

MASCULINITY AND THE SEXUAL POLITICS OF SELF AND OTHER  
IN SOVIET POLITICAL CARTOONS, 1945-1955

by

ERICA LEE FRASER

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Department of HISTORY

The University of British Columbia  
Vancouver, Canada

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### Abstract

This study examines masculine imagery in the foreign affairs cartoons in *Krokodil*, a Soviet satirical magazine, from 1945 to 1955. Both the Soviet Union's leaders and its people faced two major issues in this time period: rebuilding the country after the devastation of the Second World War, and descending into the Cold War battle of ideology with the West. Enemy countries in the cartoons are almost always portrayed as male figures, and the cartoons manipulate the masculine images to denote power relationships between countries, and also between men.

As in many countries that fought in the war, the Soviet Union prioritized rebuilding the family in postwar society. The catastrophic loss of life, particularly among the male population, made this task more difficult in the Soviet Union. The state therefore employed a variety of tactics to promote the family, and to ensure that men assumed their proper positions as husbands and fathers. Using *Krokodil*'s cartoons to promote masculine identity among Soviet men – and demeaning it among enemy men – was one such method.

The major argument of the paper is that the cartoons featuring enemy countries commented not only on those enemies, but on the domestic situation in the Soviet Union as well. Borrowing and building on the language of postcolonial theory, this paper argues that the Soviet Union defined itself against the characteristics it assigned to the enemy. The dichotomy of self and other in the cartoons extends past that of the Soviet Union and its national enemies, to the Soviet man and enemies to his masculinity. By portraying the country's enemies in various homoerotic situations in the cartoons, the Soviet Union sought to delegitimize the potency of the enemy, while also signaling to the Soviet population that the unmasculine behavior associated with the enemy in the cartoons would not be tolerated in the Soviet Union.

Drawing on a wide range of literature, including studies of humor and satire, art and visual iconography, gender, masculinity, and queer theory, this paper uses the medium of political cartoons to link issues of sexuality with postwar reconstruction and Cold War animosity in the Soviet Union between 1945 and 1955.

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## Introduction

The image of man, as George Mosse has written, betrays “the fears and hopes of modern society.”<sup>1</sup> Memories of the past, struggles through the present, and expectations for the future are often projected onto the male form. The masculinization of a society’s self-image is evident in the Soviet Union in the decade following the Second World War. This paper examines male imagery in Soviet society from 1945 to 1955, particularly the way male imagery was used in political cartoons to influence society’s image of man, which in many ways represented its image of itself. The sources for this imagery are the political cartoons that appeared in *Krokodil*, a Soviet satirical magazine, from 1945 to 1955, when Soviet society faced two major issues: domestic recovery from the Second World War, and increasing Cold War tension with the West. These two issues – one concerning the Soviet self, one concerning the foreign other – overlap in *Krokodil*’s foreign affairs cartoons during this time period. Although *Krokodil* also published cartoons dealing solely with domestic issues such as agriculture, bureaucracy, or even shopping, its foreign affairs cartoons offered the most explicit commentary on self and other, as represented by the male form. Approximately one third of the total cartoons in each issue from 1945 to 1955 feature images of enemy countries, such as Britain, Spain, West Germany, Yugoslavia, Japan, and the ultimate enemy, the United States. The enemy countries are almost always portrayed as male figures, and the cartoons manipulate the masculine images to depict varying power relationships between countries, and between men. Cartoons are in many ways a different form of imagery than other visual mediums, such as paintings or political posters, most obviously because of their humorous intent. They enable sexual discourse under the guise of

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<sup>1</sup> George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 4.

humor, and in *Krokodil*, they reveal the lengths to which a society will go to reinforce its own masculinity by belittling the masculinity of its enemies.

The feminization of enemy men is a common theme in *Krokodil* (figure 1). Konrad Adenauer, the new West German chancellor, is the bride in this example of *Krokodil*'s commentary on both male roles and foreign affairs. He is carrying a bag labeled "Ruhr," a coal-mining region in western Germany. By pairing him up with French foreign minister Robert Schuman, *Krokodil* is expressing the Soviet Union's disapproval of the Schuman Plan, which led to the formation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952. The cartoon insinuates that Adenauer has Nazi ties, by adorning him with swastikas. Images of German militarism from the war, including swastikas, were common in *Krokodil*, suggesting that the new West Germany was a reincarnation of the Third Reich – a very powerful enemy image for Russian readers. In this cartoon, Wall Street is blessing the union between Schuman and Adenauer. The humor is derived from the way in which the union is portrayed – as a marriage between two men. Adenauer can hardly be seen as a threat to the Soviet Union in a scene like this, despite his swastikas, because he looks ridiculous, dressed in a bridal gown. Similarly, Schuman's power is delegitimized by his willingness to partner with this ridiculous male figure in women's clothing. This is obviously not an image of what the Soviet Union believed was a proper marriage, and that message is conveyed along with the denunciation of the French and German economic union. *Krokodil*'s foreign affairs cartoons between 1945 and 1955 are dominated by images such as this one of Adenauer and Schuman, where the state uses its definition of improper masculinity to demonize the enemy.

As 1945 marked the end of the Second World War, opening this paper's discussion with that date does not require explanation; the more unorthodox cut-off date of 1955 does,

however. Many studies of the Stalinist era end with the leader's death in 1953, but this paper is less a study of Stalinism than of broader postwar trends in both the domestic and foreign realms. Above all, it takes its cue from *Krokodil*, its major source, and Stalin's death in 1953 did not precipitate any noticeable changes in the themes or structure of *Krokodil*'s cartoons; in fact, the event was hardly acknowledged. By early 1956, however, with Khrushchev's consolidation of power and famous "Secret Speech" denouncing Stalinism, *Krokodil*'s foreign affairs cartoons markedly dropped in frequency and changed in nature. Caricatures of Khrushchev himself sometimes appear in the cartoons, for example, which never occurred under Stalin. Further, foreign affairs cartoons after 1955 often feature images of friendship with the West, reminiscent of the wartime images of Allied cooperation that appeared between 1941 and 1945. Moreover, in the domestic sphere, 1955 saw the decriminalization of abortion in the Soviet Union, signaling a change in the pronatalist and pro-family politics that characterized the immediate postwar years, as will be discussed below. The period between 1945 and 1955 is thus a distinct time frame both for negative images of enemy countries, and for positive images of normative masculinity within the Soviet family.

This paper adopts the framework of self and other from colonial and postcolonial theorists such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Gyan Prakash, and famously, Edward Said, who introduced it into academic discourse in the past twenty years.<sup>2</sup> These scholars have employed the self/other dichotomy to probe the systematic inequalities in power relationships between colonizer and colonized in the age of European imperialism. Although Prakash and several colleagues have recently sought to move beyond the established binary of self and other, "to proceed further than the description of the construction of power-laden

categories,”<sup>3</sup> the dichotomy remains useful in explaining historical relationships between cultures. In the early 1990s, Russian history began incorporating theories of otherness into studies of the tsarist and Soviet empires.<sup>4</sup> This paper seeks to further the goal of these earlier studies to apply the notion of self and other to the Russian and Soviet context. I want to expand the usage of these terms, however, beyond their colonizer/colonized origins. In the dichotomy of self and other, I disagree that the other must occupy a subaltern position. Rather, in this paper I want to build on the scholarship of Russia’s imperial subjects as other, to demonstrate the ways in which the Soviet Union othered its Cold War enemies.

In addition to its use of postcolonial theory, this paper also draws heavily on – and hopes to contribute to – masculinity theory. Academic studies of men and masculinity have proliferated since the late 1980s, as scholars sought to problematize male gender as they had female gender. Joan Scott lamented in 1985 that “in its simplest recent usage, ‘gender’ is a synonym for ‘women,’”<sup>5</sup> and she encouraged broadening gender into its own category of historical analysis. Around the same time, studies of men and masculinity began to emerge, influenced by the feminist argument that gender identities are socially constructed. Men’s studies also has origins in what has become known as queer theory, or gay and lesbian studies, which emerged as gender scholars began to question the assumption that their subjects were heterosexual. Michel Foucault’s influential *History of Sexuality*, published in

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<sup>2</sup> See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978); Gayatri C. Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” repr. in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, eds., *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> Gyan Prakash, “After Colonialism,” in *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements*, ed. Gyan Prakash (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> See Mark Bassin, “Inventing Siberia: Visions of the Russian East in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *American Historical Review*, Vol. 96, no. 3 (June 1991), 763-94; Susan Layton, “Eros and Empire in Russian Literature about Georgia,” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 51, no. 2 (Summer 1992), 195-213; Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini, eds., *Russia’s Orient: Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997).

French in 1976 and translated into English in 1978,<sup>6</sup> sparked the literature on sexuality that began in the late 1970s, and to which masculinity theory owes a debt. Men's studies has fought an uphill battle for respectability from feminist scholars, however, largely because of the feminist argument that the domination of scholarship by the male point of view was exactly the impetus for feminist and women's studies in the first place. "'Manful assertions' – whether of verbal command, political power or physical violence – have been the traditional stuff of history," begins a 1991 study of masculinity, "yet this truth is more often accepted than analyzed."<sup>7</sup> Masculinity scholars have thus countered the feminist critique by arguing for an analysis of men as gendered beings, not merely an unquestioned acceptance of their historic domination.

Much of the scholarship on men and masculinity in the past fifteen years has focused geographically on the United States and Western Europe, and chronologically on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The field is slowly spreading to other cultures and time periods,<sup>8</sup> but histories of Russia and the Soviet Union have not yet incorporated discussions of masculinity. Women's history has become a rich field in Soviet studies, as scholars have sought to examine the issues Russian women faced in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution.<sup>9</sup> More

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<sup>5</sup> Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," in *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 31.

<sup>6</sup> Lin Foxhall, "Introduction," in *When Men Were Men: Masculinity, Power and Identity in Classical Antiquity*, ed. Lin Foxhall and John Salmon (London & New York: Routledge, 1998), 2.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Roper and John Tosh, "Introduction: Historians and the Politics of Masculinity," in *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800*, eds. Michael Roper and John Tosh (London & New York: Routledge, 1991), 1.

<sup>8</sup> Studies of men and masculinity in Latin America have been particularly prolific in adding to the existing literature in the European and American context, especially for their useful deconstructions of the term *machismo*. See Roger N. Lancaster, *Life is Hard: Machismo, Danger, and the Intimacy of Power in Nicaragua* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Matthew C. Gutmann, *The Meanings of Macho: Being a Man in Mexico City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). For the ancient and medieval period, see Foxhall and Salmon, eds., *When Men Were Men*; Jacqueline Murray, ed., *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities: Men in the Medieval West* (New York & London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1999).

<sup>9</sup> See Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism, 1860-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Wendy Z. Goldman, *Women, the State*

recently, historians have drawn on studies of women to begin examining sexuality issues in the Russian past.<sup>10</sup> The highly masculine nature of the Revolution and ensuing Soviet power structure necessitated the scholarly pursuit of women's roles, but Soviet historians also need to problematize the gendered nature of the regime's masculine identity. Focusing on masculinity does not exclude analyses of women's roles. On the contrary, many scholars have noted that the affirmation of the masculine largely involves the repudiation of the feminine;<sup>11</sup> such misogynist frameworks also inform homophobic expressions, as many of the *Krokodil* cartoons show. This paper is therefore an attempt to reach a better understanding of the Soviet Union's masculine bias through its satirical imagery of non-traditional male gender and sex roles.

