

Lidiia Sirenko*

CONSTRUCTION OF “ENEMY’S” IMAGE IN SOVIET PRESS IN 1939–1953-S

ABSTRACT

The article presents how in Soviet Union through children’s press government tried to raise new generation of Soviet men, who would be loyal to communists regime. As the main tool was used image of “enemy”, which consisted of two main parts: “external” and “internal enemies”. “Enemy’s” concept was not constant. The article examines evolution of the concept and its connection with the geopolitical situation and economic and political processes within the Soviet state. Children were taught how to identify “enemy” among other citizens, where they located, how they looks like, what values they have. And why it was so important for Soviet child to be attentive and report about all suspicious persons.

Key words: children’s press, propaganda, image of “enemy”

1. INTRODUCTION

In the Soviet Union press was an important tool for making impact on the citizens. Through newspapers and magazines government attempted to give examples of ideal Soviet citizen behaviors, create a list of “friends” and “enemies”. Not exception was children’s periodicals, which had not as entertaining as educational role. Through periodicals authorities formed the desired image of the child. On the pages of periodicals could be found everything that had to be present in the life of Soviet child: politics, ideology, entertainment, educational games, hobbies (Kolossova, 2007).

Party’s ideologues attempted to portray Soviet society as an ideal world for citizens loyal to the regime. All of whose members are equal in their rights and opportunities, as happy community where state cares about everyone and they have all that is necessary for normal human’s life. However everyday reality was pretty different from world view proposed by government. By itself, the Soviet system was not suppose to have any flaws, and the only things

* National University ok Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, lidasirenco@gmail.com.

that could undermine the well-being of Soviet citizens are “killers”, “spies” and “wreckers”, who were the epitome of “enemy” in the system (Fateev, 1999).

2. MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF “ENEMY”

Communist propaganda tried to show to the citizens how Soviet man should look like, what qualities they should have, which behavioral models to follow. An equally important aspect of Soviet man creation was modeling “the enemy” image. It was the core of differences with Soviet people. In order to understand who “we” are, you clearly see who the “they” are, and how these two categories differ between each other. Their basic values supposed to be fundamentally different, so to make compromise became impossible. When communist ideologues constructed “enemy image”, they set themselves the multiple purposes. First of all, it had “to catalyze public fears, take them under control and bring negative power in the right way.” (Sosnina, 2009, p. 204) In addition, by intrigues of “enemies” government could explain their own failures in politics or economics. Also, “enemy” presence kept the population in a constant state of readiness to fight for their country, what gave rise to the vigilance and caution, the system of denunciations worked better, and this in turn helped to suppress criticism of the authorities by the citizens. (Sosnina, 2009, p. 204) In the children’s periodicals processes of “enemy” image creation was parallel to the construction of hero’s cults. (Sosnina, 2009, p. 203) The child had been proposed two behavior models: positive that should be strived for, and negative which should be avoided.

3. EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL “ENEMIES” OF REGIME

Semantic content “they”, just as “we” was very flexible. Depending on the political situation, it could significantly change. Variable was not only a quality attributed “enemies” but also personalities, nations, social classes, countries which were deemed hostile. Enemies can be divided into “external” and “internal”. “*Internal*” – tried to harm the country, ruin it from the inside. Thus, the Soviet child had to be alert, pay attention to suspicious persons. In case of the slightest suspicion child supposed to inform the relevant authorities. (Hrab, 1953, p. 3–4) The Soviet government tried to construct a consciousness of the “new man”, creating major, dominant identity that would show belonging to the state. (Betlii & Dysa, 2009, p. 45) Human’s identity, linking person to the former political regime acknowledged as hostile. All tragedy for Soviet citizen was in fact that the enemy identity could be imposed to anyone. This means that person could not identify themselves with a particular social class, ideas or activities, but be accused and found guilty of anti-Soviet activities. “*Enemies*” within the country were considered those who directed their operations against the Soviet government or did not support the communist ideology. In particular, in children’s periodicals is widely used negative characters such as “bourgeois”, “merchant” or “banker”, “rich-man”, “pan” (lands lord), “tsar” (king) («Наше військо трудове йшло у битви проти панства, проти царського тиранства»)¹ (Muratov, 1952, p. 6–7), “boyar”, “shlyakhtych”, “invader”, “land-lord” and “capitalist”: “Корейський народ стогне під ігом іноземних і «своїх» поміщиків

¹ Our army of labor went into battle against the nobility, against royal tyranny.

