

The Tereshkova Effect:

Propaganda's Role in Breaking Barriers

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Senior Division

Individual Documentary

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A small, 4"x6" photograph, showing the cosmonaut group of the early Soviet Space Race, caught my attention at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space museum. The annotation listed the cosmonauts' names and stated that "all but Tereshkova were military pilots." I found no other trace of information referring to the first female cosmonaut, Valentina Tereshkova, at the museum. I felt her historic accomplishment deserved a deeper recognition for breaking barriers on several levels. I decided, then and there, that I would make a documentary about the effect she had on both sides of the Cold War.

For primary sources, I purchased original volumes of leading periodicals of the era. *Time* and *Life* magazines featured extensive exposés on the Mercury 13 female astronaut candidates. Publishing magnate, Henry Luce, took pride in dispatching highly qualified photojournalists. Noticing that his wife—Ambassador Clare Boothe Luce—wrote the exposés, I knew they would be thought-provoking and empowering. Tonya Lee Stone's *Almost Astronauts* publication was also a great source for photography. The *Saturday Evening Post*, *Look*, and *Ladies' Home Journal* provided a deeper exploration into the times and a richer context through advertising messages and letters sent to the editor. This society-wide context revealed the cold and shocking outcome of the Congressional Hearing that the female aeronautical trainees requested after their program's cancellation. Reading the hearing transcripts was an eye-opening experience, as I severely underestimated the misogyny of the 1950s-60s.

I believe that documentaries provide the best platform for the nuanced cultural and historical background of this era. After conducting research, I realized the hidden complexities of my thesis. On a cursory look, Tereshkova's flight appears to be a product of propaganda—a female was chosen to secure a public-relations victory for communism. The deeper I delved, the more obvious it became that she was as qualified as the Mercury 13 women, who were more qualified

than the Mercury 7 men. I also learned that the Soviet leadership mounted a secondary propaganda campaign by facilitating Tereshkova's swift marriage to cosmonaut Nikolayev, happily parading the newlyweds and new parents to promote child-rearing. While the USSR made remarkable and genuine progression with equality across class, race, and gender, their leadership was unprepared for the unintended consequences of steadily dropping birth rates, as women opted to pursue a career instead of tending to a home. In the years following Tereshkova's flight, this major issue would come to the surface, so I felt it necessary to incorporate this novel propaganda role of Tereshkova, the mother. I chose to use the most emblematic Russian symbol, the matryoshka, to visually tear down the oversimplified suggestion that this historic feat was cheap propaganda. Just as matryoshkas nestle, within the primary, aeronautic accomplishment (the cosmonaut doll of Tereshkova), you will find a generous amount of Soviet propaganda; but within that propaganda, there will be the novel introduction of a new central-planning call: to return working women to the homes for child-rearing, the diametrical opposite of what American housewives fought for, collectively.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

Brown, James and Newsome, Betty. It's a Man's Man's Man's World. James Brown. Talent Masters Studios King 6035, 1966, digital.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H77fRz1rybs>

This song lent itself to my choice for the opening scene background music. I deliberately used the lyrics of the first verse to segue into my introduction. During research, I found out that James Brown did not write the song,—despite popular belief—but rather took the writing credits for his girlfriend, Betty Newsome's work. Newsome took him to court and won shared rights, albeit, she never benefitted from public applause. I felt that the song's story underlined American women's limited social status of the times as perfectly as its lyrics did.

“Cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova.” Космонавт Валентина Терешкова, Роскосмос ТВ (Roscosmos TV), 6 Oct. 2013, www.youtube.com/watch?v=hasjSZqmqvQ.

Archival footage of Valentina Tereshkova, spanning from her Yaroslavl factory days to 2013. The footage illustrates how Tereshkova became a role model, spending her entire career in service of her fellow citizens and constituents.

“Cosmonauts: How Russia Won the Space Race.” Vimeo, BBC, 18 May 2020, vimeo.com/306311919.

This British film is based on rare, archive film footage from the Soviet Union. I used several scenes illustrating the excitement and joy of the Russian populace to see their comrade, Tereshkova, fly into orbit and the warm welcome and reverence they extended to her after her flight.