The primary argument of this paper is that *Krokodil*'s foreign affairs cartoons commented not only on the Soviet Union's enemies, but on the domestic situation in the Soviet Union as well. As the above mentioned postcolonial theorists have argued, images of the other both reflect and construct the self. The self/other dichotomy is portrayed in gendered and sexual terms in the cartoons, as the male figures representing enemy countries are drawn as cross-dressers, as the pawns of other men, or in a variety of homoerotic and anti-family situations. *Krokodil*, as a state publication, sent the dual message to the Soviet

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and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Elizabeth A. Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997); Barbara Evans Clements, *Bolshevik Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and most recently, Sheila Fitzpatrick and Yuri Slezkine, eds., *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women, From 1917 to the Second World War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> See Eve Levin, *Sex and Society in the World of the Orthodox Slavs, 900-1700* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1989); Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1992); J.T. Costlow, S. Sandler, and J. Vowles, eds., *Sexuality and the Body in Russian Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993); Eric Naiman, *Sex in Public: The Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

<sup>11</sup> Michael S. Kimmel, "Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity," in *Men and Power*, ed. Joseph A. Kuypers (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1999), 92.



reading public that not only was the enemy evil to be engaging in such deviant acts, but the deviant acts were evil because the enemy engaged in them.

Such imagery was important in the immediate postwar years, because the Soviet Union was devastated by the Second World War – physically, economically, and demographically. It was only the latest in a string of conflicts that had systematically eroded the male population of the country, following the First World War, the 1917 Revolution and ensuing Civil War, collectivization, famine, and the purges of the late 1930s.<sup>12</sup> Even before the Second World War, there were only about 92 men for every 100 women in the total population, and by the end of the war, the Soviet Union faced a demographic crisis, with approximately 74 men for every 100 women.<sup>13</sup> A major part of the Soviet Union's postwar agenda was to rebuild the Soviet family and redress the demographic imbalance between men and women. Sexuality thus became an important issue after the war, and it was expressed through *Krokodil's* images of self and other. The Soviet Union defined itself against the characteristics it assigned to the enemy; as sociologist Laurie Essig has observed, "one is naturally a man, a citizen, a heterosexual because one is *not* a woman, a foreigner, a homosexual."<sup>14</sup> In the immediate postwar era, the Soviet Union took all possible steps to promote its men as heterosexual citizens who were working to replenish the population and build a communist society, not wasting their reproductive capabilities in the arms of other men, as *Krokodil's* cartoons insinuated occurred in enemy countries. This paper therefore

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<sup>12</sup> Gail W. Lapidus, "Women, Work, and Family: New Soviet Perspectives," in *Women, Work, and Family in the Soviet Union*, ed. Gail W. Lapidus (New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 1982), xiii-xiv.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Paul Sacks, "Women in the Industrial Labor Force," in *Women in Russia*, ed. D. Atkinson, A. Dallin, and G.W. Lapidus (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977), 190.

<sup>14</sup> Laurie Essig, *Queer in Russia: A Story of Sex, Self, and the Other* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), 124.

links the medium of political cartoons to issues of sexuality and postwar recovery in the Soviet Union in the early Cold War period.

### **The Soviet Family**

In the struggle to rebuild the Soviet family after the war, and to ensure that men took their proper places as head of the family unit, the state naturally did not rely solely on political cartoons. *Krokodil*'s cartoon messages about sexuality were not isolated anomalies, but in fact fit in with other measures taken by the state to reinforce the ideal Soviet family. Bolshevik attempts to dismantle the bourgeois family structure have been well documented, as have Stalin's later reversals of Bolshevik policies. In the 1930s, as émigré sex therapist Mikhail Stern has written, "the family was more than a structure which gave life shape and form, a wellspring of happiness, and an economic unit; it became a public duty as well."<sup>15</sup> To that end, Stalin's notorious 1936 decree sought to reestablish the traditional family as the backbone of Soviet society: all nontherapeutic abortions were banned, divorce became more difficult, and fees were charged for more than one divorce, and for defaulting on spousal support payments.<sup>16</sup>

In 1944, further steps were taken to strengthen the family, not only because of Stalin's continued view that the family was essential to a productive society, but because by 1944 the low birth rate had become a state concern. The 1944 Family Law Decree was undeniably motivated by the effects of the war on Soviet families, and the text of the decree mentions the war often. "During and after the war," it reads, "when many families face more

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<sup>15</sup> Mikhail Stern and August Stern, *Sex in the USSR*, trans. Mark Howson and Cary Ryan (New York: Times Books, 1980), 37.

<sup>16</sup> For further discussion of the 1936 decree, see Peter H. Juviler, "Women and Sex in Soviet Law," in *Women in Russia*, 253-54; Goldman, *Women, the State and Revolution*, 331-36.

considerable material difficulties, a further extension of State aid measures is necessary,”<sup>17</sup> To that end, one of the purposes of the new law was to extend financial support to women and children. Medals were introduced for mothers of large families; allowances became available to families with at least three children, down from the previously required seven children; child-care facilities expanded; and pregnant women received more protection under labor laws.<sup>18</sup> The 1944 edict was ambiguous, however, in its treatment of illegitimate children. On one hand, the state seemed to welcome all births, as a means of raising the birth rate; thus, single mothers were offered the choice of accepting allowances for their children, or placing them in state institutions. On the other hand, however, the 1944 edict made it clear that children born within the family unit were preferable. To this end, single mothers were barred from establishing the paternity of their children. They were not permitted to enter the name of their child’s father on the child’s birth certificate, even if the father voluntarily acknowledged paternity.<sup>19</sup> This law was apparently designed to protect husbands from the consequences of extramarital affairs,<sup>20</sup> which is in itself contradictory. If husbands were not held responsible for fathering children with other women, families headed by single women would proliferate, thus undermining the two-parent family unit the state was trying to promote. Yet the law was likely designed not with the families of single women in mind, but rather to protect the unity of the family of the philandering husband. Forcing him to pay for his extramarital liaisons would surely disrupt his own family, perhaps prompting his wife to seek a divorce. The preservation of the established family unit was therefore more important

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<sup>17</sup> Rudolf Schlesinger, ed., *The Family in the USSR: Documents and Readings* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1949), 367.

<sup>18</sup> Juviler, “Women and Sex in Soviet Law,” 254.

<sup>19</sup> Jo Peers, “Workers by Hand and Womb – Soviet Women and the Demographic Crisis,” in *Soviet Sisterhood*, ed. Barbara Holland (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 137.

<sup>20</sup> Juviler, “Women and Sex in Soviet Law,” 254.

to the state than ensuring that single mothers were financially supported by the fathers of their children.

As further incentive to marry and have children, the 1944 decree expanded the 1941 bachelor tax. Men between the ages of 20 and 50 years, and women between the ages of 20 and 45 years, were subject to the tax if they had less than three children. For citizens already paying income tax, the sum was six per cent of one's income for having no children, one per cent for having only one child, and one half per cent for having two children.<sup>21</sup> At the birth of a third child the tax was no longer levied, and in fact the state began paying parents – or rather, mothers – their child allowance, which began at 300 rubles at the birth of the third child and extended to 5000 rubles at the birth of any child after the tenth.<sup>22</sup> For women, the bachelor tax ceased after the birth of a third child, regardless of whether or not the woman was married, or even if her children had different fathers. For men, the abolition of paternity laws meant that all unmarried men were officially childless.<sup>23</sup> In order to escape the bachelor tax, a man had to marry and father at least three children with the same woman, his wife. The law therefore steered men towards monogamous marriage and fatherhood, despite the fact that they were no longer responsible for paternity payments outside of marriage. There were contradictions in the 1944 edict, but overall the intent was to encourage childbearing within the family unit. Men and women alike were to participate in building a strong family, which would in turn contribute to building a strong Soviet Union. This task was particularly important at the time of the edict in 1944, when the scale of the war's destruction was becoming apparent, and plans for postwar reconstruction began.

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<sup>21</sup> Schlesinger, *The Family in the USSR*, 372.

<sup>22</sup> Schlesinger, *The Family in the USSR*, 368.

<sup>23</sup> Schlesinger, *The Family in the USSR*, 403.

## Masculinity and Sexuality in the Soviet Union

If a major part of rebuilding Soviet society was rebuilding the Soviet family, and a major part of rebuilding the Soviet family was ensuring that marriage and fatherhood was a priority for the country's surviving male population, then the propaganda that sought to enforce the proper image of man as husband and father needed to not only accentuate the positive features of these roles, but also highlight the negative features of alternate roles. As most scholars of male gender now agree, masculinity is not a tangible identity that can be defined based on certain characteristics. Rather, it is a relational concept, assigned meaning only in the presence of an opposite identity against which it can define itself. "Manhood means different things at different times to different people," writes sociologist Michael Kimmel. "We come to know what it means to be a man in our culture by setting out definitions in opposition to a set of 'others' – racial minorities, sexual minorities and, above all, women."<sup>24</sup> Using a Freudian framework, Kimmel and others have argued that the masculine is primarily defined as that which is not the feminine. "Masculine identity is born in the renunciation of the feminine, not in the direct affirmation of the masculine," Kimmel writes, "which leaves masculine gender identity tenuous and fragile."<sup>25</sup> In order to overcome the elasticity of masculine identity, many scholars have argued, men use power as a means of defining themselves. "Masculinity is never fully possessed," Michael Roper and John Tosh point out, "but must perpetually be achieved, asserted, and renegotiated."<sup>26</sup> In the postwar Soviet Union, with the psychological loss of male power that followed the physical loss of millions of male bodies, the need to reassert a national masculinity became a state priority. In

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<sup>24</sup> Kimmel, "Masculinity as Homophobia," 84.

<sup>25</sup> Kimmel, "Masculinity as Homophobia," 92.

<sup>26</sup> Roper and Tosh, "Introduction," *Manful Assertions*, 18.

order to do so, the state created in its national enemies an opposition identity of sexual deviance and effeminacy, against which Soviet masculinity could position itself.

“Masculine identities are lived out in the flesh, but fashioned in the imagination,” Graham Dawson has written,<sup>27</sup> illustrating the one crucial difference between domestic realities and cartoon fantasies in this period. While the homosexual identities that the Soviet state projected onto its Cold War foes through *Krokodil* were imagined, those it fought at home were not. Homosexuality was first criminalized in Russia under the 1832 Legal Code.<sup>28</sup> Igor Kon and Simon Karlinsky have noted in separate studies that the law was rarely used, mostly because many aristocrats and even members of the imperial family themselves engaged in homosexual behavior.<sup>29</sup> After the 1917 Revolution, homosexuality was decriminalized when the Criminal Code of the Russian Empire was abolished. It remains debatable whether the continued legality of homosexuality when the criminal code was rewritten in 1922, and amended in 1926, was an oversight or a deliberate act. Karlinsky has argued that the new code simply did not mention homosexual acts between consenting adults, but that it was still reviled in public discourse.<sup>30</sup> Daniel Healey, however, believes that the fact that the Bolsheviks went to the trouble of criminalizing both homosexual activity with minors and homosexual assault, shows that the legalization of consensual homosexual acts

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<sup>27</sup> Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), 1. Dawson's analysis is informed by Benedict Anderson's influential book, *Imagined Communities*.

<sup>28</sup> Legally, homosexuality always referred to male acts, or *muzhelozhstvo* (“lying with a man”). Lesbianism was never criminalized in Russia or the Soviet Union; when acknowledged at all, it was treated as a mental health problem. Because this paper is concerned with masculinity, my use of the word “homosexuality” refers to men. For further discussion of terminology, see M. Banting, C. Kelly, and J. Riordan, “Sexuality,” in *Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, ed. C. Kelly and D. Shepherd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 322; and Essig, *Queer in Russia*, 23.

<sup>29</sup> Igor Kon, “Sexual Minorities,” in *Sex and Russian Society*, ed. I. Kon and J. Riordan (London: Pluto Press, 1993), 90; Simon Karlinsky, “Russia's Gay Literature and Culture: The Impact of the October Revolution,” in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. M.B. Duberman, M. Vicinus, and G. Chauncey, Jr. (New York: New American Library, 1989), 349.

