Man about the House:

Male Domesticity and Fatherhood in Soviet Visual Satire under Khrushchev

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In February 1964, the satirical magazine *Krokodil* published a rather unusual cartoon on its front page: a father and his infant at home alone (**Fig. 1**). While images of fathers interacting with their children had appeared on the cover of the magazine almost a dozen times since 1945, this was the first time that it had depicted a father as solely responsible for the care of a small child within the domestic space.[1] From the state of the apartment, it would appear that this was also the first time that this particular father had been given entrusted with such a task: pans bubble over on the stove, the lightshades on the ceiling swing back and forth, and the floor is littered with discarded toys, broken crockery and half-eaten bits of food, and in the middle of this disorder sits the man with his baby in his arms, both of them plaintively calling out 'Ma-a-ama!', hoping to hurry the return of the wife and mother still at work.[2]

[**FIG CM.1 NEAR HERE**]

[1] Fathers appeared as the front cover of *Krokodil* eleven times between 1945 and 1965, but only twice during the Stalin era (10 September 1948 and 20 November 1949); half of these images appeared in 1964 and 1965.

[2] V. Chizhikov, 'Zhena zaderzhalas' na rabote…', *Krokodil*, no. 5, 1964, front cover

Figure CM.1: V. Chizhikov, 'Ma-a-ama!', *Krokodil*, no. 5, 1964.

As Lynne Attwood has highlighted in her analysis of early Soviet women's magazines, 'newspapers and magazines were credited by the leaders with enormous importance in socialising the population. They were seen as the main channel of communication between the Communist Party and the people, and a crucial means of disseminating propaganda'.[3] But the importance of these publications in educating and moulding Soviet people was not simply confined to the stories they told or the articles they published; the images they featured also had a crucial role in both creating the New Soviet Person and in articulating the concerns and values of contemporary society and this was equally the case for cartoons and caricatures as it was for fine art. The importance of the satirical image for Soviet socialisation was made clear by the renowned cartoonist Boris Efimov in an article written for *Voprosy literatury* in early 1962:

[3] Lynne Attwood, *Creating the New Soviet Woman: Women's Magazines as Engineers of Female Identity, 1922-53*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999, p. 2.

> Who among the workers in literature and art… does not think about how our weapons – fiery words, sharp pens, brushes, and chisels – can take part in the education of people in communist consciousness? …we – the workers of the satirical genre, a warlike genre – destroy and mercilessly expose all that is hostile to the people's interest… From the great platform of the Soviet press the political caricature spoke with a firm voice and obtained an unprecedented internal and international resonance, and drew each reader nearer to it, entering into his abode, institution and factory…[4]

For Efimov, caricature, satire and cartoons were invaluable weapons in the state's arsenal when it came to shaping Soviet society and highlighting the negative behaviours that still needed to be eradicated. Tellingly though, beyond the power of the images themselves, according to this artist, the real educational power of these cartoons lay in their inclusion in the press and subsequently in their ability to infiltrate the everyday life of the Soviet person..[5]

[4] Boris Efimov, 'Ozuzhie smekha', cited in Stephen M. Norris, 'Laughter's Weapon and Pandora's Box: Boris Efimov in the Khrushchev Era', in David Goldfrank and Pavel Lyssakov, *Cultural Cabaret: Russian and American Essays for Richard Stites*, Washington DC: New Academia Publishing, 2012, pp. 106-7

[5] The social function of satirical humour and joke-telling in the Soviet Union has been an area of interest for a number of scholars in recent years, particularly in relation to the Stalin period. See, for example: Jonathan Waterlow, 'Sanctioning Laughter in Stalin's Soviet Union' *History Workshop Journal*, no. 1, vol. 79, 2015, pp. 198-214, and his chapter in this volume; David Brandenberger, *Political Humor under Stalin* Bloomington, IN, 2009, and

Given the obsession of the Khrushchevist state with the domestic space, it would be easy to assume that it was entirely unremarkable that these issues should be reflected in the satire - – a genre particularly responsive to contemporary preoccupations – published in the nation's most popular magazines. However, the family tableaux which began to appear in the mid-1950s were part of a much broader visual re-conceptualisation of the place of men within the home which occurred after the death of Stalin. While they may appear trivial and frivolous, the themes and motifs in these drawings were actually unprecedented in Soviet visual culture.[6]

Men and the Home during the Khrushchev Era:

The Khrushchevist state was particularly concerned with the home and family life: as Victor Buchli surmised, 'if the Stalinist state was poised at the threshold of the "hearth", the Khrushchevist state walked straight in and began to do battle'.[7] With the rapid development of domestic technologies during the 1950s, the home and homemaking stopped being the domain of the woman and was turned into an arena for professionalism, scientific debate and modernisation. As Susan Reid has demonstrated, the nexus of the struggle between the private and public within the home was the kitchen, not only in the Leninist sense of helping to reduce the female burden, but also through the burgeoning debate on microbes, appliances

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Robert Thurston, 'Social Dimensions of Stalin's Rule: Humor and Terror in the USSR', *Journal of Social History*, no. 3, vol. 24,1991, pp. 541-62.