і окупантів”² (Koreiia Boretsiia za Svobodu, 1950, p. 7). During the Second World War in the Soviet press appears the term “fascist”, which became a collective and, unlike the term “hitlerivets” was used to refer not only German citizens but also their allies. The term “fascist” has become synonymous with “monsters”, human-werewolf generated by capitalism, inhuman Germany political and economic system and ideology. The Nazis portrayed as heartless murderers, exploiters, rapists, barbarians. In the children’s magazine placed articles that described how the Nazis committed mass murder, burned entire villages, not sparing neither women nor children nor old. (Raskaz o Eilke, 1950, p.6–7) In the second half of 1947 started an ideological campaign directed against cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism as indifference to Motherland, opposed to Soviet patriotism and, therefore, this phenomenon was considered as harmful and unacceptable to the Soviet people. (Vdovin, 2007, p.21) In addition, to the negative characters absented “Підлих ворогів народу – троцькістсько-бухарінські та буржуазно-націоналістичних бандитів”.³ (Politbyuro TsK VKP(b), 1939, p.4) Certain professions were used only in the context of capitalist society: “Біситься в Америці банкір, бо урожай наш означає мир”. (Politbyuro TsK VKP(b), 1939, p.4) So the word “banker” became a symbol of society of “other” and not used in children’s magazines when it came to the Soviet Union. Since the 1940s, the editors almost never refer to images of “counterrevolutionary”, “White Guard”, “denikins”, “kurkul” (fist), “peasant-vidshchepnyk” (who did not want to engage in collective farm), which were very popular 1920s–1930s. This can be explained by a change in the political situation: collectivization was already done and the issue of unification of peasants into collective farms and dispossession were not essential. By the way, political purges during the Great Terror of 1938–1939-s destroyed the ideological opponents of the Soviet regime.

In different times, depending on the geopolitical situation, countries which were treated like “external enemy” could be varied. According to Soviet propaganda, policy of those states aimed at undermining the political system in the USSR and leveling Soviet values. Important role in these processes assigned to spies. Children’s press repeatedly addressed the subject of espionage, writing off on their activity domestic troubles: “За вказівками англійських шпигунів відбулась затримка в поставках хліба”.⁴(Horodovik, 1940, p. 33)

4. “ANEMY’S” SOCIETY: NORMS, HIRERARCHY AND VALUES

The governments promoted that «enemy» have radically different values system, which is based on the money-market and exploitative relationships. “Their” society is led by one who has the most wealth and who use others for own advantages. At the highest level of hierarchy placed monarch or president. They are endowed characteristics opposite to those they allegedly possessed by Soviet leaders. Illustrative is “Yakut tale”, published in the journal “Pioneriia” in 1940. It tells how Stalin met Yakut tsar. Tsar was shown like vile, malicious, flattering and greedy. He incites Stalin to betray, sell off his friend – Truth (anthropomorphic image) promises to him for it all possible goods, than like last measure Tsar was trying to threaten Stalin. However, Soviet leader refused tsar’s offer, because he was “a real man”. (Yakutska Kazka, 1940, p. 1–3)

² Korean people are groaning under the yoke of foreign and “their own” landlords and occupier

³ Despicable enemies – Trotsky, Bukharin and bourgeois are nationalist bandits

⁴ According to instructions of British spies bread delivery is delayed.

Below in the hierarchy are lords, nobles, gentry, the capitalists. They were the embodiment of the exploitative system: lived through taxes and work of ordinary people, (Khorunzhyi, 1950, p. 11–14) were involved in the accumulation of wealth, were greedy, malicious and cowards. (Nikolskyi, 1940, p.) Their moral principles were different from Soviet, even were opposed to theirs.

