

WOMEN IN SOVIET GEORGIAN LITERATURE DURING THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR
(1941-1945).

ქალთა სახეები ქართულ საბჭოთა ლიტერატურაში „დიდი სამამულო ომის“ დროს
(1941-1945)

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Abstract. During the Great Patriotic War, the Eastern Front of World War II, fought between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, the role of women in Soviet society underwent important changes. The paper seeks to explore the nature and essence of these changes and provides an in-depth discussion of their causes based on the analysis of literary sources from the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia. The paper demonstrates that three main causes triggered women's changing roles during the Great Patriotic War in the Soviet Union: the State's desire to increase the public's participation or engagement in the War, the use of women's resources for war-related objectives, and strengthening the fighting spirit of the nation. With these objectives in mind, Soviet propaganda tried to create new models of women. Literature, namely poetry and short stories, were seen as important sources for delivering these changes to the wider public. The major finding of the paper is that while Soviet propaganda tried to link these changes with the emancipation of women in the Soviet Union, the real causes and objectives of these policies were the state's desire to instrumentalize all segments of its society for fulfilling war-related objectives. By analyzing original archival data from the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia, the paper contributes to an enhanced understanding of the transformation of the status and role of Soviet women during the Great Patriotic War.

Keywords

Second World War; Soviet Women; Great Patriotic War; Soviet Georgia; Soviet Literature;

ნანი მანველიშვილი

თბილისის ივ. ჯავახიშვილის სახელობის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტის ისტორიის
სადოქტორო პროგრამის სტუდენტი, მოწვეული ლექტორი ილიას სახელმწიფო
უნივერსიტეტსა და სულხან-საბა ორბელიანის სახელობის უნივერსიტეტში.
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აბსტრაქტი. ქალთა სტატუსმა საბჭოთა საზოგადოებაში დიდი ცვლილება განიცადა ე.წ. „დიდი სამამულო ომის“ დროს, რომელიც მიმდინარეობდა აღმოსავლეთის ფრონტზე, მეორე მსოფლიო ომის დროს, საბჭოთა კავშირსა და გერმანიას შორის. ამ სტატიის მიზანია გამოარკვიოს მიზეზები და იმსჯელოს ქალთა სტატუსის ცვლილების შესახებ საბჭოთა საზოგადოებაში. კვლევა ეყრდნობა საქართველოს საბჭოთა სოციალისტური რესპუბლიკის ლიტერატურულ წყაროებს. კვლევა ცხადყოფს, რომ სამმა ძირითადმა მიზეზმა განაპირობა ქალთა სტატუსის ცვლილება ე.წ. „დიდი სამამულო ომის“ დროს საბჭოთა კავშირში. სახელმწიფოს სურდა: 1. საზოგადოების ჩართულობის ზრდა ომში 2. ქალთა „გამოყენება“ ომის მიზნებისთვის 3. ეროვნული სულისკვეთების გაძლიერება და ბრძოლისუნარიანობის ამაღლება. ამ მიზნების გათვალისწინებით, საბჭოთა პროპაგანდა ქმნიდა ქალების ახალ მოდელებს - მისაბამ მაგალითებს. საბჭოთა სახელმწიფო ცვლილებების განხორციელების მიზნით, იყენებდა ლიტერატურას (ლექსები, მოთხრობები), როგორც პროპაგანდის საშუალებას. მაშინ როცა საბჭოთა პროპაგანდა ცდილობდა დაწყებული ცვლილებები ქალთა ემანსიპაციის პროცესით შეენიღბვა, სახელმწიფო პოლიტიკის რეალური მიზანი იყო საზოგადოების ყველა სეგმენტის ინსტრუმენტალიზაცია და ომის მიზნებისთვის მათი გამოყენება. კვლევა ემყარება საქართველოს საბჭოთა სოციალისტური რესპუბლიკის საარქივო მასალებს, და მათი ანალიზის შედეგად შეაქვს წვლილი ე.წ. „დიდი სამამულო ომის დროს“ საბჭოთა ქალების სტატუსისა და როლის ისტორიის კვლევაში.

საკვანძო სიტყვები: მეორე მსოფლიო ომი; საბჭოთა ქალები; დიდი სამამულო ომი; საბჭოთა საქართველო; საბჭოთა ლიტერატურა;

Introduction

The present research endeavor seeks to investigate the role of women in Soviet society during the Great Patriotic War through a comprehensive analysis of pertinent literature. While a substantial body of literature exists on the subject of women's experiences during the Great Patriotic War, the imperative to reevaluate the portrayal of Soviet women arises from the influence of the state's propagandistic policies on the society.

The primary reason for the changing role of women resides in the substantial alteration of women's societal positioning under Stalin's dictatorship. This article delves into an examination of the evolving role of women within the context of the Great Patriotic War (the war on the Eastern Front, 1941–1945). In the Soviet Union, official propaganda depicted women's emancipation as being symbolically enlisted to meet the demands of wartime. State propaganda underscored gender roles aligned with women's contributions during wartime and celebrated their heroism.

