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THE LAW OF THE WOLF

How the Kukryniksy Trio Represented the Enemy as a "Wild" Animal in Cold War Political Cartoons in Pravda, 1965–1982

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This article examines how the Soviet Kukryniksy trio used wild animals in their political cartoons to depict the enemies of the Soviet Union. The primary material of this research consists of Kukryniksy's 39 wild animal cartoons published in Pravda during 1965–1982. I discuss these cartoons within the theoretical framework of frame analysis and propaganda theory. According to frame analysis, we see the world through certain frames, which affect the way we interpret what is happening. Thus, it is important to bear in mind that what people perceive is dependent on their cultural frameworks. These frameworks can be used in propaganda to manipulate our perceptions and affect our behaviour. In this article I demonstrate what kind of symbolic functions wild animals have in these cartoons and what kind of characteristics they attach to the enemies depicted. Furthermore, I examine in what kind of frames the world was to be seen according to the Communist Party ideology, and how these frames were created with the use of wild animal characters. In these cartoons wild animals are used to reveal the "true" nature of the enemy. The animal's symbolic functions may derive from the linguistic or other cultural contexts. The cartoons depict the enemy mainly as deceptive and ruthless, but simultaneously predictable to the Soviet Union. They also represent the enemy in a belittling light in order to retain the frame of the superiority of the Soviet Union over its enemies.

Keywords: propaganda, political cartoons, animals, Soviet Union, Kukryniksy, Cold War

A badly beaten small hyena and an uninjured big wolf stand side by side. "Don't worry, I support you" (*Ne boisia, ia tebia podderzhu!*),[1] promises the wolf (Kukryniksy, 1970 January 18, p. 4 [Image 1]). This is a telling example of Soviet Cold War propaganda, which often used animal symbolism to depict the enemies' nature. Each animal carries with it certain symbolic connotations deriving from the cultural and historical context of the cartoon. Among other animal types, wild animals are frequently used in enemy depictions. In this specific case we see a caricatured Soviet view on the relations of the USA and South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. In a manner representative of the cartoons

that will be analysed in this article, the traits that these wild animals are meant to convey circle around the fact that these animals are outside of humans' domestic environment. They denote the characteristics of a blood-thirsty and deceptive nature of the enemy. However, even when they are being deceptive the enemies always act in certain predictable ways. And hence they are unable to surprise the Soviet Union, which portrays itself as a watchdog, ready to reveal what the enemy is trying to hide.

While the specific enemies of a nation – as well as the representations thereof – change, the idea of a common enemy stays intact (Steuter & Wills, 2009, p. 28). The idea of a perpetual
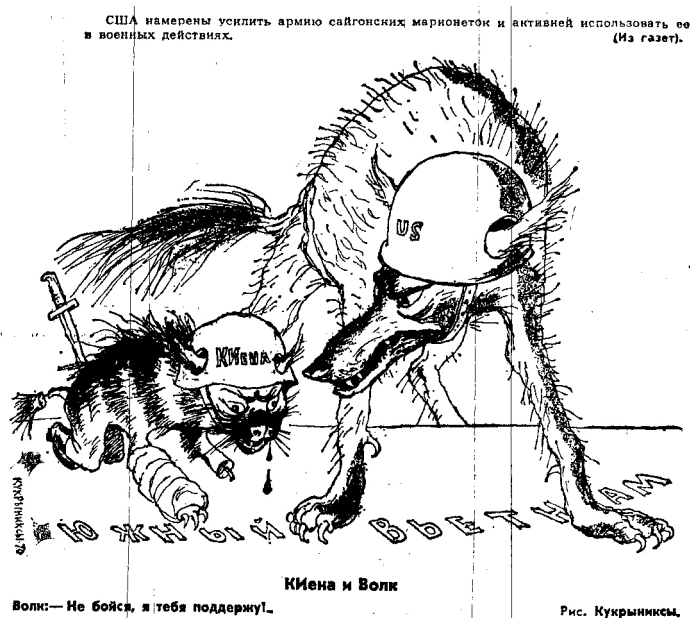
США намерены усилить армию сайгонских марионеток и активней использовать ее в военных действиях. (Из газет).

КИена и Волк

Волк:— Не бойся, я тебя поддержу!..

Рис. Кукрыниксы.

Image 1. Kukryniksy, 1970 January 18: KYena and wolf.

enemy is something that propaganda utilises frequently. It is, for example, typical to portray a war as a battle between collective good and evil (Lasswell, 1971[1927], pp. 59–60). The Soviet ideology divided the world into two sides according to such a binary system: "us" and "them". Such binary oppositions are seen as traditional for Russian culture. They were in use already in Czarist Russia, but were further emphasised by the Civil War following the revolution in Soviet Russia in the early 20th century (see Bonnell, 1999, p. 187). The Cold War was no exception from this pattern of the Russian culture of dualism. With the use of propaganda the Communist Party aimed to create and strengthen animosity towards the omnipresent ideological enemy. However, it is not only the Russian cultural context that utilises binary oppositions. It is very common more generally to create such an opposition between animals and humans as well. These two types of binary oppositions play a significant role in the material of this article.

The structure of this article is as follows. I will first introduce the theoretical background of my research. Then I proceed to the analytical part. Out of the 45 Kukryniksy cartoons, published in *Pravda* in 1965–1982, that have wild animals in them I use six to illustrate my analysis and exemplify the use of this type of animal symbolism. The analysis is divided into two parts: 1) The Warmonger's Military Needs, and 2) Life under Deceitful Oppressors. The first one of them concentrates on the cartoons discussing the enemy's military nature, while the second examines the ways in which the enemy is depicted as an untrustworthy oppressor. In the end I will make conclusions on the use of wild animals in political cartoons.