[6] References here to visual culture exclude film.

[7] Victor Buchli, *An Archaeology of Socialism*, Oxford: Bloomsbury, 1999, p. 138.

and kitchen design in line with 'scientific-Communist' ideals.[8] The kitchen was transformed into a space to showcase the latest Soviet technology, based on efficiency, solid aesthetics and underpinned by the scientific discourse of hygiene, as well as a space which demonstrated the progression of socialism to the outside world. This masculinisation of the domestic space, through the introduction of domestic appliances and rational theory, however, did not pave the way for increased male participation in household chores. As Reid has also highlighted, the introduction of modern equipment into the home, while blurring the private/public binary, only served to underline the distinct gendering of domestic labour because 'both the discourse of modern Soviet living and the actual, built form of housing in the Khrushchev era reconfirmed the individual family home as a site of reproductive labour, and the housewife as its isolated, unpaid workforce'.[9]

In her investigation into the status of women during the Khrushchev period, Attwood also drew attention to the continuation of 'traditional' gender divisions in the home, as revealed in readers' letters to women's magazines. While some letters hinted at an increased willingness by husbands to participate in housework, this was often met with ridicule from neighbours and friends:

> Seeing my husband bustle around the kitchen, some of our male neighbours have begun to mock him, saying he does 'women's work', which they say is unseemly for a man […] I think that if a man sometimes prepares food, this

[8] Susan E. Reid, 'The Khrushchev Kitchen: Domesticating the Scientific-Technological Revolution', *Journal of Contemporary History,* no. 2, vol. 40, 2005, pp. 289-316.

[9] Reid, 'Khrushchev Kitchen', p. 293.

> does him proud […] We do not laugh at women if they do what is seen to be male work […] We respect her for it. So why is it shameful for a man to help his wife with housework and childcare?[10]

Despite the despair that some authors expressed concerning the persistence of the 'double burden', calls came for men to 'help' with household duties rather than take on their fair share with the tasks of taking out rubbish or fetching water being presented as suitably masculine roles: a man who cooked or cleaned warranted special praise.[11]

A poll carried out by *Komsomol'skaya pravda* in December 1961 adds to this confused picture, with one male respondent commenting that 'it seems to me that it will soon be necessary to speak of the "emancipation" of men […] The husband takes the child to kindergarten and brings him home, he goes to the store and minds the child […] In my opinion, it is time to stop shouting about helping women'.[12] Another female respondent wrote:

> The most miserable spectacle is the bored young father sitting in the garden on Sunday with his children in his arms. He is twenty-two or twenty-three and he would like to be hiking with geologists along the Angara [River] with a

[10] Lynne Attwood, 'Celebrating the "Frail-Figured Welder": Gender Confusion in Women's Magazines of the Khrushchev Era', *Slavonica*, no. 2, vol. 8, 2002, p. 166, citing *Rabotnitsa*, no. 10, 1955, p. 25.

[11] Attwood, 'Celebrating the "Frail-Figured Welder", pp. 167-9.

[12] *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, 17 December 1961, p. 4

> knapsack on his back, or else he would like to go to the library or skating rink, but instead he sits sweating as he performs the duties of an exemplary father.[13]

For this young woman, the paternal role was one that conflicted with, rather than complemented, the model of the New Soviet Man, as in her eyes men should be exploring nature or pursuing intellectual inquiries, not bound by domestic responsibilities. The poll also asked the multiple choice question 'which of the following would be the most important in eliminating the vestiges of woman's inferior position in everyday life?' The option 'participation of husband and children in the management of the household' was not seen as a solution by any of the respondents, and male involvement in household tasks was viewed as being of minor importance in comparison with government initiatives.[14]

What these contemporary attitudes demonstrate is that confusion proliferated during the Khrushchev years with regard to men and their place and function within the domestic space, as rhetoric slipped between the need to alleviate women's domestic burden and the notion that the husband was little more than a casual assistant for women's household duties.

Representing Men and the Home in Visual Culture:

While lived experience may have been filled with contradiction and confusion when it came to what role a Soviet man should ideally be playing in the domestic space, official visual culture was far more clear-cut: there was just one role for the man within the home and that

[13] *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, 24 December 1961, p. 4

[14] *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, 17 December 1961, p. 4.

was as a father. The inclusion of the father within the domestic space in visual culture was a legacy of the Great Patriotic War. The use of the family as a motivation to fight in wartime posters and the subsequent motif of the returned father, symbolising the restoration of pre-war norms, cemented the man as a figure within the home after 1945. Before the war, the father had been almost completely absent from visual representations of family life and, as Sergei Kukhterin has demonstrated, this was not a trend confined to cultural production. Family legislation of the 1920s was based on the relationship between the child, mother and paternal state, from which the biological father was actively excluded.[15] The experience of war changed this dynamic, both practically in terms of a redefinition of paternal responsibility in the 1944 Family Code and symbolically as the presence of the father came to be used as a barometer by which society could gauge the return to normal life after such trauma and dislocation.[16]

