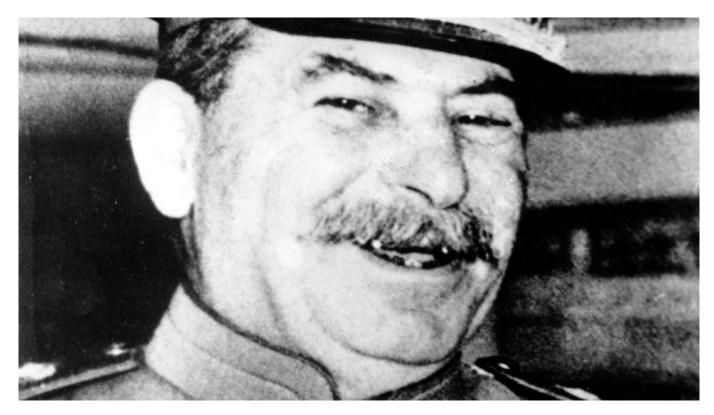


Stalin's Popularity in Russia Reaches 16-Year High

February 15, 2017



Josef Stalin AP Photo

More Russians approve of Soviet⊠dictator Josef Stalin now than at any time over the past 16 years, a⊠survey by the

independent Levada Center pollster revealed Wednesday.

Some 46 percent of respondents viewed⊠Stalin positively, compared with 21 percent who said that they hated⊠or feared the former leader. Another 22 percent described themselves⊠as merely "indifferent."

Most Russians — 32 percent — said⊠that they looked upon Stalin "with respect." Ten percent said⊠that they had "sympathetic views," while four percent said that⊠they looked upon the leader with "admiration." The survey results show Stalin's popularity at a 16-year high, according to Levada Center⊠data.

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Despite the surge of admirers, Stalin still was not able to steal the title of most beloved Russian leader from current Russian President Vladimir Putin.

A huge 49 percent of Russians said that they respected Putin, with another 24 percent claiming to admire him or "have sympathetic views toward him." Less than 5 percent held negative views, while just 10 percent were indifferent.

The survey was carried out between Jan. 20 and 23 among 1,600 people in 48 Russian regions.

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