Despite ordinary people were the most numerous constituent of this type society they were the most deprived its part. Soviet propaganda tried to present so that the people there lived below the poverty line. (Pid Piatoyu Amerykanskykh Okupantiv, 1950, p.28) They suffer from constant food shortages due to lack of funds, they are forced to walk in rags: “Бачиш, синку, як наші люди живуть. Бідують. На голе тіло овечі шкури одягають або в лахмітті ходять. Вся людська сила йде на податки та відробітки.”⁵ (Khorunzhyi, 1950, p. 11–14) USSR positioned itself as the protector of children and youth like a country with social security, free access to education, where every child has excellent prospects for development and self-realization. Instead, in “enemy’s” society child from an early age has to go to work, for not to die of hunger and to help parents pay taxes. Moreover, children’s working conditions were worse than adults had in Soviet state: hard physical labor, of twelve working hours, meager wages and constant humiliation.” Кім хлопчик-рибалка змушений тяжко працювати у поміщика, терпіти побої, одержувати декілька зернин рису у брудній посудині”.⁶ (Akselrod, 1950, p.9) Parents often sold their children to factories or simply lend them in order not to die of hunger. (Bohdanov, 1952, p. 14–15) Moreover, children are common goods: the Soviet children’s magazines placed materials that the Austrian newspaper “San” writes that every year in Austria sold hundreds of children. It says that not only in Austria but also in Japan and India are slaves markets. (Mizhnarodne Sviato Trudiashchykh, 1950, p.2) But even if the child is lucky she or he can get an education, still “in a number of American schools introduced corporal punishment. In America, there are factories producing cutting and whips”. (Oliyinyk, 1952, p. 14) Furthermore, the conditions in which children learn are also terrible: На вулиці холодно...Але і в школі не тепліше. Дощ і вітер вільно проходять крізь щілини в дахові і в стінах, і хазяйнують в класі. Та, хіба можна назвати класом цей вогкий, напівзамерзлий сарай.”⁷ (Kalman, 1953, p.7) In orphanages the situation is not better: there is always food shortages, disruptions in the heating system, there is no toys as a result – sadly children, frail and sickly. (Horkiyi, 1951, p.15)

Soviet propaganda tried to portray life in “stranger” society in as dark colors as possible, show that there is system, which deprives child of human dignity, moral values, bringing to the fore the basic instincts. Maxim Horkiyi in the journal “Pioneriia” in 1951 wrote about children’s lives of in the United States: “Коли вони знаходять шкоринку загнилого хліба, вона збуджує серед них дику ворожнечу; захоплені бажанням проковтнути її, вони б’ються як маленькі собачата. Вони вкривають мостові зграями, наче ненажерливі голуби

⁵ You see, my boy, how our people live. Suffer. On bare skin they dress sheep’s skin or rags. All human power goes to taxes and workings off.

⁶ Kim fishing-boy had to work hard for a landlord, endure beatings, received a few grains of rice in dirty bowl.

⁷ It is cold outside... But in school is not warmer. Rain and wind pass freely through the cracks in the roof and in the walls. And, how can you call “class” this raw, in half frozen barn.

о першій ночі, о другій і пізніше – вони всі ще риються в багнюці, жалюгідні мікроби бідності, живі докори жадібності багатих рабів Жовтого Диявола”.⁸ (Horkiyi, 1951, p.15)

5. SOVIET UNION LIRE A SAVIOR FOR CHILDREN FROM CAPITALISTIC STATE

Children’s periodicals showed that the only salvation for children in the capitalist countries were the Soviet Union in general and Stalin in personal. Indicative is poem B. Chalyi “Will grow, girl!” published in the journal “Pyoneriia” in 1951. (Chalyi, 1951, p.12) It refers to a little girl Jeanie who lives in a basement in one of the great American cities. She remained an orphan and forced to beg from rich. Once she had a dream in which she was on the Krasnaia Ploshchad and from the podium Stalin, whom she had seen before only in photos, was waving her. So, Soviet propagandists tried to show that children in the capitalist countries not just know about the Soviet Union, they are looking at him as their savior and protector. As a result, all actions of the Soviet regime against the US government are steps to help children in the United States.