Day, Dwayne. “Keep Dreaming, Young Lady, Keep Dreaming.” *The Space Review*, 18 June 2018, www.thespacereview.com/article/3515/1.

The author revealed, for the first time, a letter that Sally Ride received from a young fan years earlier. It was written by NASA and mailed to the young girl. The girl asked for an opportunity to train to be an astronaut. NASA sent her a letter explaining that it had no current programs for women, as astronaut training involved a “higher” criteria that women could not meet. The letter became the symbol of how women were excluded from many professions. I used the letter in my documentary.

Diamond, Edwin. “Young Wives With Brains.” *Newsweek*, 7 Mar. 1960, pp. 57–60.

The writer identifies the new phenomenon of the disgruntled American housewife, cleverly referring to the “Age of Needlepoint.” It is the first, in-depth article that

precedes Betty Friedan's ground-breaking *Feminine Mystique*, identifying the stirring discontent in middle-class, mostly white Suburbia.

Gallup, George, and Hill, Evan. "The American Woman." *The Saturday Evening Post*, 22 Dec. 1962, pp. 15–32.

The editors took a typical housewife, Mrs. Charles Johnston of Phoenix, and projected her idiosyncrasies onto the wider society, based on her writings. By today's measures, it is absurd that this woman is referred to by her husband's name, losing her sense of self entirely.

Hardesty, V. & Eisman, G. *Epic Rivalry: The Inside Story of the Soviet and American Space Race*. 1st ed. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, 2007.

This book offered the largest collection of primary source photographs from the Vostok era. I used these photos in my project.

Hendrickx, Bart. "Russian Life Support Systems: Vostok, Voskhod, and Soyuz." 23 Apr. 2018, pp. 36–40., doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-09575-2_39-2.

The author reprints the faithful translation of Nikolai Kamanin's diary. Kamanin was the head of the cosmonaut training program in the Soviet Union. He was closest to the cosmonauts because he was the one who selected them and was responsible for their daily training. Kamanin's diary is one of the few surviving primary sources of the Soviet side of the secretive space race. He wrote about how the Central Party—Nikita Khrushchev, in particular—pushed for the marriage of Valentina Tereshkova to Andriyan Nikolayev. The party leadership applied extremely strong pressure on the two unmarried cosmonauts, because—as Kamanin wrote about it—it was good for politics. Through extensive research, I found out that the nation's birth rate was severely declining (while death rates were climbing, for a disastrous "scissor effect"), and the state wanted to promote marriage and childrearing. Ironically, the very independent and egalitarian Russian women were asked to turn back to the home, to bear children, to a place that women in America wanted to break away from.

"Homepage." BFI. Accessed May 18, 2020. <https://www.bfi.org.uk/>.

The British Film Institute's archive has a significant collection of primary source video footage of Tereshkova's extensive training, as well as her camaraderie with her fellow astronauts who clearly liked and respected her. The footage also shows Tereshkova accepting the Hero of the Soviet Union award, the award that is closest to her heart. The cameras captured Tereshkova's genuine appreciation for this award. To this day, she wears it to public appearances, signaling how important it was for her to be recognized as a model citizen of the USSR.

Khrushchev, Sergei: *Personal Interview Series*. 2016-2020.

Over the years, I have turned to Dr. Khrushchev numerous times to get his first-person account of the Space Race, as well as his account on the Politburo's central planning. Since Sergei Khrushchev was his father's political confidant, as well as a leading engineer of the Soviet Space Program, he is the single most knowledgeable living person today, vis-à-vis the Soviet's side of the Space Race. He described to me, in great detail, the Soviet leadership's desire to go beyond propaganda stunts. His father, Nikita Khrushchev, was most concerned with turning a backward, agrarian country to a modern, technologically advanced country, not "cheap propaganda" that offered no measurable value to the nation. The propaganda elements of aeronautic advancements typically originated from Sergei Pavlovich Korolev, the Chief Designer of the Space Program, to secure approval for his projects. In this instance, it was the head of training (Nikolai Kamanin), who came up with the idea to shock the world by sending up a strong, independent Soviet woman into orbit. Generally, Nikita Khrushchev was against spending incredibly large sums of funds that the space race absorbed. Dr. Sergei Khrushchev also shared with me the details of the Tereshkova mission, which did not go as well as the public thinks, but the Soviets covered up the mishaps to save Tereshkova's pristine image as a role model for all.