However, while we can root the introduction of the man into the domestic space in the mid-1940s, it was not until after 1953 that the father became a ubiquitous and multifaceted figure in Soviet visual culture, appearing in a range of roles, guises and media that far outstripped the rather narrow – albeit highly significant – representations of paternity of the late Stalin era. Images of fathers and their children were everywhere: in illustrations for short stories, in published reproductions of paintings, in photographs, and in cartoons. In just two months in

[15] Sergei Kukhterin, 'Fathers and Patriarchs in Communist and Post-Communist Russia', in Sarah Ashwin (ed.), *Gender, State and Society in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia*, London: Routledge, 2000, p. 74.

[16] For the 1944 Family Code, see Rudolf Schlesinger (ed.), *The Family in the USSR: Documents and Readings*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949, pp. 367-77.

1956, the women's magazine *Sovetskaya zhenshchina* reproduced A. Lutsenko's painting *First Born of the New Settlers* (1955), in which the new father and his pals celebrate the birth of this young man's first child; Gelii Korzhev's early work *On Leave From the Construction Site* (?1956) showing a young father returning home and embracing his small child; and featured the short story *Ordinary Lads*, which told the story of Yurii Sablin and the birth of his son Mishka.[17] Illustrated by Petr Pinkisevich, the final image of *Ordinary Lads* was the proud new father, out with his friends, pushing the pram, a striking indication of how far the visual presentation of paternity had come since 1953. And while the number of photographs of fathers and their children published during the final decade of Stalinism could be counted on one hand, after 1953 photographs of men interacting with their children featured regularly, culminating in August 1960, when the cover of *Ogonek* featured a father with his child for the first time.[18] (**Fig. CM.2**). [**FIG CM.2 NEAR HERE**]

[17] *Sovetskaya zhenshchina*, no. 7, 1956, p. 30, and no. 5, 1956, pp. 6-10.

[18] For example, twenty-five photographs of the father-child relationship appeared in *Ogonek* between May 1945 and March 1953; the number of photographs published only exceeded five per annum in 1946 and 1952.

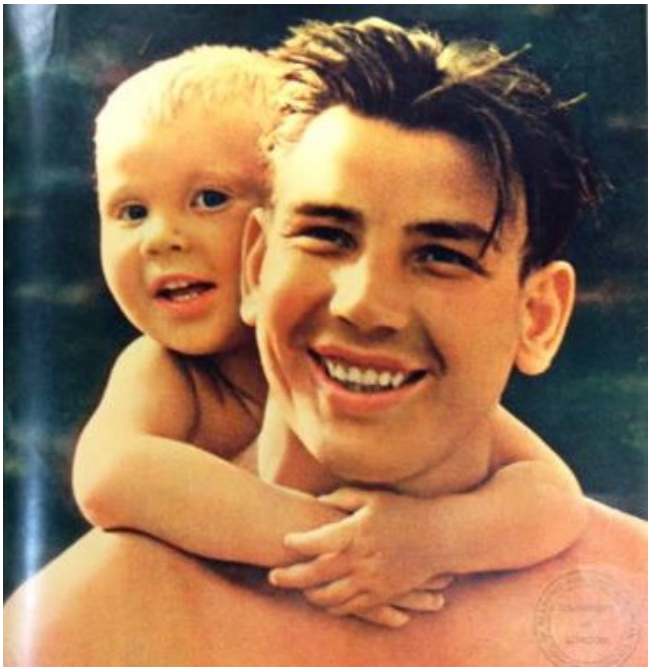

Figure CM.2: 'The New Father of the Thaw', *Ogonek*, no. 33, 1960, front cover.

The early years of Khrushchev's 'thaw' saw two developing parallel trends in the representation of the father-child relationship, signalling a significant diversion from the construction of paternity in the last decade of Stalinism. First, fatherhood came to be presented as much more participatory, with fathers depicted as playing an active role in their child's learning and development. Second, these more involved fathers were shown to be present in their child's life from birth, typified by paintings such as Dmitrii Mochal'skii's *In the New Home* (1957) and Andrei Tutunov's *First Steps* (1959). Why there was such a radical shift in conceptualisation and representation of paternity in the years after 1953 is open to interpretation, as the father-child motif is so malleable that it could easily be shaped to fit into a wide range of Khrushchevist concerns. However, anxiety over family life, happenings within the private space, the morality of the next generation or the completion of the socialist project were hardly products of the 'thaw' and yet they had never previously been articulated through the use of a man's relationship with his children, at least not visually. As such, we are left with the question of 'why now'? What change had occurred that prompted Soviet

fathers to emerge as such a potent visual presence during the Khrushchev era? It is hard to attribute this radical change to anything other than the death of Stalin ashe emergence of the father predates any shift in official policy towards the family or any other projects that subsequently influenced a whole range of artistic works that examined contemporary family life. No longer shackled by the symbolic paternal power of the state, it would appear that the death of Stalin liberated biological paternity, enabling it to be represented visually with a power, frequency and range unlike anything that had gone before.