<sup>30</sup> Karlinsky, “Russia's Gay Literature and Culture,” 357-8.

between adults was intentional.<sup>31</sup> Healey argues that one of the reasons for its legalization was the belief that had been gaining currency since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in Europe that homosexuality was a medical condition rather than a criminal activity. "The Revolution, Russia's collision with modernity, would apply the best and the brightest of human achievements to the problems of impoverished, religion-befuddled *Rus'*," Healey writes. "Science would decide everything."<sup>32</sup>

Stalin recriminalized homosexuality in 1933, a date that several historians have noted coincides with Hitler's consolidation of power in Germany, and the enactment of similar laws against German homosexuals. Healey suggests that the timing illustrates Stalin's personal admiration for Hitler and German totalitarianism.<sup>33</sup> The fact that homosexuality remained illegal in the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation until 1993,<sup>34</sup> however, indicates that the impetus for its criminalization extends beyond Stalin's possible emulation of Hitler. Despite the similarities between the two regimes and their treatment of homosexuals in the 1930s, other historians have noted that the Soviet Union linked homosexuality to fascism,<sup>35</sup> while Germany linked it to communism.<sup>36</sup> After the Second World War, it is evident in *Krokodil* that the Soviet association of homosexuality with fascism continued. "In Stalinist Russia, the pervert was never a patriot," Laurie Essig writes. "Queers were fascists, fascists were queers. Good citizens – always straight – must control, punish, and eventually eliminate treasonous desires."<sup>37</sup> General Francisco Franco, the fascist leader of Spain, was a favorite target for homosexual imagery in *Krokodil*, as was West

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<sup>31</sup> Daniel Healey, "The Russian Revolution and the Decriminalization of Homosexuality," *Revolutionary Russia*, Vol. 6, no. 1 (June 1993), 33.

<sup>32</sup> Healey, "The Russian Revolution and the Decriminalization of Homosexuality," 36.

<sup>33</sup> Healey, "The Russian Revolution and the Decriminalization of Homosexuality," 42.

<sup>34</sup> Banting, Kelly, and Riordan, "Sexuality," 344.

<sup>35</sup> Banting, Kelly, and Riordan, "Sexuality," 319.

<sup>36</sup> Karlinsky, "Russia's Gay Literature and Culture," 361.

German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, who the Soviet Union insisted was a Nazi sympathizer. The United States, portrayed in various situations as a German and Spanish ally, thus was also subjected to accusations of homosexuality by way of fascist politics.

“Issues of sexuality are at the heart of the whole workings of power in modern society,” Jeffrey Weeks has recently written. “Through its role in determining legislation and the legal process [the state] constitutes the categories of the permissible and the impermissible, the pure and the obscene.” Accordingly, “it can shape the climate of sexual opinion.”<sup>37</sup> Under Stalin, homosexuality shifted from a crime against public morality to a crime against the state.<sup>38</sup> It was seen as a bourgeois, decadent pursuit, which should have been eradicated by the Revolution; homosexuals were therefore believed to be counter-revolutionaries and a threat to state security. “From about 1930 on,” Karlinsky writes, “the opinion that homosexuality equalled opposition to the Soviet system became entrenched in the minds of Soviet bureaucracy,” because “no one from the working class could possibly be homosexual.”<sup>39</sup> After 1945, as the population struggled to recover from the war and the state sought to rebuild Soviet society, the perceived security threat of homosexuals intensified. As Robert Moeller has written about a similar anti-homosexual drive in postwar West Germany, homosexuality was viewed as “a symbol of a society in disequilibrium, a phenomenon particularly characteristic of periods of social chaos and instability.”<sup>40</sup> Igor Kon has echoed this point, noting that “homophobia, like other social fears and forms of group hatred, is usually exacerbated at moments of social crisis, when an obvious foe or scapegoat is

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<sup>37</sup> Essig, *Queer in Russia*, 5.

<sup>38</sup> Jeffrey Weeks, *Making Sexual History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), 133.

<sup>39</sup> Karlinsky, “Russia’s Gay Literature and Culture,” 361; Healey, “The Russian Revolution and the Decriminalization of Homosexuality,” 43.

<sup>40</sup> Karlinsky, “Russia’s Gay Literature and Culture,” 362.



needed.”<sup>42</sup> Further, in many countries in the early Cold War period, such as the Soviet Union, West Germany, and the United States, the family became particularly important as an insulating institution against the insecurity of the outside world.<sup>43</sup> “In the context of the Cold War,” Moeller writes, “any challenges to this ‘natural’ heterosexual order could be viewed as subversive; threats to the family were threats to society’s fundamental building-block.”<sup>44</sup>

The state rhetoric that linked homosexuality and political subversion was also tied to the anti-cosmopolitan campaign of late Stalinism. The period from the end of the war in 1945 to Stalin’s death in 1953 is often referred to as the “black years” of Soviet Jewry.<sup>45</sup> Although anti-Semitism was widespread in Russia and the Soviet Union both before and after this period, the immediate postwar years saw a backlash against the growing Jewish nationalism that followed the Holocaust and helped establish the state of Israel.<sup>46</sup> Nikita Khrushchev later indicated, however, that the pogrom atmosphere of the postwar years defied explanation: “Suddenly, after the war, Stalin was seized by a fit of anti-Semitism,”<sup>47</sup> he wrote in his memoirs. During the black years, the popular Jewish actor and chairman of the Jewish Antifascist Committee, Solomon Mikhoels, was murdered in a Kremlin conspiracy, and the famous Doctor’s Plot threatened to unleash a new wave of purges. As anti-Western sentiment

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<sup>41</sup> Robert G. Moeller, “The Homosexual Man is a ‘Man,’ the Homosexual Woman is a ‘Woman’”: Sex, Society, and the Law in Postwar West Germany,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 4, no. 3 (1994), 409.

<sup>42</sup> Kon, *The Sexual Revolution in Russia*, 247.

<sup>43</sup> For a fascinating analysis of the family and normative sexuality as part of containment ideology in postwar American society, see Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1988).

<sup>44</sup> Moeller, “The Homosexual Man is a ‘Man,’” 424.

<sup>45</sup> See Alfred D. Low, *Soviet Jewry and Soviet Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), especially Chapter 4: “Stalinism, 1945-1953, Israel, and the ‘Black Years’ of Soviet Jewry;” Yehoshua A. Gilboa, *The Black Years of Soviet Jewry, 1939-1953*, trans. Yosef Shachter and Dov Ben-Abba (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1971).

<sup>46</sup> Naomi Blank, “Redefining the Jewish Question from Lenin to Gorbachev: Terminology or Ideology?” in *Jews and Jewish Life in Russia and the Soviet Union*, ed. Yaacov Ro’i (England: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1995), 56.

increased after 1945, the propaganda against western “cosmopolitans and unpatriotic intellectuals”<sup>48</sup> spread to the Soviet Jews. Soviet leaders, Stalin in particular, began to emphasize the traditional link between Jews and capitalism. “Stalinism classified the Jews as bourgeois nationalists,” Russian historian Gennadi Kostyrchenko writes, “potential agents of the West who led separatist and other subversive activities against the Soviet state.”<sup>49</sup>

As noted above, homosexuals, like Jews, were characterized as traitors to the state. The Soviet Union therefore merged Jews and homosexuals into a singular other. As George Mosse has written, this connection originated in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, where Jews and homosexuals were often grouped together as “attempt[ing] to create a countersociety directed by men who subverted the acceptable standards of masculinity.”<sup>50</sup> Jewish men were characterized as effeminate, passive, cowardly, and emotional.<sup>51</sup> They were also seen as sexually impotent, as their “lack of patriarchal power appear[ed] as sexual emasculation.”<sup>52</sup> *Krokodil*’s foreign affairs cartoons are clearly a product of late Stalinist anti-Semitism, and they provide a visual indication of how Soviet masculinity was defined by using sexual and ethnic minorities to create an oppositional counter-identity. Mosse notes that in popular stereotypes, Jewish men were “aged, weak, or effeminate,” while “homosexuals were generally limp and thin,” with “an unmanly posture.”<sup>53</sup> Jews and homosexuals were singled out for demonization above other marginalized groups, moreover, because they were invisible, a notion that also has its origins in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe. Their lack of identifiable

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<sup>47</sup> Nikita S. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, trans. and ed. Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1970), 292

<sup>48</sup> Gennadi Kostyrchenko, *Out of the Red Shadows: Anti-Semitism in Stalin's Russia* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1995), 154.

<sup>49</sup> Kostyrchenko, *Out of the Red Shadows*, 167.

<sup>50</sup> Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 68.

<sup>51</sup> Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 69.

<sup>52</sup> Harry Brod, “Some Thoughts on Some Histories of Some Masculinities; Jews and Other Others,” in *Theorizing Masculinities*, ed. Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman (California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1994), 91.

traits meant that “they could live unrecognized, hiding among the population.”<sup>54</sup> The invisible enemy posed the greatest threat, from the state’s point of view, thus necessitating the imagination of “Jewish” or “homosexual” characteristics. These invented traits of both national and sexual enemies permeated *Krokodil* in the early Cold War period.

### ***Krokodil*: Humor as Sexual Discourse**

*Krokodil* was founded in 1922 as the official (and only) humor magazine in the Soviet Union.<sup>55</sup> Published by *Pravda*, the official newspaper of the Communist Party, *Krokodil* was a state publication that was subject to the same controls as other forms of mass media. Its cartoons, therefore, echoed the official line on any given topic, both domestic and foreign. Published three times a month, or about every ten days, by 1949 it had a circulation of 165 000 – second only to *Ogonyok* for general interest periodicals.<sup>56</sup> Circulation in fact gradually increased from 100 000 in January 1945 to 700 000 in January 1956. The price increased from 40 to 80 kopeks in December 1944, then to one ruble 20 kopeks in June 1945, where it remained for the next ten years. The daily newspaper *Pravda*, by comparison, cost 20 kopeks between 1945 and 1955. The surge in its circulation over this period seems to indicate that *Krokodil* was a popular magazine, although its cost was likely prohibitive for many in a population that remained subject to wartime rationing until the end of 1947.<sup>57</sup> Readership is therefore difficult to determine, but *Krokodil* appears to have been read by people who either had a few spare kopeks in their pockets or were able to borrow a copy from someone else.

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<sup>53</sup> Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 70.

<sup>54</sup> Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 71.

<sup>55</sup> Rodger Swearingen, *What's So Funny, Comrade?* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1961), 3.

<sup>56</sup> William Nelson, ed. *Out of the Crocodile's Mouth: Russian Cartoons About the United States From "Krokodil," Moscow's Humor Magazine* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1949), 8.

<sup>57</sup> Elena Zubkova, *Russia After the War: Hopes, Illusions, and Disappointments, 1945-1957*, trans. Hugh Ragsdale (London: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 53.

Further, the fact that its humor required prior knowledge of the people and events it satirized, combined with its frequent use of foreign words, indicates that *Krokodil* was aimed at well-educated readers. Though it is possible to speculate in these ways about who read *Krokodil*, it is more challenging to determine *how* it was read. As Victoria Bonnell has observed in her study of Bolshevik political posters, “images and their combinations may be ‘read’ in unpredictable ways. Pictures meant to emphasize class identity also conveyed – often unintentionally and subliminally – ideas about gender and gender relations, ethnicity, and other forms of cultural and social identification.”<sup>58</sup> A similar multiplicity of messages occurs in *Krokodil*’s foreign affairs cartoons in the postwar period.

As a humor magazine, *Krokodil* had a specific purpose. While the abundance of short stories, articles, and letters that were featured in each issue alongside the cartoons are outside the scope of this paper, they all contributed to the magazine’s overall satirical content. The cartoons differ from textual satire because of their visual nature, but they also differ from other visual forms of propaganda, such as the political poster, because of their humorous intent. Sociologist Michael Mulkay has argued that there is an assumed division between humorous and serious modes of discourse. “It is precisely the symbolic separation of humor from the realm of serious action that enables social actors to use humor for serious purposes,” he writes.<sup>59</sup> By shrouding its message in a veil of humor, the agent of humorous discourse can purport to be “only joking,”<sup>60</sup> and thus not serious. The message in fact can be (and usually is) entirely serious, but by hiding behind a façade of humor, the agent has much more freedom to engage in a discourse not allowed in the serious realm. Emil Draitser agrees that

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<sup>58</sup> Victoria E. Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters Under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 10-11.