One of the most poignant parts of my conversations with Sergei Khrushchev concerned his mother, Nina Khrushchev. Nina Khrushchev became a member of the communist party early in her life. Dr. Khrushchev shared Nina's diary writings that show her genuine enthusiasm for the liberation of both the proletariat and of women. She was very active in agitating, inculcating the communist ideology. Her writings are an excellent testament to the early efforts that the Soviet Union's leaders made to elevate the status of women, as the leadership clearly recognized that—in order for communism to take hold—it has to take hold in 100% of society, not just 50% (males) of society. Nina Khrushchev's efforts show how enthusiastic the female leaders were and how they genuinely subscribed to this new ideology and to spreading this ideology by empowering other women through meetings, rallies, and organizations. After seeing these writings, one must agree that Tereshkova's orbit was more than a publicity stunt.

Lathers, Marie. "“No Official Requirement:’ Women, History, Time, and the U.S. Space Program.” *Feminist Studies*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2009, pp. 14–40. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/40607922. Accessed 7 Mar. 2020.

This publication reprints the Congressional Hearing transcript for the hearing that the Mercury 13 women requested. The raw manifestation of pervasive misogyny is truly disheartening.

"Katyusha - Valeria Kurnushkina & Red Army Choir," Youtube video, posted by "zosimov," August 30, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmh9TDuLU5g>.

This Red Army choir performance had a very tender moment that best symbolized a burgeoning patriotic renaissance in today's Russia. With the constantly changing border situation in Europe, Russia has turned inward to pull strength from their own history and culture. I included a vignette of the loving emotions that the elderly lady showed toward the young girl who genuinely honors an old song that was very popular during the Soviet

Union's existence. This is a visual example of how the older generations were able to positively influence the younger generations in Russia.

Kocivar, Ben. "The Lady Wants to Orbit." *Look*, 2 Feb. 1960, pp. 112–119.

The editors tagged along for a few weeks to follow Betty Skelton, an accomplished female pilot, while she underwent training with the Mercury 7 boys. While the editorial spread is very well presented with journalistic gloss, the entire project was very superficial. When asked if she really believed to be training for an astronaut mission, Betty Skelton said that it was obvious to her that this was just a fun exercise, presented as a light-hearted possibility to the masses.

Lothian, A., et al. *Valentina - First Woman in Space: Conversations with A. Lothian*. Pentland Press, 1993.

Valentina Tereshkova does not give personal interviews and has not published an autobiography. However, after bonding at women's conferences over the years, Antonella Lothian became close friends with Tereshkova, and Tereshkova allowed Lothian to publish the transcripts of their numerous conversations. Although the collection was not published by a commercial press, I was able to buy a copy from Scotland. This was simply the most rewarding find. I gained a genuine appreciation for Tereshkova's personality and character. She offers an incredibly pragmatic outlook for society to move forward without leaving the best of family life, village life, and multigenerational living. She credits her perspective on the rare opportunity to see our planet looking in from the outside.

Madara, John and White, David. *You Don't Own Me*. Leslie Gore. Mercury, 1963, digital. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDUjeR01wnU>

Leslie Gore's original studio rendition of *You Don't Own Me* was released a few months after Tereshkova's flight, Betty Friedan's publication of *The Feminine Mystique*, the same month that President Kennedy published *American Women*, the scorching conclusion of his President's Commission on the Status of Women.

Madara, John and White, David. *You Don't Own Me*. Lauren Jauregui. Montreux Jazz Festival, 2019, digital. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSHLTyet7iE>

This is the only version of Leslie Gore's iconic song that does not end with the song softly fading out. Instead, it ends with an assertive drum beat combination. I felt that this was the perfect, energetic punctuation that my documentary needed to end with a figurative "exclamation point," instead of a "period."

"Posters of the Golden Age of Soviet Cosmonauts." BBC News. BBC, September 19, 2015. <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-34281621>.

