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## IDEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE IN SOVIET ANTHEMS: FROM LENIN TO GORBACHEV

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores how Soviet national anthems functioned as ideological and rhetorical tools that reflected and shaped political authority across different leadership eras, from Lenin to Gorbachev. Drawing on Teun A. van Dijk's model of ideological discourse, particularly the construction of "us" versus "them" and the discursive polarisation of power, the research examines how anthem texts mirrored the political and social structures of their respective periods. Simultaneously, the analysis incorporates Aristotle's rhetorical appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos to reveal how these anthems aimed to legitimise authority, foster collective identity, and mobilise emotional engagement. For instance, the "International Anthem" of the Lenin era emphasised revolutionary unity and class struggle. At the same time, Stalin-era anthems glorified centralised leadership and heroic sacrifice, portraying loyalty to the state as loyalty to its leader. As leadership shifted, so did the thematic and rhetorical content of the anthems, reflecting the ideological moods of the

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Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods, with increasing emphasis on unity and peace. Ultimately, the findings demonstrate that Soviet anthems were not mere ceremonial compositions but powerful discursive instruments designed to reinforce hegemonic narratives, sustain ideological dominance, and shape Soviet identity across changing political landscapes.

**Keywords:** Soviet national anthems, ideological discourse, rhetorical analysis, identity construction, socialist propaganda.

## **SOVYET MARŞLARINDA İDEOLOJİK SÖYLEM: LENİN'DEN GORBAÇOV'A**

### **ÖZ**

Bu çalışma, Sovyet ulusal marşlarının Lenin'den Gorbaçov'a uzanan farklı liderlik dönemlerinde siyasi otoriteyi yansıtan ve biçimlendiren ideolojik ve retorik araçlar olarak nasıl işlev gördüğünü incelemektedir. Teun A. van Dijk'ın ideolojik söylem çözümlemesi modeli temel alınarak, özellikle “biz” ve “onlar” ikiliği ile iktidarın söylemsel kutuplaşması çerçevesinde, marş metinlerinin ait oldukları dönemlerin toplumsal ve siyasal yapısını nasıl yansıttığı analiz edilmektedir. Aynı zamanda, Aristoteles'in klasik retorik kuramı doğrultusunda ethos (güvenilirlik), pathos (duygusal etki) ve logos (mantıksal akıl yürütme) unsurları değerlendirilerek, marşların kolektif kimliği inşa etme, devlet otoritesini meşrulaştırma ve toplumsal duygulanımı yönlendirme işlevleri ortaya konmaktadır. Lenin döneminin “Enternasyonal Marşı”, devrimci bir kimlik ve sınıf mücadelesi ideallerine vurgu yaparken; Stalin döneminde marş söylemi, merkezi liderliği ve kahramanlık temalarını ön plana çıkararak lidere bağlılığı devlet sadakatiyle özdeşleştirmiştir. Sovyetler Birliği'nin siyasal yapısı değiştikçe marşların tematik ve retorik içeriği de dönüşmüş; Kruşçev ve Brejnev dönemlerinde birlik ve barış vurgusu ön plana çıkmıştır. Bulgular, Sovyet marşlarının yalnızca törensel müzik eserleri değil, aynı zamanda hegemonik söylemleri pekiştiren, ideolojik sürekliliği sağlayan ve Sovyet kimliğini yeniden üreten güçlü söylemsel araçlar olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sovyet ulusal marşları, ideolojik söylem, retorik analizi, kimlik inşası, sosyalist propaganda.

## INTRODUCTION

Ideology plays a crucial role in shaping the basic structure of society and determining the roles of individuals within that framework. Althusser (2010: 85) posits that ideology reflects social structures that influence people's consciousness to protect the interests of the ruling classes. This perspective provides a basis for understanding how Soviet anthems functioned as ideological state apparatuses, shaping collective consciousness through language and ritual performance. Similarly, Gramsci (2016) defines hegemony as the process of directing social structures by incorporating the cultural and ideological values of the ruling classes into society (Ayhan, 2018: 21-23). This framework is used to analyze how the anthems articulate consent and unity, constructing a hegemonic narrative that aligns popular sentiment with state power. Within this context, the ideological systems and cultural tools of the Soviet Union align directly with these theoretical frameworks. As Roth-Ey (2020) emphasizes, music, particularly state-sanctioned forms such as national anthems was employed by the Soviet regime as a performative extension of ideological power, reinforcing state legitimacy and shaping public emotion through sonic symbolism.

During Lenin's era, collectivist and revolutionary ideals were particularly prominent. Soviet anthems played a central role as propaganda tools, guiding the populace toward the socialist revolution and reinforcing a collective Soviet identity (Çelik, 2009: 95). Their lyrics and structure reflected the urgency of class struggle and the spirit of international solidarity.

Soviet music more broadly served not only as a form of aesthetic expression but also as a mechanism of ideological control. Frolova-Walker (2016: 3) emphasizes that Soviet cultural policies transformed music into a medium that "appeals to the masses," carried out through the doctrine of socialist realism. Taruskin (1997: 304) describes this musical ideology as "splendid but hollow," highlighting its embedded propagandistic structure. Fitzpatrick (1992: 116) similarly argues that music was part of the cultural front in the class struggle, used strategically to shape public consciousness. Soviet anthems transcended mere musical composition; they became powerful symbols for communicating the prevailing ideology to the public, fostering a common social identity, and bolstering the authority of the Soviet regime (Frolova-Walker, 2016: 49; Eagleton, 1991: 15). Their ideological significance extended beyond their lyrical content, closely tied to the cultural hegemony strategies of the time (Fairclough, 1992: 91; Ayhan, 2018: 41). Van Dijk's (1998: 69) approach to ideological discourse analysis illustrates how discourses legitimize

underlying power relations (Van Dijk, 2003: 353). While Althusser and Gramsci emphasize the role of ideology in sustaining hegemonic power through institutional and cultural means, Van Dijk focuses on how this power is linguistically encoded and reproduced through everyday discourse. Together, these perspectives offer both macro-level (structural) and micro-level (discursive) insights into how Soviet anthems conveyed and reinforced ideological authority. Within this framework, Soviet anthems served as tools that enhanced individuals' loyalty to the socialist revolution, Soviet identity, and the state, establishing specific ideological patterns in the minds of the populace (Kaplan, 2017: 58). These anthems were powerful instruments that facilitated the societal adoption of ideology while also playing a central role in shaping social identity and establishing Soviet ideology (Goldman, 2015: 143).

