The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

# Brezhnev Most Popular 20th-Century Leader, Poll Says

By The Moscow Times

May 21, 2013




Communist Party General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev is the country's most popular leader of the 20th century, according to a poll released Wednesday.

Fifty-six percent of respondents told the independent Levada Center pollster that they view Brezhnev's 18-year rule positively, whereas 50 percent said the same about Josef Stalin's 30 years in power, Kommersant reported.

Soviet reformer Mikhail Gorbachev and Russian President Boris Yeltsin were rated lowest in the survey. Negative assessments of their rule outweighed positive judgments by more than three times.

Experts said the poll results reflect a lack of historical knowledge and that people's recollections about their former leaders are colored by deeply ingrained myths.

"Stalin is synonymous with victory, Brezhnev with prosperity," political scientist Sergei Chernyakhovsky told the newspaper.

For Gorbachev and Yeltsin, however, the associations are less favorable.

"Gorbachev's rule ended in the collapse of the Soviet Union, which Russians still see as one of the catastrophes of the 20th century," said Alexei Grazhdankin, Levada Center's deputy director.

Boris Yeltsin evokes mixed feelings due to his 1992 reforms, as a result of which prices rose and businesses closed, he said, adding that people typically value stability over freedom.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/05/21/brezhnev-most-popular-20th-century-leader-poll-says-a24237