The editorial team of BBC presented this online gallery of original, Soviet Space Race posters, based on the *Cosmonauts: Birth of the Space Age* exhibit at the Science Museum in London. These posters “say a thousand words” about the central government’s control of propaganda in the Soviet Union, with the government’s omnipresent message motivating the populace to rebuild the war-torn Union and participate in governance. The exhibit gave me the idea to research 1960s posters—in both the US and USSR—to illustrate my thesis.

Smithsonian Institution Archives Record Unit 371 Box 5 Folder October 1987

The Smithsonian’s Archives houses over 3 million photographs. I was able to use several photos from their archives for my project.

Stevens, Edmund. “Comely Cosmonaut.” *Ladies Home Journal*, July 1963, pp. 60–62.

This is one of the few in-depth articles in American media about Valentina Tereshkova. Despite the sexist title—at least by today’s standards—the article is well-balanced and relatively unbiased. It should be noted that after listening to Valentina talk about her training program, the American writer repeatedly returned to comments about Valentina’s physical appearance, sartorial choices, taste, and questions about dating and marriage, revealing that representatives of the American media were used to asking these types of questions from women.

Timofeychev, Alexey. “Here's Why Education in the USSR Was among the Best in the World (PHOTOS).” *Russia Beyond*, TV-Novosti, 9 July 2018, www.rbth.com/history/328721-education-in-ussr-the-best.

The article is superbly illustrated with high-quality primary source photographs from Cold War-era Russian schools, their practices, and their wide prevalence. I used several of these photos for my documentary.

United States Congress. *Qualifications for Astronauts: Report of Special Subcommittee on Selection of Astronauts, 87th Congress, 2d Session. Vol. 2, Eighty-Seventh Congress, Second Session, 1962.*

This transcript of the two-day Congressional Hearing was an absolute eye-opener. John Glenn’s stern scolding of the Mercury 13 women, putting them in their places—as assigned by “social order”—was beyond my understanding of the density of misogyny at the end of the 50s. It explained why American women lacked the opportunities that were taken for granted by men. For America’s favorite astronaut—and bona fide celebrity—to stand so firmly on this issue suggested that the “social order” he described was, indeed, very pervasive. It stood in stark contrast to Valentina Tereshkova’s Soviet Union.

Vandermolen, Larry, and Irene Cheung. *A Purpose for Modern Woman* (1955), Adlai E. Stevenson, W. W. Norton & Company, https://wwnorton.com/college/history/archive/resources/documents/ch32_04.htm.

The authors reprinted the verbatim speech that Presidential Candidate Adlai Stevenson made at the commencement address at the all-female Smith College. His entire speech is a testament to the 1950s role of women: the role of a housewife. He specifically states that the primary and “meaningful” purpose of these women is in the home, to “keep her husband Western,” and to tend to the home and the children. It was the first source that equated the traditional roles of females (as housewives) with being part of the Western civilization.

Weitekamp, Margaret A. *Right Stuff, Wrong Sex: Americas First Women in Space Program*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2006.

As the curator of the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C., Margaret Weitekamp had access to the Smithsonian’s *Archives* that houses files on the Mercury 13 women, Dr. Lovelace, and Valentina Tereshkova. She also conducted eleven oral history interviews with the female astronaut candidates and included primary source documents from the participants’ personal collection. I used several photos and Lyndon Johnson’s notes for my documentary.

Secondary Sources:

Clancy, Michael. “It’s a Woman’s World.” *The Village Voice*, 18 Dec. 2007, www.villagevoice.com/2007/12/18/its-a-womans-world/.

This journalist interviewed Betty Jean Newsome, who inspired the soundtrack of my documentary. Ms. Newsome was an accomplished backup singer and the girlfriend of James Brown in the early 60s. On a long car drive to a show in the South, Newsome came up with the lyrics and melody to what would be recorded as “It’s a Man’s World.” Initially, James Brown did not credit Newsome as the writer of the song. Newsome went to court, and the courts awarded Newsome with writing credits. This fact remained largely unknown to the public. I thought it was particularly fitting to underscore my documentary with a song that had a very similar experience to what most middle-class housewives of the 50s and early 60s had: their contribution to society was severely limited and their efforts were not taken seriously, and were rarely recompensed.