The use of Soviet anthems evolved in accordance with the prevailing ideological objectives of different periods. Particularly during Lenin's time, anthems were overtly implemented as ideological tools. For instance, the "Internationale" anthem emerged not just as music but as a potent symbol celebrating international labor movements and signifying revolutionary solidarity (Sablin, 2019: 72; Eagleton, 1991: 28). Under Lenin's guidance, these anthems were effectively leveraged to disseminate revolutionary consciousness among the people and deepen the sense of Soviet identity (Kelley, 1987: 112; McLennan, 2012: 57). During the Stalin era, anthems emerged as powerful tools of ideological consolidation, functioning not merely as cultural expressions but as instruments of hegemonic articulation. As Laclau (1981: 84) argues, political discourse achieves stability through symbolic unities that mask antagonisms a function that Soviet anthems performed by embedding the revolution's triumph into popular consciousness. This process mirrors what Hall, Lumley, and McLennan (2007: 119) describe as the cultural encoding of dominant ideology through ritualized forms. Similarly, Mitchell (2016: 101) highlights how state-sponsored music production in authoritarian regimes crafts emotional allegiance, further illustrating the anthem's propagandistic role in Stalinist cultural policy. The music of this period revolved around themes that encouraged adherence to socialist values and the Soviet identity. Under Khrushchev, the focus shifted to the relationship between Soviet socialism and international labor movements, with anthems continuing to convey ideological messages emphasizing global solidarity and the working class (Žižek, 2010: 91; Bell, 1990: 211). In contrast, during the Brezhnev era, nationalist elements gained prominence, as the anthems of this time glorified the strength of the Soviet people, their loyalty to the state, and national unity. These anthems played a significant role as cultural tools,

reinforcing socialist ideology while symbolizing national unity (Frolova-Walker, 2016: 193; Mardin, 1992: 33). The transformations in the content and themes of Soviet anthems throughout these periods clearly reflect the evolution of Soviet ideology and social structure over time (Therborn, 2008: 42; Tsipursky, 2016: 162). This study demonstrates that Soviet anthems functioned not merely as musical compositions but as potent instruments of ideological hegemony. It examines how these anthems shaped social identity and transmitted ideological messages across distinct political eras. While numerous studies have explored the concepts of ideology and hegemony—particularly in relation to discourse and power (Fairclough, 1992: 88; Foucault, 1987: 26) few have systematically investigated how such mechanisms operated through national anthems, especially in the Soviet context. By analyzing these anthems as rhetorical and ideological artifacts, this study offers a unique perspective on the intersection of music, discourse, and power.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Van Dijk's Ideological Discourse Analysis Model**

The study utilized Teun A. van Dijk's ideological discourse analysis model to analyze each anthem. This model examines the distinction between "us" and "them," ideological polarization, and various discursive strategies such as repetition, metaphor, and emphasis. It also explores social power relations and implicit messages within the texts. This analysis reveals the political discourses of the periods when the anthems were created, the nature of the relationship with the public, and how state ideology is reflected in language.

Each anthem was analyzed line-by-line through manual qualitative coding. Discursive elements related to Van Dijk's ideological square, such as positive self-presentation, negative other-presentation, and strategic use of agency, were identified in the lyrics. The coding process focused on lexical choices, rhetorical tropes, and syntactic emphasis that reflect ideological polarization. This allowed for a systematic evaluation of how group identity, power relations, and ideological positions were constructed across different anthems and leadership periods.

### **Aristotle's Model of Rhetorical Analysis**

In the second stage of the analysis, we used Aristotle's classical rhetorical framework to examine anthems based on three key components: the credibility of the speaker (ethos), emotional resonance

(pathos), and logical structure (logos). Each anthem was evaluated according to these rhetorical strategies, allowing us to uncover the ideological sentiments and beliefs they expressed.

This methodological approach enabled us to identify not only the formal differences among the anthems but also their contextual and functional variations. As a result, we could analyze the discursive transformation of the Soviet political regime over time from a multidimensional perspective. In applying Aristotle's framework, each anthem's lyrics were examined to identify explicit and implicit rhetorical devices aligned with ethos, pathos, and logos. Ethos markers included appeals to collective credibility and leadership authority; pathos was traced through emotionally charged language, nationalistic tone, and imagery of unity or sacrifice; logos was identified in appeals to historical continuity, socialist progress, and rational justification of state actions. This analysis enabled a layered understanding of how rhetorical strategies served ideological aims across different Soviet regimes. The specific anthems and historical periods included in this research are as follows.

To ensure analytical consistency, each anthem was examined using a qualitative thematic analysis guided by two overarching theoretical lenses: Van Dijk's ideological discourse framework and Aristotle's rhetorical model. The lyrics were manually coded based on key ideological constructs (e.g., us/them dichotomy, hegemonic symbols, appeals to authority) and rhetorical strategies (ethos, pathos, logos). No software-assisted coding was used; instead, interpretive analysis was performed by the researcher using an abductive reasoning approach.

As a limitation, the analysis is inherently interpretive, relying on theoretical insights rather than empirical validation. While this enables depth and contextual nuance, it may introduce subjectivity. Nevertheless, the comparative nature of the study and the triangulation of theoretical perspectives help mitigate bias and increase reliability.

### **Integration of the Two Frameworks**

Integrating these two frameworks presented both opportunities and challenges. While Van Dijk's model offers a structural and ideological analysis, Aristotle's approach is rooted in affective and persuasive dimensions. At times, aligning the sociocognitive dimensions of discourse analysis with classical rhetorical categories required interpretive flexibility. To address this, the two methods were applied sequentially: first, ideological patterns were identified using Van Dijk's tools; then, rhetorical analysis was used to frame how these ideologies were communicated and legitimized

through emotional and ethical appeals. This two-stage process ensured conceptual clarity while allowing cross-validation of findings from distinct analytical lenses.

### **Analytical Consistency and Limitations**

To ensure analytical consistency, each anthem was examined using a qualitative thematic analysis guided by these two overarching theoretical lenses. The lyrics were manually coded based on key ideological constructs (e.g., us/them dichotomy, hegemonic symbols, appeals to authority) and rhetorical strategies (ethos, pathos, logos). No software-assisted coding was used; instead, interpretive analysis was performed by the researcher using an abductive reasoning approach.