Kukryniksy and *Pravda*

In this article I examine the *Pravda* political cartoons of the artist trio Kukryniksy published 1965–1982. The Kukryniksy trio consisted of Mikhail Kupriyanov (1903–1991), Porfiri Krylov (1902–1990) and Nikolai Sokolov (1903–2000). They started working under the pseudonym 'Kukryniksy' in the mid-1920s and worked as a collective up to the 1980s. Their long and prolific career in political cartooning,

poster making,[2] as well as painting, has guaranteed them a place among some of the most famous Soviet political artists and the fact that they were awarded the honorary title Hero of Socialist Labour – the highest possible degree of distinction that a Soviet citizen could obtain – in 1973 is a testament to the significance of their work, and to how highly the leaders of the country valued it.

Kukryniksy's *Pravda* cartoons are significant in many ways. First of all, the newspaper publishing them had a circulation covering the entire Soviet Union. Secondly, *Pravda* was a newspaper whose pages were filled with small text, bureaucratic language, and only few illustrations, despite the Brezhnev administration's attempts to make the newspaper visually more appealing (Roxburgh, 1987, p. 48). This text-heavy layout of *Pravda* surely meant that the political cartoons would attract a fair amount of attention. The cartoons were often published on the page reserved for foreign news and world events. Therefore, the cartoons could be seen as illustrations to the news articles. *Pravda*'s main priority was to print news in the Soviet Union and set the tone of the political conversation in the media (ibid., p. 58). Additionally, along with other centrally controlled newspapers, *Pravda* was used to express the official view of the Soviet Union (Beglov, 1984, p. 273). In expressing this view, the main point was not what was discussed, but rather how it was discussed. In particular, issues were discussed in accordance with the "authoritative representation," the official ideological view, as dictated by the Communist Party (Yurchak, 2005, pp. 60–62).

The cartoonists' view was essentially that of the Communist Party. However, it is important to remember that most Western cartoonists also work in accordance with the political line of their newspaper (see Benson, 2012, p. 14–15). In general, cartoonists give their work to the editor-in-chief of their newspaper, who either approves the cartoon for publication or declines it. In the Soviet Union the editors made sure that the cartoonists followed the Communist Party's view in their work. However, the extent to which this occurred depended somewhat on the

editor in question. In *Pravda* there were three different editors during the years 1965–1982. Aleksei Rumyantsev (1905–1993) was the editor until 1965, when he was relieved from his duties due to his more permissive and liberal publication standards. Mikhail Zimyanin (1914–1995) stuck close to the Party line and worked as the editor until he was appointed a secretary in the Central Committee in 1976. The next editor, Viktor Afanasyev (1922–1994), had the same editorial policies regarding the Party line as his predecessor (Roxburgh, 1987, pp. 44–48). Furthermore, during his rule, Brezhnev held meetings with *Pravda* and *Izvestia* editors to advise them on the content of their newspapers (ibid., p. 60). The political cartoons in *Pravda* frequently cited previously published newspaper articles and discussed the world events in the same tone as the articles, thus similarly emphasising the ideological views of the Party (McKenna, 2001, p. 16). In general, the political cartoons discussing foreign politics were supposed to be political satire about the Western powers, and never portray the Soviet Union in a negative light (Smirnov, 2012, p. 31). Thus, the political cartoonists participated in the creation of the Soviet enemy by emphasising and repeating images that already existed within the Communist Party's ideology.

Taking all this into account one can assume that the *Pravda* political cartoons give us in a concentrated visual form an idea of the official Party view on world events, the view that the nation was supposed to absorb. Therefore, Kukryniksy's political cartoons are interesting, on the one hand, because of their national and cultural importance. On the other hand, they are interesting as an example of how political cartoons were used for propaganda purposes.

Reinforcing Cultural Frameworks

Manipulating the audience's worldview by influencing their behaviour is one of the key themes in many propaganda theories. For example, Harold Lasswell's (1995[1934]) classical definition states that propaganda is "the technique of

influencing human action by the manipulation of representations" (p. 13). Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell (2004) define propaganda as "the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist" (p. 7). One could say that the underlying concept in both these definitions is that propaganda creates a framework, or "schemata of interpretation" as Erving Goffman (1986) defines the term, in which things seem real, whether or not they actually are real (p. 21). For the audience what they assume to be true, is the truth. The propagandists aspire to "frame the world in which they are acting" (see Snow, Rochford, Worden, & Benford, 1986, p. 466). For example, when a Soviet political cartoon portrays, in line with the Communist Party ideology under Brezhnev, the Americans as warmongering missile-crazy imperialists, it aims to create a semblance of reality in the minds of the readers, making them believe that the Americans are, indeed, warmongering missile-crazy imperialists. This in turn, is supposed to affect the way in which the audience acts; to make them more fervent supporters of those opposing the warmongers, i.e., the Soviet Union.

To be effective the created frameworks need to connect to the audience's understanding of the world; the framework relies on "cultural resonance" (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 5; see also Snow & Benford, 1988, pp. 208–211 on "narrative fidelity"). The idea behind this concept is that the audience's cultural background affects the frame interpretation process. Due to its greater familiarity, a culturally resonant frame is more likely to appeal to the audience. Propaganda is by nature very context specific, and needs to be adjusted according to the environment in which it is supposed to work (Ellul, 1973, p. 34). The way in which propagandists target our perceptions is dependent on our pre-existing knowledge and past experiences, as well as the cultural sphere in which these experiences have been made. With the use of language, images, and symbols the propagandist seeks to shape a certain perception in a certain

context (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2006, pp. 8–9). It is important for the propagandist to be able to use appropriate presentations and symbols in order to appeal to the audience as effectively as possible (Lasswell, 1995, pp. 19–20). For example, in the Soviet Cold War propaganda there were references to Russian mythology, history and classical literature. These all had cultural resonance in the minds of the propaganda's audience. Those same references would not have had the same resonance in a different culture, e.g., in the USA, because of the American audience's lack of Russian cultural knowledge. Furthermore, by repetitive use of the same imagery propaganda emphasises certain themes making them more resonant. For example, the image of the evil capitalist in a top hat resonated throughout the Soviet times. This character was influenced by western European satirical art, and was first introduced to Soviet political iconography in the years preceding the 1917 revolution (Bonnell, 1999, pp. 201–202). Admittedly, the evil capitalist was more prominent during the first half of the 20th century than during the Cold War, when he was partially replaced by other characters, such as the American cowboy. However, the capitalist in a top hat is still visible in Kukryniksy cartoons throughout the 1980s.