<sup>59</sup> Michael Mulkay, *On Humor: Its Nature and Its Place in Modern Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), 1.

the relationship between the humorous and the serious is codependent. "Humor licens[es] speech about the unspeakable," he notes in his recent book on Russian humor.<sup>61</sup>

Sexual topics provide an example of what can be said under the guise of humor. The sexual repression in Soviet society has been well documented. Under Stalin, and his successors in the 1960s and 1970s, school curriculums did not teach sexual education, birth control information was scarce, and sexual issues or problems were never discussed openly.<sup>62</sup> This separation of public and private spaces, with sexuality rooted firmly in the latter, meant that the state was unable to discuss sex with its citizens even when the postwar agenda of reconstructing the family urgently required it. Soviet citizens "were now convinced that only perverts and decadents talked freely about sex," Igor Kon has written. "Thus, sexual intolerance, behind which often lurked personal sexual anxieties and alarm, became an essential aspect of global social intolerance."<sup>63</sup> Humor, however, was a way to engage in a sexual discourse covertly. Mulkay writes that "sexual jokes circulate, not simply as sources of amusement, but as carriers of sexual information, attitudes and emotions which have restricted passage within the serious mode."<sup>64</sup>

Although Mulkay and Draitser have written primarily about humor in the form of jokes told between private individuals, their theories also apply to the humor of political cartoons drawn under state control. In particular, the political cartoons of interest in this

<sup>60</sup> Mulkay, *On Humor*, 217.

<sup>61</sup> Emil Draitser, *Making War, Not Love: Gender and Sexuality in Russian Humor* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 5.

<sup>62</sup> For a detailed discussion of these issues, see Deborah Ann Field, *Communist Morality and Meanings of Private Life in Post-Stalinist Russia, 1953-1964* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1996) especially Chapter 3: "Sex Education and the Limits of Professional Authority;" and Kon, *The Sexual Revolution in Russia*, especially Chapter 5: "Sexophobia in Action." For an engaging personal account of these issues, see Cathy Young, *Growing Up in Moscow: Memories of a Soviet Girlhood* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1989). Young is a native Russian who anglicized her name, Ekaterina Jung, upon her arrival in the United States.

<sup>63</sup> Kon, *The Sexual Revolution in Russia*, 80.

paper feature images of enemy countries, and Draitser notes the ease with which sexual jokes are often projected onto groups peripheral to the joke's agent. This tendency applies to political cartoons as well as jokes. Although humor enables a sexual discourse forbidden in the serious realm of one's own society, sexual humor is further eased when it refers to another's society. Draitser observes that in Russian jokelore, which is usually initiated by male agents, the others that become the object of sexual humor are primarily women, but can also be men that fall outside the agent's frame of reference. Men of other ethnic groups are a major target, as are those accused of deviant sexuality. These two groups are often linked. "Many jokes on homosexuality... show Russian unwillingness to accept the reality of homosexuals existing among them," Draitser writes. "They shift it outside of the group: to foreigners (usually Frenchmen), [or] minorities (Armenians and Georgians)."<sup>65</sup>

Projecting sexual humor onto othered groups enables discussions of otherwise taboo sexual topics. In *Krokodil's* political cartoons, the use of enemy images in sexual situations was a means of discussing the sexual situation at home, without violating Soviet codes of respectability by admitting that the sexual situation at home indeed warranted discussion. In his pioneering study of sexual humor, Gershon Legman observed that "people do not joke about what makes them happy or what is sacred to them. They joke only about what frightens or disturbs them."<sup>66</sup> Following the Second World War, the Soviet Union was frightened and disturbed by its low birth rate, the imbalanced ratio between men and women, and the possibility of male homosexuality subverting the postwar reconstruction of family and state.

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<sup>64</sup> Mulkay, *On Humor*, 122.

<sup>65</sup> Draitser, *Making War, Not Love*, 128.

<sup>66</sup> Gershon Legman, quoted in Draitser, *Making War, Not Love*, 203.

### **Othered Sexualities of/as the Enemy**

*Krokodil's* identification of state enemies, and enemy masculinities, was a gradual process over the second half of 1945. The cover of the July 30, 1945 issue shows that the nations (and their masculine forms) which would become primary Cold War enemies were still friendly immediately after the war (figure 2). It shows three cars, each respectively sporting an American, Soviet, and British flag. Between the cars stand three soldiers in a relaxed pose, sharing a lighter. The British soldier is presumably the one on the left, with the pipe, the American in the middle, and the Soviet soldier on the right, with the Red Army star on his cap. They are all leaning against the car with the Soviet flag. The Soviet soldier says, "Remember, John, back at Yalta I told you, here's to a speedy meeting in Berlin!" With the standard anglophone name of John, the remark could be addressed to either the American or British soldier. It is most likely directed at the American, though, because of the position of the British soldier (as well as his car) on the periphery of the interaction between the American and Soviet soldiers.

Published in the summer of 1945, this cartoon shows the three soldiers as allies, emphasizing their camaraderie and cooperation in defeating the Nazis and reaching Berlin. The fact that the American soldier needs a light from the Soviet soldier, however, hints at the Soviet view that the Americans might not have made it to Berlin without Soviet aid, and with the war in Europe over, the need for assistance has continued. All three figures are drawn identically, as are their cars and flag sizes. All three men present strong images, with high cheekbones, short, neat hair, and immaculate uniforms. Britain, and particularly, the United States, have not yet become the enemy, because the men representing these countries in this cartoon look identical to the man representing the Soviet Union. As the Allied cooperation

turned into Cold War animosity over the next year, so too would *Krokodil*'s images of American and British men change.

By 1949, the male images of the United States and Britain in *Krokodil* were drastically different. The change in fact began in the last few months of 1945, as Soviet concern over the atomic bombing of Japan became apparent in the cartoons. Images of the United States and its Western European allies as war-mongers became more common. With the introduction of the Marshall Plan in 1947, a clear enemy image began to form, and by the time the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was formed in 1949, the Soviet Union had identified its principal enemies among NATO's members. It had also identified in *Krokodil*'s foreign affairs cartoons a new propaganda tool, a means by which to transmit ideals of masculine behavior to Soviet readers. One cartoon, featured in the April, 1949 issue of *Krokodil*, demonstrates the connection between enemy imagery and domestic propaganda (figure 3). It depicts a stereotypical Uncle Sam, representing the United States, firing torpedoes from his NATO submarine. Beside him is a torpedo launcher, but Uncle Sam is also firing torpedoes of his own, which bear the likeness of American diplomat John Foster Dulles and British opposition leader Winston Churchill. The caption reads, "Defense, American-style," and Uncle Sam says, "Aim for the United Nations – fire!" The message is that NATO's military nature poses a threat to the United Nations, but NATO's militarism is portrayed in a unique way in this cartoon. Uncle Sam, the human torpedo launcher, is ejecting the male-personified torpedoes from between his legs. This scene suggests a male sexual encounter, because the torpedo-man does not need to be positioned between Uncle Sam's legs in order for him to be launched as a torpedo; he could be tossed from over Uncle Sam's head, or thrown from his side. The cartoonists have chosen to place him between



Uncle Sam's legs, however, and to thereby forge a link between international politics and sexuality. The male sex insinuated in this cartoon is improper, because it is associated with Uncle Sam, the enemy. In all the cartoons I have examined, *Krokodil* never depicted the Soviet Union or its allies in situations like this.

The next cartoon, reprinted from a Romanian magazine in the Oct. 30, 1949 issue of *Krokodil*, shows John Bull, the traditional male personification of Britain, before and after his meeting with Uncle Sam, the traditional male personification of the United States (figure 4). Before the meeting, John Bull is fully dressed, with his trademark smoking pipe and top hat adorned with the British flag. A scrawny lion, another traditional male image of Britain, accompanies him. The lion has a bandaged foot and paltry mane, and two of his ribs are showing through his body. Despite John Bull's tidy appearance, his lion betrays the truth of Britain's slow postwar recovery. In the first frame, Uncle Sam opens his door to welcome the hopeful-looking John Bull and his alter ego, the sullen lion. In the second frame, the conference has ended and Uncle Sam is showing John Bull and the lion out the door. John Bull has been stripped of his clothes, his hat, his pipe, and even the buckles on his briefcase. The lion has been completely skinned, but walks out looking just as miserable as he did going in. John Bull is scratching his head in bewilderment. Uncle Sam, smiling as before, holds John Bull's top hat and has the lion's skin draped over his arm.

By 1949, Russian readers were well aware of the state's view that the United States was taking advantage of a weakened Britain, particularly through the Marshall Plan. This cartoon puts that exploitation in sexual terms. John Bull has clearly been violated by Uncle Sam, his humiliation compounded by the fact that Uncle Sam is keeping his clothes and forcing him out the door naked. Britain's split personality has different reactions to what

happened behind the closed door, during the time lapse between the cartoon's two frames. John Bull is both shocked and confused, raising his eyebrows and scratching his head. As he walks out the door naked, he uses his briefcase to cover his private parts from the viewer. The lion, on the other hand, seems to have expected what he got. He slinks away the same way he came in, head hung low, eyes downcast. Uncle Sam epitomizes degeneracy in this cartoon, with his caricatured Jewish features. He has wild and unruly hair, a hook nose, a single tooth, and big glasses. He appears more intellectual than usual for Uncle Sam, an image that carries the enemy connotations of the anti-cosmopolitan campaign of this time period. John Bull is also countertypical to the masculine ideal.<sup>67</sup> He is short, overweight, and bald. Whatever occurred between these two degenerate men, not to mention the lion, was enemy behavior, despite the fact that it happened behind closed doors, out of the public eye, and the viewer cannot definitively prove that an illegal (that is, homosexual) act took place.

Another example of deviant sexual imagery appeared in the last issue of 1949, as part of a two-page spread entitled "New Year's Carnival on Wall Street" (figure 5). Part of that spread shows a line of chorus girls performing. These girls are in fact a group of scrawny men with pot bellies and loin cloths, doing the can-can. Belittling the Marshall Plan and its recipients was a running gag in *Krokodil* after the Plan began in 1947, as the nude John Bull in the previous cartoon demonstrated. Cartoons commonly portrayed Western European countries as pawns of the United States, willing to do anything for Marshall Plan assistance. In this scenario, the Western European dancers are showing off what they have received from the Plan – mere rags – yet they continue to "dance to the American tune," and, in the Soviet view, rehearse for a future war program. The transliteration of the English word, "girls," on

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<sup>67</sup> I have borrowed the useful word, "countertype," from George Mosse, who coined it to describe masculinities that fall outside the boundaries of a society's established male stereotype. See Mosse, *The Image*

the poster further indicates the state's disapproval of the Marshall Plan and its degenerate recipients. Rather than using the Russian *devushki*, the poster has kept the English word, spelled with Cyrillic letters. This move draws a clear line between self and other, because using the English word detaches the event, a girlie show, from the Russian world. The cartoon indicates that this type of show, either with real girls or men acting as girls, would not be seen in Russia. The participants are the other, the enemy, and their actions are deviant and unacceptable for Russians.