Men and the Home in Visual Satire:

Although the most visual genres coded the role of the man in the domestic space almost exclusively through paternity, the confusion highlighted earlier surrounding men and their place within the home when it came to other duties did find an outlet in cartoons and satire. The celebration of International Women's Day on 8 March provided the most fertile ground for ridiculing the shortcomings of Soviet men around the house and the vast majority of images of men doing housework appear around this time of year. The premise was usually the same: the well-meaning husband, eager to give his wife a break from her usual domestic chores, turned his hand to preparing dinner, mopping the floors or doing the ironing with disastrous yet comical results.[19] By the late-1960s, the humour associated with this supposed

[19] See for example I. Semenov, 'Iz samykh lushikh pobuzhdenii…', *Sovetskaya zhenshchina* , no. 3,1958, pp. 12-13; I. Lisogors, 'V den' 8 marta', *Krokodil*, no. 7,1960, p. 6; G. and V. Karaveav, 'Dorogoi, ty opyat' zabyl chto 8 Marta ya delayu vse sama', *Ogonek*, no. 10,1961, p. 33 and the page of cartoons 'Prazdnik zhenshchin v raznye epokhi', *Krokodil*, no. 6,1963, p. 5.

day of celebration was so well established that in March 1968 *Ogonek* dedicated its whole 'funny page' to the day and the panic it induced in men across the nation: a man surreptitiously removes the date from the calendar; one man attempts to make a cake using instructions from a TV cooking show and another pores over recipe books while the dinner burns.[20] Although all this chaos and incompetence served a comic purpose – after all a wife coming home to a pristine apartment and a beautifully cooked meal was hardly amusing – the suggestion appears to have been that no Soviet man was comfortable performing these domestic tasks. What is more, by associating this behaviour so closely with International Women's Day, the impression is given that such male involvement in housekeeping was a deviation from the normal rhythms of domestic life, an exceptional, once-a-year kind of occurrence.

The notion that housekeeping was alien territory for the Soviet man was made even more explicit in a number of cartoons that linked domestic chores to more manly pursuits. In 1964, for example, *Ogonek* depicted a husband tending a boiling pot using the same protective equipment usually worn by metal workers.[21] An earlier cartoon by the same artists shows another husband standing to attention in the kitchen, saluting his wife and reporting that nothing significant has happened in her absence, as the pan behind him boils over and spills on the floor.[22] This military subtext is also found in one of the most intriguing cartoons from

[20] '*Zhenskii den'*', *Ogonek*, no. 10, 1968, p. 30.

[21] G. and V. Karavaev, 'Ekh ty, a eshche luchshii stalevar na zavode!' *Ogonek*, no. 26, 1964, p. 31.

[22] G. and V. Karavaev, 'Za vashe otsutstvie nichego sushchestvennogo ne proizoshlo' *Ogonek*, no. 9, 1964, p. 33.

the era, this time published in *Krokodil* in 1965, again to coincide with International Women's Day. Bedecked in a uniform of floral aprons and wielding an array of household appliances, a group of men march in formation through the street as the women watch from a dais in a parody of the military marches that took place on Red Square. Here male participation in household duties is endowed with a sense of heroism, as if men were off to face the enemy rather than some dirty dishes![23] The link between domestic and more typically male public spaces provided the basis for German Ogorodnikov's sketch, *Happy Housewarming!*, in which a man cooks a meal for his son over an open fire in the courtyard outside their new, but unfinished, apartment block.[24] The insinuation appears to be that it is only in this carnivalesque world, where the patterns of everyday life have been completely disrupted, would a man perform such a task, although interestingly this is one of only a few images where the man is shown as competently fulfilling a traditionally female role, presumably because the target of the satire is not the uselessness of the Soviet man within the home but the quality of Soviet construction. Yet, despite showing the man wearing an apron, taken outside the home, with all its connotations of primitiveness and adventure, the setting and fire transform this 'female' task into something suitably masculine, and life in the city is endowed with the rugged pioneer spirit found in contemporary representations of the Virgin Lands.

The idea that emerges most clearly and consistently from these images, then, is that men's participation in housework was an aberration, something confined to specific days of the year and with largely negative, if amusing, consequences. Still, however formulaic such cartoons

[23] S. Aleksandrov, Untitled, *Krokodil*, no. 6, 1965, p. 7.

[24] G. Ogorodnikov, 'Schastlivy novosel'e', *Krokodil*, no. 24, 1966, p. 8.

may have been, they were the only visual media that engaged with the issue of men's place within the domestic space in any capacity beyond fatherhood. For all the rhetoric that came from the state with regards to easing the burden on women when it came to domestic chores, even in official culture the idea that the solution for this lay in increasing male participation in such responsibilities was quite literally laughable.