Due to the contextual nature of frameworks, propaganda, and even political cartoons, it is occasionally necessary to provide the audience with some explanatory devices to ease the interpretation process in order to achieve the desired outcome. According to Ernst Gombrich (2002), when it comes to interpreting images, there are three interpretational areas acting together: context, caption, and code, i.e., the image's visual language (p. 142). Naturally, parts of the message might open to the reader even without comprehending all the three components, but the full meaning of an image can be obtained only by understanding all three of them. Nevertheless, for a political cartoon these components are essential; without the knowledge of the context and the ability to understand the caption and read the code, the spectator is not able to fully capture the meaning of the cartoon (ibid., p. 154). Political cartoons also – often literally

depict the world inside a specific frame, persuading the audience to see the world according to the cartoonist's view. These ideas on propaganda, frame theory and political cartoons are the methodological and theoretical starting points for my analysis of the Kukryniksy cartoons.

"Wild" Animals

The Kukryniksy political cartoons create a frame through which to view the Cold War, which they aim to disseminate to the masses. The creation of this worldview is primarily based on the enemy depictions. There are different ways to create hostile feelings towards the opposing side. For example, the enemy is often depicted as an inferior and inhuman being. One of the common devices for this is the use of animal symbolism (Baker, 2001, p. 36; Steuter & Wills, 2009, p. 48). This is a technique typical to political cartoons (Lamb, 2004, p. 102). Interestingly, the enemy is usually not depicted as fully animal, but rather as a hybrid of animal and human body parts, making the enemy an impure being, lower than a pure animal (Baker, 2001, p. 108). While portraying the enemy as a subhuman, the propagandists often use ridicule and belittling in order to make it appear that while the enemy poses a threat, it still is one that "we" can – and should – defeat. Different types of animal characters are present in the cartoons, but in this article I concentrate on examining how the Kukryniksy trio use attributes of "wild" animals to describe the enemy. Undeniably, making a distinction between "domesticated" and "wild" animals is problematic (see, e.g., Ritvo, 2014). Nevertheless, I have made this distinction in my research in order to find out whether different animal types are used to depict different values in the enemy's character. By "wild" animals I mean the animals that are regarded, or would have been regarded in Brezhnev's Soviet Union, as being outside of the human sphere and control, i.e., the ones that have not been domesticated.

It is fair to assume that the enemy taking the guise of a wild animal says something about the ways in which the enemy was meant to be understood as an entity outside of the human sphere of experience, as well as outside of the Soviet Union and its superior ideology. The idea is that communism was the ideology for people, whereas capitalism benefited only the "sharks" who knew how to take advantage of others. Furthermore, the enemy was made into a "they." This served to oppose "us", the humans and the animals in their imminent sphere of experience, to "them", the wild animals. Wolves, snakes, crocodiles, and others, are all seen as potential threats to the human life in their ability to invade the human sphere, making them an unpredictable threat to the existence of humans.

In Soviet propaganda, wild animals represented the ruthless, treacherous, and militant enemy, actively involved in posing a threat to humanity. However, the enemy was also depicted as belittled creatures, not able to pose a real threat to the Soviet Union. Thus, the cartoons give the impression that the enemy, though it is ruthless and treacherous, still has no chance against the might of the Soviet Union. While creating the impression of an imminent threat, the Kukryniksy trio were also careful to simultaneously promote the idea of the inevitable victory of communism, in accordance with the Party's ideological views, despite the fact that they hardly ever portrayed any Soviet characters. It was extremely seldom that the Soviet cartoonists depicted their country's leaders, and on those rare occasions they were always depicted in a positive light (Benson, 2012, p. 16). In general, the Soviet cartoonists avoided depicting "us"; the caricatured images concentrated mainly on "them". One exception to this rule of not depicting Soviet characters in the Brezhnev era Kukryniksy cartoons is the 1980 Summer Olympic mascot Mishka, who appears in a cartoon to give a yellow card to Carter for unsportsmanlike conduct in boycotting the Moscow Olympics (1980 March 23, p. 5). When a Soviet entity appears in a cartoon, it usually takes the form of a large arm or weapon stopping the enemy in

their attempts to instigate war (e.g. Kukryniksy, 1966 June 23, p. 3; 1981 May 9, p. 5). This type of collective symbol for the Soviet nation was familiar to the Soviet audience from earlier works of visual propaganda, especially from the times of WWII (see Kangas, 2010, p. 138). Otherwise, the nature of the cartoons is such that they focus on ridiculing the enemy.

The Warmonger's Military Needs

The cartoon described in the beginning of this article exemplifies how the Kukryniksy trio distanced the enemy from "us", the audience and the artist, and described the relations between different enemy nations [Image 1]. We see the two characters, a hyena and a wolf, in the middle of a discussion. The big bad wolf represents primarily the US army, while the hyena is a portrayal of the head of South Vietnam, Nguyễn Cao Kỳ (1930–2011). In the cartoon, the wolf reassures the hyena of its support for the hyena's regime. Kukryniksy has created a pun based on the name of the person and the animal used to represent him by replacing the first syllable of the word 'hyena' (*giena*) with the name of Kỳ in the form it is when transliterated in cyrillic script (*Ki*), making it into *kiena*. The pun works in English as well, if the animal's name is transformed into 'kyena'. However, the pun on Kỳ's name would be lost on us, without us being aware of the historical context of the cartoon. Without the knowledge about the Vietnam War and the South Vietnamese fighting on the US side with Kỳ as their head, one would not understand the pun. These types of puns are common in Kukryniksy's cartoons: Apart from a hyena, Kỳ is also seen as the Slavic mythical creature, Kikimora (1966 May 13, p. 5), and the West German minister Franz Josef Strauss (1915–1988) is depicted as an ostrich due to his name's similarity to 'ostrich' in Russian, as well as the actual meaning of his name in German (1967 May 5, p. 4; 1968 December 25, p. 5). Thus, the connection of a name with an animal's name was one of the determinants in choosing a specific animal for an enemy depiction.

