The Politics of Propaganda: Myth and Reality of the Iron Curtain

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ABSTRACT: *In our day to day political spheres of increasingly conflicting interests, political propaganda has become an essential tool for contending rivals to construct a narrative based on selected facts rather than commensurable truth in order to win over the masses. However, the origin of deploying propaganda as a political weapon goes back to the beginning of history since the inception of power based political organizations (like kingship) and have continued ever since. But it is only in the twentieth century when the world was divided between capitalist USA and its political as well as ideological rival, the communist USSR, that political propaganda gained a rapid momentum. The attempt of this essay is to reconstruct from contemporary movies, books, radio programs and lastly official documents, the ways in which a concept of an 'Iron Curtain' under the communist USSR was created in the tumultuous backdrop of acquisition of nuclear power, political upheaval and infiltration in opponent's spy agencies*

Introduction:

"From Stettin in the Baltic to Triste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent…….all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and in many cases, increasing measures of control from Moscow."

-Winston Churchill
(Fulton, Missouri, 1946)[1]

With the Second World War gradually coming to an end, claims were pressed for world peace in major conferences like the Yalta (February 1945) and Potsdam (July 1945), where the foundation of the United Nations Organization was laid.[2] The Allied powers maintained an apparent cordial tie with each other to achieve the common goal of defeating the fascists. Another objective of the Allied forces was the maintenance of status- quo across the globe once the Second World War came to an end. However, underneath the placid scenario, there were currents of mutual distrust and disagreement that rapidly embittered the relationship between the two emerging superpowers namely, the capitalist USA and the communist USSR.

Despite the victory of the Allied forces in the Second World War, the major European powers, namely Great Britain, Germany and France, not only suffered enormous material and human losses but also reached the brink of economic ruin. Contrary to its Western counterparts, USA'S Gross National Product doubled during the time of war making it a decisive factor in the political dynamics of Western Europe. USA not only owned more than 50% of the world's gold reserves but also enjoyed absolute control over the atomic powers.[3] Moreover, USA's 'Open Door' policy necessitated that USA be given access to the traditional European markets, thereby prompting   American control strategically and financially across the European continent. This has been rightly referred

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[1] '*The Sinews of Peace (The Iron-Curtain Speech)*', International Churchill Society, 1946. https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1946-1963-elder-statesman/the-sinews-of-peace/ Retrieved 17th March, 2020

[2] Norman Lowe, *Mastering World History* (New Delhi: Macmillan, 1997), pp 125-126

[3] Matthew John Costello, *Secret Identity Crisis: Comic Books and the Unmasking of the Cold War America,* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2009), p 33

to as 'Pax Americana' by Martin McCauley. However, much to the chagrin of USA the American dream of Pax Americana[4] faced a severe challenge when the USSR rebuilt its economy under Stalin and the subsequently influenced in forming communist governments in Eastern European countries like Bulgaria (1946), Romania (1947),Yugoslavia (1947) and Poland (1945). The much coveted metallurgical and copper rich lands of Eastern Europe, therefore, closed their doors to the American goods as well as to American influence. USA's apprehension of a communist control over the resources of Eastern Europe coupled with the disruption of its market policy was further bolstered by the 'Iron Curtain' speech of Churchill.

Thus, the Second World War came to an end not without its aftershocks and disillusionment. Within a span of a few months, even before the ink dried on the peace agreements at the major conference of Potsdam (1945), the world was again confronted with war like circumstances and the illusion of peace went to oblivion once again.

The birth of a communist China in 1949 and the growth of the New Left in the USA in1960s,[5] coupled with emerging student wings like the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) that critiqued American policies during the Vietnam War (1967), churned a fear for the communists in the USA[6].

This fear prompted the USA to use propaganda as an important tool to contain the communist advancements as well as to mobilize and sustain a strong public opinion against the USSR which might be largely based on panic and hysteria. The study of propaganda is but an informed account of the chronological events that took place since the inception of the cold war during the post Second World era till the time it reached its zenith in the 1960s. Studies in propaganda show the underlying factors which culminated in the rapid deterioration between the bilateral relation of USA and USSR. Mobilizing the masses that had already seen the dictatorial regimes of fascists, the bouts of fear for another

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[4] Martin McCauley , *Origins of the Cold War 1941-1949*, (London: Pearson Longman, 2008), P 14

[5] Matthew John Costello, *Secret Identity Crisis: Comic Books and the Unmasking of the Cold War America*, P 23

[6] 'SDS and the Struggles of 1960s' ,Socialist Worker.Org http://socialistworker.org/2006-1/586/586_10_SDS.php Retrieved : 17th March, 2020

communist dictatorship of the USSR was not an easy task. Nevertheless, with the thorough and elaborate machinery of propaganda it gradually transformed the reality of the USSR into an overpowering myth.