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### **1st Anthem - Lenin Era (1917-1924)**

**Name:** The Internationale (Revolutionary version)

**Characteristic:** Revolutionary call, class warfare, in the spirit of the Lenin era.

### **2nd Anthem - Stalin Period (1924-1953)**

**Name:** National Anthem of the Soviet Union (Stalin version)

**Characteristic:** Glorification of Lenin and especially Stalin, heroism and praise of the people.

### **3rd Anthem - Khrushchev Era (1955-1977)**

**Name:** National Anthem of the Soviet Union (post-Stalin version)

**Characteristic:** A more collective and people-centred discourse in which Stalin's name was removed.

### **4th Anthem - Brezhnev Era (1977-1985)**

**Name:** National Anthem of the Soviet Union (1977 post-constitutional version)

**Characteristic:** Lyrics unchanged, but the tone becomes more corporate, system-orientated.

### **5th Anthem - Gorbachev Era (1985-1991)**

**Name:** Version with unchanged lyrics but reduced discursive impact

**Characteristic:** The same anthem was used when the system collapsed, but it lost its ideological meaning. There was a disconnect between the reality of the anthem and the feelings of the people.

## **FINDINGS**

The Lenin era (1917–1924) marked the revolutionary inception of the Soviet state, characterized by the overthrow of the tsarist regime and the establishment of proletarian rule. This period's ideological discourse was heavily shaped by Marxist-Leninist principles, aiming to mobilize the masses through class consciousness, revolutionary solidarity, and anti-bourgeois sentiment (Hosking, 2017). In this ideological climate, The Internationale served not only as a symbolic anthem but also as a rhetorical weapon to awaken the proletariat, foster internationalism, and reject capitalist hegemony. The following analysis explores how this anthem articulated ideological aims using both discourse and classical rhetoric

### **1st Anthem - Lenin Period (1917-1924) The Internationale (Revolutionary version)**

Wake up, wake up from sleep,  
Break your chains, slave man,  
Take your rights, take your rights  
Labor is the supreme value!  
There is no salvation alone,  
Either all together or none!  
Our homeland is all over the world,  
We are all laborers!  
The International is marching,  
Humanity is a thundering army!  
The International is marching,  
This is the army of liberation!

### **Van Dijk's Ideological Discourse Analysis of The Internationale Anthem of the Lenin Period (1917-1924)**

Van Dijk (1998: 45) asserts that ideologies contribute to polarization by establishing group distinctions through language. In the analyzed anthem, laborers, slaves, and humanity are represented as "us," while "them," although not explicitly mentioned, implies the exploiting class.



This situation reflects what Van Dijk (2003: 357) describes as "ideological euphemism." The phrase "Break your chains, slave man" in the anthem aligns with Althusser's (2010: 25) view that the state suppresses individuals through its ideological apparatuses. The line "Altogether or none of us" strongly emphasizes the concept of collective liberation. According to Van Dijk (1998: 117), such collective identities are used in discourse to foster a sense of belonging to the "we" group. Gramsci (2016: 288) suggests that this approach seeks to transform the class into a historical subject through hegemonic discourse.

The phrase "Our homeland is all over the world" presents a discourse that opposes the idea of nationalism, as discussed in Billig's (1995: 10) concept of "banal nationalism." This replaces the traditional understanding of the nation-state with a class-based notion of universal citizenship. In this discourse, labor is valued positively. The use of imperative verbs such as "wake up" and "break" calls people to take direct action. Additionally, metaphors rooted in symbols like "chain," "army," and "march" provide a tangible and concrete dimension to the struggle (Van Dijk, 2003: 359).

However, the anthem's portrayal of a unified global working class may overlook the internal tensions and cultural diversities within the labor movement itself, idealizing solidarity as a universally shared experience.

### **Lenin Period (1917-1924) Rhetorical Analysis of The Internationale Anthem (Ethos, Pathos, Logos)**

Aristotle (4th century BC / 2007: 8,25) defines ethos as the credibility of the speaker. In this anthem, the focus is on a collective subject rather than an individual leader. The people represented are not a passive mass but an active subject. Phrases like "break your chain" and "wake up from sleep" are designed to evoke strong emotions. Fairclough (1992: 110) notes that this type of language is intended for emotional mobilization. By offering listeners hope for liberation from oppression, the anthem aligns with Aristotle's concept of pathetic rhetoric. The anthem possesses a simple yet effective logical structure: If you are a slave, you are chained → Break the chain → Be free. According to Eagleton (1991: 44), ideology becomes powerful by merging emotional and logical elements. This anthem effectively employs this strategy.

In summary, *The Internationale* encapsulates the revolutionary ethos of the Lenin era by rhetorically mobilizing the masses and ideologically framing labor as a universal identity marker.

Its discourse exemplifies Van Dijk's polarization between "us" (the working class) and "them" (the oppressors), while simultaneously invoking Althusser's concept of ideological state apparatuses. Compared to later periods, this anthem prioritizes transnational unity and revolutionary fervor over state-centered narratives. Thus, the Lenin-era discourse was defined more by collective struggle than by centralized authority, marking a unique ideological foundation for the subsequent transformation of Soviet hegemony.

### **2nd Anthem - Stalin Period (1924-1953) National Anthem of the Soviet Union (Stalin version)**

The Stalin era (1924–1953) marked the consolidation of centralized authority and the rise of a highly orchestrated ideological regime. This period saw the transformation of Soviet identity through the elevation of Stalin as the symbolic embodiment of national unity and revolutionary continuity. While Lenin's legacy was still invoked, Stalin's rule emphasized unwavering loyalty, industrial strength, and militaristic pride, supported by an extensive propaganda apparatus (Plamper, 2012; Khlevniuk, 2015). The Stalin-era anthem served as both a celebration of national triumph and a tool for legitimizing authoritarian rule. The analysis below examines how ideological discourse and rhetorical strategies were employed to reinforce collective identity, glorify leadership, and suppress dissent.

An indestructible union of free republics,  
Great Russia united forever.  
Long live the creation of the will of the people,  
United, strong Soviet Union!  
Be glorious, our free Motherland,  
A reliable fortress of friendship of peoples!  
Let the banner of the Soviets, the banner of the people,  
lead from victory to victory!  
Through the storms, the sun of freedom shone on us,  
And the great Lenin illuminated our path,  
We were brought up by Stalin to be true to the people,  
He inspired us to labor and do heroic deeds!  
We raised our army in battles,

We will clear the vile invaders from the road!  
We will fight to decide the fate of future generations,  
We will glorify our Motherland!

