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Russians Say Soviet Rule Was 'Closer to People' Than Current Regime – Poll

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Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency

More people in Russia view the late Brezhnev era of the Soviet Union as "close to the people" than they do President Vladimir Putin's Russia, according to a survey by the independent Levada Center pollster.

Russians have expressed increasingly positive opinions about the Soviet Union over the years, with nostalgia toward the U.S.S.R. and Stalin hitting record highs in recent months. Putin's popularity has meanwhile been lagging amid widespread poverty and controversial pension reforms.

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According to Levada's results published Monday, 29% of Russian respondents described late 1970s-early 1980s Soviet rule as "close to people" when offered a list of choices.

A quarter of the respondents said Soviet rule was “strong and enduring,” 22% called it “just” and 20% “legitimate.”

When asked to characterize Russia's current leadership, 41% called it “criminal and corrupt” and 31% called it “distant from the people and alien.”

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Another 24% called the regime “bureaucratic,” 19% “shortsighted” and 15% “inconsistent.”

The poll’s methodology of giving multiple choices makes it less likely for respondents to provide the answer they think is expected from them, Lev Gudkov, the head of Levada, said in comments to the Vedomosti business daily.

Levada conducted the survey among 1,608 respondents between June 27 and July 4. Levada did not provide a breakdown of those surveyed by age.

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