Foreign policy and Propaganda

Political propaganda was the most cost effective method to accomplish political and economic ambitions at home and overseas. As a result, propaganda was integrated chiefly with the foreign policy of the USA on one hand to ensure its national security and to contain USSR's advancements on the other. Propaganda was carried out in a sophisticated method which apparently seemed to have superficial and simplistic approach towards the people but behind which lurked an elaborative and efficient bureaucratic machinery.

In 1946, George Kennan, an American diplomat put forth in his Long Telegram the apprehension that USSR might not have the intention for a peaceful co existence with USA owing to the lack of cooperation in signing agreements with America over joint control of USA USSR in Germany.[7] Based on this fear, American diplomats adopted the policy of 'containment' to contain the communist expansion in Western Europe by virtue of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall plan.[8] Russia's immediate retaliation was the formation of Cominform in 1947. The formation of the communist bureau of information across the communist states led to an organised system of passing on information about motives of the USA. At this stage, Kennan and other diplomats initiated a shift from the containment policy accepting propaganda as the major weapon of policy and declared that no important steps should be taken without the nature of its propagandistic development.[9]

As a result, in 1947, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Office of Policy Coordination was established with the sole purpose of unsettling and overthrowing of the communist regimes behind

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[7]George Kennan ,Long Telegram, February 22, 1946. https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116178.pdf Retrieved: 17th March, 2020

[8] Martin McCauley , *Origins of the Cold War 1941-1949*, p 16

[9] Gary Rawnsley, (ed.) *Cold War Propaganda in the 1950s,* (Great Britain: Macmillan, 1999), P 19

the 'Iron Curtain'.[10] The policy of containment was more or less abandoned by the end of 1947. The role of CIA in unsettling communist governments worldwide became quite promiscuous during Eisenhower's regime with the military coup in Guatemala that led to the overthrow of democratically elected President Jacob Arbenz. With the workers facing massive extortion of the United Fruit Company, the Communist Party of Guatemala confiscated 234,000 acres of land from the United Fruit Company resulting in USA intervention since it was a corporation based in the USA.CIA head Alan Dulles approved a plan for overthrowing Arbenz by a military coup (code named PBSUCCESS), portraying the communists in a negative shade and allocating 3 million dollars for the program.[11]

In 1950, President Harry Truman launched the first populist propaganda- the Campaign of Truth propaganda. In a meeting with the President, the American Society for Newspaper Editors[12] launched 'The Campaign of Truth' propaganda that would seek to counter the misrepresentation of the USA in the communist media of USSR. In this process, the whole of USA could be mobilised which could be suggested from the influx of letters that daily poured into the White House.

Several tactics were used to fuel the Campaign of Truth. Not only letters, but also private organizations like Common Council for American Unity played a key role in inculcating American ethics among the immigrants. Articles were regularly sent in European languages to instruct readers the methodology of using the letters posted to friends and relatives overseas. Yet, in reality, the council's publication "Counterattack: Facts to combat Communism" was but concerned with the witch hunting of communist sympathisers in the Senate and Departments of State and Commerce.[13] However, despite much effort, the Campaign of Truth failed to gain the success it had promised.[14]

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[10] Ibid P 18

[11] ' Operation PBSUCCESS, The United States and the Guatemala, 1952-1954' , https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB4/docs/doc05.pdf Retrieved : 23rd March, 2020

[12] Gary Rawnsley, (ed.) *Cold War Propaganda in the 1950s* , (Great Britain: Macmillan 1999), P 20

[13] Ibid, p 41

[14] Ibid, p 42

In 1953, with the end of the Korean War and change in USA's leadership, the nature of propaganda and foreign policy underwent a massive change. With Dwight Eisenhower as the new President, emphasis was laid more on the strategic nuclear and air power.[15] There was a constant threat of a nuclear war with USSR after the Soviet testing of a nuclear bomb in 1949. During Eisenhower's regime, civil defence was chosen as the main device to persuade the American people to bear the brunt of an imminent nuclear war. Civil defence in the 1950s emerged as a form of propaganda based on a program of emotion management to control fears of a nuclear attack through careful organisation of planning and training and lastly, making civil defence compulsory in each house hold.[16]

During the early days of Eisenhower, family was included into the purview of National Security Policy. In 1953, J.M. Chamber of Federal Civil Defence Administration, the federal agency responsible for formulating and implementing the civil defence strategy, outlined the purpose of civil defence in the new administration.[17] Although Civil Defence was given a lot of emphasis, statistics show USA's production and acquisition of nuclear weapons was considerably higher than USSR.[18] It probably translated into USA's portrayal of the USSR as much larger threat than it was in reality. Civil defence therefore, catered both to the need of propagandistic activities and building the defence of civilians against the face of an upcoming nuclear attack.