Coontz, Stephanie. *A Strange Stirring: the Feminine Mystique and American Women at the Dawn of the 1960s*. Basic Books, 2012.

Stephanie Coontz compiled an extremely thorough analysis of the “Good Times,” the post-war America social order that served the nation for a decade or so, although women silently and increasingly bubbled in turmoil under the surface. She gives precise statistical information, extremely well-researched case studies, and anecdotes to flesh out

a world that was only two generations ago, but, yet, it was millions of miles away, compared to our contemporary social order.

Cunningham, Walter. *All-American Boys*. Milk and Cookies Press, 2016.

This book highlights, if not perpetuates the “Space Cowboy” image that the Mercury 7 built up, that was so enshrined in a uniform public perception that the Mercury 13 women could not break down.

Davies, R. W. *Soviet Economic Development from Lenin to Khrushchev*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.

One cannot study the Cold War era from the point of view of the USSR without going back to the Bolshevik revolution, as the entire economic and social system’s genesis was in the Revolution. The book has a very easy and to-the-point delivery that became an essential building block for this project.

Davies, R. W., et al. *The Economic Transformation of the Soviet Union, 1913-1945*. Cambridge University Press, 2008.

This book is a thoroughly researched work detailing the nascent Soviet state’s economic challenges and attempts at transforming the state into a superpower. The book is illustrated with a large number of charts and graphs, and I was able to use data from this publication for my documentary.

“EDUCATION IN THE U.S.S.R.” Education in the U.S.S.R., Anglo-Soviet Youth Friendship Alliance, 1942, www.revolutionarydemocracy.org/archive/anglosov.htm.

The article highlights the impressive progress that the Soviet educational system experienced, particularly in the measurement of illiteracy. Since party leadership viewed illiteracy as a major roadblock to the spread of communist ideology, it was one of the party’s main goals to eradicate illiteracy and send men and women to school.

Frederiksen, Marie. “Women before, during and after the Russian Revolution.” In Defense of October, 8 Mar. 2020, www.bolshevik.info/women-before-during-and-after-the-russian-revolution.htm.

This article identifies the long history of benevolent sexism in the Soviet Union. After reading this article, it is clear that Tereshkova’s flight was not a “cheap propagandist shot,” but rather, the result of a long process of genuinely building women up in the Soviet Union.

French, Francis, and Colin Burgess. *Into That Silent Sea: Trailblazers of the Space Era, 1961-1965*. University of Nebraska Press, 2007.

This collection of essays was edited by two foremost aeronautical history experts. The chapter on Tereshkova was written by fallen astronaut, Christa McAuliffe. This essay suggested that Tereshkova's marriage was entirely arranged by the Soviet Communist Party's leadership. McAuliffe pointed to Nikolai Kamanin's diary, prompting me to obtain the diary to verify the details.

Harrison, Mark. "The Soviet Economy, 1917-1991: Its Life and Afterlife." *The Soviet Economy, 1917-1991: Its Life and Afterlife* | VOX, CEPR Policy Portal, VoxEU & CEPR, 7 Nov. 2017, voxeu.org/article/soviet-economy-1917-1991-its-life-and-afterlife.

This is a very detailed account of the Soviet Union's economic life, going back to the early days of communism. The article is extremely well researched and I was able to use some of the data for my graphs in the documentary.

Hartmann, Heidi I., and Ann R. Markusen. "Contemporary Marxist Theory and Practice: A Feminist Critique." *Review of Radical Political Economics*, vol. 12, no. 2, July 1980, pp. 87–94, doi:10.1177/048661348001200210.

This was the first publication that I read that identified the economic difference between Western and Socialist societies—vis-à-vis women—in how each society defines "production." Production is narrowly defined as the production of commodities in the West, whereas socialist production includes work done at home and in conjunction with child-rearing. The author pointedly summed up gender equality is a yet-to-be-resolved problem, compared to other divisive issues, and it is so significant that it is "capable of pulling capitalism down."