To explore the changing roles of women during the war, this study focuses on how women are depicted in Soviet wartime literature, particularly those who were not directly involved in combat but played crucial roles "behind the frontlines." Throughout the war, approximately 800,000 women were mobilized to the front line in the Soviet Union (Corbesero, 2010:104; Krylova, 2010:3; Pennington, 2002:776; Saktaganova, 2020:282).

While thousands of them served on the front line and others stayed behind, the current focus will be on the propaganda that mobilized Soviet women on the home front. This investigation into women

aims to introduce new models of historically determined images of women and their relationship to the gender roles encoded in Soviet war propaganda through literature.

Another reason for reassessing the depictions of Soviet women lies in the examination of the prevailing perspectives held by the Soviet people. An analysis of Soviet wartime literature in the years 1941 to 1945 reveals a discernible shift in the portrayal of women on the domestic front, resonating with the official stance on gender issues. During the initial stages of the war, women were depicted in unconventional roles as soldiers, fighting mothers and as partisans. However, commencing in 1943, given the imminent prospect of victory, there was a conspicuous endorsement of traditional gender norms by the state, accentuating conservative ideals of femininity, thereby encouraging women to conform to established norms.

The third reason we should rethink the evolving role of women is connected to the changing propaganda policies of the state. Additionally, this study raises some intriguing questions: What sorts of portrayals of women emerged in Soviet literature during the Great Patriotic War? And how did the government employ propaganda to boost women's involvement in the war effort?

Statement of Problem and Objectives of Study

Exploring the complexities of the Stalinist propaganda apparatus is a commonly traversed route, especially with the opening of Soviet archives shedding new light on the subject. It is a terrain many have explored. However, our unique angle, focusing on the utilization of women for war-related objectives through an analysis of literary sources from the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia, brings a fresh perspective to this extensive body of research.

The historiography of warfare predominantly emphasizes military perspectives, often privileging the male experience, thereby marginalizing that of women. The Great Patriotic War needed the active involvement of women both on the frontline and in domestic spheres. However, this article diverges from the conventional approach of recounting the history of Soviet women in wartime. Alternatively, it aims to illuminate the changing roles of Soviet women as depicted in Soviet literature during this era. This article endeavours to investigate the portrayal and perception of Soviet women during wartime within the Stalinist state. Simultaneously, it strives to unveil the underlying propagandistic mechanisms employed by the state to achieve its objectives. As a result, considerable emphasis is placed on delineating how the Soviet state constructed the idealized archetype of Soviet women during wartime.

Furthermore, an examination of the historical role of women has had a significant impact on modern society. The propagandistic stereotypes forged during a particular war served as catalysts for transformative changes in the lives of thousands of women, having a lasting influence on individuals in post-Soviet nations.

Literature review

Traditionally, women were typically kept away from participating in wars, but that paradigm shifted during the entire period discussed in this article. This paper explores an assessment of women's contributions during the Great Patriotic War, drawing insights from an analysis of literary sources originating from the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia. The research applies a case study-approach

to discern the dynamic roles that Soviet women assumed during wartime in Georgia, a region fully engaged in the conflict. In the course of this research, a comparative analysis between Georgian literature and that of other republics was not undertaken. Still, researching the case based on previously unexplored documents, which haven't been published before, provides a new perspective.

More importantly, in this examination, we argue that the state encouraged citizen engagement in the war through the utilization of propaganda mechanisms. Throughout the course of the investigation, we employed the analytical frameworks proposed by Catherine Hodgson and Anna Krylova, specifically focusing on their approaches to elucidate the propagandistic policies thus illustrating the change of women's societal status during the Great Patriotic War.

The research focuses on analyzing the monthly literary and public-political magazine "Mnatobi" (The Light) from 1941 to 1945. The selection of these years serves a specific purpose: The German attack, famously known as Barbarossa, on June 22, 1941, marked a pivotal moment for the Soviet Union in World War II. Subsequently, the war was officially termed the "Great Patriotic War" by the Soviet propaganda machinery. These years prove to be noteworthy from a propagandistic perspective. Since the late 1920s, the media, ranging from major publications like Pravda to the smallest local papers, bore a significant responsibility—to mobilize the population. Agitprop, the Soviet propaganda agency, directed district newspaper editors that their primary task during the ongoing war was to inspire people for a grand patriotic war of liberation (Berkhoff, 2012:11).

Before June 1941, the "Mnatobi" magazine contained little to no propaganda information. However, a shift occurred, and starting from June 1941 onward, there was a notable emphasis on activating patriotism.

Even though there's a lot of literature out there about the status of women in Soviet society during World War II, we have some good reasons to dig deeper by focusing on Soviet women through the lens of the monthly literary and public-political magazine "Mnatobi." The data for this research comes from the collection at the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia. The reader can access "Mnatobi" in electronic format at the library, and the series of magazines is preserved in their digital collection.

In Soviet Georgia, various literary magazines and newspapers were published. Among these, "Mnatobi" stood out as one of the foremost monthly publications, encompassing both literary and political dimensions. This magazine held a significant position, serving as a platform for the dissemination of renowned literary works, political letters, and orders by Stalin.