Along with Spanish General Francisco Franco (figures 7, 8, and 9), West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer was one of *Krokodil*'s favorite targets, particularly regarding the subordination of these two leaders to American power and influence. A cartoon in the April 10, 1951 issue positions Adenauer in a uniquely degrading scenario (figure 6). In the top frame, a tiny Adenauer is chained to a doghouse in the backyard of the United States. In the bottom frame, the United States has installed a sign representing the new West German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and has moved Adenauer's chain so that he can move more freely than when he was chained to the doghouse in the top frame. He still has limited freedom, however, and can only move between the American house and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sign. The caption comments sarcastically that with the introduction of the new ministry, "The Bonn government has been left with a great deal of independence." *Krokodil* commonly satirized events in West Germany in the immediate postwar period. Having fought and suffered during the war because of Germany, the Soviet Union did everything possible to construct an image of power over Germany in the postwar era, and to remove all traces of danger from the German image. Demeaning German masculine identity

was a way to make this recently formidable enemy seem less threatening to the Soviet Union's postwar stability.

In this cartoon, the message of American control over the Bonn government is portrayed as a suspicious relationship between two men. In the top frame the American, with his stereotypically Jewish nose, bushy eyebrows, and a cigar in hand, is leaning casually against the door frame, grinning at his backyard pet. Adenauer, the pet, is dressed in a decadent tuxedo, but he is positioned on all fours, with his behind to the American. He is coyly eyeing his master, and they are smiling knowingly at each other. In the bottom frame, Adenauer seems to have been rewarded for his good behavior, with the American adding the signpost to the yard and giving Adenauer greater freedom of mobility. The American again stands in the doorway, admiring both his work and his pet's enjoyment of the gift. The time lapse between the two frames is intriguing, and it adds a great deal to this cartoon's commentary on male roles. A knowing glance is exchanged between the two men in the top frame, but other than that the viewer is not given any visual reason for the American's decision to give Adenauer greater freedom in the bottom frame. Something seems to have happened between the figures in the time between the top and bottom frames. The characterization of Adenauer as a pet, a kept man, gives the cartoon a sexual insinuation. They are involved in an unequal relationship, with one partner clearly dominant over the other. The way that they are looking at each other betrays the fact that this is not a fraternal relationship, such as the Soviet Union has with its allies. These two men are involved in something sinister, though the viewer is neither told nor shown exactly what it is. The insinuation of impropriety, however, is enough to conclude that these men, who represent enemy countries, are involved in enemy behavior.

The Dec. 30, 1950 issue featured a two-page spread on foreign affairs called, "Predictions for 1951." The message of one cartoon in the spread is summed up in its caption: "Tito and Franco, as usual, will be selling themselves on the streets of New York" (figure 7). The image shows a grinning male Wall Street figure escorting caricatures of Yugoslavian leader Tito and Spanish leader Franco, who are dressed as female prostitutes. According to official rhetoric, the Revolution had freed Soviet women from the need to resort to prostitution. As Elizabeth Wood has written of Revolution-era ideology, "prostitution had to be viewed as a consequence of capitalism, a dependent variable that arose from poverty and exploitation."<sup>68</sup> The cartoon puts this ideological view in literal terms, with Tito and Franco becoming prostitutes as a consequence of their association with the capitalist United States. Tito and Franco are transvestite prostitutes, however, and thus the cartoon's humor is derived from belittling the masculinity of the enemy. The Soviet Union's view that Yugoslavia and Spain were pandering to American interests is translated into the cartoon imagery of Tito and Franco as Wall Street whores. This image illustrates Laurie Essig's observation of the dominant view that "men who wear skirts and make-up and ribbons in their hair are men who pervert the gender system. Men who pervert gender are themselves perverts."<sup>69</sup>

Cross-dressing Franco was a favorite pastime for *Krokodil*'s cartoonists; he is in fact almost never portrayed in anything but a dress after 1945. One cartoon in the May 30, 1951 issue is no exception (figure 8). It features Uncle Sam and Franco sitting together on a bench as a couple. Uncle Sam has traded his usual tuxedo for a cowboy outfit, with dollar-sign spurs on his boots and a missile holster at his side. Franco is adorned with his standard

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<sup>68</sup> Elizabeth A. Wood, "Prostitution Unbound: Representations of Sexual and Political Anxieties in Postrevolutionary Russia," in *Sexuality and the Body in Russian Culture*, 126.

swastikas and priest's cap. His boots are not very different from Uncle Sam's, however, and their male style do not quite match the dress. The knife slipped into Franco's right boot confirms his duplicity, despite his rosy glow and demure expression behind the fan. The cartoon is titled, "Generous Yankee," and Uncle Sam tells Franco, "For you, señora, I would sacrifice anything! I am even prepared to return his Gibraltar to you!" As he speaks he points to John Bull, the male personification of Britain, who is fearfully cradling Gibraltar. His boots are also similar to Uncle Sam's and Franco's, indicating that despite their infighting, these three countries are not very different. John Bull's knee patches betray his reliance on Marshall Plan assistance, which places him in a weak position vis-à-vis the United States; the latter's threat to give Spain control of Gibraltar and revoke Britain's right to the island further demonstrates Britain's helplessness.

It is worth noting that scenarios featuring the United States and Britain with other countries almost always use the male national symbols of Uncle Sam and John Bull, while most other countries are represented by their actual leaders – General Franco for Spain, Konrad Adenauer for West Germany, Charles de Gaulle for France, Emperor Hirohito for Japan, or Tito for Yugoslavia. Between 1945 and 1955, American presidents (Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower) and British prime ministers (Clement Atlee and Winston Churchill) do make rare appearances in the cartoons, but usually only in cartoons in which the United States and Britain are the only characters. Situations involving any other country with the United States and Britain invariably use Uncle Sam and John Bull. There could be a number of reasons for this pattern, but most plausibly, *Krokodil* uses Uncle Sam and John Bull to epitomize the enemy identity of the United States and Britain as a whole – their long histories of a democratic power structure, capitalist economy, and exploitation of weaker groups in

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<sup>69</sup> Essig, *Queer in Russia*, 113.

society. For countries such as Spain, Germany, France, and Yugoslavia, *Krokodil* satirizes real leaders not only because these countries do not have a male representative such as Uncle Sam or John Bull, but because it is the leaders who are seen as deviant or problematic, not the people or the country's institutions in general.

The next cartoon, from the March 20, 1950 issue, again features the familiar triad of Uncle Sam, John Bull, and General Franco (figure 9). As their new servant, Franco is waiting on Uncle Sam and John Bull, telling them, "We work well together, mister! My previous bosses had the same taste as you!" He is referring to Hitler and Mussolini, and the *Krokodil* perception that they have been replaced by Uncle Sam and, to a lesser degree, John Bull as Franco's puppeteers. Franco's allegiance to his old masters is apparent in the swastikas adorning his kerchief and sleeve, and the blood-stained axe he is carrying. As usual, Franco is dressed as a woman in this cartoon, although in a different way. In most other Franco cartoons, he is dressed as a prostitute or other sort of overtly sexual woman. In this cartoon, however, he looks like a *baba*, a common yet derogatory term for a Russian woman. The telltale feature is the kerchief, which is tied under the chin rather than behind the neck like modern women workers or *kolkhoznitsy*, collective farm women.<sup>70</sup> At the onset of collectivization in the early 1930s, Stalin refashioned the image of the female peasant from *baba* to *kolkhoznitsa*. While the *kolkhoznitsa* – young, slender, and intelligent – stepped into Stalin's modernizing society, the *baba* was demonized.<sup>71</sup> She was backwards and represented the traditional elements of Russian peasant society, such as religion, that Stalin sought to eradicate. In this cartoon, the *baba* image is further demonized by associating it not only with Franco, the fascist enemy, but with male cross-dressing. The deviant male sexuality of this

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<sup>70</sup> Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 223.

<sup>71</sup> Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 105.

cartoon – with a man dressed as a woman in the service of other men – is doubly stigmatized, for its association with the backward *baba* and the Spanish enemy.

The enemies in *Krokodil*'s cartoons were not always European; the late 1940s and early 1950s were a rich period in *Krokodil*'s cartoons about Asian enemies. Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang, South Korean leader Syngman Rhee, and Japan were all demonized in this period as American puppets and enemies of Asian communism. Later in the 1950s, South Vietnamese leaders would also begin to feature prominently in *Krokodil*'s enemy cartoons.<sup>72</sup> In the next cartoon, American General Douglas MacArthur and Japanese Emperor Hirohito are positioned in deviant roles (figure 10). The cartoon is one of several with a philatelist theme that appeared in the May 30, 1950 issue of *Krokodil*. It purports to be a stamp from Japan, and it shows an oversized MacArthur sitting cross-legged on a Japanese hillside with a miniature Hirohito, in full geisha attire, entertaining him on his lap.

In political terms, this image is simply reiterating a common theme in *Krokodil*'s foreign affairs commentary: Japan is a pawn of the United States, catering to its desires and remaining firmly within American hands. That message was already five years old by 1950, and Russians could read *Pravda* for the latest update on Japanese-American friendship. By placing the message in *Krokodil*, however, the state was able to use humor to disguise another message within the foreign affairs commentary. The common *Krokodil* tactic of dressing enemy men in women's clothing is again used here, although as a geisha, Hirohito has adopted not only women's clothing, but a very particular female identity with a rich history in Japan. Hirohito's geisha espouses the traditional view of women as backwards, "a

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<sup>72</sup> The issue of race in cartoons featuring Asian enemies is a fascinating topic that deserves to be discussed in its own right. The theories of Edward Said's *Orientalism* and other works in the field of the European othering of Asia would be most useful in analyzing Asian imagery in *Krokodil*. Unfortunately, these issues fall outside the scope of this paper.



reminder of the past,” countering the progressive modernity of the male image.<sup>73</sup>

MacArthur’s male image, however, is hardly ideal either. He is seated in a decidedly unmasculine pose, looking rather uncomfortable, and not at all in control of his body. His unnatural posture has wrinkled his military uniform, nearly popping the button on his left breast pocket and pulling his jacket tightly under his arms. The perceived discomfort tarnishes his potential strength as a military figure, which is otherwise a standard masculine image. Like other enemy men in *Krokodil*’s cartoons, MacArthur is wearing sunglasses, possibly indicating espionage or physical infirmity.

Beyond its surface message of Hirohito catering to MacArthur’s desires lies a subtle yet powerful message informed by Soviet domestic issues. The soldier in this cartoon is indulging in improper behavior with a local prostitute, in fact another transvestite prostitute. According to the state, the soldier was the member of postwar Soviet society most in need of guidance towards marriage and family. In many societies, the military is the most sacred heterosexual institution, and the Soviet Union was no exception. A soldier cavorting with a prostitute – worse, a male prostitute – was engaged in enemy behavior. *Krokodil* was able to quietly convey that message by assigning the soldier identity to MacArthur, and the geisha identity to Hirohito, both behavioral and political enemies.

### **The Masculinity of the Soviet Self**

The male figures used to represent the Soviet Union’s enemies are caricatures of men, with features that contradict the stereotype of the masculine ideal. To contrast the enemy image, *Krokodil* also published many cartoons that demonstrated that masculine ideal, as embodied by the Soviet Union. Eric Hobsbawm has noted that late 19<sup>th</sup> century socialist

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<sup>73</sup> Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 9.

imagery, more than that of any previous revolutionary movement, was strikingly masculine.<sup>74</sup> Female imagery also appeared, but as “the goddess of freedom, the symbol of victory, the figure who pointed towards the perfect society of the future,” Hobsbawm writes.<sup>75</sup> “It is the man who represents industrial labor,” however, which is the most important socialist role.<sup>76</sup> The cartoon on the cover of the Oct. 20, 1952 issue demonstrates the importance of the worker in Soviet iconography (figure 11). It shows a tall, strapping young man, dressed in coveralls, a worker’s cap, and work boots, striding purposefully towards his goal. The letters “USSR” are emblazoned across his chest. Behind him staggers a pathetic figure labeled “capitalist economy.” With war materiel strapped to his back and tanks as shoes, the figure is hunched over, struggling to keep up with the stronger man. He mutters, “How can I keep up with him if he strides firmly, while my legs give way!” We can see that his legs give way because they are weighed down with military machinery, while the Soviet man walks easily in his work boots. Size is an obvious visual tool in this cartoon; not only is the Soviet man drawn more realistically and less cartoonish, but he is three times as large as the capitalist man. This image echoes Victoria Bonnell’s findings in early Stalinist political posters. “Like Gulliver towering over the Lilliputians,” she writes, “the male Stalinist hero... was depicted as larger than life.”<sup>77</sup> Moreover, the contrast between the erect posture of the Soviet man and the limpness of his foe underlines the impotence issues that many scholars of male gender have found to be central to masculine identity.<sup>78</sup> Rendering the enemy impotent in this

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<sup>74</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, “Man and Woman in Socialist Iconography,” *History Workshop Journal*, Issue 6 (Autumn 1978), 124.

