

Summer 2016

# Soviet Defectors: Sexuality, Gender, and the Family in Cold War Propaganda, 1960-1990

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SOVIET DEFECTORS: SEXUALITY, GENDER, AND THE FAMILY  
IN COLD WAR PROPAGANDA, 1960-1990

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A Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

Central Washington University

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

History

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by

Scott Andrew Miller

August 2016

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies

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## ABSTRACT

### SOVIET DEFECTORS: SEXUALITY, GENDER, AND THE FAMILY IN COLD WAR PROPAGANDA, 1960-1990

by

Scott Andrew Miller

August 2016

The purpose of this study is to examine the rhetoric of gender, sexuality, and the family used by the media of the Soviet Union to discuss American and Soviet defectors from 1960 to 1990. Utilizing previously established historiographies of gender, sexuality and the family as well as statements from Soviet and American government officials, it is shown that the Soviet government linked gender, sexuality and family “perversions” to the individualistic and capitalistic ideology of American society, by contrast with the Soviet collectivist and socialist “purity.” This analysis fills in the gaps in the historiography by connecting studies of gender, sexuality and family to the practice of defection, and situating them in the cultural Cold War context.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the members of my Thesis Committee, Dr. Jason Knirck and Dr. Stephen Moore of the History Department at Central Washington University. Your classes were some of the earliest I took as an undergraduate student at Central Washington University. Your classes only helped to reassure me in my decision to study history and my desire to pursue a Master's degree. Most importantly, I want to thank my advisor and Committee Chair Dr. Roxanne Easley of the History Department at Central Washington University. As an undergraduate, you helped spark my desire to not only continue my education, but to focus on the study of Soviet history. You have always been there when I have questions or need help, and always push me to improve.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I	INTRODUCTION .....	1
II	COLD WAR GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND FAMILY.....	17
III	AMERICAN DEFECTION .....	39
IV	SOVIET DEFECTION .....	58
V	CONCLUSION.....	82
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	85

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Over the course of the Cold War, hundreds of American and Soviet citizens committed acts of treason by defecting. The tense political climate between the two postwar superpowers turned the defectors into traitors or heroes, depending on which side of the Iron Curtain one stood. Defectors ranged from intelligence agents and military personnel at every rank, as well as civilians. The governments of the US and USSR publicized defections to a world audience, using the media to arouse public opinion for or against the defectors and their home societies. After World War II, the focus of the Cold War expanded beyond military concerns to a cultural confrontation. The message officials presented was not limited solely to the transfer of valuable intelligence, but about the two nations' competing ideological and social systems. Treason came to be equated with low character and private vice, which each side accused the other of creating. The Soviets in particular used defections to showcase the rottenness of the capitalist US fostered by the American sense of individualism, and the superiority of their own scientific communism.

The research presented here shows why themes of gender, sexuality and the family often appeared in Soviet propaganda about defectors, whether an American defected to the USSR or a Soviet citizen defected to the US. As will be shown, the Soviets believed that American individualism and capitalism fostered irrationality, subversion and perversion, the opposite of the honest labor, scientific "hygiene" and

public collectivism of Soviet communism. The USSR represented itself as having the highest of moral standards, and these norms were attached to or stripped from defectors as an explanation for their actions and, more importantly, to claim moral superiority over the United States. An examination of Soviet rhetoric as it pertained to defectors helps to better understand a highly visible part of the cultural Cold War, as well as to explain how the US and USSR understood and viewed their own cultural norms about gender, sexuality, and the family.

The scope of this study is Soviet and American defectors from the 1960s to the 1980s. Once the immediate military threat of the postwar years passed, ideological and cultural differences assumed more importance in the Cold War. In addition, by the 1960s, appropriate gender, sexual and family norms had been defined by the Soviet government, and they changed very little until the collapse of the Soviet system in 1991. The defectors included here represent a wide variety of people from different backgrounds. They were low ranking military personnel, high ranking political officials, members of the intelligence service of both the US and Soviet Union, and civilians. By focusing on the defections that occurred over an almost thirty year period, it shows that it did not matter who the defector was, what their profession was, or how much intelligence they possessed, Soviet propagandists employed the same rhetoric of gender, sex and the family to broadcast the moral and social superiority of the Soviet Union to the United States and the world.