Representing Fathers in Visual Satire:

The mid-1950s witnessed both an explosion in the range of roles that fathers were presented as playing in the upbringing of children and the frequency with which fathers and their children appeared in Soviet print culture. Satirical representations not only map onto the hugely expanded repertoire of father figures found in other visual media, but also created a space for the exploration of some of the more negative aspects of the parent/child relationship that did not have an outlet in other genres, which by and large continued to be optimistic in their outlook, despite the move towards the exploration of some of the more emotionally profound aspects of Soviet life. This is not to say that the representation of the father and his interaction with his children was always presented positively in other forms, but satire engaged far more with the Khrushchevist concerns of parasitism, hooliganism and negative family dynamics than other 'high-brow' forms of visual culture.

The regime's obsession with youth during the 1950s and 1960s has been well-documented: from the attempts to engage the next generation with the Soviet project through programmes such as the Virgin Lands scheme, to the worries over the so-called 'youth problem' that proliferated in official discourse, the young people within Soviet society and their outlook

was of particular concern for the government.[25] The most infamous embodiment of the negative Soviet youth was the *stilyaga* (style-hound), whose ridiculous clothing and vacuous lifestyle provided rich fodder for satirical cartoonists even though, as Mark Edele has demonstrated, the *stilyagi* themselves were very much products of the immediate post-war era not de-Stalinisation.[26] Rather than viewing the lifestyle and appearance of these apparently indolent youths as demonstrative of new forms of expression and experimentation, though, the prevailing view was that these children were the products of poor parenting.[27] Consequently, the mid to late-1950s saw a wave of satirical images that condemned the attitude of some parents towards bringing up their children, which were founded on the implicit belief that the raising and socialisation of a child was the responsibility of both adults: in the case of the portrayal of the idle youth, the overindulgent father was just as much to blame as the overprotective mother. In Aminodav Kanevskii's *Busy Hands* (1958), for example, as his mother lights his cigarette, a young man is supported physically, and we can assume financially, by his father, who is depicted as haughty and unbothered by his son's slothful existence (**Fig. CM.3**).[28] Another drawing by the same artist from earlier in the year

[25] See, for example, Juliane Fürst, 'The Arrival of Spring? Changes and Continuities in Soviet Youth Culture and Policy Between Stalin and Khrushchev', in P. Jones (ed.), *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, London: Routledge, 2006, pp. 135-53**.**

[26] Mark Edele, 'Strange Young Men in Stalin's Moscow: the Birth and Life of the *Stiliagi*, 1945-1953', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, no. 1, vol. 50, 2002, pp. 37-61.

[27] 'O ser'eznykh nedostatkakh v vospitanii detei', 24 August, 1955, in *Prezidyum TsK KPSS 1954-8*, vol. 2, Moscow, 2003, pp. 114-22.

[28] A. Kanevskii. 'Ruki zanyaty' *Krokodil*, no. 35, 1958, p. 5.

shows a youth lounging in a hammock hung between his parents' necks,[29] while a 1955 cartoon entitled *Year After Year* also depicts a grown man lazing in a hammock as his parents ply him with food and shade him from the sun, wistfully hoping this will be the year 'little Kolenka' goes to college.[30] Writing in 1957, Allen Kassof recalled seeing similar images on posters on the streets of Kiev, with one showing a middle-aged man struggling to hold his grown-up son in his arms, the slogan reading: 'Falko Edvard, born in 1937, works nowhere, studies nowhere. Supported by his father […] He goes aimlessly through the city. His father will clothe him, his mother will feed him – they have brought up a "specialist" who cares not a fig for anything'.[31] While the responsibility for raising such idle and pampered children was most frequently associated with the actions of both parents, the father was singled out for particular attention on a couple of occasions, most notably in the *Krokodil* cartoons *Once he climbed on his father's shoulders…*(1955) and *At Their Father's Bosom* (1957), both of which explicitly linked 'bad' fathering to the profligate adolescents depicted.[32] [**FIG CM.3 NEAR HERE**]

[29] A. Kanevskii, 'So vsemi udobstvami' *Krokodil*, no. 8,1958, p. 7.

[30] E. Shcheglov, 'Iz goda v god' *Krokodil*, no. 21, 1955, p. 13.

[31] Allen Kassof, 'Youth vs the Regime: Conflict in Values', *Problems of Communism*, no. 6, vol. 3, 1957, p. 20.