Depicting in this way children’s daily life in society of “enemy” Soviet propaganda was intended to cause sympathy for these children, and thus distaste to their exploiters. In addition, the communist regime tried to show that what children have in the Soviet Union should not be taken as the norm. Such high standards – it is parties and leaders achievement. The child should be grateful for his or her «happy childhood», be prepared to defend the system that has created such life conditions for them. Since if children are not able to defend their way of life, all the horrors of capitalistic life, described in periodicals will become their realities.

Not only children, like a future of the country, were socially vulnerable in society of «enemy» but also those who had defended this country in the past – veterans. The magazine «Barvinok» in 1950 published a story about how on the streets of Chicago together orphan girl, playing the violin, and disabled veteran are begging some money. (Malyshko, 1950, p. 7) It supposed to serve as a vivid contrast to situation in USSR where officially veterans were treated with great respect and gratitude.

6. CAPITALISM IS THE MAIN “ENEMY” OF SOVIET MAN

Reading children’s periodicals, it can be concluded that as the main «enemy» Soviet leadership saw not a particular person, class or country but capitalism like a socio-economic system. «Capitalism is affliction of the world» and «property instinct is the main peoples enemy and the cause of all sorrow, all the misery of life». (Horkiyi, 1941, p. 1) The communists attempt to show that ordinary workers were not the embodiment of «the enemy» for the Soviet people. After all, they had no ability to chose a system in which they live, they were exploited class. The only thing you can blame them for, it is that they were politically passive, they do

⁸ When they find rotten bread crust, it excites wild discord among them; passionate by desire to swallow it, they are beating like little puppies. They covered bridge in packs, like hungry pigeons at one o’clock at night, at the two o’clock and later – they all still digging in the dirt, germs miserable poverty, living reproaches of Yellow Devil servants greed.

not try to change their political regime, to start a revolution, as it happened in the territory of the USSR in 1917.

Soviet propaganda wanted to show that a society based on a trade-market relations creates inequality. It's not just a matter of exploitation of one class by another, but the racial and national discrimination as well. In the children's periodicals was constantly emphasized that in capitalist countries there is no inter-ethnic tolerance. According to Soviet propaganda especially critical situation was with afro-americans in the United States. "У бідності, в злиднях живуть негри в «демократичній» Америці. Такий насправді американський спосіб життя".⁹ (V Khrushchobakh Vashyngtona, 1951, p. 27) Racial discrimination and the laws of segregation were a constant topic of children's periodicals. The magazine "Pioneriia" was launched separate heading "Tsvetnoy barier" (color barrier), dedicated to the topic. Within which children were told about the slave trade in the United States in the past century and the oppression which afro-Americans are experiencing now. And this is against of internationalism and friendship among peoples in the Soviet Union where according to official statements such problem, simply could not exist at all. It was proclaimed that in Soviet society, every citizen is equal, regardless of national or ethnic origin, any harassment or discrimination or positive discrimination as well are punishable according to Article 123 of the USSR Constitution.

On the eve of the WW 2 the main embodiment of "enemy" were characters firstly, associated with the subversive activities of other countries in the Soviet Union via the domination their agents and secondly the images associated with the previous regime, such as Petliura, (Fremd, 1940, p. 31) bilopoliaky (Poles who support monarchy) or Wrangell. (Uchtyysiia Komunizmu, 1940, p. 1)

In the postwar period in children's literature increased number of articles which pay attention to image of the negative effects in the "enemy society": poverty, intolerance, exploitation of one class by another, etc. For communist propaganda this was caused by several reasons: one of the main of which it is tool to show that in Western countries citizens live in a much worse conditions. (Fateev, 1999) To convince citizens of the Soviet Union in truthfulness of these statements was very important, because a lot of soldiers had returned from Europe after the war, and their stories often did not coincide with the official view of life in Western countries. So we may say that the more difficult became living conditions in the USSR, the more harder existence in society of "enemy" was described.

7. MENTAL LOCATION OF "ENEMY" IN SPACE

Soviet propaganda telling about the system's enemies placed them in space in a certain way. «Enemy» could be not only outside, but also inside Soviet society. So, Soviet people supposed to know special markers which could help them to identify the «enemy» among other citizens. For example, objects from everyday life, which was considered signs of bourgeois lifestyle – "chewing gum or any other bourgeois things" fur "long shiny car", the presence of home icons or manifestation of disrespect for symbols and attributes of Soviet state. (Chalyyi, 1951, p.13)

⁹ Afro-Americans are poor, live in poverty in the "democratic" America. This is real American way of life.