In the study of the Soviet history, there is little sustained analysis on Soviet rhetoric about defectors. Much of what is written is in the form of a narrative. Many defectors have written their stories down in an effort to tell the story of how they defected. Or historians may treat the topic of defectors in passing, without it being the main focus of analysis. By bringing together separate histories of propaganda, the cultural Cold War, sexual, gender, and family roles, this study examines the Soviet rhetoric of defectors instead of leaving it on the periphery. The inclusion of US material is partly because of a lack of Soviet studies on this topic. Despite the differing paths the United States and Soviet Union developed, they both equated gender, sexual and family morality with treason.

Historians have studied the foundations of Cold War propaganda. In order to focus pressure on each other, the US and the USSR used propagandistic rhetoric. Nicolas O'Shaughnessy, in *Politics and Propaganda: Weapons of Mass Seduction*, offers some description of what constitutes some of the many different forms of propaganda. Propaganda "conjures up images of governmentally inspired lies, often either in the context of a 'hot' or a 'cold' war."<sup>1</sup> Americans especially viewed "propaganda as an activity that is engaged in by authoritarian or totalitarian governments," and so it was not to be trusted.<sup>2</sup> In politics, O'Shaughnessy argues, propaganda "generally involves the unambiguous transmission of message: 'clarity' may not be an essential adjunct to the

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<sup>1</sup> Nicolas O'Shaughnessy, *Politics and Propaganda: Weapons of Mass Seduction* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 15.

<sup>2</sup> O'Shaughnessy, 15.

definition of propaganda but it is certainly a normative one.”<sup>3</sup> By seeking out the deep emotional sensitivities within the target audience, through “compelling and even irrational” messages, propaganda manifests itself as “shameless advocacy.”<sup>4</sup> As O’Shaughnessy pointed out, “a political issue is not merely a product to be merchandised but a vibrant value symbol connecting with an individual’s sense of who and what they are at the deepest level.”<sup>5</sup> Sexual and gender norms, extremely deep-rooted in culture, were particularly powerful propaganda weapons in the Cold War, as the defectors would show.

In *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929*, Peter Kenez examined how different forms and methods of propaganda were used in the building of the very foundation of Soviet government. One of the most important forms of propaganda was newspapers, the “blood-circulation system of the body politic.”<sup>6</sup> Kenez stated that the “average citizen learned what were the legitimate public issues as defined by the leaders and learned the verbiage of political discourse.”<sup>7</sup> The Soviet Union, of course, lacked a free press. Many of the propagandistic attacks that targeted the defectors would take the form of articles and interviews printed in newspapers containing information carefully crafted by Soviet officials. American

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<sup>3</sup> O’Shaughnessy, 16.

<sup>4</sup> O’Shaughnessy, 16.

<sup>5</sup> O’Shaughnessy, 158.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 224.

<sup>7</sup> Kenez, 224.

newspapers picked up these stories and published them in the US, allowing the Soviet message to reach readers in the United States, too.

The United States was no stranger to propaganda, either, though policy-makers had far less control over the press. In *Pressing the Fight: Print, Propaganda, and the Cold War*, Greg Barnhisel and Catherine Turner examine newspapers throughout the entire conflict. In describing political cartoons, for example, the authors point out: “Publicity was America’s secret weapon: outsiders were drawn to the prosperity, glamour, and mobility that popular culture in the United States presented.”<sup>8</sup> The print media was used during the Cold War to spread information inside and outside of America. Within the print media there was “one consistent theme: a fundamental optimism regarding the capability of the United States to successfully repel the Soviet threat *if* Americans were educated in the tools their Founding Fathers had provided for them.”<sup>9</sup> The news and pop culture were used to spread the message of a prosperous America to the rest of the world. Images of the American way of life even slipped under the Iron Curtain, challenging the best efforts of Soviet officials to shape public opinion at home.