Both of the cartoon's animals, the hyena and the wolf, are depicted in a way that emphasises their wildness and aggression – they are ragged and snarling, and blood is dripping from the hyena's mouth (cf. Baker, 2001, pp. 39–40). The cultural connotations connected with these two animals are at play here. Both of these animals are positioned clearly outside of the human sphere of action. The hyena, a scavenger, is regarded as an unclean, treacherous (Cooper, 1995, p. 137), cowardly greedy and hypocritical animal (Werness, 2004, p. 234). The wolf, too, has negative connotations in the European framework. It is often associated with the diabolical characteristics of the devil, and frequently seen as an imminent – albeit exaggerated – threat to humans (Cooper, 1995, p. 264; Werness, 2004, pp. 435–436). Using animals with negative and unclean connotations, e.g. scavengers, is typical for Kukryniksy's wild animal cartoons; along with hyenas and wolves, they also use other animals such as vultures and rats (e.g. 1968 October 29, p. 5; 1971 April 29, p. 5; 1974 May 17, p. 5). Thus the negative attributes of these animals are transferred onto the enemy, creating a frame that distances the enemy from the audience's "us".

The hyena's and the wolf's actions in the cartoon, their positions and expressions, as well as the title and caption of the cartoon, further the interpretation process. Kukryniksy frames the Vietnam War, the US and the South Vietnamese positions in the war, by depicting them in a situation in which the USA is shown as supporting the "Saigon puppets", as the cartoon's caption calls them. But simultaneously the USA is shown only wanting to use the South Vietnamese in order to benefit from the situation. In general, the Soviet press showed the Vietnam War in a frame according to which the US was constantly the aggressor, but also on the losing side, having ventured into something that it could not quite handle. In this light, the co-operation between the South Vietnamese and the USA is shown as only benefitting the USA. The cartoonists also aim to reveal the treacherous nature of the relationship between the USA and South Vietnam: The wolf does not show any signs of suffering,

while the hyena is badly injured. It even has a knife stuck in its back, presumably stuck there by the US wolf. So the wolf is shown as having a backstabbing personality, whereas the hyena is a somewhat clueless subordinate of the wolf. But, the hyena can also symbolise treachery (Cooper, 1995, p. 137). And, indeed, the hyena is here portrayed as having betrayed its own nation by co-operating with the USA. This subordination between allies is a typical way of describing the allegiance between different nations in the cartoons of Kukryniksy by, e.g., showing one of them being caged by another or strangling an ally (1966 May 13, p. 5; 1968 December 25, p. 5).

In general, wolves have a connotation of being an extremely wild animal. Perhaps, this view stems from the fact that wolves are closely related to domestic dogs, while at the same time being very different. They are the wild version of the dog, something that intrigues us with its unpredictability (see Werness, 2004, p. 436). This puts the wolf in a position in which its wildness is, perhaps, even more exaggerated; a binary opposition between the dog and the wolf is created. Dogs are also frequently used in propaganda, albeit in a different way than wolves. It is, indeed, their domesticity that is significant here. For instance, the enemy may be shown as someone else's lapdog, a servant.

Another significant aspect of wolves is that they attack domestic animals, such as sheep and chicken, which further diabolises the animal. They cross the border between the two worlds, the border drawn between the domestic and the wild animals. The wolves are viewed as taking what is not rightly theirs; they appear as a threat to the possessions of humans. Furthermore, the wolf is perceived as a possible threat to domesticated animals, and thus to agriculture, which creates the idea of the evil capitalist wolf posing a threat to big agricultural societies, such as the Soviet Union. This translates into language in the form of idioms. For example, in a Soviet dictionary under the word wolf, one also finds the expression 'law of the wolf' (*volchii zakon*), which is defined as a lawlessness that is supported by brute force and is connected to the word 'capitalism' (Ozhegov, 1978, p. 87). Other animals were used in this kind of expressions as well. For example, 'shark' made it into the Soviet language in the expressions 'sharks of capitalism' (*akuly kapitalizma*) and 'sharks of imperialism' (*akuly imperializma*), which refer to capitalist exploiters (see Ozhegov, 1978, p. 24; Kheveshi, 2004, p. 19). In fact, this kind of word usage transferred into a visual form in the cartoons, creating a visual code that can be understood through the cultural resonance of language.

The capitalist exploiter sharks are part of the same enemy frame as the wolf in the previously discussed cartoon. The exploiter takes advantage of other countries and benefits from the suffering of others. The military presence of the USA all over the world is closely connected to this in the Kukryniksy cartoons. While making others fight the fights the US is inciting, as in the previous cartoon, they themselves take the role of a military supervisor and commander. In order to maintain this position, the USA stations military troops all over the world. In a cartoon titled "The Pentagon's sharks" (*Akuly Pentagona*), Kukryniksy depicts a US military man controlling wild animals (1971 February 6, p 4 [Image 2]). The title of the cartoon points out that the animals in question are sharks despite the fact that they look more like whales, which may be a reference to Japan. In any case, the cartoonists have created a visual-verbal pun, or wordplay, in the cartoon. The sharks are a reference to the idea of "sharks of capitalism", and indeed the US military man feeds them with money. However, the attentive spectator realises that the animals in question are not sharks, but whales, thus creating a juxtaposition between these two. The sharks of capitalism are growing into whales of capitalism, so much have they been fed. Among the sharks are swimming a number of smaller fish. A closer look reveals these fish to be missiles. These could be taken to represent the offspring of the larger sharks, the larger sharks being US submarines and the smaller fish their missiles, ready to be launched.