[32] B. Leo, 'Odnazhdy on zabralsya ottsu na sheyu… ….da tak i ne slez', *Krokodil*, no. 32, 1955, p. 5; V. Konovalov, 'U ottsa za pazukhoi' *Krokodil*, no. 22, 1957, p. 14

Figure CM.3: A. Kanevskii, 'Busy Hands', *Krokodil*, no. 35, 1958

Whilst the rhetoric of parental blame did not disappear completely, in the early 1960s there was a shift in the portrayal of these problematic youth as parents now came to be represented as victims of their children's idleness rather than the root cause of it. However, their frivolous lifestyle remained central to these cartoons as they were depicted sleeping off the excesses of 'dancing, restaurants and picnics', being buffed and preened by their parents or lounging on the sofa being waited on by family members, although this time more out of coercion than pandering.[33] In many images, interest in fashion and personal grooming was used to signify the lack of ideological zeal in these youths. For example, in one *Krokodil* cartoon from 1962, a fashionably-dressed hula-hooping girl defends her lifestyle to her parents, shown pegging out the laundry, by proclaiming 'I don't work? All day long I spin like a squirrel in a wheel!'[34] In another from October 1965, the immaculate and Westernised dress of a brother

[33] E. Gorokhov, 'Uzhasno ustal nash synok!...', *Krokodil*, no. 17, 1956, p. 5

[34] E. Gorokhov, 'Ya ne rabotayu?' *Krokodil*, no. 13, 1962, p. 8.

and sister is juxtaposed against the shabby and unfashionable clothing of the adults, who are occupied with cleaning their shoes, brushing their coats and fixing on loose buttons so that the pair can hit the town.[35] This was not the same deriding of fashion as it had been with the *stilyagi*, but rather clothing and appearance were now used as a means of distinguishing between generations: with their tailored suits, high-heels and coiffured hair, the impression was instantly given that young people were not the same as their modest, work-conscious parents.[36]

In his discussion of later *Krokodil* cartoons, Alexei Yurchak has pointed out that, while these caricatures ridiculed the young for their slavish adherence to 'bourgeois influences', at the same time they helped to 'normalise the use of Western symbols among Soviet youth who were interested both in having Western music and clothes *and* in work, study and many other pursuits', and who did not see themselves reflected in *Krokodil*'s treatment of their indolent peers.[37] According to Yurchak, by drawing upon a characterisation of the most extreme negative elements within the young generation, the state inadvertently legitimised other, less

[35] Yu. Uzbyakov, 'Vechno my opazdyvaem iz-za roditelei!' *Krokodil*, no. 29, 1965, p. 9.

[36] Other examples include B. Leo 'Ditya ekrana' *Krokodil*, no. 14, 1962, p. 11; V. Goriev, 'Mamoobsluzhivanie', *Krokodil*, no. 9,1962, front cover; E. Gorokhov, 'Tebe ne kazhestsya, chto my kak-to ne tak vospityvaem rebenka?' *Krokodil*, no. 24,1963, p. 6; B. Leo, 'Nu, milochka, v etom naryade vam v trudovom pasporte ne otkazhut!', *Krokodil*, no. 13,1964, p. 7; L. Samoilov, 'Na kogo by nazhat'?' *Krokodil*, no. 29, 1965, p. 9; E. Shcheglov, 'Tryakhnem starinoi!' *Krokodil*, no. 31, 1965, front cover.

[37] Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More: the Last Soviet Generation*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 198.

extreme forms of deviancy.[38] While there is no doubt that satirical images reveal a great deal about the state's perception of Soviet youth during the 1950s and 1960s, we should not overlook what this can also tell us about parental relationships and the changing place of the father in representations of the family. Less than twenty years separates the introduction of the Soviet man into the domestic space as a father-primarily in the guise of the returned veteran-and the use of the father within that same domestic space to comment on the shifting outlook of youth. That the notion of a present and proactive father was by this point so ingrained in representations of family life that his love and care for his children could now form the basis of satire shows just how central paternity had become to the Soviet masculine ideal by the mid-1960s.

However, the portrayal of men with their problematic adolescent children was by no means the only depiction found in satire from this period. As Deborah Field has highlighted, advice given to fathers by contemporary pedagogues often centred on the need not to be a workaholic, alcoholic or physically abusive, rather than being constructed in more positive terms.[39] These same concerns influenced satirical representations of fatherhood as such undesirable behaviours became the benchmark for representing what 'bad' fathering looked like and which, in turn, conveyed what every Soviet father should strive to be. While artistic depictions of Soviet fathers were not always positive – Sergei Grigorev's *He's Come Back* (1954) being a case in point – satire provided an outlet for the exploration of these negative paternal figures with a far greater frequency than in fine art. There are a handful of cartoons

[38] Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, p. 198.

[39] Deborah Field, *Private Life and Communist Morality in Khrushchev's Russia*, New York: Peter Lang, 2007, p. 88.

that represent a physically abusive father, such as the 1961 *Krokodil* cartoon, *A Contradictory Upbringing*, which shows a boy going off to school, his mother lovingly saying goodbye on one side and his father standing belt in hand on the other.[40] An even more explicitly violent cartoon, *With the Help of God* (1964), depicts a father having just finished beating his son with his belt under the watchful eyes of the icon in the corner of the room.[41] But such images are the exception and it was generally a more benign neglect that was portrayed, with the most common motif being what we might think of as the disengaged father.

The idea that the father was responsible for children's educational development and achievement of *kul'turnost'* ('culturedness') was well-established in Soviet society. It had been a part of how fatherhood was conceptualised from the 1930s and the Stalinist state's shift in attitude towards the family and its place in socialist society. As a 1936 *Pravda* commentary on the role of the father proclaimed:

[40] A. Kanevskii, 'Protivorechiya vospitaniya', *Krokodil*, no. 17, 1961, p. 8. This cartoon was part of a double-page spread featuring simple cartoons on the theme of parents and children, mostly drawing on examples of bad parenting.