### **Stalin Period (1924-1953) National Anthem of the Soviet Union Van Dijk's Ideological Discourse Analysis**

In this anthem, "We " refers to the Soviet people, the army, the workers, and the leaders, while "They " signifies the "despicable invaders, " emphasizing a clear division between our heroism and their threat (Van Dijk, 1998: 45). The lines, "Lenin showed the way, Stalin educated us "align with Van Dijk's (2003: 356) strategy of "ideological sanctification of authority figures. " In this context, Stalin is portrayed as an instructive leader, and Lenin is treated as an almost sacred guide. As Fairclough (1992: 91) points out, leaders are transformed into legitimate authorities through language. This example supports Fairclough theory of "ideological legitimization "

The phrases "We raised our army in wars " and "May it lead us from victory to victory " evoke themes of war and victory, reconstructing the Soviet past around the notion of heroism. According to Eagleton (1991: 51), ideology controls collective memory by shaping historical narratives. The phrase "The banner of the Soviets, the banner of the people " illustrates symbols that Laclau (1981: 104) defines as "empty signifiers. " Their meanings are flexible and open to different ideological interpretations. In this case, the flag stands out as a symbol of unity, representing both the state and the people.

This glorification of leaders, while effective in building legitimacy, also silences dissent and alternative narratives, reinforcing a one-dimensional view of political loyalty.

### **Stalin Period (1924-1953) National Anthem of the Soviet Union Rhetorical Analysis (Ethos, Pathos, Logos)**

Lenin and Stalin are explicitly mentioned as leadership figures within the context of the state, which is metaphorically described as a "reliable fortress." This portrayal aligns with Gramsci's (2016: 211) concept of "ideological hegemony," suggesting that the state and its leaders have successfully gained the consent of the people. The text employs intense emotional imagery through metaphors such as "through storms," "the sun of freedom," and "from victory to victory." Such language fosters a sense of pride, resilience, and hope among listeners, especially in light of past suffering.

According to Fairclough (1992: 114), these "emotionally charged discourses" have the potential to mobilize the public effectively. The logical sequence presented is: "We fought in the past → We defeated the enemy → Our leaders charted our path → Now we will build the future." This supports Eagleton's (1991: 49) assertion that ideology employs a mechanism of persuasion by establishing a sense of logical continuity. Furthermore, Van Dijk (1998: 73) argues that power legitimizes itself by manipulating knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes through discourse.

In the anthem, the state is glorified using positive concepts such as "freedom," "fortress," and "victory," while the enemy is demeaned with terms like "inferiority." Leaders are idealized as sacred figures. These elements exemplify classical propaganda techniques, where ideology creates a one-sided reality.

The Stalin-era anthem illustrates a dramatic shift from revolutionary collectivism to leader-centered nationalism. Through metaphors of strength, purity, and victory, the text constructs an emotionally resonant discourse that aligns with both Van Dijk's theory of legitimizing power and Gramsci's notion of consent-based hegemony. While Lenin appears as a guiding figure, Stalin dominates the narrative as both moral and practical authority. This transformation signals an ideological transition from class-driven solidarity to a mythicized vision of the state, revealing the anthem's dual role as both a unifying cultural artifact and a coercive ideological instrument.

### **3rd Anthem - with Khrushchev lyrics (version used after 1955)**

Our unity is strong and unshakable,  
We live in the friendship of nations.  
Our Soviet homeland is great,  
With the unity of people forever!  
Be glorious, free Soviet land,  
Homeland filled with the brotherhood of peoples!  
May our flag fly high,  
May it lead the people from victory to victory!

### **Khrushchev Period (1955-1977) National Anthem of the Soviet Union (post-Stalin version)**

#### **Van Dijk's Ideological Discourse Analysis**

The Khrushchev era (1955–1977), known for de-Stalinization and relative liberalization, marked a rhetorical and ideological departure from the authoritarianism of the previous period. Nikita

Khrushchev aimed to humanize socialism by promoting peace, interethnic harmony, and scientific progress while reducing the cult of personality. This shift was reflected in the revision of the Soviet anthem, which removed direct references to Stalin and emphasized themes such as "friendship of peoples " and the unity of nations under socialism (Fitzpatrick, 2001; Jones, 2013). The following analysis explores how this softened ideological tone influenced both the language and rhetorical structure of the anthem during this transitional period.

Expressions like "our unity is strong," "we live," "our homeland," and "unity of peoples" create a strong collective identity, aligning with Van Dijk's (1998: 42) concept of "us-centered discourse." Rather than invoking the authoritarian image of a leader reminiscent of the Stalin era, the themes of "unity" and "brotherhood" take precedence. This shift reflects a softer strategy of hegemonization of power, as highlighted in Gramsci's theory of hegemony. The omission of Stalin's name from the discourse exemplifies Van Dijk's (1998: 89) concept of "discursive erasure," where ideological transformation is subtly manifested through absence rather than explicit expression. The phrase "We live in the friendship of nations" serves as rhetoric that legitimizes the multinational composition of the Soviet Union. Drawing from Billig's (1995: 15) idea of "banal nationalism," such discussions of national identity become commonplace yet effective through their repetitive use in everyday language. While earlier narratives focused on war, military might, victory, and adversaries, the Khrushchev era saw these themes diminish in favor of discourses centered on unity and peace. Fairclough (1992: 102) notes that these shifts preserve the ideological function of discourse through a process of "reframing."

Although the tone is more peaceful and inclusive, this discursive shift may also function as a strategy to depoliticize dissent by framing unity as natural and unquestionable.

### **Khrushchev Period (1955-1977) National Anthem of the Soviet Union (post-Stalin version)** **Rhetorical Analysis (Ethos, Pathos, Logos)**

The most striking aspect of this anthem is that it places the people at the forefront, rather than emphasizing the leader figures. The state and its citizens are presented as equals. This perspective aligns with Aristotle's (2007: 18) definition of "subjects sharing common values. " Phrases like "be glorious, free Soviet land " and "our flag is high " evoke a sense of belonging and pride in the listener. Unlike the fear or heroism emphasized during the Stalin era, this anthem highlights peaceful devotion. The basic logic of the message can be summarized as follows: Different nations

→ They came together → A strong union was formed → The homeland will endure forever. This structure aligns with Eagleton's (1991: 50) concept of the "logical constructivism of ideology "

The absence of Stalin's name, while using the same melody, can be understood through Laclau and Mouffe's (1985: 112) theory of the "empty signifier." In this sense, the anthem serves as an ideological vessel that can be imbued with different meanings over time. Although Stalin's name is not mentioned, the core of the discourse remains state-centered and people-oriented. Van Dijk (2003: 360) refers to such changes as the "strategic reformatting of discourse." Here, the content is preserved while the form is updated.