This cartoon's events take place in Okinawa, Japan. The caption of the cartoon further clarifies that the USA is investing large sums of money to keep their submarines on the Japanese

С ША расходуют огромные средства на содержание своего подводного флота у берегов
Японских островов.
(Из газет).

ОКИНАВА

US

АКУЛЫ ПЕНТАГОНА.

Рис, Кукрыниксы.

Image 2. Kukryniksy, 1971 February 6: The Pentagon's sharks.

islands. The historical context here is that of the Koza riot, which took place in December 1970 against the military presence of the USA in Okinawa, an area that had been under US military occupation since WWII. But the cartoon does not go into the specifics of the Koza riot. Rather, Kukryniksy is merely reflecting on the reaction of the US military to the incident. Instead of assessing what went wrong and what to do to make things better, the US man finds a sack of money and starts solving problems the capitalist way – by investing more money in the military machine. As it happens, the depiction of the US military man with the sack of money in front of him, is very much in line with the image of the bourgeois capitalist that appeared in the Bolshevik propaganda already before the revolution, that became a traditional portrayal of the bourgeois capitalist with a sack full of money controlling his allies, which may have, e.g., taken the form of dogs (cf. Bonnell, 1999, pp. 196–203). In the Kukryniksy cartoon the depiction has been taken even further by making the capitalist control wild animals. In fact, some of the Kukryniksy wild animal cartoons show wild animals being controlled by humans

(e.g. 1968 December 16, p. 5; 1971 May 5, p. 4). This further distances the controlling human from the rest of the humanity. The human who controls wild animals becomes more akin to them, and comes to resemble the witch Baba Yaga and other entities connected with animals in the Russian folklore.

The two cartoons discussed above are primarily concerned with the militarisation of the world, and the funding thereof. Like the shark cartoon, a large number of Kukryniksy cartoons show the Western countries, especially the USA, having an incessant need to control the world militarily and approach the issue by investing ridiculously large sums of money in military development and armaments (e.g. 1966 January 20, p. 3). Simultaneously, a further rift between East and West is created with references such as "their five-year plan" (*ikh piatiletka*), which is shown to consist of a shark-shaped missile feeding on Pentagon money, to be exact, 636 billion dollars (Kukryniksy, 1976 April 17, p. 5). This frame makes a juxtaposition between "their five-year plan" and those of the Soviet Union. According to this frame the enemy invests all its money in military development, which in turn

distances them from the Soviet Union, whose five-year plans concentrate on economic development and the wellbeing of its citizens. After all, these plans form the road towards communist utopia, while the capitalist plans lead to a darker, hopeless future of war and an oppressed working class.

The framing of the USA as trying to control the rest of the world, militarily and otherwise, has also been done with literary references (e.g. Kukryniksy, 1974 February 17, p. 5). These culturally resonant references create further layers within the cartoons. Even if the cartoon makes sense without it, understanding the reference allows the audience to understand the cartoon on a different level and to connect the information received with the framework of their own culture. The literary references frequently come from Ivan Krylov's fables, which are often adaptations of Aesop's fables. Kukryniksy had previously illustrated Krylov's fables, which might help to explain their fondness of Aesopian, or Krylovian, symbolism. For example, in one of the cartoons we see a scene reminiscent of the

Почти по басне Крылова «Ворона и лисица». Рисунок Кукрыниксы.

Image 3. Kukryniksy. 1965 December 22: Almost according to Krylov's fable "The crow and the fox".

fable "The crow and the fox" (Kukryniksy, 1965 December 22, p. 1 [Image 3]). This fable was well known to the Russian audience from Krylov's adaptation of it. In the cartoon, the fable's crow has been replaced with a vulture. But, the vulture is also replacing the US national animal, the eagle. In this sense, it acts as a negative pairing, lending unfavourable connotations to the national animal, connotations of a carcass-eating ominous bird. In fact, the real national animal of an enemy country is not often encountered in propaganda, and when it is, it appears in such a guise that there is nothing noble left in its being (Baker, 2001, p. 39). The only national animal Kukryniksy used frequently is the British lion, which was cast in the role of a defeated former king of the animals (Kangas, 2014, p. 63–70). Nonetheless, while the lion remains a lion, the eagle is morphed into a more negative animal.

But back to the fable, the cheese that the fox tries to get from the crow in the fable, has turned into a missile in the cartoon. The fox, which is one of the main characters in fables (Werness, 2004, p. 184), has stayed the same sly fox, which, similarly to the wolf, crosses the border between domestic and wild by hunting domestic animals. But, in the cartoon the fox depicts West Germany, lending the country the usual attributes attached to the fox – trickery and hypocrisy (Cooper, 1995, p. 104; Werness, 2004, p. 183). The fox's aim is to trick the vulture into dropping the missile from its mouth, so that the sly fox can have it. This closely follows the plot of Krylov's fable. An article published next to the cartoon (Vishnevskii, 1965, p. 1), further clarifies the message of the cartoon by explaining that the USA and West Germany are discussing the possibility of West Germany's inclusion in the western nuclear programme.

US and West German plans for the militarisation of Europe do not always show West Germany as trying to trick the USA into agreeing to something. Instead, the issue is often framed in such a way that the USA is the brain behind the militarisation projects, wanting to station their missiles in the West European countries (e.g. Kukryniksy, 1966 May 22, p. 5). Thus, the Soviet cartoonists represent the USA as a warmonger

wanting to militarise the whole world, starting with Europe, which is close to the other end of the binary opposition, the Soviet Union. This, in turn, leaves the rest of the Soviet enemies in the position of being henchmen of the USA. Here a juxtaposition between the two countries is furthered by referring to the enemy as a missile-crazy lunatic, thus creating the impression that the own country, "us", is the opposite of that – a reliable peace-loving protector. Indeed, an important part of the thematic of militarisation in these Cold War cartoons is the rearmament of West Germany and the military co-operation of the European countries. The USA is often, but not always, depicted as orchestrating the whole thing, trying to achieve a strong military position in Europe.