In light of the state's propagandistic policy, a thorough examination of the poems and stories that exerted influence on the populace becomes essential. Given the paramount importance of the magazine's propagandistic approach, it is important to determine the outcome that was reflected in the formation of a new archetype of a woman. The published literary works serve as the principal sources for the research.

Results

As previously mentioned, there is ample literature addressing women's issues during the Great Patriotic War. However, delving into the analysis of the Soviet state's propagandistic approach towards women, using documents from the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia, enhances our comprehension

of the transformation of Soviet women's status and roles. The outcomes of this study could be presented in various perspectives.

Therefore, my initial approach to this is examining the correlation between the war and the liberation of women. In the Soviet Union, it appears that war contributed to the emancipation of women. The Great Patriotic War prompted the state to open up opportunities for women to take on roles traditionally considered not suitable for them. To boost their combat capabilities, the government, through propaganda and literature, crafted new images of women that had an impact on the average Soviet reader (Ziemer, 2019:3).

Following the end of the war, literary works emerged that delineated archetypal female characters capable of discerning an injured and paralyzed man as a prospective fiancé or husband, thereby advocating for their assimilation into societal structures (Krylova, 2001:324). This phenomenon shows the pervasive influence of Soviet propaganda, which strategically utilized literature as a tool to increase the fighting ability of the military and people on the home front during the Great Patriotic War and The state exhibited a lack of interest in the emancipation of women.

My second perspective revolves around the paradoxical depictions and archetypes engendered through state-sponsored propaganda's intervention in literature. The state formulated characters intended to serve as role-models for the general populace. Novel female personas emerged, subject to positive evaluations by the government. The portrayal of archetypal figures, encompassing the roles of a mother, a female warrior, and a working woman, aimed at enhancing the combat efficacy of Soviet citizens. However, these archetypes, at times, were contradictory. For example, the archetype of a mother oscillated between that of a resilient woman capable of defending the state and, alternatively, an elderly lady necessitating protection from the Soviet soldier.

In conclusion, it is important to acknowledge the substantial influence exerted by Soviet literature in shaping public opinion (common sense), a resource that the Soviet government actively exploited. A comprehensive examination of Soviet literature pertaining to women, coupled with an analysis of the Soviet magazine "Mnatobi," could be seen as one of the approaches taken to underline the inherent contradictions characterizing Soviet gender policies.

Commencing with a brief exposition of social realism, I will define a certain system of archetypes and will include different approaches: Three distinct portrayals of women were sorted and analysed: women depicted as warriors, vengeful mothers, and individuals proficient in traditionally male domains, thereby assuming the roles of both husband and father within familial and occupational spheres(working women).

We will delve into the question of why Soviet propaganda crafted such an image and its resulting impact. However, we will also explore the various methods employed to construct these depictions of women and the conflicting behaviors they portrayed.

The concluding section of the article highlights the primary findings and outcomes of the research.

Discussion

For a thorough comprehension of the Bolsheviks' motivations and actions, it is essential to contextualize the pre-World War II status of women within a scholarly framework.. The leaders of the newly-created Soviet Union were keen on forging a novel state, envisioning the need for a "new type of man" to make it happen. What stands out is the Bolshevik attitude on women's matters. V. Lenin shared Marxist ideology on women's emancipation. Marxists believe that socialism will liberate women by abolishing private property and by socializing domestic labour (Thebaud, 2015:12) According to Lenin, the genuine liberation of women would start when the proletariat seized state power, resulting in a shift from trade to a socialist economy (Lenin,2010:66).

In the initial stages, a considerable number of Bolsheviks held the belief that the family would be relegated to the "museum of antiquity" (Goldman, 1993:7; Lee, 1999: 55, Lapidus, 1979:97; Fitzpatrick, 2017:86). The demise of the family, according to this perspective, would mark the commencement of women's emancipation. This emancipation was evident in the early 1920s.

On the one hand, this is substantiated by the establishment of the women's section, "Zhenotdel" (the women's department of the Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party) (Heitlinger, 1979: 58). On the other hand, this is supported by the legalization of abortion, albeit as a temporary measure (Ghodsee, 2015:114). Stalin's rule can be divided into two periods concerning women's issues: before 1936 and after 1936.

In 1936, the USSR ratified a new constitution that acknowledged women's equal rights in the realms of labour, culture, and politics. Moreover, women gained access to benefits such as maternity leave, kindergartens and more. Nevertheless, the enactment of the "Happy Mothers' Law" in 1936 made abortion illegal. (Attwood, 1999:115; Shulman, 2008:13). In 1936 Stalin limited women's freedom by prohibiting abortion (Petroni 2004, 198; (Ghodsee, 2015:118). The 1936 legislation aimed to foster parental responsibility among fathers by implementing measures that made divorce more challenging. This policy can be identified as "two-parent pronatalism." (Nakachi, 2021:10). This amendment was intended to address and enhance the demographic situation. Consequently, the perception of women underwent a transformation during this period.