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[15]'The-New-Look',
https://www.airforcemag.com/PDF/MagazineArchive/Documents/2003/August%202003/0803look.pdf Retrieved: 2nd April, 2020
[16] Gary Rawnsley, (ed.) *Cold War Propaganda in the 1950s,* p 68
[17] Ibid, p 69.
[18] In 1947, UK builtt its first atomic reactor, in 1948, US conducted the first atomic tests at Eniwetok Atoll, in 1949, Russia tested its first atomic weapon in Kazakhastan. In 1950 President Truman announced the decision to proceed with development of the hydrogen bomb. In 1951 Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were convicted and sentenced to death for passing information on atomic weapons to the U.S.S.R. A second U.S. nuclear weapons laboratory was established in Livermore, California The USS Nautilus, the first American nuclear powered submarine, was launched in 1954. In 1955, U.S.S.R. deployed two strategic bombers, Bear and Bison. President Eisenhower signed amendments to the 1954 U.S. Atomic Energy Act which opened the way to a bilateral agreement between Britain and America on nuclear weapon design information. See 'Timeline of the Nuclear Age', http://www.atomicarchive.com/Timeline/Time1950.shtml Retrieved: 10th April, 2020

A further interesting theme that has been largely overlooked during the history of Cold War is the brainwashing methods used during the early years of Truman presidency. This technique of covert propaganda was the brain child of Edward Hunter – a newspaper writer-having connections with the CIA.[19] The word was associated with the mysterious behaviour of American soldiers fighting in the Korean War. It suggested that the communist regime of USSR was using psychological warfare in abundance to brainwash the captured American soldiers.[20] Thus, on one hand the danger of nuclear weapon loomed large in the American psyche and, on the other hand, the fear of psychological slavery of the free Americans was deemed to be a potential threat to the American society. In process, the American collective consciousness began to visualise the abstract fear of the psychological slavery as a concrete danger to their existence. Thus the cold war shifted from a physical front to a mind front overcoming the geopolitical boundaries. It was probably due to this reason that each and every household could be mobilised into participating into the civil defence training. Even the most learned American fell prey to the propaganda, beginning to believe that their freedom could be at risk. However, evidences of such overt mind control by USSR could not be traced as the diplomats and policymakers claimed.

Although, the brainwashing techniques ceased to exist by the end of the 1950s, but it left a deep imprint in the American psyche and society for a few decades. Its impacts were deeply felt in the print and visual media of mass communication.

Propaganda in Audio Visual media

a) Propaganda through Radio:

The communist occupation of the East European nations and the Soviet propaganda measures in the late 1940s served as an impetus for enhancing US foreign information programs with incognito psychological operations. While in USSR, the Communist Party had optimum state control over the domestic media, the Voice of America broadcasts were jammed probably with the deep rooted fear that USA might indoctrinate the citizens of USSR

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[19] Gary Rawnsley, (ed.) *Cold War Propaganda in the 1950s, p* 48.
[20] ibid

against the ideology of communism.[21] This fear of the West perhaps had its origins in the Western intervention during the Civil War in Russia (1918-1919) with a motive to overthrow the communist regime.

With the propagation of the Marshall Plan and the episode of Berlin Airlift (1948), the Eastern communist bloc and the Western capitalist bloc were physically separated by the armed patrols and barbed wires. Radio broadcasts were chosen as the weapons that could impale the 'Iron Curtain' and reach out to the audience. Tracing out the genesis of international radio stations like Radio Free Europe and the Radio Liberty could be best understood against this backdrop.

At a time when the flow of information was successfully surceased by the USSR, the US government officials, the Congress and the American private enterprises bore upon themselves in the guise of a messiah to provide news and information to the 'people of the captive nations'.[22]

In 1947, former Office of Strategic Services, Frank Wisner joined the Department of State in US as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Occupied Countries and at once became involved with the political exiles of Soviet Russia.[23] This became a turning point in the cold war history of radio broadcasting as political exiles of USSR came to be gradually involved with these broadcasts for the very first time.