[41] V. Goryaev, 'S bozh'ei pomoshch'yu', *Krokodil*, no. 8, 1964, p. 5. See also Yu. Uzbyakov 'Povtoryayu: nel'zya tak vospityvat' rebenka!' *Krokodil*, no. 20, 1952, p. 5, for an earlier representation of an abusive father. In a more light-hearted vein, see G. and V. Karavaev, 'Vot vidish', chto znachit ne slushat'sya papu!' *Krokodil*, no. 31, 1965, p. 25, which depicts a man showing a young child Il'ya Repin's painting *Ivan Groznyi i syn ego Ivan 16 noyabrya 1581* (1885).

> In the Soviet land, 'father' is a respected calling […] It designates a Soviet citizen, the builder of a new life, the raiser of a new generation […] Under Soviet conditions the father is the social educator. He has to prepare good Soviet citizens: that is his duty, that is also his pride […] A man who cowardly and basely abandons his children, shuns his responsibility, hides in corners and puts all the paternal duties on the mother's shoulders, shames the name of a Soviet citizen […] A Soviet child has a right to a real father, an educator and a friend.[42]

This idea persisted beyond the end of the Stalin era, as emphasis continued to be placed on the father's role in providing both 'discipline and intellectual stimulation' during the late 1950s and early 1960s.[43] Given how central the role of disciplinarian was to the traditional paternal ideal, it is surprising then that it plays a remarkably small part in how fathers were portrayed in satire under Khrushchev.[44] A lack of parental discipline was covertly at the heart of many of the cartoons lambasting the lifestyle of indolent adolescents, and harmful and abusive forms of discipline can be found in images that portray physical violence, but, generally, images that examined a father's (in)ability to control his unruly children were few and far between. One rare example, featured on the front page of *Krokodil* in February 1965,

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[42] *Pravda*, 9 June 1936.

[43] Deborah Field, 'Mothers and Fathers and the Problem of Selfishness in the Khrushchev Period', in M. Ilic, S.E. Reid and L. Attwood (eds), *Women in the Khrushchev Era*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004, p. 97.

[44] Catriona Kelly, *Children's World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890-1991*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007, p. 104.

depicted a sheepish-looking child, carrying a slingshot, being brought home by a disgruntled neighbour, only for the man to be sent away by the child's father because his wife was not home to deal with the situation.[45]

Far more common were images depicting fathers interacting with their children, which centred on school work or education more generally. Two examples that were printed on the front cover of Krokodil – one in 1954 and the other in 1962 – are particularly noteworthy. The earlier cartoon depicts a mother and her three children studying together around a table, the older children wearing Pioneer uniforms, while the little girl, clutching her ABC book, looks at her father warily as he sits in a comfy chair away from the rest of the family, puffing on a cigarette.[46] Although the barb of the cartoon was aimed at those who undertake 'self-improvement' only to gain a tactical or political advantage, it is interesting that the artist chose to articulate this both within the confines of the family home and explicitly through the father. This detachment from learning purely for the love of learning or disengagement with the education of one's own children also comes across in an image from the 1960s: a man on a couch lies with his back turned towards his daughter, who has come to ask him what the word 'nobility' (in terms of behaviour not social class; *blagorodstvo*) means, only to be dismissed by her father for asking 'silly questions' (**Fig. CM.4**).[47] [**FIG CM.4 NEAR HERE**]

[45] G. Andryanov 'Vash syn? - Da. No zaidite s nim v drugoi raz, zheny net doma', *Krokodil*, no. 6, 1965, front cover.

[46] L. Gench, 'U nas v sem'e vse uchatsya…', *Krokodil*, no. 25, 1954, front cover.

[47] V. Goryaev, 'Papa, chto takoe blagorodstvo?...', *Krokodil*, no. 24, 1962, front cover.

Figure 4: V. Goryaev, ‘Papa, What is Nobility?’ *Krokodil*, no. 24, 1962.

Through these images, then, it is possible to ‘reverse engineer’ what the ideal father was perceived to be during the Khrushchev era. The derision aimed at those men who showed no interest in their child’s education, who were too busy to play a role in their child’s life or who set a poor moral example for their offspring demonstrate that even during the 1950s paternal responsibility was portrayed as being far more multifaceted than simple financial support and the imposition of discipline. It demanded an emotional engagement and day-to-day involvement more commonly associated with later attitudes towards the father’s place in the family. While there may have been ambiguity surrounding what role the Soviet man had in the maintenance of the family home, there was no doubt that he had a crucial part to play in successfully raising the next generation, and such representations of ‘bad’ fathers served to reinforce this ideal.