Subsequently, as the Second World War started, the need arose to replace soldiers for the functioning of the state. The active involvement of women in this context became imperative. Therefore, the propaganda apparatus commenced operating in earnest to its full capacity.

In the 1930s, there was a prevailing belief that the establishment of a socialist society would inherently result in the emancipation of women. However, the prohibition of abortion and the endorsement of the nuclear family impeded the emancipatory process (Ruthchild, 1983:5). Although women were engaged in manufacturing and social activities, they did not get genuine freedom. (Hodgson, 1996:211). Historians have acknowledged the concept of women's full employment coupled with the simultaneous responsibility for childcare, family, and household as a dual burden (Ewing, 2010:453).

As Simon Morison notes “Social realism, like formalism, had no concrete definition. It meant whatever officialdom wanted it to mean” (Ivashkin, 2014:430). Nevertheless, Social realism established a specific system of archetypes, with variations based on gender. However, the aim of these archetypes, regardless of gender, was to construct exemplars for society. One such archetype is a large Soviet family led by a wise leader- the father. Allegorically, this father figure symbolizes Stalin, depicted as the one who does everything for the welfare of the people (Gafrindashvili, 2010:78; Gill, 2011:92).

Following the onset of the Second World War, literature assumed a new significance. Soviet literature and its writers were expected to serve as role models for Soviet citizens. The texts were infused with distinct moral lessons, with primary characters in both poetry and prose frequently articulating sentiments from the viewpoint of parents, wives, or sisters. These expressions often conveyed the hope that individuals heading to the front would not bring shame to the family name (Gafrindashvili, 2010:61). What’s more, Soviet people not only “speak Bolshevik” but also “master Bolshevik” (Krylova, 2017: 316). Stalinism transcends being solely a political system; it extends to encompass a complete way of life (Boobbyer, 2000:11)

The transformation in the status of women was closely tied to the Great Patriotic War. Following the conclusion of the Second World War, the theme of family reunification took a central position in Soviet magazines and literature (Krylova, 2001:308). Soviet literature introduced the archetype of a woman who empathizes with men and establishes all the essential conditions for them to perceive themselves as independent members of society.

Men who found themselves traumatized and struggled to adapt to the new reality sought a different type of woman as a saviour. Following the conclusion of the war, literature crafted female archetypes who would acknowledge a paralyzed or wounded man as a fiancé or husband and actively advocate for their integration into society (Krylova, 2001:324; Dawson, 2019:176).

In World War II soviet literature, personal space is defined as a therapeutic environment. In this context, women were assigned the role of healers for their wounded male counterparts, breaking traditional gender boundaries and entering what was considered "male space" during the war (Krylova, 2001:325). However, post-war expectations mandated a return of this role to men. Additionally, the attitudes of female characters underwent shifts both during and after the war. During the war, women retained their femininity while awaiting the return of their fiancés and husbands from the front. However, upon the soldiers' homecoming, their bodies did not look the same. In response, maternal instincts were kindled in women, transforming them into supportive wives and nurturing mothers who empathized with the returning soldiers (Krylova, 2001:329). This underscores the constrained position of women in Soviet society, where they were expected to constantly prioritize the well-being of others and maintain a cheerful and considerate demeanor. Unfortunately, there was little room for acknowledging the hardships and challenges that women faced in their daily lives.

In contrast to prevailing archetypal representations of female characters, Soviet literature depicts women as proactive participants. While ancient Greek literature, such as the portrayal of Penelope awaiting Odysseus's return from the Trojan War, often relegated women to peripheral roles, Soviet women actively engaged in the wars of the twentieth century (Hodgson, 1993:77).

State institutions echoed this sentiment, as reflected in Soviet literature, which does not deny the wartime exploits of women but assigns distinct values to their accomplishments compared to the

"merit" attributed to men (Hodgson, 1993:77). Despite the active involvement of women, Soviet literary works reinforced traditional gender roles, portraying men as soldiers and women as devoted wives committed to maintaining the domestic hearth, as articulated in the phrase, "to keep the fire at home" (Hodgson, 1993:77). While women were willing to engage in war if the motherland required it, their presence during the conflict is considered an exception in Soviet literature. The Bolshevik perspective emphasized that "war is not a woman's business" (Hodgson, 1996:210), asserting that a woman's primary duties revolved around wifhood and motherhood (Brintlinger, 2017:198). Consequently, the expectation after the war was for women's active participation to revert to the pre-war norm.

The emancipation of women in the Soviet Union ought not to be construed as a deliberate societal transformation aimed at achieving complete gender equality. Rather, it emerged as a transient consequence of war. The augmented demand for labour during the War heightened the involvement of women in various capacities. Simultaneously, women's emancipation was concomitant with an escalating burden, necessitating their active participation in work activities alongside their conventional responsibilities.

The dangers of the war provided a conducive environment and groundwork for the evolution of a new feminine archetype. The Great Patriotic War mandated a substantial mobilization of human resources in the Soviet Union, necessitating the acceptance of women as substitutes for men. The research explores several archetypes of women in literature. Primary among them is the portrayal of a partisan and warrior woman, followed by the archetype of the mother, and lastly, the depiction of the perfect performer of the man's work — the working woman. We will try to describe each of these archetypes below. The archetypes in question were intended to serve as societal role models. Consequently, the Soviet writer or poet bore the responsibility of crafting their characters, imbuing them with qualities mandated by state propaganda.