George Kennan, the father of containment, issued the directives of NSC 4A and NSC 10/2, the latter dealing with the creation of Office of Special Projects within CIA. The new office was entrusted with the task of carrying on propagandistic activities through the creation of surrogate radio stations.[24] On the eve of President Truman's administration, the Committee of Free Europe was set up (1949). Its name was later changed to the National Committee of Free Europe (NCFE) that included CIA chief Alan Dulles and the future President Dwight Eisenhower. Under the operation of NCFE, the Radio Free Europe (RFE) on July 4, 1950, transmitted its very first broadcast in the state of

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[21] Ibid p 35

[22] Richard Cummings,*Cold War Radio: the dangerous history of American broadcasting in Europe in 1950 – 1989 (London:* McFarland and Company Inc. Publishers, 2009), p 6.

[23] Ibid p 8

[24] Ibid p 6

Czechoslovakia. The inaugural speech was written by Czech exile, Pavel Tigrid. Experimental broadcasting to Romania began on July 14, in the same year, to Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria on August 1950.[25]

The radio broadcasts were further bolstered by the balloon programs launched by the Free Europe Committee in 1951. The first balloon program was launched to Czechoslovakia encrusted with the word 'Svoboda', the Czech word for Freedom, containing numerous leaflets carrying propagandistic messages from the Free Europe Press. In 1953, a second balloon program, code named 'Operation Prospero', was sent to Czechoslovakia, where within 4 days, 6,500 balloons landed carrying the message for freedom. The soviet regime responded to this technique by shooting down the balloons with military aircrafts. [26]

Another surrogate radio station, the Radio Liberty (RL), in keeping with the US foreign policy, conducted psychological warfare against the Iron Curtain, with the narratives of Soviet exiles who were united to speak out against communism.

Thus, behind a facade of independent radio stations, that preached the freedom of the people in the captive nations of USSR, the RFE and RL acted as agencies having an intelligence underpinning and sought to infiltrate the minds of the people living behind the 'Iron Curtain'. The American leadership supported these methods and Dwight Eisenhower's speech amplified the same when he asserted that these radio broadcasts along with the balloon campaigns were but a crusade to 'fight the big lie with the big truth'.[27] It was aimed at countering the Soviet propagandistic misrepresentations of USA as morally bankrupt warmongers. The American diplomatic officials like Frank Wisner created a turning point in the history of cold war radio by broadcasting the narratives of Soviet exiles. These narratives were upheld with the sole aim of constituting a unified opposition to the communist regime by the people of USSR. These radio broadcasts moved the American people so much that a contribution of millions of dollars poured into the NCFE.[28] The radio stations were funded by the CIA till 1975 when 'Ramparts' magazine

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[25] Ibid pp 9-11
[26] Ibid pp 15-16
[27] Ibid p 20
[28] Ibid p 25

exposed the CIA funding of these so-called independent radio stations.[29] In this regard, it should be noticed that the Soviet radio stations were state owned and the Soviet state department overtly carried out ideological propaganda against the US. The US on the other hand had an elaborate system of bureaucratic machinery with intelligence underpinnings that was too convoluted to be comprehended by the common people and only came into light in 1975.

b) Propaganda through Movies and Docudramas

In the race of garnering mass support through films and docudramas, during the cold war, the West especially Hollywood made far more progress than their Soviet counterparts. While in the USSR, the film studios were nationalised, movie contents were thoroughly scrutinised and celluloid imports were regulated by the cultural commissars as well as the state agencies, the USA's control over visual media had a more sophisticated state control that was too intricate for the common people to understand. USA carried out propaganda in a subtle way but in stark contrast with the Soviet state that had its own detailed network of cultural propaganda that dissociated all forms of connection with the rest of the world.

The post Second World War period in the history of cultural propaganda has been notoriously named as the Zhdanovshchina, after Andrey Zhdanov, the Politburo member from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Zhdanov, a close associate of Stalin, together with Ivan Bolshakov, head of the cultural affairs, in September 1944, set up the Artistic Council for Cinema, with eminent members of the film circuit like Pudovkin, Eisenstein, Alexandrov, to examine film contents and talk about the dangerous components in them.[30] Films during the Stalinist time were fundamentally coordinated with two objectives, one being the proliferation of the ideology that communism was, and the second was denouncing America. Three movies of the late Stalinist era that released in the 1950s were: 'Composer Glinka', on the profundity and greatness of Russian high culture; the 'Kuban Cossacks' revolved on the riches and delight of Soviet life; and 'Meeting on the Elbe', highlighted the threatening intensity of

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[29] Ibid p 28
[30] Gary Rawnsley, (ed.) *Cold War Propaganda in the 1950s, pp* 107- 108

the only enemy of the Soviet individuals: the United States.[31] With elaborate discussions and censorships, directors were hesitant to present their work to the council and in the process, their opportunity of making movies was tragically minimised. In 1951, just 8 feature films and in 1952, just 23 movies were released. [32]