To support the positive self-image presented by a nation’s media, negative propaganda was used to reinforce the idea that the enemy did not hold themselves to the same high cultural or moral standards. Americans believed “the United States was an

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<sup>8</sup> Greg Barnhisel and Catherine Turner, *Pressing the Fight: Print, Propaganda, and the Cold War. Studies in Print Culture and the History of the Book* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010), 181.

<sup>9</sup> Barnhisel and Turner, 52.

exceptional nation, set apart- at least in the beginning- by a unique set of republican and classical liberal economic principles. These principles provided the best opportunity in history for humans to live free lives and develop to their fullest potential.”<sup>10</sup> The Soviet Union, of course, upheld collectivist principles as the best plan for free and productive life, by pushing the Soviet people to work for the betterment of the Soviet Union. Soviet officials held no qualms about lying or even fabricating stories to discredit the United States. One example of this is a note written in 1960 by KGB Chairman Alexander Shelepin to the Central Committee of the Communist Party, which laid out plans to discredit CIA Chief Allen Dulles. In it, Shelepin suggested mailing letters with the names of CIA officials who criticized Dulles, publishing a satirical pamphlet about him. Shelepin even planned “to fabricate the failure of an American agent ‘Fyodorov’” to discredit Dulles.<sup>11</sup> Most important for the discussion defectors, he planned to “publish in the Soviet press an announcement about the arrest of ‘Fyodorov’ as an American agent and, if necessary, to arrange a press-conference about this affair.”<sup>12</sup> The practice of fabricating stories, and posing starkly opposed national moralities, became a major factor in how defector propaganda was formed. Discussions of gender, sexual, and family norms were carefully planted in press conferences and news stories about defectors. The Soviet Union attempted to influence public opinion at home and abroad by drawing a clear line between the moral respectability of the collective and the Soviet Union,

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<sup>10</sup> Barnhisel and Turner, 52.

<sup>11</sup> “Note from KGB Chairman A. Shelepin to Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Regarding Plan to Discredit CIA Chief Dulles,” June 7, 1960.  
<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115975> (accessed January 14, 2015)

<sup>12</sup> “Note from KGB Chairman A. Shelepin to Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Regarding Plan to Discredit CIA Chief Dulles,” June 7, 1960.

cultivated since the earliest days of the revolution, and Western individualism and perversion.

Beyond the political and military tensions of the Cold War, the United States and USSR waged a cultural war to establish moral superiority in public and private life, and the propaganda of both sides played out on a world stage. Many historians have examined the cultural Cold War, though primarily from a US perspective. The differences between Soviet and American ideologies ran deep. As Martin McCauley writes, the United States and the Soviet Union “were revolutionary powers. They possessed universal visions of how to improve the lot of humankind.”<sup>13</sup> One was driven by capitalism and democracy, the other by communism and the collective. Communism “required an expansionary policy, and would continue along that path until a communist society that embraced collectivism across the globe had been achieved.”<sup>14</sup> Soviet policymakers believed that communism would continue to spread until all people placed the good of the group above the individual’s self-interest. At the other end of the political spectrum, the United States’ culture was “based on the freedom of the individual.”<sup>15</sup> Americans who believed in the virtues of individual liberty and looked at totalitarianism Communism as “the personification of evil” would have to respond to Soviet expansionary policy that encroached upon capitalist countries.<sup>16</sup> As McCauley puts it, “the United States understood that its prosperity depended on what happened outside its

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<sup>13</sup> Martin McCauley, *Russia, America and the Cold War, 1949-1991* (New York: Longman, 1998), 3.

<sup>14</sup> McCauley, 3.

<sup>15</sup> McCauley, 17.