Soviet literature fought against the fascists by constructing an "enemy image" of the Germans, employing various propaganda methods to convince the population to despise the Germans. To establish this hostile image of the Germans, Soviet literature depicted them as violent and murderous soldiers who targeted women and children. The portrayal of violence against women and children was particularly painful for readers, emphasizing the brutality of the enemy. In fact, the German army was extremely harsh with the enemy and vice versa (Reyes, 2017:20).

In the following section, I will attempt to formulate and characterize the women archetypes that emerged in Soviet literature during the Great Patriotic War.

Women Warriors

Following the start of the war between the Soviet Union and Germany, a hostile image swiftly emerged, depicting the fascist Germans as an enemy. The fascist German was delineated as a heartless, emotionless, and brutal entity, capable of employing any means to defeat the Soviet country. The Soviet propaganda machine directed its focus towards elucidating the fascists' maltreatment of the most vulnerable segments of society. A German character engaged in the killing and torturing of pregnant

women, children, or the elderly was consistently depicted in Soviet literature. This strategic portrayal within Soviet propaganda aimed to construct an image of the German enemy. The duty of killing a fascist was imperative for every decent Soviet citizen. (The same idea was propagated on the German side (Usborne, 2017:467). In Elizbar Polumordvinov's narrative "I Killed Him," the primary female character, a soldier, expresses the following sentiment after eliminating a fascist: "I killed him (a German soldier) ... I will kill him again..." (Polumordvinov, 1942:76). The propaganda machine utilized literature to fortify their ideological positions and contribute to the defeat of the fascists.

In the 1930s, men occupied an unrivalled dominant position. Initiatives toward the emancipation of women were initiated but remained incomplete (Krylova, 2004:627). The need to set an example for women to join the military became apparent with the start of the war. Consequently, archetypes of women warriors gradually emerged. During this era, the Soviet government actively encouraged women to pursue professions traditionally viewed as masculine. Women had the opportunity to receive training in roles such as pilots, parachutists, snipers, and other traditionally male-dominated fields (Ghodsee, 2022:21). Working as a pilot became an esteemed occupation for women. To some extent, this archetype changed the conventional female role associated with motherhood, demonstrating adaptability to the new circumstances. Importantly, even during peacetime, women warriors continued to be advocates for women's emancipation (Krylova, 2004:629).

Furthermore, the ideological framework of the Soviet Union promoted engagement of women as snipers, bus drivers, tractor drivers, etc (Krylova, 2004:633).

In the late 1930s, the archetype of female warriors emerged, swiftly becoming an example for the broader Soviet populace. However, the Soviet policy did not sustain their hero status, and over time, the significance of women who joined the front diminished. Unsubstantiated rumours and jests circulated, suggesting that women went to the front for prostitution or to seek husbands, thereby fostering a depreciative attitude towards them (Krylova 2004, 650). This attitude had adverse consequences for women's emancipation. Notably, women's contributions were inadequately acknowledged both during and after the war. Hodgson shares the idea, that women's merit was lost in wartime. She inquires, "Where is the grave of the unknown nurse?" (Hodgson 1996, 253). Post-war revelations unveiled a disparity in the acknowledgment of men's and women's contributions, with the Soviet authorities privileging men's merits.

During the war, women warriors were highly appreciated by the Soviet government, as evidenced by Stalin's order on November 7, 1943. In this order, the leader directly addresses women, mandating them, along with partisans, to intensify their efforts against the fascists. Stalin stipulates that women should bolster aid for the advancing Red Army, help in dismantling the enemy's central headquarters, and contribute to the salvation of the Soviet people (Stalin 1943, 19).

In such circumstances, women deviating from the traditional roles of housewives assumed particular significance. The soviet novels vividly depict the transformation of the main characters. Commencing as modest, working women, these characters evolve into vengeful figures against the fascists in the end. The principal propagandistic message conveyed is clear: Soviet citizens are encouraged to persist in their fight and resist surrendering to socially accepted norms, including gender roles that delineated women's place in society.

Certain novels underscore the capacity of women to save the Soviet homeland, highlighting the substantial roles played by female partisans and warriors.

In Simon Tsverava's short story "Seaside Wind," Ershov's wife Tsabaya, is depicted as someone who "loves field flowers" (Tsverava, 1942:137). Notably, she plants and sows' crops. However, her husband places additional demands on her. In a particular passage, he addresses Tsabaya; "It would be better to practice using a rifle than working on the land... Here, irrespective of age or gender, everyone should know how to use a rifle..." (Tsverava, 1942:138). It is noteworthy that the woman affirms to her husband that she is proficient in using a rifle. However, within the same narrative, a distinct female character emerges, fulfilling the role of a nurse on the front lines.