It would be a mistake, however, to characterise all fathers represented in satire as being feckless individuals who had a negative influence on their child's life. There were also images (such as fig. CM.1) that presented the father as simply clueless or, to put it politely, challenged by the realities of childcare. While depictions of 'bad' fathers were for the most part restricted to *Krokodil*, the portrayal of bumbling and charmingly incompetent fathers, along with their housekeeping counterparts, also found a place in *Ogonek*. The humour of these more positive images rests on the supposition that the father was inexperienced and ill-equipped when it came to dealing with children on his own: so we find images of a father contemplating drying his child's tears with a laundry mangle; a father telephoning his wife because the baby has refused the food and drink he has prepared (which looks remarkably like caviar and vodka!); a father covered in bruises from attempting to feed his small son; and a father chatting to a friend on the street oblivious to the fact he is holding his child upside down.[48]

Of course, the common denominator in all of these images is that the father had been left in charge of an infant a scenario that is almost exclusively the preserve of satire during this period. While a father failing miserably to pacify, feed, or entertain a baby was perhaps more ripe for comedic exploitation than situations involving older children, it would appear that the humour in such cartoons rested on the notion that, while a good father should be intimately involved in raising his children right from birth, he was still not expected to do so alone;

[48] G. and V. Karavaev, 'Eshche raz prostirnu i budu sushit' *Ogonek*, no. 10, 1966, p. 18; V. Tamaev, 'Vozvrashchaisya skoree, on ne p'et, ne est', *Ogonek*, no. 10, 1966, p. 19; Yu. Cherepanov, 'Nakonets-to s mannoi kashei my pokonchili!' *Ogonek*, no. 50, 1965, p. 33; A. Belov, 'A gde zhe mama? V roditel'skom universitet', *Ogonek*, no. 18, 1963, p. 25.

hence left to his own devices with a small child, calamity ensues. And yet, for all their absurdity, we should not overlook the real importance of these cartoons, which is that they comprise a significant part of a much wider trend that brought an aspect of Soviet family life that was entirely absent from visual culture just a few years earlier to the pages of the nation's most widely read magazines, and consequently into the homes of millions of Soviet citizens.

Conclusion:

With its destruction of the paternal cult and the subsequent disruption to the dynastic patterns of the state, the emergence of new identities and modes of expression and the questions raised about the role of the older generation in the crimes of the previous regime, some commentators have viewed the Khrushchev era as defined by the rejection of the father.[49] While it is certainly the case that the processes of de-Stalinisation eroded some of the certainties of Soviet society and that paternal relationships, particularly figurative ones, can provide a useful lens for exploring how these changes were both conceptualised and navigated, moving away from the symbolic reveals that in reality the Khrushchev years were anything but fatherless. Given the preoccupation of the state with all things domestic during the mid-1950s and early 1960s, it is not surprising that scenes of family life proliferated in visual culture but the portrayal of the family, and particularly the relationship between father

[49] Nancy Condee, 'Cultural Codes of the Thaw', in William Taubman, Sergei Khrushchev and Abbott Gleason (eds), *Nikita Khrushchev*, Chelsea, MI: Yale University Press, 2000, pp. 160-76; Dina Spechler, *Permitted Dissent in the USSR: Novyi Mir and the Soviet Regime*, New York: Praeger, 1982, pp. 121-2.

and child, was radically different from the visual culture of the post-war Stalin era, which had marked the initial introduction of the father into the domestic space. Gone was the subtext of wartime absences and separation, and instead a plethora of emotionally-engaged and fully-developed father figures populate the imagery produced and published in Soviet print culture after 1953.

Satirical representations of men within the domestic space played a unique part in this development. Cartoons were the only visual medium which dared to broach the thorny issue of men's involvement in the family home in any capacity beyond fatherhood. Largely confined to the humour pages of *Ogonek,* rather than the more hard-edged satire of *Krokodil*, such representations of male participation in housework were more a light-hearted ribbing of a supposed male incompetence than a critique of the domestic burden that continued to be largely shouldered by women. While the importance of this trend should not be overlooked, it is arguably in relation to the depiction of men as fathers that cartoons and satirical drawings prove to be particularly valuable sources as they provided a conduit for examining some of the more negative aspects of domestic life with a frequency and acerbity unparalleled in other forms of visual culture. As positive images of the perfect father proliferated on the pages of magazines such as *Ogonek,* primarily through photographs and reproductions of paintings, cartoons showed the other side of family life through portrayals of fathers who were disengaged, physically abusive or morally suspect. While it is impossible to gauge how greatly such images may have impacted on the outlook and behaviours of actual Soviet men, at the very least the willingness to broach such issues demonstrates how visual culture changed following 1953, as Socialist Realism moved closer to representing real life.

Thus, through satire the premise that a good father, and by extension ideal Soviet man, should be actively involved in the intellectual and psychological development of his children from birth was reinforced – not a concept that was new in the mid-1950s but one that found artistic expression for the very first time. However trivial these cartoons may seem, they are actually part of nothing less than a visual revolution in how the father, his role in the home and his relationship with his children were represented after the death of the self-styled ultimate patriarch, Father Stalin.