The Khrushchev-era anthem represents a rhetorical recalibration in Soviet discourse, where unity and peace replaced earlier motifs of heroism and sacrifice. Van Dijk's model reveals how implicit messages about inclusion and harmony were deployed to re-legitimize the regime, while Gramsci's theory explains this as a hegemonic adjustment in response to sociopolitical pressure. The relative absence of personalized leadership marks a shift toward collective subjectivity and ideological inclusivity. By depersonalizing power and promoting interethnic solidarity, the anthem redefined Soviet identity as a peaceful, modern socialist union—yet remained firmly within the ideological bounds of state control.

The Khrushchev era marked a transitional phase in the ideological discourse of the Soviet Union. By toning down the authoritarian glorification of leadership and emphasizing unity among nations, the anthem reflected the broader political reforms and de-Stalinization efforts of the period. Unlike the earlier periods, which were driven by revolutionary zeal or cults of personality, the Khrushchev-era anthem prioritized a rhetorical tone of peaceful coexistence and national brotherhood. This shift in emphasis reveals an evolving strategy in hegemonic discourse—from dominance through fear to unity through consent—echoing Gramsci's view of soft power and Van Dijk's focus on discursive repositioning. Thus, the Khrushchev anthem represents a discursive recalibration where the power of ideology lies more in its ability to subtly shape collective consciousness than to enforce obedience through authority.

#### **4th Anthem - of the Brezhnev Era - 1977 National Anthem of the Soviet Union (1977 post-constitutional version)**

With indestructible friendship, the people united,  
built a new life with Soviet power.

This is the land of work, peace, and freedom -  
The Soviet Motherland is the pride of the people!  
Be glorious, our great Soviet Motherland,  
You created the brotherhood of people!  
May our flag wave triumphantly,  
May the Soviet people march to victory!

### **Anthem of the Brezhnev Era - 1977 National Anthem of the Soviet Union Van Dijk's Ideological Discourse Analysis**

The main theme highlighted in the anthem is the "friendship of peoples " and how it is fostered by the Soviet system. Van Dijk (1998: 39) notes that one of the crucial aspects of ideological discourse is its ability to strengthen in-group solidarity while creating a distinction that separates the out-group. In this anthem, there is no explicit enemy; instead, unity and communal life take center stage. The phrase "A new life was established with Soviet power " serves as a typical example of how the success of the system is ideologically legitimized.

There are no direct references to Lenin or Stalin in the anthem. Instead of focusing on a heroic leader, the emphasis is placed on the overall success of the system. This aligns with what Van Dijk (2003: 363) describes as "the repositioning of social actors in an ideological context." Here, power is not attributed to individuals but is represented through the functioning of the system.

As Eagleton (1991: 53) points out, the phrase "this is the land of work, peace, and freedom " exemplifies how ideology is presented by making certain values appear universal and natural. This strategy, known as "naturalization, " renders these values unquestionable.

The anthem's avoidance of conflict or leadership focus may be seen not only as systematization of ideology but also as the normalization of ideological routine—risking rhetorical stagnation and loss of mobilizing power.

### **Anthem of the Brezhnev Era - 1977 National Anthem of the Soviet Union Rhetorical Analysis (Ethos, Pathos, Logos)**

The sentence "A new life was established with Soviet power" suggests that the system is portrayed as a reassuring entity. In this context, it is not the individual leader who is emphasized, but rather the collective structure of the state and society. This structure aligns with Aristotle's (2007: 18)

understanding of ethos and Gramsci's definition of hegemony, which centers on obtaining the consent of the people.

The pathos strategy is developed through a sense of collective belonging, illustrated by phrases like "It is the pride of the peoples" and "Be glorious, our great Soviet homeland." These sentiments are rooted not in conflict or hostility but in ideals of peace, labor, and loyalty to the system.

The main arguments of the logos strategy highlight that the Soviet system united the peoples and provided peace and work; as a result, the people take pride in this order. According to Eagleton (1991: 49), such cause-and-effect structures align with the logical framework of ideological apparatuses.

In the post-1985 period, the 1977 Brezhnev-era anthem continued to be used officially. However, the policies of perestroika (restructuring) and glasnost (openness) initiated by Gorbachev marked the start of a new era at the discursive level. During this time, the anthem became incompatible with the prevailing context: while the state discourse was shifting, the anthem continued to glorify the Soviet system. The details of this contradiction are further explored in the following analysis.

The Brezhnev era's anthem reflects a shift toward bureaucratic stability and institutional continuity, rather than revolutionary fervor or charismatic leadership. The discourse centers on collective pride, peace, and productivity, portraying the Soviet state as the natural culmination of historical progress. However, this emphasis on order and unity also signals an ideological saturation, where repetition and standardization dilute emotional appeal. While rhetorical strategies still utilize ethos and pathos, they increasingly rely on routine rather than inspiration. This transformation supports Van Dijk's view of discourse as a stabilizing mechanism and aligns with Gramsci's theory that hegemonic power, once normalized, can become rigid and vulnerable to ideological fatigue.

### **5<sup>th</sup> Anthem - Gorbachev Era (1985-1991) 1977 National Anthem of the Soviet Union**

#### **Anthem in the Gorbachev Era: Same Words, Changing Meaning**

In the 1977 version, phrases like "We have built a new life with Soviet power" and "Homeland full of the brotherhood of peoples" reflect a specific ideology. However, the reality was quite different:

- Soviet power weakened.
- Unity among the peoples gave way to disunity.
- The economic crisis deepened.
- Demands for independence became widespread.



## **Van Dijk's Ideological Discourse Analysis of the Gorbachev Period (1985-1991)**

### **Discursive Gap and Crisis Approach**

According to Van Dijk (1998: 137), "discourse-structure contradictions" occur when ideological discourse deviates from reality. During the Gorbachev era, despite the anthem emphasizing values such as unity, strength, and brotherhood, society presented a very different picture. This disconnect caused the discourse to lose its social legitimacy.

While the anthem proclaimed "Soviet power," people were standing in long grocery store queues. Although "fraternity" was highlighted, separatism was increasing in the Baltics and the Caucasus. This situation marked the moment when the discourse began to collapse.

This discursive dissonance ultimately exposes the fragility of ideological tools when they become disconnected from the socio-political realities they aim to reflect.