Holt, Nathalia. *Rise of the Rocket Girls: The Women Who Propelled Us, from Missiles to the Moon to Mars*. Large Print Press, A Part of Gale, Cengage Learning, 2017.

Holt's survey of the smart and capable corps of female scientists left me with the desire to investigate what happened to women's participation in science—and in the workforce, in general—after WWII.

Kreusler, Abraham. "Soviet Preschool Education." *The Elementary School Journal*, vol. 70, no. 8, 1970, pp. 429-437. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/1000637.

The writer describes the history, structure, and learning program of Soviet kindergartens and nursery schools, which he found very impressive. Providing free early childhood school programs was key to the Soviet Union's ability to enlist women in the workforce. Without this investment into women—into human capital—women would not have been able to achieve the level of equality that they did in the Soviet Union.

Lapidus, Gail Warshofsky. *Women in Soviet Society: Equality, Development, and Social Change*. University of California Press, 1979.

Gail Lapidus did a fantastic job researching and illustrating all aspects of the unique

circumstances of women (participation in the workforce, in governance, in housework) in the Soviet Union. Her book is full of precise census bureau data, clearly showing how much farther ahead the USSR was with education, literacy, and equality.

Leslie, Rachel. "Women at Home." Women at Home, Tripod, Nov. 2004, history-and-film.tripod.com/housewives.html.

This article was written to highlight the pervasive misogyny of the 50s/60s. The author illustrated the article with contemporary advertising pieces to show how women were reduced to the home by the media and by consumer product companies.

Mespoulet, Martine. "Women in Soviet Society." Cahiers Du CEFRES, CEFRES USR 3138 CNRS-MAEE, 5 June 2015, halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-01160379.

This article's main focus is the value of a woman working at home, or at home in addition to the workplace. The writer carefully researched the amount of time women spend on their home obligations, compared to the men. The key to the success of the Soviet leadership's ability to enlist women for the economy was in recognizing the value of domestic work. Leadership worked systematically toward easing women's work from the earliest days of the communist regime, creating creches (kindergarten), public laundry facilities and public dining halls.

Meyerowitz, Joanne. "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946- 1958." The Journal of American History, vol. 79, no. 4, Mar. 1993, pp. 1455–1482. JSTOR, doi:10.2307/2080212.

This journal article described "the problem that had no name," as Betty Friedan tagged the growing disenchantment of white middle-class American housewives with their limited opportunities and feeling of being unchallenged and unfulfilled. The mainstream American women portrayed by the author contrast sharply with the Russian women who were actively participating in higher education, medicine, engineering, etc. in the Soviet Union.

Nolen, Stephanie. *Promised the Moon the Untold Story of the First Women in the Space Race*. Thunders Mouth Press, 2004.

This is a collection of portraits, including Valentina Tereshkova's. It is a perfectly condensed piece that allowed me to initially familiarize myself with Tereshkova's accomplishments.

Royal, Summer. *Algorithm Remixed*. 2020

I created my own audio track, using Music Maker, for a quiet but energetic background sound, sampling Muses's *Algorithm* [Bellamy, Mathew. *Algorithm (Acoustic Version)*. Muse. Warner Bros Helium-3, 2018]

Sharp, Tim. "Valentina Tereshkova: First Woman in Space." Space.com. Space, January 22, 2018. <https://www.space.com/21571-valentina-tereshkova.html>.

This award-winning online portal was started by Lou Dobbs and Rich Zahradnick and was managed by Sally Ride before her passing. Their editorial piece brought Jerrie Cobb's story to my attention, giving me the idea to juxtapose Tereshkova's effect in the Soviet Union against the vastly different experience of the Mercury 13 women in the United States.

Sharpe, Mitchell R. *"It Is I, Sea Gull;" Valentina Tereshkova, First Woman in Space*. Crowell, 1975.

After reading this biography of Tereshkova—which was written for school-aged children—I realized how little Western society has memorialized of Tereshkova's barrier-breaking contribution, motivating me to focus on her achievement for my documentary.

Smithsonian. "The First Group of Female Cosmonauts Were Trained to Conquer the Final Frontier." Smithsonian.com, Smithsonian Institution, 12 Apr. 2019, www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/first-group-female-cosmonauts-trained-conquer-final-frontier-180971900/.