It was only after the demise of Stalin in 1953 that circumstances started to improve in the film industry of USSR. The first indication of real change was Mother (February 1956) and 'The 41st' (October 1956). 'Mother', was based on Maxim Gorky's renowned novel of the same name revolves around Pelageya Nilovna, a timid old lady who witnesses the revolutionary pursuits of her son Pavel Vlasov and slowly comes to understand that his motivation is an extraordinary and respectable one. She includes herself in the movement and discovers satisfaction and incredible mental fortitude in her new life as a revolutionary. The movie was directed by Mark Donskoy.[33] 'The Cranes are Flying' that released in 1957 was yet another film that depicted the damage caused to the Soviet psyche as a result of World War II showed an alternate, progressively humanistic way to deal with the past. [34]

Later directors like Tarkovsky and Paranjov made huge contributions to the panorama of films across the globe with their work. While Solaris, by Tarkovsky, rotated around the life of a Russian psychologist Kelvin who was sent on a mission to a planet named Solaris, along with two crew members and had hallucinations of his dead wife being alive in the mysterious planet. Though he chose to remain back at the planet with his wife but, at the end of the day he decided to return.[35] Sergei Paranjov's movie 'Colors of the Pomegranate' was a biography of Sayat nova, an Armenian troubadour, who falls in love and dies as a monk. This film focussed more on its sensory details where red as dye, pomegranate juice and blood bear the figurative implications of love and martyrdom.[36]

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[31] Ibid p 85
[32] Ibid p 20
[33] 'Mother', Mark Donskoy, 1956
[34] Mikhail Kalatozov, 'The Cranes Are Flying', Mosfilm, 1957
[35] Andrei Tarkovsky, 'Solaris', distributed by Mosfilm, 1972
[36] Sergei Paranjov, Colors of the Pomegranate', Armenfilm, 1969

The above noted films - beginning from 'Mother' to 'The Cranes are Flying' to 'Solaris' and 'Colours of the Pomegranate', show that in the post Stalin period a significant shift had occurred on the part of Soviet filmmakers as focus had shifted from propaganda to tangible subtleties which raised the quality of film-making to the international standard.

In contrast to the USSR, USA's propaganda strategy was unquestionably elaborative and refined. US policy makers viewed film as a fundamental method for establishing their anti-communist viewpoint through a series of subtle pressure and tactics which compelled producers to choose topics that suite the ideology of various official organisations – including the FBI, State Department, Pentagon, CIA and United States Information Agency – engaging movie producers in different ways.[37] It even included covertly sponsoring foreign made films depicting anti-communist sentiments. Hollywood films as well as movies of the West, circumscribed different genres during the Cold War: from comedies to docudramas and musicals, to science fiction 'shockers'.[38] While certain movies looked for imparting resentment among the American citizens towards the communist adversary others attempted in an increasingly estimated fashion to convince Third World countries of the ethics of Western democratic system. The popular themes of the first category were the apprehensions of an atomic Armageddon, the 'hot' wars in Korea also Vietnam, a comparison of lifestyles on either side of the 'Iron Curtain', and also, the possibilities of the Cold War reaching a conclusion. In movies made before the cold war, like Ninotchka, the Russians represent no harm to the US national security. Ninotchka was considered to be 'one of the few American movies that suggest that there are lessons that capitalism can learn from communism'.[39] However, such a portrayal of the communists and the substance of movies changed post the Second World War.

Hollywood in 1940s and 1950s went through its grimmest year during the McCarthy era when makers were constrained into making many

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[37] Tony Shaw, *Hollywood's Cold War,* (Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p 4
[38] Ibid,p 5
[39] ibid p 19

shocking 'red-baiting'[40] movies and when scores of producers' careers were demolished by fake allegations of communist subversions.[41] Movies like Chaplin's Monsieur Verdoux (1947) and Abraham Polonsky's Force of Evil (1948) depict that defilement, voracity and murder were at the center of Western society. Frank Capra's political satire State of the Union (1948) both scrutinized American conservatism and embraced one-world internationalism. By mid 1952, when McCarthysim was going full bore, Chaplin had been forced into exile by the FBI.[42]

Movies in Hollywood were often produced by governmental organisations. For instance, The Bell (1950), which was a joint venture by the 'Defense Department' as well as the 'Crusade For Freedom'. 'The Fearmakers' (1958), revolved a brainwashed Korean War veteran who comes back to the US to locate his advertising firm taken over by communists. [43]Another film 'The Manchurian Candidate' (1962) is a political thriller about the child of a conspicuous U.S. political family who is programmed into being an accidental professional killer for a Communist scheme. [44]