<sup>16</sup> McCauley, 17.

borders,” such as capitalist trade, markets, raw materials and labor.<sup>17</sup> Soviet ideology, in the minds of Americans, denied God, individual freedom, and the benefits of the free market. Moreover, the USSR had “vowed to destroy the free world.”<sup>18</sup> For these reasons the US chose to intervene and stand in opposition to the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union challenged American universal promises to improve lives and uphold the noblest of principles. By linking defections to issues of private morality, the Soviet Union attacked the national self-perception of America and presented the USSR as maintaining higher standards and offering a better model for the rest of the world to emulate. Over the decades, the Soviet media used defectors as examples that despite domestic reform, the United States was still a haven for immorality, which drove defectors to seek out a better life in the Soviet Union. Through propaganda about defectors, sexuality, gender and the family became crucial arenas for the moral battles of the Cold War. The Soviet Union employed messages of the morally pure Soviet man, woman, and family to claim that the United States was a haven for selfish debauchery, exploitation, and vice. By using defectors to connect perversions of gender, sexuality and the family to the individualism of American ideology, the Soviet Union staked a claim to superior morality.

The cultural conflict took many forms. Historian Mary Dudziak examined how Cold War cultural confrontation played out over the topic of race, and how the dispute influenced the civil rights of minorities in the United States. American policy makers

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<sup>17</sup> McCauley, 3.

<sup>18</sup> McCauley, 17.

were faced with a question: “How could American democracy be a beacon during the Cold War, and a model for those struggling against Soviet oppression, if the United States itself practiced brutal discrimination against minorities within its own borders?”<sup>19</sup> Dudziak examined how the United States and the USSR affected each other culturally, socially and politically by focusing on an issue that was not primarily economic or militarily based. Her argument was that domestic civil rights became a facet of American foreign policy, in effect “a product of the Cold War.”<sup>20</sup> Through a discussion of racially-charged events in the two decades following the end of World War II, Dudziak concluded that American civil rights reform “was motivated by a desire to placate foreign critics,” particularly the USSR and its target satellites, the US, in short, had to safeguard the image of America abroad.<sup>21</sup> American policy makers perceived that civil rights reform was strategically important to the overall Cold War effort.<sup>22</sup> By examining a Cold War cultural conflict in detail, Dudziak made it possible to study the clash between Soviet and American ideals of sexuality, gender, and family life. Dudziak shows how racial injustices in America were perceived abroad, and how the international reaction to the injustices influenced American national security. Instead of focusing only on issues of race, this study of defector propaganda adds to conclusion drawn by Dudziak. The Soviet Union used the Soviet definitions of gender, sex and the family in a similar fashion as issues of racial inequality were used as described by Dudziak. The defectors became

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<sup>19</sup> Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy. Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 3.

<sup>20</sup> Dudziak, 12.

<sup>21</sup> Dudziak, 251.

<sup>22</sup> Dudziak, 254.

highly visible tools for embracing the private behavior of Soviet citizens, because private life according to the Soviet system was the responsibility of the state, and demonizing individual private life of the US.

Where men and women stood in society was another aspect of the cultural battle between the Soviet Union and America, and there is a rich historiography on gender roles and the family in both societies. Elaine Tyler May, in her book *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, described the Kitchen Debate of 1959, in which the opposing Soviet and American beliefs about women's place in society can be seen clearly.<sup>23</sup> Vice President Richard Nixon was sent to Russia as a representative of the United States at the American Exhibition in Moscow. Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet Premier, toured a model American home that was on display. Nixon defended "the principles of the West inside the Soviet Union at a moment of international tension and national political decision."<sup>24</sup> One of the most famous events that occurred during the tour of the home, examined by Elaine Tyler May in *Homeward Bound*, was the argument that erupted over whether the United States or the Soviet Union provided better for women.<sup>25</sup> As May describes it, "Vice President Richard M. Nixon articulated the essence of American superiority by pointing to the consumer-laden suburban home."<sup>26</sup> The superiority of the American home, according to Nixon, was "one that obliterated class

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<sup>23</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).

<sup>24</sup> James Reston, "Nixon's Political Coup: His Soviet Tour Viewed as Perfect Way To Open Campaign for U.S. Presidency," *The New York Times*, July 30, 1959.

<sup>25</sup> "Nixon and Khrushchev Argue in Public as U.S. Exhibit Opens; Accuse Each Other of Threats," *The New York Times*, July 25, 1959.