This article was produced by the Smithsonian about the first Russian female cosmonauts. The article concludes with the realization that women might be better suited for space flight.

Special, Hedrick Smith. "In Soviet Union, Day Care Is the Norm." The New York Times, The New York Times, 17 Dec. 1974, www.nytimes.com/1974/12/17/archives/in-soviet-union-day-care-is-the-norm.html.

The title of the article says it all: daycare—and by that, they mean free, universally available, state-funded daycare—is the bedrock of women's liberation in the Soviet Union.

Staff Reports. "Path into Space Long for U.S. Women." Oklahoman.com, Oklahoman, 17 June 1983, <https://oklahoman.com/article/2028862/path-into-space-long-for-us-women>.

This article's subject is Jerrie Cobb, the first female astronaut candidate at the Lovelace Clinic. After NASA announced that they had no plans for a female corps of astronauts, Jerrie Cobb and Jane Hart (another candidate) went to Washington to lobby to reverse the decision. The writer reflected on Ms. Cobb's utter disappointment when the Mercury women were not given a chance at going into space, despite their remarkable aviation.

Tudge, Jonathan. "Education of Young Children in the Soviet Union: Current Practice in Historical Perspective." *The Elementary School Journal*, vol. 92, no. 1, 1991, pp. 121–133. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/1002080.

This article shined a light on an important reason behind the Soviet party leadership's eagerness to offer state-funded early education to all children: education was seen as an excellent way to inculcate children into the communist doctrine early on.

SCRIPT

The Tereshkova Effect: Propaganda's Role in Breaking Barriers

It was a man's world. Man made the cars to take us over the road, the train to carry the heavy load, the electrolight to take us out of the dark, and it was Noah who made The Ark. And it was a man—James Brown—credited for this iconic song that his girlfriend, Betty Newsome composed during a long ride.

How did Sixty's America turn into this Man's World? What happened to Rosie the Riveter—the WASPs, Rocket Girls, and Code Girls? They fell victim to propaganda: the polity's attempt to restore pre-war the status quo. Interestingly, this direction was the diametrical opposite of the Soviet Union's course, where women enjoyed near-equal status with men since the Bolshevik Revolution. In '63, when Russia sent a female—Valentina Tereshkova—into space, the Tereshkova Effect inflamed the second wave of feminism in America, while it had the antipodal effect in the Soviet Union. Let's have a look:

After WWII, 7 million American veterans returned home, in need of a job. A massive propaganda campaign sent women back to the home, fostering a "return to normalcy." A new social order took hold, as middle-class women played their part happily, hypnotized into domestic felicity.

[clip of Debbie Reynolds monologue from The Tender Trap about marriage's importance over a career]

Then, the Cold War heated up, and the Space Race focalized the difference between Western society and the Russian way-of-life. Suddenly, a series of Soviet aeronautic firsts shook America's complacency, questioning its supremacy. Seven red-blooded American men were cherrypicked to lift the morale of a nation to the moon. They had the "right stuff:" moxie, manliness, something primordial.

But a group of women could only watch from the sidelines. The doctor who chose the Mercury boys—Randolph Lovelace—tested 13 women, suspecting that women would make *better* astronauts. When his protégé, Jerrie Cobb, completed the tests, the results were stunning: she outperformed the men hands down. Girls flooded NASA with applications, but NASA categorically rejected women, citing "training criteria" the women couldn't match: an engineering degree—something John Glenn didn't have!—and jet test-piloting experience. Women—by law—were not allowed to enter the military to become jet pilots. When Jerrie aced the jet-test, in NASA's book, she crossed the line. All women's testing was cancelled abruptly.

Jerrie took her case to Washington, but Lyndon Johnson directed his aid: “Let’s stop this ... now.” The Mercury women called for a Congressional Hearing to show discrimination.

Jerrie’s testimony summed up the collective chagrin of the middle-class housewives of the early 60s: “It’s inconceivable that space would be restricted to men only, like some stag club. Let’s face it, for some women, the PTA is just not enough.”