Science fictions were well known vehicles for the secret language of the counter Red campaign, where beasts from space or from underneath the ocean filling in as the figurative adversary intruder. Gordon Douglas' 'Them!' (1954), for instance, included gigantic atomic induced mutant ants threatening Los Angeles which were finally demolished by the joined force of the police, FBI and military.[45]

Finally, a side by side comparison of the Soviet and Western i.e. Hollywood movies exhibit that the USSR focussed more on ideological propaganda and the Russian high culture reflecting on the past glories of Russia. Eminent film makers like Tarkovsky, Paranjov and others inclined principally towards artistic and sensory details. Films that bluntly

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[40] 'Red-baiting' is a term that is commonly associated with the McCarthy era in the USA and originated in the 1950s during 'The Second Redscare' at a time when Cold War tensions and fear of the Communist adversary reached its peak in the USA.

[41] Ibid p 1

[42] Ibid p 137

[43] Ibid p 49

[44] John Frankheimer, 'The Manchurian Candidate', M. C. Productions, 1962.

[45] Tony Shaw, *Hollywood's Cold War,* p 49

portrayed the USA as the sole adversary of the USSR, are hard to find, and are much less in number than their Hollywood counterparts. In contrast, Hollywood films had a significant shift of contents post the Second World War. The focus of the 'villain' now shifted from the Nazis to the communists. 'Red-baiting' was a popular subject of the movies. Directors who dared to speak against the American state system like Chaplin were labelled as communists and hence exiled. Propaganda was so effective that after releasing the docudrama 'The Bell' that spelled the danger of an impending aggression by the USSR, that encouraged moviegoers to purchase savings bonds in abundance.[46] Action films for adults and teens like the Rambo Series or Rocky IV essentially portrayed the offender as Russian.[47]

Propaganda in the Print Culture

The print culture has often remained the most influential medium of cultural diplomacy in the twentieth century. Forging a cultural identity as well as a narrative of a nation through the print culture was an essential aspect of the covert psychological warfare between the two blocs- the USA and the USSR. In this vast scope of operations through the print culture, a specific type of warfare that goes unnoticed is the 'Book Program' funded by the non-governmental organizations of USA and also by the CIA.[48]

The book program reached its zenith during the cold war, had its antecedents in the Second World War. During the Second World War, a publishers' trader group- the 'Council on Books in Wartime' worked jointly with the Office of Wartime Information with the aim of transmitting information about pro US books, promulgating the cause for US to join the war and holding book discussions and fairs, and also using radio and movies to propagate their message, 'Books are the weapons in the war of ideas'.[49]

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[46] Ibid p 49

[47] Sylvester Stallone, 'Rocky IV' ,United Artists Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1985

[48] Alfred A. Reisch, *Hot Books in the Cold War*, (New York: Central European University Press, 2013), (in Introduction) p X.

[49] Greg Barnheisel, *Cold War Modernists*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), p 95

But in no way could the cold war book programs be equated with their Second World War predecessors. The target audience was large and the number of countries to cater to was drastically different. With the cold war reaching an intense peak, the US leadership and officials sought to disseminate a narrative of freedom and individualism, greater cooperation between the private sectors and the government, cultural diversity of the American identity. As a result, the books that were meant to be circulated as a part of the book program mainly focussed on these aspects. During the Cold War, the United States made books accessible to foreign countries in different manners: by setting up Information Centre libraries abroad, through the IMG program, through donations of books and scientific publication to foreign schools and help programs; and through a government directed task to translate, distribute, and sell American books in outside the markets of US.[50] The goal was to counter the idea that the United States was a 'a cultural wasteland'[51] and to introduce the nation as a benevolent one where civil liberties and democratic establishments guaranteed that it would rectify whatever deficiencies it might have. Unlike their Soviet counterparts, US book programs were not centrally designed but were assisted by the resources of private enterprises. Probably after the Smith-Mundt Act (1948), calling for greater cooperation between private and government enterprise, the private enterprises took a definitive role in book programs. The three major book programs that dominated the cold war US were the IMG program, the Library and Information Centre Service (ICS), and the Books in Translation program.[52] While the Informational Media Guaranty and the ICS program worked for the portrayal of culturally diverse and liberally democratic American identity, the Book in Translation Program worked somewhat differently and emphasised on books that depicted the futility of communism as well as the horrors associated with it. Books like 'The Captive Mind', the 'Animal Farm', 'God that Failed', 'Eleven Years in Soviet Prison Camps' etc were the examples.