Arrangement of “enemy” settlements: villages and towns are also different from the Soviet. Thus, cities have their “sacred zone” – the historical center, a place associated with the symbols of power, religion and traditions. (Kazakevich, 2011) Typically, children’s periodicals wrote about them only in a negative sense. Authors of articles for children’s magazines emphasize the contrast between areas inhabited by wealthy citizens, those are clean, ordered, with large, luxurious houses and those inhabited by ordinary workers – poor shabby shacks and huts.

Soviet child had to be able to define the territory of “enemy” on the map, to know which country is friend, and which is not. Before the Second World War¹⁰ Soviet propaganda attention was focused on the fight against “internal enemy”, especially in the “newly-regions” such as Western Ukraine, Western Belarus and occupied Poland’s lands. Annexation of Polish territory by two aggressors: Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union – radically differently highlighted in contemporary media. In children’s magazines all the attention was drawn to the newly-earth and “rescue” mission of the USSR in relation to these lands. The main object of criticism was society’s exploitative class. (Ziednalyz Znov Roziednana Zemliia, 1940, p. 44) In the first years after the war in the Soviet Union “external enemy” was not clearly defined, Nazi Germany was defeated, and with allies communists still tried to maintain friendly relations. (Fateev, 1999) Instead, in 1950-s the confrontation between two superpowers: the USSR and the USA results in ideological war, was named “cold war”. During which, a children’s periodicals was used as a tool. After reading its contents, Soviet child could outline map territory which was considered “enemy” lands. The hostile country can be divided into two categories: “real” capitalist states: USA, UK, (Ne zadushysh, ne ubiesh!, 1951, p. 4) France, (Pravnyky Paryzhskykh Komunarov, 1951, p. 16) Spain, (Bartov, 1950, p.11) Canada, (Bezdomnue v Kanade, 1951, p. 3) Italy (Kalman, 1953, p. 7) and others. The other categories include countries that were “occupied” by capitalist states: South Korea, (Bezposhchadnyyi, 1950, p. 24) Greece, (Puyimanova, 1950, p. 15) Republic of Vietnam (Romanivska, 1950, p. 28–31) and Japan: ”Трудові люди Японії стогнуть під п’ятою американських окупантів. Горе й злидні несуть поневоленням народам душители свободи й демократії – американські монополісти та їх слуги”.¹¹ (Pid Piatoyu Amerykanskykh Okupantiv, 1950, p. 28) For the Soviet child in the center of his or her mental picture of “the enemy” housed the United States that were the epitome of the capitalist way of life.

8. CONCLUSIN

In the Soviet Union along with the creation of new Soviet man took place construction of “enemy’s” image. This process had several objectives. Firstly, shift to abstract enemy blame for their own failures in politics or the economy. Secondly, unite Soviet citizens for struggle against common threats. Thirdly, create a view of society with lifestyle and values contrasting with “communist world” in order to assist Soviet man in the process of self-identification.

“Enemies” were divided into “internal” and “external”. To “internal enemies” were attributed old regime supporters or those who sympathized to Western states and did not share

¹⁰ Officially in Soviet public discourse Second World War was started in 22 of June 1941.

¹¹ Labour Japanese people are groaning under the heel of the American occupiers. Woe and misery are bringing to enslaved peoples stranglers of freedom and democracy – American monopolists and their servants.

Soviet values. The main “external enemy” was not a specific country, but the capitalist system that was prevailed in some countries.

The society of “enemy” had their own hierarchical system. The most numerous and the most depressed part of which were workers. Soviet propaganda tried to show all the flaws of this society: racial discrimination, the exploitation of poor by rich, the main value of this community is wealth.

The spatial position of “enemy” was not stable. Some countries could change their status depending on the political conjuncture. Significant changes in Soviet foreign policy took place after Second World War, as a result the list of “friends” and “enemies” of the USSR was changed.

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