### **The Gorbachev Era (1985–1991) Rhetorical Analysis Loss of Credibility (Ethos & Logos Crisis)**

The state's rhetoric no longer inspired confidence among the people. According to Aristotle (2007: 18), the foundation of credibility is ethos, which is lacking in this situation. In terms of the Logos strategy, the anthem, which proclaimed "The system works → the people are happy," no longer reflected social reality. Eagleton (1991: 61) argues that when an ideological structure collapses, a "meaning gap" arises. During the period of glasnost, the public was able to speak openly about many issues, yet the anthem remained unchanged. This situation can be viewed as a form of "ideological silence," where discursive dissonances are inevitable during times of ideological crisis. A "hegemonic conflict" occurs here: the old discourse has become ineffective, but a new one has yet to be fully established.

The Gorbachev era exposed the widening gap between ideological discourse and socio-political reality. While the official anthem retained the language of unity and strength, the lived experience of citizens was marked by economic crisis, national fragmentation, and political uncertainty. This dissonance resulted in a breakdown of rhetorical legitimacy what Aristotle defines as a collapse of ethos and logos. From Van Dijk's perspective, the anthem exemplifies a failure in discourse strategy where institutional language loses its persuasive power. Gramsci's notion of a hegemonic

crisis is also evident, as the consent that once sustained Soviet power eroded without a coherent alternative narrative. Thus, the anthem became a symbol not of unity, but of ideological inertia.

### Comparative Analysis / Synthesis of Rhetorical Periods

Feature / Period	1. Anthem (Lenin Era)	2. Anthem (Stalin Era)	3. Anthem (Khrushchev Era)	4. Anthem (Brezhnev Era)	5. Anthem (Gorbachev Era)
Tone of Discourse	Revolutionary, mobilizing	Nationalist & glorifying leader	Proud, unifying	Enterprise, order-centric	Ceremonial but hollow, a reflection of the period of dissolution
Leader Emphasis	Lenin & Stalin are explicitly mentioned	Stalin is the central figure	It never passes	It never passes, the system is glorified	It never goes away, the leader figure disappears
The , "Us- Them Distinction	Net: people vs. invaders	Clearly emphasizing the enemy and external threat	Implied: past threat	Dim: enemy undefined, unity inward	None: ideological distinctions are blurred, unity dissolves
Pathos (Emotion)	Very high: anger & hope	High: heroism & loyalty	Medium-high: courage & pride	Middle: belonging & loyalty	Weak: emotional connection with the public is lost
Logos (Logic)	Revolution = liberation	Stalin = guide, homeland = sacred	Unity = freedom	Socialism = immutability and norm	Emphasis on a system that contradicts reality
Ethos (Legitimacy)	The leader figure speaks	Stalin is spoken for	The people speak	The system speaks, the people are the collective subject	There is no subject of the discourse, credibility has fallen

Ideological Message	Class war and revolution	Patriotic heroism & praise of the leader	Socialist People's Union	Loyalty to the regime, defense of the status quo	Disbelief, ideological vacuum
Rhetorical Strategy	Command repeat: Arise!	& Metaphor sublimation galore	& Exaltation, metaphors and enthusiasm	Constant repetition, Routine repetition and standardized ideological	Routine repetition has lost its medium status
Choir Collective Voice	/ Mass revolutionary call	The power of society is reflected in the leader	Voice of national unity	Ritualistic and static discourse	Symbolic but ineffective, empty collective voice

*Table 1. Comparison of Soviet Marches in Periods and Rhetoric.*

Across the five Soviet leadership eras, the national anthems reveal not only distinct ideological narratives but also evolving rhetorical techniques that reflect shifting hegemonic strategies. Van Dijk's emphasis on linguistic polarization and discursive strategies is particularly visible in the Stalin and Lenin periods, where language delineates "us " vs. "them " and mobilizes emotional urgency. Gramsci's concept of hegemony becomes increasingly relevant in the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras, where the emphasis shifts from coercion to consent, and from leadership-centered discourse to system-centered legitimacy. Meanwhile, Aristotle's rhetorical triad (ethos, pathos, logos) allows us to trace how emotional resonance and credibility fluctuate: highly charged and persuasive under Lenin and Stalin, increasingly ceremonial and hollow under Brezhnev and Gorbachev. This theoretical triangulation demonstrates how discourse operates not merely as a tool of state communication but as a mirror of ideological vitality or exhaustion. It is in the collapse of this rhetorical coherence during Gorbachev's era that the anthem loses its function as a unifying symbol highlighting how form without resonance fails to sustain hegemony.

## DISCUSSION

Through the lens of Van Dijk's (1998: 43) ideological discourse analysis, these anthems have crafted a collective sense of "we" across various eras, seeking to influence and guide public sentiment using ethos, pathos, and logos at a rhetorical level.

The "International Anthem," written during Lenin's era, transcends mere entertainment; it functions as an ideological instrument. Through its discourse, it defines and mobilizes oppressed peoples, aiming to foster a universal class consciousness. When examining this anthem alongside Van Dijk's (2006: 363) theories on discourse and manipulation, Gramsci's concept of hegemony, and Aristotle's rhetorical framework, it becomes evident that this anthem serves as both a political and rhetorical weapon of struggle.

In contrast, the anthem from the Stalin era focuses on creating a national identity and unity, sanctifying authority through the cult of the leader, and directing public sentiment by both antagonizing enemies and glorifying heroes. It shapes societal perceptions on emotional and cognitive levels through its rhetorical and ideological strategies. Unlike the universalist labor discourse in the Lenin period, Stalin's anthem embraces a national, militaristic, and leader-centered ideology, diverging significantly from the International Anthem.

The Soviet anthem of the Khrushchev era shifted away from the leader-centric, triumphant, and militaristic rhetoric of Stalin's time. Instead, it emphasized the unity of the people and themes of peaceful coexistence. According to Van Dijk's discourse analysis, this anthem employs the strategy of "erasing the figure of the leader" at the discursive level while still constructing a collective identity. Rhetorically, it adopts a softer tone based on unity, brotherhood, and belonging.

Consequently, while continuing to reflect Soviet ideology, the anthem was recontextualized through the process of de-Stalinization. The Soviet anthem of the Brezhnev era completely overcame the authoritarian, belligerent, and leader-centered discourse characteristic of Stalin's time. It established a rhetoric focused on the system's achievements, the unity of the populace, and an environment of peace. According to Van Dijk's analysis, this anthem reproduces ideology in a system-centered manner rather than a leader-centric one, fostering popular consent through a peaceful and proud sense of belonging, consistent with Gramsci's concept of hegemony. Rhetorically, the elements of ethos, pathos, and logos work together to create an identity that is integrated with the system.