Irina is obsessed with guns, prompting a wounded soldier to express surprise: "You are a woman, and why are you so obsessed with military work?" (Tsverava, 1942:142). This narrative encapsulates two contrasting facets inherent in Soviet society. While women are urged to use firearms when required, this is seen as a temporary occurrence; conversely, they will not engage in combat until "the motherland requires them." In numerous instances, warfare is deemed "unsuitable for women."

Two distinct archetypes of women emerged during this period: the woman warrior actively engaged in combat with a weapon and the woman who assumed the role of caregiving for her "brothers" at the front. Numerous novels and poems spotlight the central figure as a woman embodying the role of a sister of mercy on the front lines. However, they did not abandon their "femininity" in the frontline.

Partisan and warrior women hold distinctive significance in Soviet literature, a sentiment underscored by the author's commentary. Vanda Vasilevskaya, in her work "The Rainbow," delineates two character types. These characters, identified as sisters, embody disparate values: the first, named Pusia, is a traitor and "German's lover." Pusia hopes that a German soldier will return to Europe and take her along, a portrayal the author condemns, branding her a Soviet woman who has "sold for money" and succumbed to the material allure offered by the Germans. In contrast, Pusia's sister Olena is a teacher who has lost her husband in the war. Subsequently, she joined a Soviet partisan detachment. To intensify the story, Olena gets pregnant. As previously noted, pregnant women are considered a vulnerable category. In order to portray the "true face" of the Germans, the pregnant teacher is subjected to starvation and torture by German soldiers (Vasilevskaya, 1942:57). Nonetheless, the partisan woman displays resilience. Additionally, she admits that the blowing up the bridge does not compromise the location of Soviet soldiers. The Soviet government demanded the same from the general populace. The Soviet character, Olena, a partisan woman, undergoes torture, a circumstance the author generalizes to signify the broader affliction of the entire village under fascist occupation (Vasilevskaya, 1942:65). However, the strength of vengeance allows her to endure such torment: "Olena's heart was filled with black blood, hatred blood, which gave her power" (Vasilevskaya, 1942:65). The pain empowered a vengeful female warrior. Thus, Olena is a multifaceted character, embodying various archetypes. Initially a peace-loving woman, she undergoes a transformation, becoming a partisan warrior. The underlying message of the short story emphasizes the imperative for Soviet citizens to resist despair. Importantly, passivity is not sanctioned; instead, the pain had to transform into strength and subsequently into revenge.

In certain cases, female characters do not start as partisans; rather, their circumstances change them. A notable transformation in a female character is evident in Lado Avaliani's novella "Guest-Host." In the initial episode, a woman named Margarita, accompanied by her husband and infant child, flees through the forest to save themselves. Subsequently, her husband is compelled to return to the frontlines, leaving his wife and child alone. The consequence is that the woman finds herself amidst fascist soldiers. Margarita is neither a partisan nor a warrior. However, a desire to safeguard the homeland and seek revenge prevails within her. She misleads the enemy. In detailing Margarita's psychological state, the author notes her self-forgetfulness, attributing her thoughts to her sole child. A second female archetype emerges, the Soviet woman as an ideal mother. Notably, the warrior woman goes to the extent of sacrificing her own child. It must be noted that the imprisoned husband is also a factor in the woman's transformation. Given his injuries and bruises, Margarita fails to recognize her husband. The husband questions Margarita, stating, "Would a woman be able to do it? (kill Germans)" (Avaliani, 1942:111). This particular example reflects the prevailing Soviet propagandistic perspective, portraying women as inherently weak and lacking wisdom. The underlying idea centres on the capacity of a woman deceiving the enemy and defending the motherland. In the end, the reader witnesses Margarita's act of explosion of fascists, resulting in her own death.

Female warriors and partisans emerge as role models. Through Soviet propaganda, which aimed to construct an adversarial image, literature sought to impact ordinary citizens, instilling in them a fervour to defend the homeland. However, the transformation of women is portrayed as a transient phenomenon, deemed necessary only for the duration of the war. Post-war, women revert to their traditional roles.

The archetype of mother

L. Trotsky conducted an analysis of the societal role of mothers, naming the mother theme as "a question among questions" and "the main problem" (Trotsky, 1970:54). Trotsky advocated for the fortification of the institution of motherhood, asserting that "woman is the mother of the nation" (Trotsky, 1970:57). Consequently, the establishment of the archetype of the Soviet mother was important in shaping the future of Soviet society.

During a period marked by less-than-optimistic demographic indicators, Stalin endorsed conservative family structures and fortified the institution of motherhood. Consequently, widespread propaganda ensued, advocating that all Soviet women should be mothers (Ilic 2020, 7). The Soviet authorities implemented policies to create relatively favourable conditions for mothers, such as providing sixteen weeks of paid maternity leave, as opposed to the previous norm of one year of unpaid leave, along with regular paid leave, etc. (Heitlinger, 1979:109). However, the primary responsibility for child-rearing was squarely placed on the mother, while additional support was provided by women in various roles, such as female teachers who contributed to childcare in kindergartens or schools (Bebel, 2007:227)

The onset of the Great Patriotic War precipitated the reinforcement of the mother's archetype, wherein the mother assumed symbolic significance as the embodiment of the motherland. Devotion to the motherland became synonymous with loyalty to one's own mother and the fulfilment of commitments.