In 'The Captive Mind', polish author Czeslaw Milosz seeks to clarify the perspectives of dissenting voices to communist government in post-war

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[50] Ibid p 99
[51] Ibid
[52] Ibid pp 99-102

Soviet Bloc.[53] The 'God that Failed' consisted of essays by six writers with the common theme being the disillusionment that communism is and how they abandoned it.[54] Eleven Years in Soviet Prison Camps by Elinor Lipper, a Dutch socialist, dealt with the malevolent fate of foreign prisoners in Soviet prison camps.[55] George Orwell's 'Animal Farm', being one of the greatest classics of all time, revolved around three pigs Snowball, Napoleon and Squealer who defeat the owner of the farm and develop the philosophy of animalism. With Napoleon emerging as the leader of the farm, he ordered a purge against the rest of the animals in the farm, who he believed were conspiring with Snowball for toppling him. Gradually, the pigs began to ally with the human farmers to such an extent the common animal could no longer tell the difference between the pigs and the humans. Orwell being a critic of Joseph Stalin, etched out the events from the Russian Revolution to the era of Stalin through allegories only to exemplify how communism became a dictatorship under Stalin.[56]

The Books in Translation program tried to cautiously promulgate anti communist feelings among the readers by publishing writings of socialists or communists (at times even from the USSR) who gradually abandoned the ideology.

Along with these programs, books programs were also funded and distributed by the CIA in schools, libraries, research institutes and countries of the Warsaw Pact, namely, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia etc[57]. What is interesting to note in this context is that the book distribution could be channelized through the jurisdiction of surrogate radio stations- the RFE and RL. The distribution of books was carried on by the Bedford Publishing Company and the Free Europe Committee until they finally merged under the International Literary Centre (ILC). The books that were circulated primarily focussed on the intellectual elites believing them to be the 'leadership group' to influence policies in the communist regimes. The book program also set out to counter the communist ideology through concepts of democracy and liberalization. [58] The book programs were tried

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[53]Czeslaw Milosz, *The Captive Mind*, (France: Instytut Literacki, 1953)
[54] Arthur Koestler, *The God That Failed*, Columbia University Press.
[55] Elion Lipper, *Eleven Years in Soviet Prison Camps*, Hauraki Publishing.
[56] George Orwell, *Animal Farm*, (London: Secker and Warberg, London, 1945)
[57] Alfred A. Reisch, *Hot Books in the Cold War* p x (in introduction)
[58] Ibid p 16

to be kept secret but was revealed as a CIA project as late as in the 1970s when it's funding by the CIA was cut off.[59]

Along with the book programs that aimed at influencing the elite intellectual groups, thrillers, novels and short stories written by West European and American authors subtly propagated an anti communist sentiment among the readers. In political thrillers like 'Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy' British author John le Carre weaves his plot against the backdrop of the existence of a Soviet double agent in the British intelligence service, the Circus.[60] Ian Flemming's 'From Russia with Love', a book from the James Bond series, shows how the British spy had to constantly battle the SMERSH, a Soviet counter intelligence agency.[61] Tom Clancy's debut novel, the 'Hunt for Red October' revolves around the Russians inventing a deadly nuclear submarine to wreck havoc in the US while the US navy captain Marko Ramius tries to stop the possibilities of a nuclear war and defects to US.[62] Through his novel, the author probably tried to elucidate that even though the common people did not want a war with the US, it seemed that the Soviet government left them with no other option and this theme in a nutshell outlined the objectives of the book programs which was to appease the common citizens of USSR by condemning the communist regime.

Alongside, the book programs and novels and short stories that were widely in circulation, it would be sheer mistake if the segment of comic books is not discussed in detail. Comic books, essentially superhero comics, like the Marvel superhero comic, were essentially set in the backdrop of the bipolar world amidst the apparition of an impending nuclear war. Under Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, the superhero comics gained a new vigour.

Superheroes like Iron Man, Thor, Hulk etc. dominated the cold war times. Iron Man alias Tony Stark, in his earlier stories, was kidnapped by the communists in Vietnam when he was field testing a new weapon. He had to face thieves who were trying to steal his military technology handing it over to the Soviets who could use it for a sinister cause and had to constantly combat Soviet agents like the Crimson Dynamo, Titanium Man

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[59] Ibid pp xiii-xv (in Introduction)
[60] John La Carre, *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, Hodder and Stoughton, UK, 1974.
[61] Ian Flemming, *From Russia With Love*, 1957.
[62] Tom Clancy,*The Hunt for Red October*, Naval Institute Press,USA, 1984.