Within this context, Kukryniksy also made frequent analogies to Nazi Germany (see ibid.; 1973 January 14, p. 4), in particular when depicting West Germany. The country's rearmament is presented as analogous to the Nazi German militarisation. But such references were also made when talking of countries other than West Germany. After WWII the word 'fascist' became synonymous with the word 'enemy', rather than describing merely Soviet Union's enemies during WWII (Tumarkin, 1994, p. 222). Thus, also other enemy countries, or people, are referred to as fascists and labelled with swastikas (e.g. Kukryniksy, 1974 May 17, p. 5). Along with West Germany, all these countries and people have become the heirs of the traditions of Nazi Germany. These cartoons exemplify the ways in which the Soviet Union framed its enemies as fascist regimes that aim to oppress not only their citizens, but the entire world.

Фашистская военная хунта, узурпировавшая власть в Чили, опутала страну сетью концентрационных лагерей и продолжает жестокие репрессии против патриотов.
(Из газет).
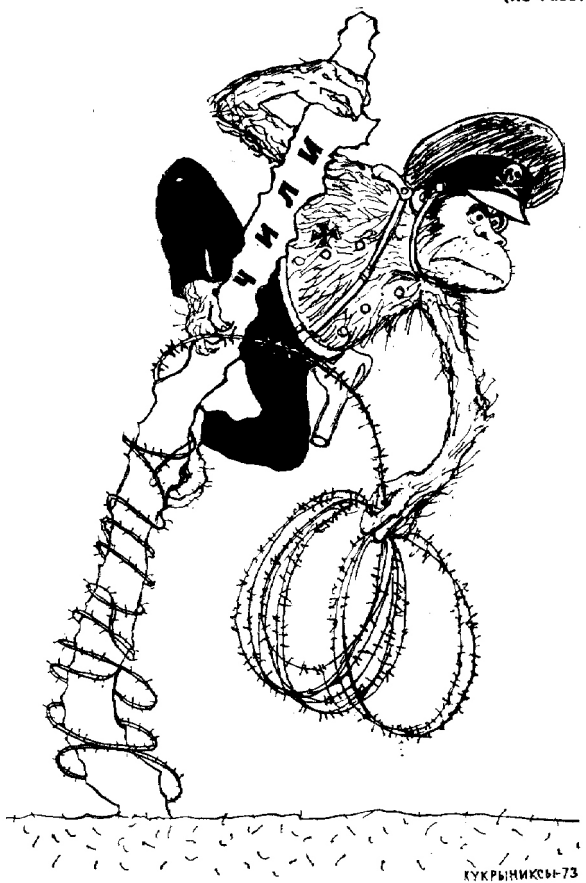
Гориллы «за работой».

Рис. Кукрыниксы.

Image 4. Kukryniksy, 1973 December 9: Gorillas "at work".

Life under Deceitful Oppressors

Above we saw a cartoon depiction of the fascists oppressing the world via their militarisation. Other Kukryniksy cartoons portray the maltreatment of citizens living under a fascist regime. For instance, one cartoon describes the situation under the Chilean junta (Kukryniksy, 1973 December 9, p. 5 [Image 4]). A gorilla, dressed in military attire, hangs onto a tree-like figure shaped in the form of, and labelled as, Chile. The gorilla holds on to barbed wire wrapped around the Chile tree, forming the

word 'junta'. The caption of the picture further frames the interpretation of the picture by stating that the Chilean junta is putting up new concentration camps in the country as well as taking repressive actions against patriots. In addition, the title of the cartoon, "Gorillas 'at work'" (*Gorilly "za rabotoi"*) reveals the Soviet view on the governing of the junta in Chile. The ironic quotation marks around the phrase "at work" imply that one cannot possible regard what the gorillas are doing as work. In fact, apes are often used in satirical contexts in order to mock humans and their activities (Cooper, 1995, p. 6; Hall, 1979, p. 22). These "ironic quotation marks" are also frequently used in *Pravda* editorials (Pöppel, 2007, p. 98). In fact, their use in the Soviet Union goes back to Lenin and they are also known as "Lenin's quotation marks" due to his fondness of using them to point out the problems in the arguments of his opponents (Tynianov, 1924, p. 93). Thus, the "work" the gorillas are doing is only work according to the gorillas. They claim to be working in the best interest of their country, but once again the Soviet cartoonists reveal the truth. Oppressive measures against a country's citizens and the suppression of their freedom is not something that could be seen as work according to the Soviet ideology. Naturally the audience is not supposed to think about repressive measures taken against Soviet citizens, but rather to focus on the enemy's actions, furthering, once again, the distinction between "us" and "them".

But why a gorilla? At first it may appear that the use of a primate to depict the enemy is a departure from the strict binary opposition of animal / "they" – human / "us". Primates, in general, are closely related to humans, and hence the use of a gorilla may indicate an intermediate role between the binary opposites of animals and humans. However, primates are also frequently considered to be less evolved and thus less civilised than humans. Thus they are often used to emphasise the sub-humanity of the enemy (Baker, 2001, p. 111). In a sense, then, the binary opposition becomes stronger through the opposition of the uncultured and less evolved primate "they" with the civilised "us", the hu-

mans. They are almost human, but without the culture and civilisation that humanity brings with it. Furthermore, the word 'gorilla' in Russian can be used to describe a big, strong, and aggressively behaving person. In this particular cartoon, the use of gorillas is intended to make the Chilean junta appear as uncivilised brutes. It creates the image of the enemy as a savage beast, a ruthless wild animal, albeit at the same time a ridiculous satirised being. The barbed wire and the message of the caption further help to convey the ruthlessness and cold-heartedness of the enemy. While the Soviet cartoonists aim to depict the worst traits of the enemy, show the enemy as a threat, simultaneously they still make sure to give a ridiculous and belittled impression of the enemy by depicting his follies and erratic nature.