Soviet literature, akin to visual aids, was designed to augment the resilience of ordinary Soviet citizens in their fight. The deliberate crafting of characters such as an elderly mother, a widow, and a mother avenging her deceased child aimed to elicit empathy from the reader, fostering an identification of the character's experiences with their own lives.

An image of a stay-at-home mother is prevailing in Soviet propaganda. Furthermore, literature often portrays mothers encouraging their children to fight. Pavle Simonov, in "Sailor's Mother" says: "take revenge on them, on behalf of your father" (Simonov, 1942:79). In the narrative's culmination, with Germans present in the village, the son returns to his mother and is tasked with providing a signal to others. Since the son dies in the battle, the mother, now empowered, seizes her fallen son's firearm and continues killing the Germans. The narrative concludes with her setting the house on fire, as a signal to his army members. The concluding sentence underscores the significance: "They (Soviet soldiers) were lit by the fire, the fire of his mother..." (Simonov, 1942:85). Generally, Soviet war novels exhibit a pathos-laden narrative style.

The portrayal of the mother figure is well illustrated in "Mother" by Klavdia Devdariani. The narrative unfolds with a depiction of a mother who sends her sole child to the front, only to have him return severely wounded. In the initial episode, the mother embarks on a train journey to visit her son. Upon her arrival, it becomes evident that the soldier's injuries are grave, ultimately leading to his demise (Devdariani, 1942:155). Within the story, another critically ill patient occupies the bed once occupied by the deceased soldier.

Despite having lost her son, the mother finds solace in caring for another Soviet soldier—a recurring motif in the narrative. The grieving mother discovers her life purpose and meaning in nurturing someone else's son who is also a Soviet soldier. Notably, the story concludes with the soldier's return to the frontlines, emphasizing the ongoing battle and the imperative for every soldier to actively engage—a perspective aligned with the propagandistic undertones.

The mother's final word is "son." However, the narrator observes, "no one could understand whom she addressed - to the lost son or to the new one" (Devdariani, 1942:56). This phrase encapsulates a crucial message—the mother transcends her role as the parent of a specific soldier, evolving into a symbol of the protective mother of the entire nation. In Soviet literature, the loss of a son is not presented as cause for despair. Quite the opposite, it becomes a catalyst for maternal hatred towards the Germans. Furthermore, the narrative asserts that each mother is compelled to find another soldier, a surrogate for their lost sons, and assume the role of their protector.

The Second World War brought about significant changes in the lives of both men and women. With most men serving on the front lines, women were left to manage the Home front, shouldering a dual responsibility. Mariam Garikuli's story, "Only Child," stands out in this context. The narrative unfolds exclusively with female characters, set against the backdrop of the home front. The women depicted in the story vary in roles, encompassing motherhood, sisterhood, and wifely duties, etc. An intriguing character named "Babe" is introduced: "[she] is childless, unmarried but always devotes herself to others" (Garikuli, 1942:55). In the Soviet Union, motherhood held significant social value and was considered a duty for every woman. The prevailing belief was that maternal instinct inherently existed in all women. However, Soviet propaganda asserted that if a woman happened to be childless, she could fulfil her duty by caring for other people's children.

The maternal image is not confined to prose; it also appears in poetry. Simon Chikovani's poem "Amanati," portrays a grey-haired mother engaged in "knitting a glove" (Chikovani, 1942:33) and sending a package to her son. The poem is marked by a significant phrase: "kill, destroy our enemy and protect your family" (Chikovani, 1942:33). Consequently, the poem encapsulates two contrasting images of women: femininity and motherhood. While a mother's words serve as the foundation for bolstering her son's combat capability, femininity is positioned to inspire men to safeguard their families. This serves as a reminder of the dual purpose of the Soviet soldier—to protect both his mother and family.

Several novels and poems depict the maternal figure anxiously awaiting a letter from her son or husband (Getsadze, 1944:34), (Gabeskiria, 1944:12). Within these literary works, the letter assumes a symbolic significance, serving as a connective thread between the past and the new life. The emphasis on the letter means that the individual who went to the front remains alive, symbolically entwined with hope and faith.

In certain stories, fathers enlist in the military, leaving mothers to manage the home front and care for their children. Within this context, the mother often is a character willing to make the sacrifice for the greater good, symbolizing her commitment to the motherland over her offspring. In Demna Shengelaia's "The Fourth Brother," an account unfolds wherein a young boy deliberately steps forward to be shot by the Germans. While witnessing the tragic death of her son, the mother is not as desperate as the reader might expect but displays an unexpected readiness for sacrifice, fuelled by intense hatred (Shengelaia, 1941:18).