<sup>75</sup> Hobsbawm, “Man and Woman in Socialist Iconography,” 133.

<sup>76</sup> Hobsbawm, “Man and Woman in Socialist Iconography,” 126.

<sup>77</sup> Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 41.

<sup>78</sup> See Lucy Candib and Richard Schmitt, “About Losing It: The Fear of Impotence,” in *Rethinking Masculinity: Philosophical Explorations in Light of Feminism*, Second edition, ed. L. May, R. Strikwerda, and P.D. Hopkins (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1996).

cartoon removes a key aspect of his manhood, and by doing so, *Krokodil* has also decreased his power to threaten the Soviet Union.

A cartoon from the Oct. 30, 1947 issue again uses masculine imagery to denote the separation between the Soviet Union and its enemies, and between the Soviet man and his enemies (figure 12). Titled “the power of millions,” it contrasts the capitalist with his millions of dollars to the millions of Soviet people. The capitalist declares, “I am the state,” while the Soviet people counter that, “We are the state.” This is rather simplistic ideology, and it was not new to Soviet readers by 1947; the fat capitalist hoarding money is standard socialist imagery.<sup>79</sup> The masculinity of the cartoon gives it a secondary meaning, however. On the right is a worker in coveralls and an open-necked shirt; second from right is a Red Army soldier in full uniform: both are standard Soviet male images. Second from left is a *kolkhoznitsa*, a female collective farm worker. On the left is a man from one of the Soviet Union’s ethnic minorities, a rare figure in *Krokodil*. His identity is evident from his unique hat and dark moustache. This cartoon thus obeys a standard *Krokodil* format for group imagery of the Soviet people: three men and one woman. Although the four figures are supposedly standing in a row, the Russian men are in fact in front, followed by the woman, then the minority man. This ranking of Soviet citizens is subtle, however, as they are meant to be presented as equals, working together to counter the capitalist in the left frame. They cannot afford to other anyone within their ranks – neither the dark-featured minority nor the woman. The enemy, meanwhile, is not only an enemy to their nation, but also to the masculinity of their nation. He has distorted features: his girth is out of proportion with his feet; his jowls and neck bulge grotesquely from under his tiny top hat; and his glasses

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<sup>79</sup> Hobsbawm, “Man and Woman in Socialist Iconography,” 122.

indicate physical weakness. He is in every way the classic countertype to Soviet male imagery.

The male form represented a number of things in *Krokodil*: entire countries, economies (figure 11), atomic energy programs (figure 17), and even peace itself (figure 15). In a cartoon from the Dec. 20, 1949 issue, male bodies represent the strength of various currencies (figure 13). The powerful Soviet ruble strides confidently among the feeble currencies of Western Europe. The German mark observes to the French franc that the ruble looks so good because he is not under the thumb of the dollar, like the invalid currencies surrounding him. This cartoon uses physical strength or weakness to symbolize the monetary equivalent. The male forms of the European currencies are unsightly degenerates. They again have stereotypically Jewish hook noses, as well as ape-like feet and toes, rotting teeth, and torn clothing, not to mention their physical handicaps: broken legs and arms and one patched eye. They require crutches and canes to support themselves, and in 1949 this representation of the enemy likely refers to the battlefields still etched in popular memory. Although the war took a greater toll on male bodies on the Eastern front than on the Western front, this cartoon insinuates that the reverse is true by contrasting the healthy Soviet body with the wounded bodies of the West. As in the earlier cartoon with the Gulliverian worker (figure 11), the limp, broken bodies of the Western currencies in this image are impotent in comparison to the tall, broad-shouldered, neatly dressed ruble, who grins as he observes the sorry state of his foes. "Crippled soldiers had to be 'made' into men again," Joanna Bourke has written, "shrugging off what was regarded as the feminizing tendencies of disability."<sup>80</sup> The Western men are feminized not only by their disabilities and impotence, but also by their

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<sup>80</sup> Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996), 74.

subordination to the mighty dollar, which is masculinized by the declaration of its dominance. The hulking Soviet man, by contrast, is subordinate to no one. His image underscores Hobsbawm's observation that socialist iconography "typifies not so much the worker as sheer muscular effort; not intelligence, skill and experience, but brute strength." According to Hobsbawm, "the expression of intelligence is irrelevant,"<sup>81</sup> and this argument extends to the *Krokodil* cartoons. In the currency cartoon, as in many others, the male representations of Soviet power and dominance have not outwitted their capitalist opponents; they are not shown devising superior technology, for example, and indeed any hint of intellectualism insinuates the alleged Jewish cosmopolitanism of this period. Instead, *Krokodil*'s imagery relied mainly on physical prowess to denote dominant masculinity.<sup>82</sup>

Reprinted from a Bulgarian magazine, a cartoon from the Oct. 30, 1949 issue of *Krokodil* provides a stark contrast between the way socialist countries viewed their relations, as opposed to those between capitalist countries (figure 14). In the top frame, a Russian and a Bulgarian man are sharing a cigarette and a flask in a show of fraternal cooperation. In the bottom frame, a murderous Uncle Sam is holding a knife to Marianne, the traditional female representative of France.<sup>83</sup> The caption reads, "Friendship... and friendship." The friendship

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<sup>81</sup> Hobsbawm, "Man and Woman in Socialist Iconography," 136.

<sup>82</sup> Curiously, Victoria Bonnell has found the opposite in her research on postwar political posters: elderly men appear in suits and ties and are "engaged in mental as opposed to physical work." She attributes this in part to "the changing nature of science and technology in the postwar era, when military competition depended more on sophisticated weaponry than on physical prowess and numerical superiority" (*Iconography of Power*, 245). A future project comparing the conflicting imagery in posters and cartoons might be useful in explaining this contradiction.

<sup>83</sup> In the foreign affairs cartoons I have examined in *Krokodil*, Marianne is the only woman who appears regularly, and she is the only female personification of any of the countries featured. Other traditional female symbols, such as Germania and Britannia, never appear; instead, Germany and Britain are represented by male forms, usually Konrad Adenauer and John Bull. The cartoonists' use of Marianne in *Krokodil* demonstrates the historic Russian admiration for the French Revolution, out of which her image was born. Her association with the liberty of the French people is underscored in numerous cartoons that contrast her image with that of French leader Charles de Gaulle, who is demonized along with leaders such as Franco and Adenauer. For further discussion of Marianne's image, see Maurice Agulhon, *Marianne into Battle: Republican*

in the top frame is evidently the proper form between allies. The United States purports to be France's ally as well, the cartoon seems to say, yet France is in fact being held hostage by its relationship with the United States. Beyond the denunciation of the western alliance, which was common, this cartoon shows the Soviet Union's idea of a proper relationship between men, and demonizes men who commit violence against women. The first emphasizes the importance of male friendship in Slavic culture. Researchers have noted that in Russia (and extending to Bulgaria in this cartoon), "a male friend is a brother, a drinking companion, a soulmate and a bulwark against the outside world."<sup>84</sup> The sanctity of the platonic male bond in Russian life helps explain the disgust with which *Krokodil* cartoons assign improper male relationships to, and as, the enemy. Accusing the enemy of abusing the unique fraternal bond that Russians value between men was a potential means of deepening public opinion against that enemy. Further, as Susan Reid has argued of paintings in the immediate postwar years, "what the party most urgently needed from art and literature was instructive role models and images of comradeship to recuperate disaffected young men."<sup>85</sup> The image of Russian-Bulgarian friendship offers such a portrait of proper camaraderie between men. The bottom frame of the cartoon, which demonizes the behavior of a man holding a knife to a woman, demonstrates a different way in which *Krokodil* accused enemy men of improper behavior. In most cartoons during this time period, enemy masculinity was belittled through insinuations of homosexuality. In this image of Uncle Sam threatening Marianne, however, a masculinity that crosses the limits of heterosexual respectability has become the enemy. Soviet society was by no means free from violence against women, but by projecting this characteristic onto

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*Imagery and Symbolism in France, 1789-1880*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

<sup>84</sup> Lynn Visson, quoted in Draitser, *Making War, Not Love*, 84.

the enemy, *Krokodil* effectively distanced it from the Soviet self. Like homosexuality in previous cartoons, an overly aggressive heterosexuality is othered in this image.

In contrast to the enemy cartoons that feature improper male behavior, or even the cartoons that show Soviet masculinity triumphing over that of the other, a cartoon from the Feb. 28, 1951 issue provides a rare glimpse of the way the state believed a Soviet man should properly interact with women (figure 15). The occasion is March 8, International Women's Day, which was widely celebrated in the Soviet Union and accordingly given special attention in *Krokodil* each year. Such a solemn occasion was never satirized, of course, and for this reason such "cartoons" in fact fall more into the category of propaganda posters than humorous imagery. This dual purpose for cartoons first appeared in Russia in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the censors "drew a distinction between the funny cartoons, which raised careful laughter, and the socially significant ones, which played a leading role in the reconstruction of social life."<sup>85</sup> In the Women's Day cartoon, a man presents the seated woman with flowers for the occasion while two other women applaud, and he thanks all three women for their contributions to Soviet society. He is not just any Soviet man, however; he is the personification of peace. Peace was a major theme in *Krokodil* during this time period, and the Soviet Union was often portrayed as seeking peace while its enemies continued to wage war. Whenever peace is personified in *Krokodil*, it is always male. This is a curious feature, both because peace is traditionally a female cause in many countries, and because soldiers are venerated in Soviet society. In *Krokodil*, however, soldiers are rarely shown in battle. They hold babies in their arms, express camaraderie to their proletarian brothers, or stand tall in defense of the motherland. While prepared to defend the country, however,

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<sup>85</sup> Susan E. Reid, "Masters of the Earth: Gender and Destalinization in Soviet Reformist Painting of the Khrushchev Thaw," *Gender and History*, Vol. 11, no. 2 (July 1999), 284.

Soviet soldiers in *Krokodil* are mostly portrayed as champions of peace. Although he is not in a soldier's uniform, the man in this image embodies the goal of peace in Soviet society. After thanking the women for their work, the man also asks them not to forget about him, indicating that men and women need to work together to secure peace in their society. This cartoon demonstrates the state's idea of proper interaction between men and women, and it shows male chivalry towards women of all ages. By comparison, the aggression shown by Uncle Sam towards Marianne (figure 14) is improper. The Women's Day cartoon also underscores the demographic imbalance that still concerned the state in 1951. Placing one man against three women highlighted the urgency of population recuperation, in order to balance the numbers of men and women.

Like the Women's Day cartoon, the image featured on the Sept. 20, 1953 cover of *Krokodil* is also less a cartoon than a propaganda poster (figure 16). Under the heading, "At 7:00 at night, after work," it shows a father at home with his three children, while their mother approvingly looks on in the background. A book of stories lies on the floor beside a teddy bear, and the children are smiling adoringly at their father. The caption asks, "How does this wife manage them alone?" indicating that a father is essential to any healthy family environment. Evidently, a mother cannot manage three children alone, and judging from the smile on the mother's face, she does not want to. In 1953, as the Soviet family still struggled to rebuild after the war, this image is particularly influential. It sends a clear message to Soviet men that their proper role is that of father, in a traditional family setting, while also reminding women that their children need a father. The image provides a candid illustration of the 1944 family legislation discussed earlier in this paper, which promoted the two-parent family and discouraged single motherhood. Interestingly, the father in this ideal image of

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<sup>86</sup> Vladimir Kazanevsky, "The History of the Cartoon in the USSR," *Humor*, Vol. 8, no. 2 (1995), 168.



family life bears a striking resemblance to the recently deceased *vozhd'*, Stalin. It seems to reinforce the view of Stalin as the ultimate family man, a staunch supporter of family values.