Although the form of the Soviet anthem remained unchanged during the Gorbachev era, the ideological themes it conveyed increasingly diverged from the social realities of the time, rendering it an empty and ineffective propaganda tool. Van Dijk's analysis of discourse identifies this as the moment when an anthem loses its hegemonic influence. Rhetorically, the collapse of ethos and

logos indicates that the state can no longer persuade its citizens, reducing the anthem to a symbolic void for that era.

In general terms, while the International Anthem of the Lenin period promoted a radical discourse centered on revolutionary collectivism, class solidarity, and universal labor, the Stalin-era anthem adopted a more authoritarian and nationalistic tone, emphasizing the cult of individual leadership, militarism, and anti-enemy sentiment. The Khrushchev era shifted the focus away from the post-Stalin leader, praising system successes through collective popular unity and peace. During Brezhnev's time, this discourse became increasingly institutionalized, transforming into a propaganda tool that linked the system with themes of peace, work, and freedom. By the Gorbachev period, the disconnect between the anthem's discourse and social reality had become evident; while the anthem persisted symbolically, it lost its ideological efficacy. Although its rhetoric did not change, society did. This phenomenon can be elucidated through Van Dijk's concepts of "discursive crisis," Eagleton's "ideological vacuum," and Fairclough's "loss of legitimacy."

While both Van Dijk's discourse analysis and Gramsci's concept of hegemony explain how power operates through language, they do so from complementary yet distinct perspectives. Van Dijk focuses on the micro-level strategies of discourse—how repetition, lexical choices, or pronoun usage encode ideology. In contrast, Gramsci conceptualizes hegemony at a more structural level, as the means by which ruling ideas become common sense through civil society and consent. Thus, the Soviet anthems' rhetorical strategies (ethos, pathos, logos) identified through Van Dijk's lens gain deeper meaning when understood within Gramsci's hegemonic framework—especially in periods like the Brezhnev era, where ideological legitimacy was not enforced but internalized by the public. This theoretical juxtaposition enables a richer interpretation of how language and ideology interact in nationalistic contexts.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study contributes to discourse analysis by offering a comparative rhetorical and ideological examination of Soviet national anthems across different regimes, a topic rarely analyzed in such a longitudinal and systematic manner. It also expands the scope of musicology by integrating classical rhetorical theory and ideological critique into the analysis of national anthems as politically charged texts, rather than solely cultural or artistic expressions. Through these analytical

tools, Soviet anthems are shown to function as ideological apparatuses that reflect state power, shape collective identity, and respond to shifting political realities.

The framework employed here combining Van Dijk's ideological discourse analysis with Aristotle's rhetorical theory can be extended to other contexts. Future research might investigate national anthems in other socialist or post-socialist countries, such as China or Vietnam, or apply this framework to non-musical state discourse like political speeches or school textbooks. Theoretically, this study offers a model for integrating discourse analysis with musicology and political communication, enriching our understanding of how ideology operates across cultural forms.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This study opens several avenues for future research. First, comparative analyses between Soviet national anthems and those of other socialist or post-socialist states such as China, Vietnam, or Cuba may reveal how different ideological regimes utilize music as a discursive tool. Such a comparative approach can broaden our understanding of how political power and cultural expression intersect in varying historical and geopolitical contexts.

Second, the methodological framework combining Van Dijk's ideological discourse analysis with Aristotle's rhetorical theory can be applied to other forms of state discourse beyond anthems. For instance, school textbooks, official speeches, or national holidays may similarly encode ideological content. Exploring such texts could further illuminate how states construct, sustain, or lose hegemonic authority.

Third, incorporating audience reception studies or media analysis could complement this study's textual focus. Understanding how citizens responded to or internalized anthem messages in different eras would offer deeper insights into the actual ideological influence of these anthems.

Finally, integrating digital tools such as corpus linguistics or software-assisted discourse analysis may increase the replicability and empirical robustness of future studies. This would also address the limitations of purely interpretive analysis and support the growing interdisciplinary dialogue between political communication, musicology, and discourse studies.

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## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Sovyetler Birliği döneminde kullanılan beş farklı ulusal marşın ideolojik söylem ve retorik yapısını analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma, Lenin'den Gorbaçov'a kadar uzanan yaklaşık yetmiş yıllık dönemi kapsamakta ve her bir marşın, üretildiği tarihsel bağlamın sosyo-politik koşullarına göre nasıl şekillendiğini ortaya koymayı hedeflemektedir. Marşlar yalnızca müzikal eserler değil; aynı zamanda dönemin hegemonik ideolojisinin sembolik temsilleri ve



siyasal iktidarın meşruiyet stratejilerinin sözcüleridir. Bu çerçevede analizler, Teun A. van Dijk'in ideolojik söylem çözümleme modeli ile Aristoteles'in *ethos*, *pathos* ve *logos* temelli retorik kuramı dikkate alınarak gerçekleştirilmiştir.

İdeolojinin dilsel düzlemde nasıl inşa edildiğini anlamak, özellikle totaliter rejimlerde iktidarın kendini nasıl yeniden ürettiğini analiz etmek açısından kritik öneme sahiptir. Ulusal marşlar, devletin resmi ideolojisinin en yoğun ve doğrudan ifade edildiği metinler arasında yer alır. Bu yönüyle marşlar yalnızca ulusal birlik ve gurur temalarını değil; aynı zamanda belirli bir tarihsel anlatıyı, düşman imgelerini ve meşruiyet stratejilerini de içinde barındırır. Marşların içerdiği metaforlar, tekrar eden ifadeler ve çağrışıl söylemler yalnızca retorik değil; aynı zamanda iktidarın ideolojik kodlarını iletmekte kullanılan araçlardır.