In disdain for the Mercury women, John Glenn blurted out: “this gets back to the way our social order is organized. It’s just a fact. The men go off to fight wars and fly planes [...] The fact that women are not in this field is a fact of our social order.” With that, the hearing adjourned.

Then, on June 16, 1963, a 26-year old amateur parachute enthusiast put on a spacesuit, strapped into a Vostok capsule and quietly lifted into orbit, beaming with pride behind her helmet emblazed with the letters “USSR.” Her name was Valentina Tereshkova. A day earlier, she was an unknown Yaroslav textile worker. But she touched down a national hero, riding with Nikita Khrushchev in her own ticker-tape parade, flaunting Soviet technology and equality, perfectly represented by Tereshkova.

Western women stood in awe, while American politicians decried the coup as “cheap propaganda.”

[clip of Mercury 7 astronaut Scott Carpenter’s interview, where he equates Tereshkova’s accomplishment with that of a chimpanzee sent into space.]

Was Tereshkova’s flight really *just* propaganda?

Not at all. The Soviets had a long history of women’s self-actualization. The Bolshevik Revolution erased the ascriptive basis of political participation. A class-less society automatically assumed the equality of gender, bringing benevolent sexism to the nascent Union, decades before the US.

At first, women’s liberation was a *political dimension* of the socialist transformation: by tearing down patriarchic family units, the central state could spread the new socialist norm. After WWII, drawing women into the labor force became an *economic necessity*, after the Soviets suffered a 74 million population-loss.

This early stage did employ heavy propaganda to pull women into the workforce. By the end of the revolution, 15% of women participated in government; by the 40s, 50% comprised of the workforce. So, choosing a male and a female cosmonaut seemed natural. Tereshkova was an expert parachute jumper, joined the Air Force, learned to jet-pilot, and quickly gained the respect

of the entire cosmonaut core. Her flight upstaged the US because it was an inconceivable feat by American social standards. The barriers she broke down were in the US, not the Soviet Union.

Her flight had an indelible effect on American women. The landmark book that kickstarted the second wave of feminism, Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique*, got a second wind on the NY Times Bestseller list after Valentina's flight. A few months later, JFK's Presidential Commission on the Status of Women issued its scathing final report, *American Women*, in an effort to build on breaking barriers. Middle-class women would no longer be satisfied, relegated to homemaking.

Perhaps the most interesting outcome of the Tereshkova endeavor was the entirely diverging effect it had on Russian ground. Four months after touching down, Valentina married cosmonaut Andriyan Nikolayev in a wedding arranged by the Central Party and gave birth to their daughter soon after. In his memoir, Cosmonaut Training Director Kamanin noted: the union was "useful for politics ." But presenting Tereshkova as a young mother ran completely counter to the American claim of a propaganda stunt for *gender equality*. Why would the Central Party pressure the poster woman of *égalité* into marriage and motherhood?

Because bringing women into the workforce to rebuild the postwar economy came with an undesirable consequence: a significant drop in birthrates—a phenomenon that would concern any economist.

For the next decades, Tereshkova embodied the career cosmonaut, political activist, and doting mother, the ultimate propaganda coup de grâce. While raising her child, she earned the highest engineering degree, then became a member of the legislature, serving as an impeccable role model.

How could she do it all? The Soviet central plan's greatest realization was that—in order to engage women—the state had to invest in the *human capital*. In a novel way, child-bearing was treated as a *social service*. Public nurseries, kindergartens, and dining halls opened at ferocious rates. The school system was drastically expanded, since literacy was seen as a tool for successful inculcation. Women could return to work if they so chose—or stay home with pay.

There's a valuable take-away in this story: the line between mindful, central social planning, and propaganda is a very fine line. We forget that the definition of propaganda is not innately negative. It can foster unity, growth and patriotism, positively shaping generations, like Valentina did. To this day, she proudly wears her Hero of the Soviet Union medal, an award she very much earned and lived up to, inspiring generations of women to remember that: man made the first cars to take us over the road, the first train to carry the heavy load, that first boat, spaceship, and electrolight, but could not make the woman—in either America or the Soviet Union—his property right.