The oppressive nature of the enemies is visible also in cartoons that depict the ways in which they aim to justify their militarisation projects and to keep their citizens under control. This is an interesting thematic area of Soviet political cartoons, because in dealing mainly with the deceptive and lying characteristics of the enemy, it ends up being propaganda about propaganda. This reflects the developments of the media in the 1970s, which caused the Soviet central press to struggle with the ever faster dissemination of international news (Wolfe, 2005, p. 129). During Brezhnev's rule, *Pravda* was increasingly used to counteract the information people received from the West due to the relaxation of the relations between East and West, as manifested, e.g., in the form of the Soviet Union allowing most of the Western radio stations to broadcast in the Soviet Union (Roxburgh, 1987, p. 48). Thus, when portraying the information coming from the West, the Soviet political cartoonists clearly depict the problematic nature of such information, and the fact that it is coming from crazy military capitalists.

In general, the word 'propaganda' did not have a negative connotation in the Soviet official usage. Rather they made a distinction between Imperialistic (negative) and Soviet (positive) propaganda: western propaganda was seen as brainwashing, while communist propaganda
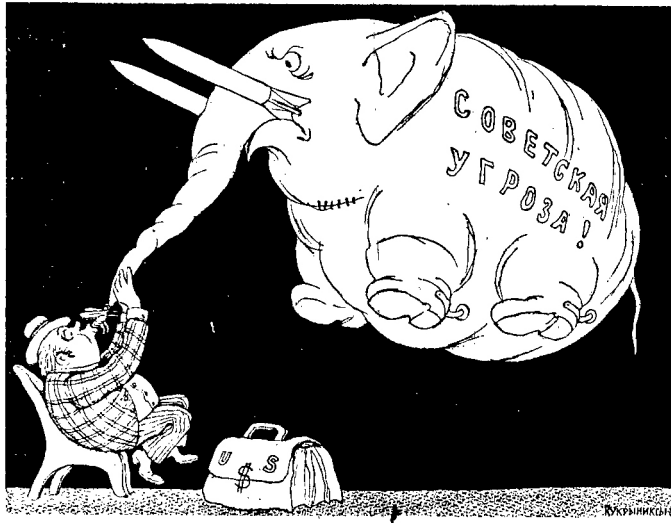
Image 5. Kukryniksy & Dm. Demin, 1980 December 28: Their lies are even more visible, / When they make an elephant out of a fly.

was regarded merely as a means to educate the masses (Buzek, 1964, pp. 13–37; Shandra, 1982, pp. 5–6). Seemingly, the Soviet idea of western propaganda is somewhat comparable with the western notions of propaganda in general. Furthermore, according to the Soviet view, the bourgeoisie divide propaganda into information (peace time) and propaganda (wartime) in accordance with their class interests. Thus, they disguise their attempts to control the nation during peacetime as information, while, in fact, it is still manipulation (Beglov, 1984, p. 70). Naturally, in the spirit of the communist ideology, bourgeois propaganda was regarded not only as brainwashing, but also as a reactionary activity, as we can see in the cartoons depicting the enemy in the middle of this activity. This is also closely connected to the overarching frame of the enemy as a deceptive being.

Kukryniksy frequently depicts the US trying to gain control over others, escalating the Cold War, and justifying their militarisation projects with references to fabricated lies, i.e. propaganda. Fittingly, Kukryniksy shows the enemy as disseminating propaganda disguised as information (e.g. 1974 January 26, p. 5; 1982 February 25, p. 5). One cartoon shows US President Jimmy Carter (b. 1924) in the act of fabricating lies about a Soviet threat (Kukryniksy, 1980 December 28, p. 5 [Image 5]). Carter is in the middle of the act of inflating a giant balloon shaped like an elephant through its trunk. At a closer look one notices a fly between the lips of Carter and the trunk of the elephant. This clarifies to the audience, possessing the needed culturally resonant information – in this case the linguistic knowledge – that the cartoon plays on the Russian expression 'to make an elephant out of a fly' (*delat' iz mukhi slona*), which corresponds with the English 'to make a mountain out of a molehill'. Kukryniksy often used Russian expressions to add more depth to their cartoons and to clarify the message of the cartoon (e.g. 1965 October 20, p. 5; 1981 June 19, p. 5). They created scenes that acted as visual representations of Russian expressions, and as such contained a relatively complex message within a simple visualisation. This is a typical technique for political cartoons (Lamb, 2004, p. 49; Duus, 2001, pp. 974–975). Moreover, representing the target of the cartoon in a negative, belittling, and simplified way, leads to political cartoons distancing the reader

from the target of the cartoon, and creating an impression of a black and white world, a world of binary oppositions.

But what does the fly that Carter is making into an elephant represent? To clarify matters, Kukryniksy has labelled the elephant as "Soviet threat" (*sovetskaia ugroza*). To emphasise that this threat is of a military nature, the elephant's tusks have been drawn as missiles. In order to reveal the true nature of the Soviet threat the US is raving about, Kukryniksy has not only employed the fly and elephant expression, but also made the elephant look like an American fabrication with a seam on its neck and cowboy boots on its feet. The cartoon caption clarifies the matter further: "During the last days of staying in power the administration of J. Carter has used the myth of a 'Soviet threat' to inflate the war hysteria" (*Administratsiia Dzh. Kartera v poslednie dni svoego prebyvaniia u vlasti, ispol'zuia mif o "sovetskoi ugroze", razduvaet voennyi psikhoz*). Thus, the elephant, an exaggerated fabricated lie, serves simultaneously as a reference to the "war hysteria" and the "myth of a 'Soviet threat'", and in a function to counteract the ideas circulating in the Western media.