Sovyetler Birliği'nin ilk dönemlerinde kullanılan Enternasyonal Marşı, proleter enternasyonalizmini yücelten; işçi sınıfının küresel ölçekteki kurtuluş mücadelesine odaklanan ve devrimci bilinç inşa etmeyi amaçlayan güçlü bir söyleme sahiptir. "Zincirini kır ", "ayağa kalk " "gibi eyleme çağırın ifadeler yalnızca bireysel direnişi değil, kolektif devrimci bir öznenin inşasını da teşvik eder. Bu retorik, Van Dijk'in söylem analizinde sıkça karşılaşılan "biz"ve "onlar " ayrımını net bir biçimde kurar: "Biz " ezilen işçi sınıfını, "onlar " ise sömürücü kapitalist düzeni temsil etmektedir. Bu ayrımın inşası, ideolojik kutuplaşmayı artırarak kolektif dayanışmayı meşrulaştırır. Ethos, halkın kendi kendini temsil etme hakkını meşrulaştırırken; pathos üzerinden öfke, umut ve devrimci coşku gibi yoğun duygular harekete geçirilir. Logos ise devrimci eylemin kaçınılmazlığına dayanan bir mantıksal çerçeve sunar: Zincirler kırılırsa, özgürlük mümkün olur. Stalin döneminde kullanılan marş ise daha farklı bir ideolojik formasyona sahiptir. Bu dönemde marşın dili, lider merkezli söylemi ön plana çıkaran ve neredeyse bir tür kişilik kültü oluşturan temsillerle örülüdür. Marшта sıkça geçen "Stalin bizi yetiştirdi ", "zaferden zafere koşturdu " gibi ifadeler, liderin halkla özdeşleştirilmesini sağlayarak onun ideolojik olarak kutsanmasına zemin hazırlar. Bu söylem biçimi, düşman imgesini de pekiştirir. Düşman dışsallaştırılmış; tehdidin varlığı, halkı bir arada tutan önemli bir faktör hâline gelmiştir. Bu bağlamda pathos ögesi kahramanlık, sadakat ve fedakârlık gibi temalarla desteklenirken; logos da tarihsel başarıların sürekliliği üzerinden yapılandırılmıştır. Ethos burada halktan çok liderin kişiliğiyle ilişkilidir. Bu bakımdan halkın meşruiyeti, lidere olan sadakat üzerinden inşa edilir. Retorik açıdan bu marş, halkı pasif kılan değil; lider etrafında seferber eden bir söylem örneğidir.

Kruşçev döneminde, Stalin sonrası yaşanan ideolojik çözülmeyle birlikte, ulusal marşlarda daha yumuşak, kolektif kimliği öne çıkaran ve halklar arasında birlik vurgusuna dayalı bir dil hâkim olmuştur. "Halkların dostluğu ", "birlik ve beraberlik " gibi kavramlar, çok uluslu Sovyet yapısının ideolojik bütünlüğünü sağlamaya yönelik bir çabanın göstergesidir. Van Dijk'in "söylemsel silme " stratejisi burada açıkça görülür: Stalin'in ismi marşlardan çıkarılmış; lider figürü yerini kolektif öznelere bırakmıştır. Ethos bu kez halkın kendi içinde kurduğu birlik üzerinden inşa edilirken; pathos, barış, kardeşlik ve karşılıklı güven temalarına dayanır. Logos ise bu çok uluslu birliğin Sovyet halklarını refaha taşıyacağı fikrine dayalıdır. Retorik olarak halkı ortak geçmişte buluşturup geleceğe yönelik bir umut inşa eden bir söylem ortaya çıkmıştır.

Brejnev dönemi, Sovyet sisteminin kurumsallaştığı, ideolojinin ise daha durağanlaştığı bir dönemdir. Bu dönemin marşlarında belirgin bir biçimde sistemin başarılarına vurgu yapılmakta; bireysel liderlerden çok, Sovyet rejiminin istikrarı ön plana çıkarılmaktadır. "Sovyet gücüyle yeni bir yaşam kurduk " gibi ifadeler, halkın yaşam standartlarının rejim sayesinde yükseldiğini ima eder. Bu söylem, artık doğrudan bir devrim çağrısı değil; var olan sistemin meşruiyetini koruma amacını güder. Pathos, çalışkanlık, barış ve sosyal adalet gibi evrensel değerlere yaslanırken; logos ise geçmiş başarıların bugünkü istikrarı mümkün kıldığı varsayımı üzerine kuruludur. Bu dönemde söylem, ideolojinin artık sistematik ve teknokratik bir düzenle temsil edildiğini ortaya koyar.

Gorbaçov dönemine gelindiğinde, ulusal marşların söylemi ile toplumsal gerçeklik arasında ciddi bir uyumsuzluk dikkat çekmektedir. Glasnost (açıklık) ve Perestroyka (yeniden yapılanma) politikalarıyla birlikte Sovyet toplumu daha şeffaf ve eleştirel bir yapıya evrilirken, marş söylemleri hala geçmişin ideolojik övgüsünü sürdürmektedir. Bu durum, Van Dijk'in "söylemsel kriz " kavramıyla örtüşmektedir. Söylem ile sosyal pratik arasındaki kopukluk, ideolojinin hegemonik etkisini yitirmesine yol açmıştır. Eagleton'un "ideolojik boşluk " tanımı da bu durumu desteklemektedir: Eski söylem geçerliliğini kaybetmiş; fakat yerine konulacak yeni bir ideoloji henüz kurumsallaşmamıştır. Bu bağlamda ethos unsuru işlevini yitirir, çünkü halk söyleme inanmamaktadır. Pathos ise toplumsal duyguları harekete geçirmekten uzak kalmakta; logos ise artık gerçeklikle bağdaşmamaktadır.

Sonuç olarak, Sovyet ulusal marşları yalnızca devletin resmî müzikleri değil; aynı zamanda dönemlerinin siyasal iklimini, ideolojik kodlarını ve toplumsal tahayyüllerini yansıtan güçlü söylemsel yapılardır. Her bir marş, üretildiği dönemin siyasal mantığına göre şekillenmiş; halkı harekete geçirme, yönlendirme, bütünleştirme ve iktidarın meşruiyetini pekiştirme gibi işlevler

üstlenmiştir. Van Dijk'in söylem çözümleme modeliyle ele alındığında, bu marşlar toplumsal kimlik inşasında etkili; retorik açıdan ise hem duygusal hem de mantıksal ikna araçlarını ustalıkla kullanan metinler olarak değerlendirilebilir. Bu yönüyle Sovyet marşları, lider figürlerinin meşruiyet stratejilerinden sistemin ideolojik evrimine kadar geniş bir çerçevede okunmayı hak eden tarihsel belgelerdir. Buna ek olarak, Sovyet marşlarının ideolojik işlevi yalnızca içerik üzerinden değil; aynı zamanda performans biçimleriyle de ilişkilidir. Marşların törenlerde, devlet etkinliklerinde ya da eğitim kurumlarında tekrar edilmesi, söylemin ritüelleştirilerek güçlenmesine katkı sağlamıştır. Böylece marşlar, sadece bir propaganda aracı değil; aynı zamanda kolektif hafızayı şekillendiren birer kültürel pratik haline gelmiştir. Dolayısıyla bu marşlar, ideolojinin yeniden üretiminde hem dilsel hem de kültürel semboller olarak tarihsel öneme sahiptir.