symbolism", pp. 74-77; Karpenko, p. 60.

11. The 1924 constitution provided for the adoption of the state coat of arms and flag of the Soviet Union. On all versions of the Soviet state emblem the languages were arranged from bottom to top, moving from left to right across the arms. The first three placed the languages in groupings by order of admission to the Soviet Union, although the listing of Republics admitted in the same year varied in the different versions. On the first version (1923-1936) of the arms the motto was written in six languages in this order: Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian, Turko-Tatar, Byelorussian, and Armenian. By 1936 the number of republics had increased to eleven, reflected by the addition of Uzbek, Turkmenian, Kazakh, Kirghiz and Tajik. The second version of the emblem (1936-1946) ordered the languages as Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Georgian, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Uzbek, Turkmen, Tajik, Kazakh, and Kirghiz. In 1946 the state emblem was again altered to add Karelo-Finnish, Moldavian, Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian, increasing the number to sixteen. On the third version (1923-1936) the order was Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Azerbaijani, Georgian, Armenian, Turkmen, Uzbek, Tajik, Kazakh, Kirghiz, Karelo-Finnish, Moldavian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian. When the final change was made in 1956 the languages were listed in "constitutional order". This arrangement predates the 1977 constitution, placing the republics in order by population (apparently according to statistics from 1940). Because the

republics were later listed in this order in the 1977 constitution the arrangement eventually became known as "constitutional order". This listing matched the data from the 1939 census except that in that year the Kirghiz SSSR would have come before the Tajik SSSR.

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12. Butler, "Soviet State Symbolism"; Smith, *Flags Through the Ages and Across the World*, pp. 174-179, 130-131; Crampton, *Flags of the World*, pp. 99-100; Znamierowski, *The World Encyclopedia of Flags*, pp. 126-127, 242-243; Stephen Slater, *The Complete Book of Heraldry: An International History of Heraldry and Its Contemporary Uses* (London: Lorenz Books, 2002), pp. 214-219; Ivanchenko, pp. 44-91; Soboleva, "From the History of Soviet Political Symbolism", pp. 78-86; Karl Marks and Fridrikh Engel's, *Manifest Kommunisticheskoi partii* (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoi literatury, 1980), p. 61; Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Mani-*

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## FM'S COVER



The Union Flag flies from Moot Hall, the original Town Hall of Colchester, Essex. (Photo: Theun Okkerse)

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