Finally, a cartoon in the July 10, 1954 issue shows another contrasting image of the masculinity of self and other (figure 17). It depicts a Soviet worker in an atomic power station who is using atomic energy in a positive way, to highlight a suspicious looking enemy who is using it in a negative way, to build atomic weaponry. The cartoon features another stereotypically masculine Soviet worker: his sleeves are rolled up, his grip is firm on the controls, and drawn in profile, we can see his straight nose, high cheekbones, and strong jaw. His nemesis, meanwhile, again bears the characteristics of a Jewish stereotype: he is small, thin, and weak. His face is wrinkled with age, his nose too big, his eyebrows too bushy. He is annoyed to have been caught by the spotlight, crouching in the dark with his atomic bomb cradled in his arms. Like the cartoons with the huge Soviet worker and the currencies (figures 11 and 13), the atomic energy cartoon (figure 17) also uses the imagery of impotence to emphasize the power of the Soviet Union, and the harmlessness of the enemy. Everything about the Soviet man is erect: his posture, his extended arm, his control wand, even the pen in his shirt pocket. Everything about the enemy, on the other hand, is flaccid: his stance, his bent knees and arms, even his curled fingers. His attempt to acquire potency through possession of the phallic missile has been thwarted by the Soviet man's illumination of the scheme. As in the Women's Day cartoon (figure 15), this Soviet man seeks peace, and is safeguarding both his country and his masculinity against an enemy that he believes could subvert both.

## Conclusion

By using masculine images to shape Soviet notions of self and other, *Krokodil's* foreign affairs cartoons reinforced the traditional identity of man as the model for a progressive and productive society. The male figures in the cartoons personified entire countries, giving them male national identities and fusing national enemies with enemies to modern masculinity. "Intolerance of differences, typical of any authoritarian regime, is ill-suited to sexual or any other kind of pluralism," Igor Kon has written. "From the totalitarian standpoint, the homosexual is dangerous primarily because he is a dissident, because he differs from the rest."<sup>87</sup> In *Krokodil's* foreign affairs cartoons, associating homosexuality with the enemy was a way to reinforce the heterosexual masculine ideal the Soviet Union required of its men after the war. As Robert Moeller has written of West Germany, the othering of sexual minorities was "part of a postwar effort to restore an imagined past where society made men into fathers, biology made women into mothers, and nature made everyone heterosexual."<sup>88</sup> *Krokodil's* foreign affairs cartoons were not only about the enemy; they were also about the Soviet Union, and they were used to demonize both the enemy countries and the deviant male behavior associated with them. In the early Cold War period, when a deteriorating international situation overlapped with domestic issues of postwar reconstruction, the sexual politics of self and other were played out through competing masculinities in an attempt to show that Soviet society would rebuild itself, and that socialist society would prevail in the new global order.

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<sup>87</sup> Igor S. Kon, *The Sexual Revolution in Russia: From the Age of the Czars to Today*, trans. James Riordan (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 246.

<sup>88</sup> Moeller, "'The Homosexual Man is a 'Man,'" 428-29.



Fig. 1 (June 10, 1950)

*Title:* A marriage of an American team.

*Caption:* Groom – Schuman; Bride – Adenauer; Blessing from Wall Street

*Text on bag:* Ruhr



Рис. Бор. Едимов

— Помните, Джон, я ещё в Ялте сказал вам: до скорой встречи в Берлине.

Fig. 2 (July 30, 1945)

Caption: "Remember, John, back at Yalta I told you, here's to a speedy meeting in Berlin!"

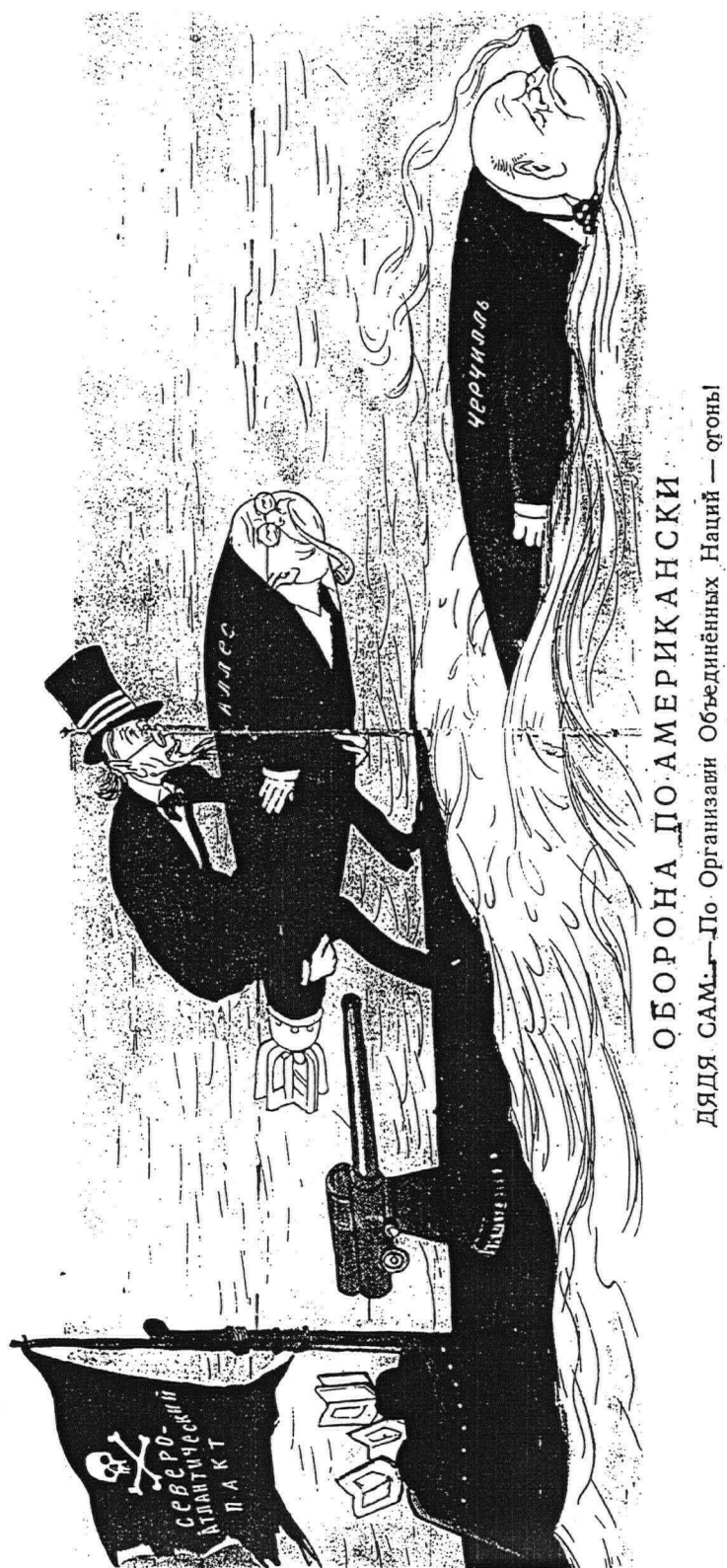


Fig. 3 (April 20, 1949)

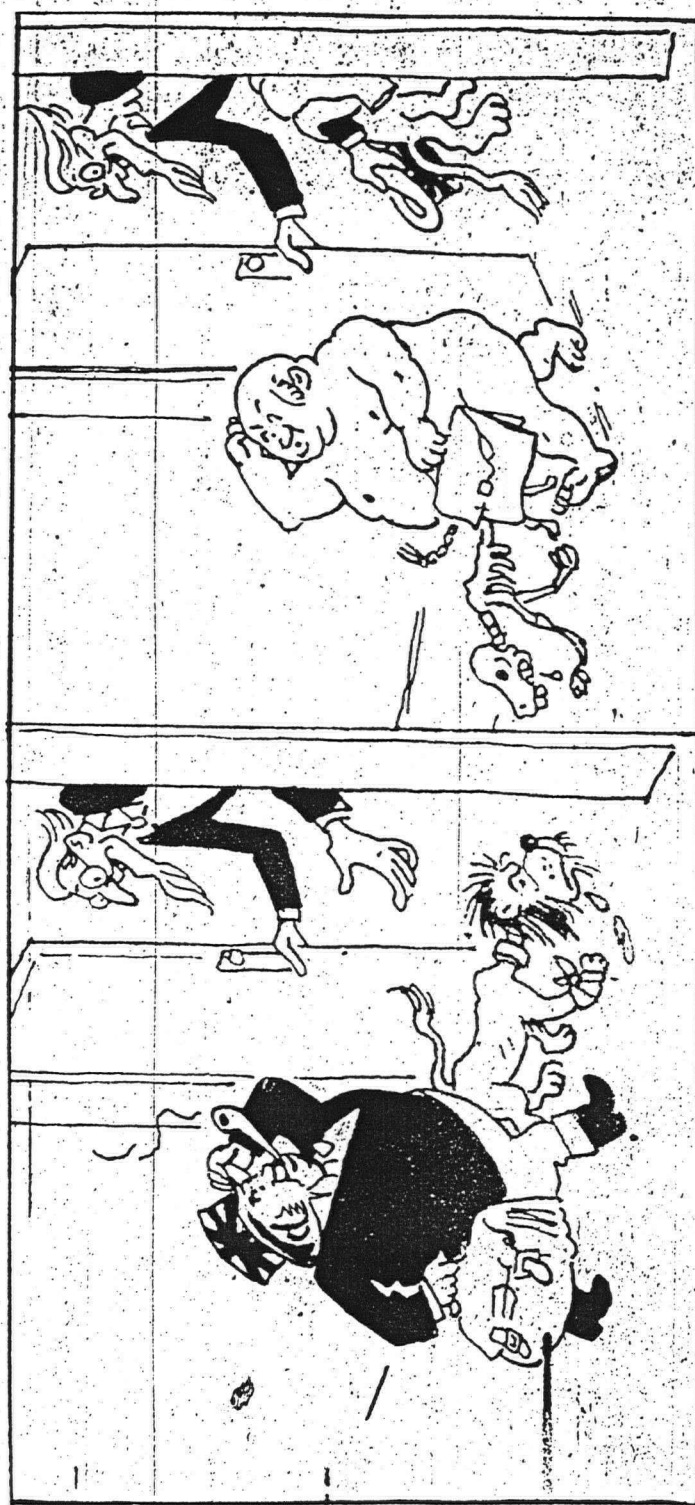
Title: Defense, American-style

Caption: Uncle Sam: "Aim for the United Nations — fire!"

Text on flag: North Atlantic Pact

Left to right: Uncle Sam, Dulles, Churchill

# АНГЛО-АМЕРИКАНСКАЯ КОНФЕРЕНЦИЯ В ВАШИНГТОНЕ



Начало . . . и конец.

Начало . . .