Hence, the aforementioned literary works collectively affirm the portrayal of the mother during wartime in Soviet fiction as one that prioritizes the motherland above all else. Her readiness to sacrifice even her son for the greater good serves as a direct plea to Soviet citizens. The state acknowledges the preciousness of a child to a mother, yet it does not permit even a grieving mother to perpetually mourn. Instead, the mother is obligated to fulfill her duty to the country, and her son's death must make her an avenger. So, the characters act in the story. In Shalva Dadiani's story- "Tobacco," the mother of a soldier is mourning her son, who succumbed on the front. Her words: "We will not be able to get back our dead sons, brothers, fathers, and husbands... but if anything eases our greatest sorrow, it is that we must take revenge on the enemy, we must destroy the enemy" (Dadiani, 1942:28), serve as a direct entreaty to the reader, a plan that a true Soviet citizen must obey.

Influenced by Soviet literature, every Soviet mother had to identify herself with the characters portrayed and adopt them as role models. The mother, in this context, represents the face and symbol of the motherland. It is the mother's responsibility to raise her child in service to the motherland.

The image of working women

During the war, a rapid and necessary change in gender roles became essential in the Soviet Union.

While men were at the front, the country faced a significant loss of its labour force. Consequently, there arose a need for propaganda to promote increased participation of women in the workforce.

During Stalin's regime, the Soviet Union leaned towards conservative family values, reinforcing traditional gender roles. However, the war allowed women to enter male-dominated professions, acting as an exception to the norm, and this was actively encouraged by the government. This perspective is

vividly portrayed in the literature magazine "Mnatobi." On the one hand, the characters express surprise at the women's interest in traditionally "male-dominated professions," while on the other hand, there is visible state encouragement to enhance women's involvement in these fields. The authors present women in a positive context.

The Great Patriotic War provoked women's "employment" at the front. In literature, two primary female archetypes emerge: the mother and the nurse. Both symbolize emotionality and serve as a source of strength for soldiers (Hodgson, 1996:212).

While the doctor's role was primarily focused on physical healing, the nurse's function extended into spirituality. The stories unfold with male doctors and female nurses. The nurse's primary responsibility was to offer solace and soothe the mental well-being of a wounded man.

Mariam Garikuli's "Chance" serves as noteworthy examples in this context (Garikuli, 1941:31). It is imperative to note that, in many cases, women assumed the roles of sanitary workers or sisters of mercy rather than female doctors. This raises the question: why does this pattern exist? The explanation is simple—being a doctor entails great responsibility, and societal perceptions tended to regard women as relatively weaker individuals. While some resilient women excelled as doctors, this remained an exception. Most women assumed the nurturing role of nurses or sisters of mercy, providing solace to the ailing patient through their tenderness and empathetic listening skills.

Wartime demands brought about significant changes in women's daily lives. With the majority of men joining the front, active female participation in agriculture became imperative. Consequently, propaganda campaigns were launched, featuring female characters in roles such as privileged tractor drivers. In Lado Baliauri's "Woman in the Whirlwind," the character named Dunya operates a tractor, managing to retain her femininity as she lets her "golden hair curls" wave in the wind (Baliauri, 1942:41). Dunya soon discovers that she is pregnant. Taking maternity leave, and after giving birth, she is later promoted and transferred to work alongside harvest workers. This passage holds significance for two reasons: firstly, the Soviet government values female tractor drivers, and secondly, motherhood is regarded as a woman's duty. Therefore, a woman who becomes a mother receives privileges from the state, such as maternity leave and promotion. Besides female tractor drivers, the story also features female metallurgists.

Some of the poems show the direct engagement of women left on the home front. While the posters depicted women replacing their fathers and husbands in all activities, Soviet literature crafted female characters who took on jobs that were less acceptable for their gender roles. However, this was a temporary process. The wartime economy created job opportunities for women in heavy industry. Therefore, at the same time, the strengthening of the mother's image didn't stop.

There are two explanations for this phenomenon: on the one hand, women were able to contribute to improving the demographic situation, and on the other hand, mothers became a symbolic representation of the motherland. Thus, the "utilization" of the woman's image in literature serves to enhance the fighting spirit of the Soviet citizen. As depicted in the posters, the majority of women workers who stayed on the home front "replaced" men.

Conclusion

Soviet propaganda endeavoured to shape public opinion through literature. This underscores the fact that Soviet propaganda employed literature as a tool to bolster the fighting spirit of both the military and civilians on the home front during the Second World War in 1941 -1945. State propaganda, by intervening in literature, crafted figures intended to serve as role models for the masses. New female archetypes were delineated, receiving positive evaluations from the government. The portrayal of a mother, a woman warrior, and a working woman aimed at enhancing the fighting capabilities of the Soviet citizens.

Moreover, the archetypes, in certain cases, exhibited contradictions. For example, the archetype of a mother was occasionally depicted as a robust woman capable of defending the state, while in other portrayals, she appeared as an elderly lady requiring protection from the Soviet soldier. This article has defined the principal characteristics of each archetype. The incorporation of empirical materials imparts a special significance to the research. In conclusion, it is imperative to underscore that Soviet literature wielded considerable influence in shaping public opinion, and the Soviet government actively harnessed this resource. Simultaneously, the momentum of women's emancipation, which gained traction during the Second World War, experienced decline at the end of the war.

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