and the Black Widow. While Thor became a prisoner of the communists (one third of the stories from 1963 to 1966 were pitted against communist adversaries), Hulk had to battle Soviet spy agents who were keen on stealing American nuclear technology. [63]

Another different series of comics, the Treasure Chest of Fun and Facts issued a ten series anti communist propaganda comics- This Godless Communism- from 1961-1962. The opening issue paints the dystopic picture of the Communists taking control over trade unions, newspapers and radios which reveal 'how horrible communism really is'. Another instalment of the same comic strip delineates how the Communists crushed the Hungarian people in 1956.[64]

On the other side of the world, in the Eastern bloc, print culture essentially stressed on the Russian high culture, the achievements of communism in industrial and agricultural sectors. The Soviet print media were keen on highlighting the Russian culture and literature through translation of Russian folk tales for children like 'The Tales from the Amber Sea', 'Ukrainian Folktales' etc. The Raduga publication of Moscow invited a bevy of eminent writers of various regional languages from all over the world to participate in their translation programs. For instance, eminent writers like Nani Bhowmik from Bengal, was appointed and spent his lifetime in USSR. Works of Russian litterateurs like Alexander Pushkin, Maxim Gorky etc were translated not only in English but also in various other languages. Publication of magazines like 'Soviet People', 'Sputnik', 'Vostok' etc in different regional languages made them immensely popular. The same publishing house also published various books on science, technology and world history. The cheap price of these books as well as their good quality of glossy paper, printing and binding made them very popular among the readers of the third world countries like India.

Mention may be also made of the few novels by Arkady Gaidar which essentially portray communism in a positive light. While 'Timur and his Squad' by Gaidar revolves around a gang of boys who sneak around at night and indirectly provide service to the 'red army' by protecting the

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[63] Matthew. J. Costello, *Secret Identity Crisis: Comic Books and the Unmasking of Cold War America*, Continuum International Publishing Inc., 2009, pp 62-63

[64] Chris York and Rafiel York (ed.) Comic *Books and the Cold War* (ed.) , Macfarland and Company, Inc. Publishers, 2012, pp 190-195

family members of the soldiers who were active at the front.[65] Timur became an icon for the Soviet teens and was a part of school curriculum in the USSR till 1990s. Other stories like Chuk and Gek, The Blue Cup, by the same author subtly reveal how the communists are patriots to their core and how serving the 'red army' is a duty of every Soviet citizen.

While Soviet print culture emphasised essentially on an ideological propaganda of communism, the American and West European authors had a multifaceted approach of propaganda. During the four decade long war, the antagonists in western novels and thrillers predominantly were Russian. Either they were double agents in the higher echelons of American or Western European counter intelligence or they were super scientists or brutal communist generals with buck teeth and overhanging eyebrows as a symbol of their moral bankruptcy as were shown in the Marvel comics. While the books of the book programs were aimed for the intellectuals to influence their opinions, some novels and thrillers were busy in manipulating opinions about communists at home and abroad, comics aimed to influence the youth with anti communist sentiments. The characters were but a reflection of the nation and the youth that live constantly under the threat of the communists but win every time against the Soviets. While the communists were portrayed as physically deformed, marvel superheroes were good looking and fair, reinforcing the assertion that they were symbol of moral virtue and democracy contrary to their soviet counterparts.

Conclusion:

Panic against the opponent's capabilities led to an exaggerated estimation of the enemy's power thereby resulting in a sudden boost in nuclear defence and weapons system. Also the apprehension of a massive nuclear aggression and the fear of infiltration of the enemy agents in the friendly nations have but one thing in common, that is the out of proportion fear of opponent's power without substantial evidence. It led both the superpowers to engage in an unprecedented mode of battle using media, foreign-policy, book-programs and comics as weapons. In short, this battle

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[65] Arkady Gaidar, *Timur and his Squad*, (USSR , Detskaya Litertura, Moscow, 1940).

was raged on the basis of a mammoth scale of propaganda which was unheard of before. What is intriguing to note in this regard is the means by which statistical reality often contradicted the skewed proportions of indoctrination. While USSR busied itself with a set pattern of ideological promulgation of communism in the third world nations, USA took an interest in a multifaceted methodology of promulgation. Through books, films and Balloon projects, the inventive technique for purposeful propaganda was one of its kinds and sponsored by great colonial powers of yester–year like Britain and France. The excessive reliability of these nations on the USA post Second World War was the chief factor prompting the spread of a biased assessment against USSR.

However, it is the nexus of large scale propaganda, covert operations, and foreign policy which unravel how Cold War was nevertheless a power struggle where ideology assumed the mere role of legitimization.

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