While advocating the "myth of a 'Soviet threat'" the Americans are simultaneously depicted as hiding their own military activities. They are represented as blaming others of the type of activities that they are themselves undertaking. Revealing the enemy's true nature is important in the Kukryniksy cartoons also in the sense that the enemy is framed as someone who is hiding his true actions, pretending to be something or someone other than what he actually is. Often this is combined with portraying the enemy in the middle of an armament project. In order to depict all this, Kukryniksy used many symbolic variants among the wild animals. The deceitful nature of the enemy can, for example, be described with the use of a chameleon, an animal that is known to change its colour according to its environment. Sometimes, the chameleon does indeed act as a "symbol of inconstancy" (Cooper, 1995, p. 45). This behavioural characteristic of the chameleon is seen as an inherent part of its nature, which in turn makes the same characteristic a fundamental attribute of the enemy depicted in the form of this animal. Hence, seeing Ronald Reagan (1911–2004) depicted as a half man, half chameleon

Image 6. Kukryniksy & Dm. Demin, 1982 July 8: Chameleon's tricks / Designed for masking.

(Kukryniksy, 1982 July 8, p. 5 [Image 6]), gives the audience an idea of the US president being a person who changes himself according to the situation, but also as a person whose political stand and claims are in a constant state of fluctuation.

In his novel *Chameleon*, Anton Chekhov (1884) used this animal as a metaphor for someone who changes his views according to the situation he is facing. Chekhov's police superintendent Ochumelov keeps changing his side in an argument according to what will bring him the most advantage. Thus, this perceived characteristic of the chameleon was familiar within the Soviet cultural context also from its literature. Similarly to Ochumelov, Reagan is depicted as being able to change sides easily. He has wrapped a paper labelled "discussions on peace" (*rassuzhdeniia o mire*) around a missile, thus disguising his true intentions and the deception in progress. The cartoon caption further explains this as a depiction of the nature of American politics by stating that "the talks about the peace loving nature of the American administration" (*razgovory o miroliubii amerikanskoi administratsii*) are only a propaganda trick to disguise the military preparations of the USA. Once again, the treacherous nature of the enemy is revealed. While being in the middle of vast armament projects, the USA tries to get other countries to work towards disarmament, which would leave the USA in the position of being the only major military power of the world.

This chameleon cartoon exemplifies well how Kukryniksy depicted the enemy as constantly trying to disguise its – and its enemies' – true nature, leaving it to the Soviet Union to expose them (see also 1965 October 20, p. 5; 1967 June 26, p. 4). The basic idea behind this cartoon is similar to cartoons in which Reagan is depicted as a wolf dressed in sheep's clothing (Kukryniksy, 1980 June 4, p. 5; 1981 June 19, p. 5), or one in which a hypocritical US crocodile sheds tears over the war in Vietnam (1965 October 20, p. 5). In order to deceive the public into believing in their peace-loving nature, the Americans disseminate their propaganda and

try to appear as something other than what they truly are. Whereas the wolf in sheep's clothes gets its meaning from the expression, the chameleon disguising itself as something else, and here also disguising the missile it is holding, is a part of the chameleon's inherent nature.

The Enemy as a "Wild" Animal

In their political cartoons Kukryniksy use the wild animals to demonstrate something about their enemies' nature. We have seen different animals, each having their own symbolic functions and culturally resonant meanings. Some of them have their symbolism deriving from linguistic content, such as expressions and proverbs, whereas others' symbolic functions are based on the connotations the animals have in the cultural sphere of the cartoon. More or less all of these wild animals attach to the enemy the characteristics of deceit and deception, but also of ruthlessness and treachery. These are not unpredictable wild animals, but rather, wild animals acting according to a pattern. A pattern typical to imperialists and capitalists. The superior Soviet Union sees through their deceitful nature. By detecting the predictability in the enemies' actions, they are able to reveal the evil schemes of the enemy and reveal the "truth" about the world.

But the enemy's allies do not see its true plans, and hence they blindly believe in the enemy and act according to its wishes. Indeed, many of the wild animals in these cartoons are under a human's or other animal's control. This does not necessarily mean that they are oblivious to the events taking place around them – even if some of them are, as the KIena is to the wolf's plans. In some cartoons the animals are co-operating with their masters, such as the sharks of the Pentagon and the fly-elephant of Carter. Whereas some of them act as equal allies, like the fox and the vulture scheming for the militarisation of Europe others are completely independent actors, such as the Reagan chameleon or the Chilean gorilla. Thus, animals and humans might have control over other an-

imals, but never are animals depicted as having control over humans in these cartoons, even if this type of depiction is also not unheard of in earlier Kukryniksy cartoons, namely the ones of WWII (see e.g. 1942 July 2, p. 4). It is true that some of the cartoons, e.g. the one with the Chilean gorilla, suggest an animal's control over humans in an oppressive way. But this is never shown in the cartoons, it is only implied. Furthermore, animals behaving on their own terms are more likely to depict specific people, whereas wild animals acting under human control are more likely to be abstract concepts – a nation or a people, rather than a specific person.

In all these cartoons the animal poses a danger to the world. But the cartoonists are also careful to show the animal being belittled and ridiculed to give the impression that the Soviet Union is superior to the enemy and the threat it is posing. It is evident that they will defeat the enemy whenever necessary. Most of these car-

toons concentrate on how the Soviet Union's enemies control military assets, either their own, or more often, somebody else's. Indeed, these cartoons concentrate very much on the military side of world affairs.

Finally, it should be noted that in these cartoons only the negative sides of animal symbolism come forward. Many of these animals also have positive connotations in general animal symbolism, but these would not have served the purposes of the Soviet cartoonist trio, who concentrated in representing and revealing the true nature of the enemy. In fact, in framing the world with their culturally resonant animal cartoons, Kukryniksy further emphasised the frame creation process otherwise going on in *Pravda*, and in Soviet propaganda more generally; they participated in the strengthening of the Soviet political framework according to which the world was to be seen.

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Endnotes

1. I use the ALA-LC romanisation system of the cyrillic alphabet in this article, omitting the diacritics and the capitalisation rules, except in the cases where an established way of transliterating exists, e.g., with names.

2. Often they used the same sketches for both their cartoons and posters. The cartoons are in black and white, whereas the posters, as well as the cartoons published in the humour magazine Krokodil, are in colour and have more detail in them than the cartoons, showing that developing their images from one form to the other gave Kukryniksy the opportunity to make their art even richer in detail.