Fig. 4 (Oct. 30, 1949)

Title: Anglo-American Conference in Washington

Caption: Beginning... and End

Left to right: John Bull, Uncle Sam





Fig. 5 (Dec. 30, 1949)

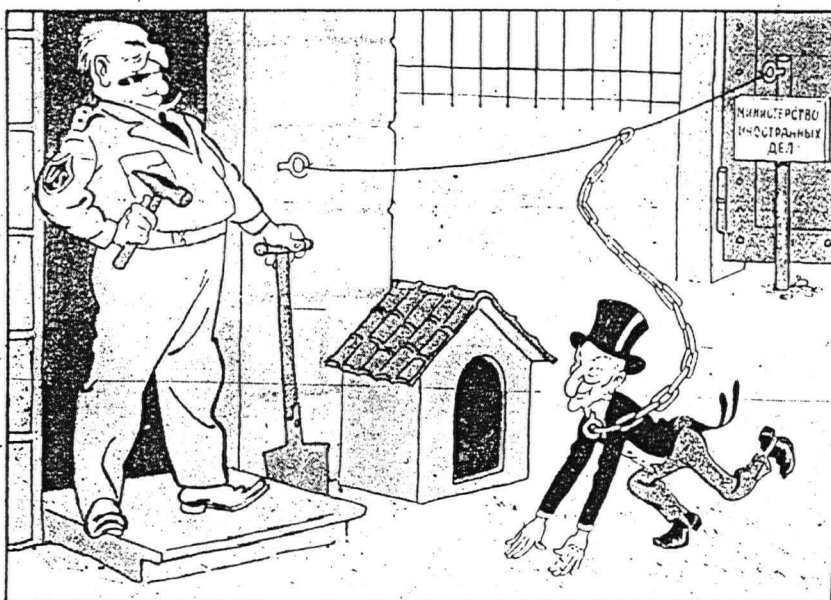
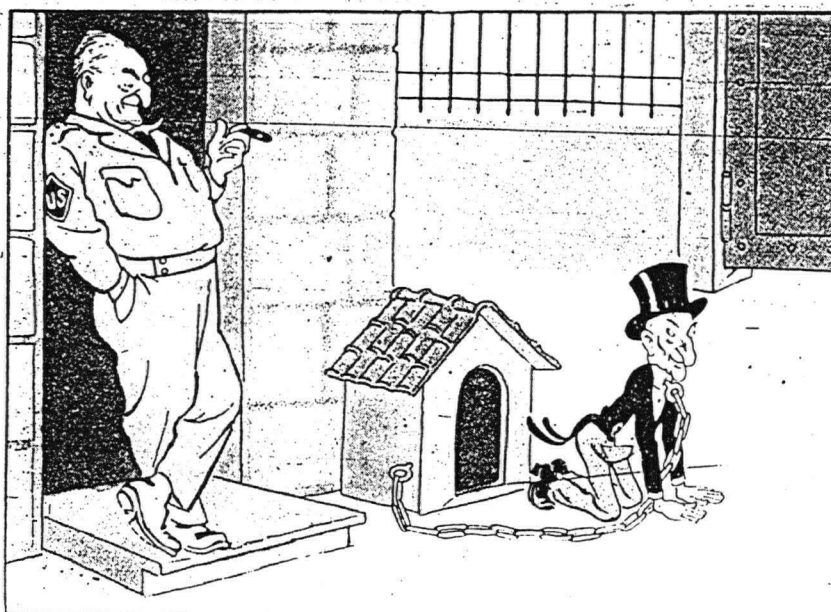
*Title:* New Year's Carnival on Wall Street

*Text on sign:* Today, 16 'girls,' Marshall Plan costumes, Big war program, Dancing to an American tune

# НА АМЕРИКАНСКОМ ПОДВОРЬЕ

Рис. Д. ЦИНОВСКОГО

Стремясь обмануть народные массы и облегчить включение Западной Германии в агрессивный блок, западные державы объявили об «изменениях» в оккупационном статуте, якобы расширяющих права боннского правительства.



Боннскому правительству предоставлена большая самостоятельность.

Fig. 6 (April 10, 1951)

Title: In an American Townhouse

Caption: The Bonn government has been left with a great deal of independence.

Text on sign: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Note: Seeking to deceive the national masses and facilitate the inclusion of West Germany in the aggressive bloc, the Western powers announced a "change" in the occupation statute, supposedly extending the rights of the Bonn government.



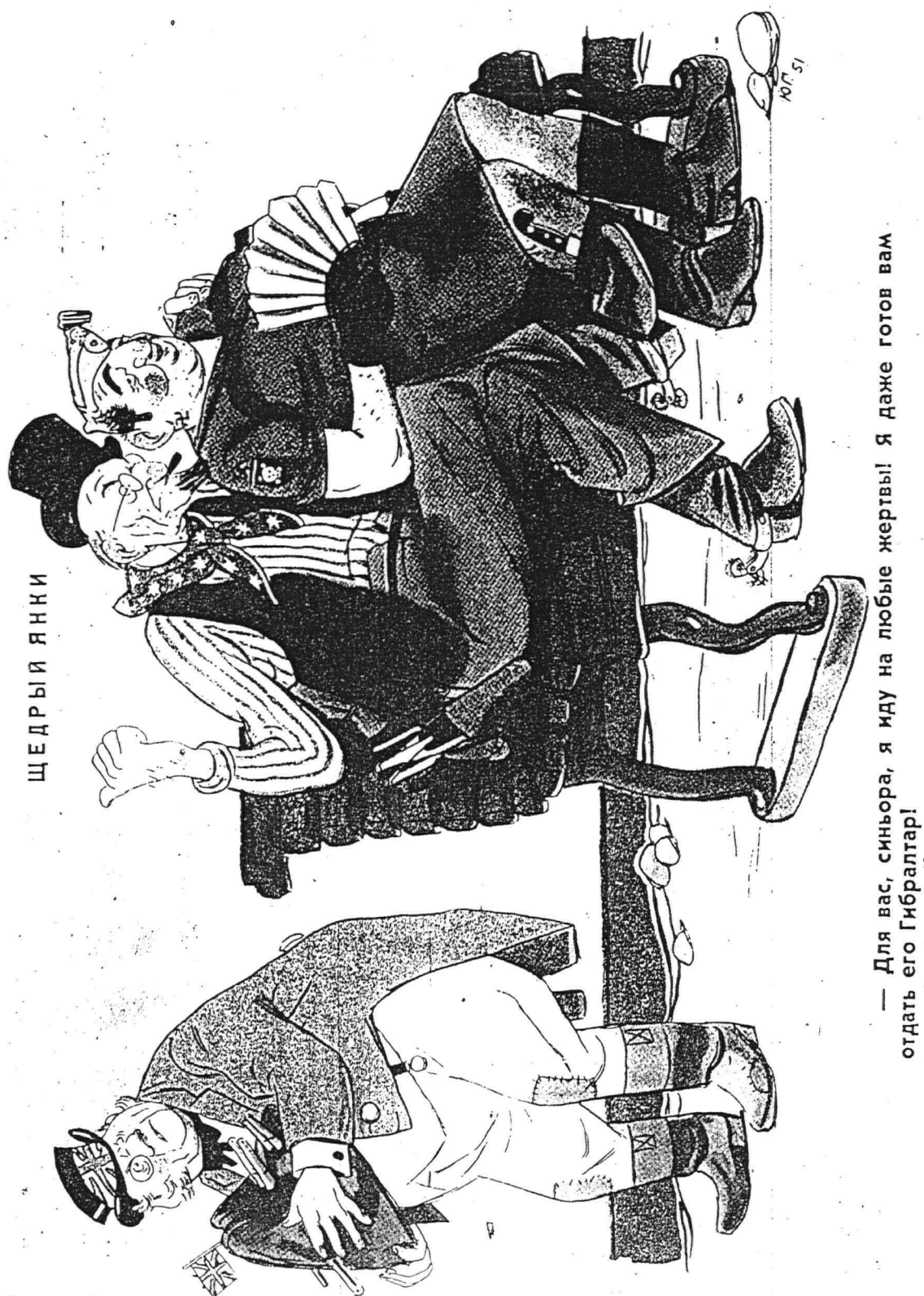


Fig. 7 (Dec. 30, 1950)

*Title:* Predictions for 1951

*Caption:* Tito and Franco, as usual, will be selling themselves on the streets of New York.

*Left to right:* Tito, Wall Street, Franco



— Для вас, синьора, я иду на любые жертвы! Я даже готов вам  
отдать его Гибралтар!

Fig. 8 (May 30, 1951)

Title: Generous Yankee

Caption: "For you, señora, I would sacrifice anything! I am even prepared to return his Gibraltar to you!"

Left to right: John Bull, Uncle Sam, Franco



Fig. 9 (March 20, 1950)

Title: An Experienced Servant

Caption: Franco: "We work well together, mister! My previous bosses had the same taste as you!"

Text on paper: Recommendation... A. Hitler, B. Mussolini

Left to right: Uncle Sam, John Bull, Franco



### Марка для Японии.

Fig. 10 (May 30, 1950)

Caption: A Stamp for Japan

Text on stamp: Japan

Text on geisha: Hirohito

Left to right: MacArthur, Hirohito



Fig. 11 (Oct. 20, 1952)

*Caption:* "How can I keep up with him if he strides firmly, while my legs give way!"

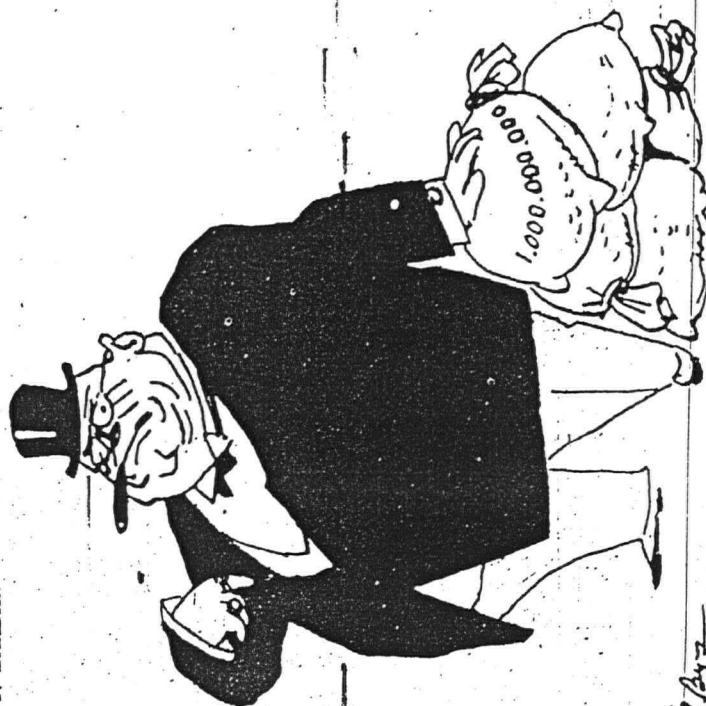
*Text above left figure:* Capitalist Economy

*Text on right figure:* USSR



# ВЛАСТЬ МИЛЛИОНОВ

РИС. Г. ВАЛЬКА



Государство — это я!



Государство — это мы!

Fig. 12 (Oct. 30, 1947)

Title: The power of millions

Left: "I am the state!"

Right: "We are the state!"



ФРАНК: — Как этот рубль выглядит хорошо!  
 МАРКА: — Ещё бы! Ведь на него доллар не давит!

Fig. 13 (Dec. 20, 1949)

*Caption:* Franc: "This ruble looks so good!"

Mark: "I'll say! The dollar is not oppressing him!"

*Clockwise from bottom left:* Franc, Mark, Pound, Lira, Krona, Guilder



Fig. 14 (Oct. 30, 1949)

Caption: Friendship... and friendship

Top frame, left to right: Bulgarian man, Russian man

Bottom frame, left to right: Marianne, Uncle Sam





Fig. 15 (Feb. 28, 1951)

*Caption:* Compliments of the Season!

Peace: "Thank you, women comrades, for your trouble. Don't forget about me in the future!"

*Text on sign:* March 8 - International Women's Day

*Text on man:* Peace



**К Р О К О Д И Л**

Fig. 16 (Sept. 20, 1953)

Title: At 7:00 at night, after work

Caption: "How does this wife manage them alone!"

Text on book: Stories



Fig. 17 (July 10, 1954)

*Caption:* A question of using atomic energy... for new illumination

*Text on sign:* USSR, First industrial electric power station for atomic energy

*Text on missile:* Atomic

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