<sup>26</sup> May, 155.

distinction and accentuated gender distinctions.”<sup>27</sup> May sums up the views of the Vice President (and by extension, of all Americans) of what the home should be: “The family home would be the place where a man could display his success through the accumulation of consumer goods. Women would reap rewards for domesticity by surrounding themselves with commodities; they would remain content as housewives because appliances would ease their burdens.”<sup>28</sup> The American woman was defined as a housewife; “Nixon continually interchanged the words *woman* and *housewife* as he extolled the American way of life at the Moscow exhibition.”<sup>29</sup>

As May described it, Nixon was rebutted by Nikita Khrushchev with a similar argument, only slightly altered to fit within Soviet ideology. The response from the Soviet premier was that “in the Soviet Union they did not have what he called ‘the capitalist attitude toward women,’” that in the Soviet Union women were not solely regulated to the role of housewife.<sup>30</sup> Khrushchev maintained the fiction that women were still responsible for domestic life, but it was paid work on behalf of the community, instead of for the individual family. The new domestic technology was not essential, but faintly distasteful. It consisted of nothing but expensive gadgets to selfishly benefit a single family.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> May, 155.

<sup>28</sup> May, 156.

<sup>29</sup> May, 159.

<sup>30</sup> “Nixon and Khrushchev Argue in Public as U.S. Exhibit Opens; Accuse Each Other of Threats.”

<sup>31</sup> May, 155.

May concludes that not only do the remarks from the Kitchen Debate provide a picture of what the role of women was thought to be in each society, but also an excellent example of gender-based propaganda. An argument over new items that were available for purchase blatantly placed women below men in the public sphere. When Nixon proclaimed that in America, “What we want to do is to make more easy the life of our housewives,” he was stating that it was up to the men to provide for and protect the domestic housewife.<sup>32</sup> By producing new technology for the household kitchen, the United States’ political and economic system created a better living situation for individual women by making their lives, and hence the lives of their husbands, easier—if they could afford it. May’s argument is that the importance of domestic life in America in the 1950s was a result of, not separate from, the fears that arose out of the Cold War. By channeling personal satisfaction into the family, it separated the everyday life of the American family from the fear of war with the Soviet Union. However, absent from May’s study is the ways that the Soviet family responded to the Cold War. The study of Soviet defector propaganda shows how the family and fears of the Cold War were used by Soviet officials as a counter-point to the propaganda that surrounded the American family.

Orlando Figes, in *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin’s Russia*, conducted an examination of how ordinary citizens in Russia under Stalin’s rule and during the Terror conducted their personal and public lives. Figes describes a dual existence for the Soviet woman, “conforming to Soviet norms in her public life whilst continuing to feel the

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<sup>32</sup> “Nixon and Khrushchev Argue in Public as U.S. Exhibit Opens; Accuse Each Other of Threats.”

counter-pull of” their private life.<sup>33</sup> Figes focuses on the moral sphere of the family, and how Soviet women coped with the shifting pressures from Stalin’s government. While not focusing specifically on gender, sexuality or the family, Figes establishes the ways in which the population felt the need to hide their true selves from public view. As a result of the Terror, Figes argues citizens of Russia became stoic and accepting of their environment. It was “Stalin’s lasting achievement to create a whole society in which stoicism and passivity were social norms.”<sup>34</sup> This passivity brought by the fear during Stalin’s rule “affected the children of Stalin’s victims in many different ways, from the friends they made at school to their choices of career.”<sup>35</sup> Marriages would be affected as well, with the goal in some cases being protection.<sup>36</sup> In a society with fear seeping into every aspect of life, Figes showed that the population hid their true beliefs or feelings in an effort to avoid persecution. Important to the examination of defector propaganda is the effect that this fear had in maintaining the message that abnormalities such as homosexuality did not exist in the Soviet Union. Stoicism and acceptance of the social norm led to continued intolerance for sexual, gender or family abnormalities. As long as the population remained stoic and accepting of the Soviet distrust of what the government classified as abnormal, they would continue to be viewed as negative and potentially dangerous to the Soviet state, making it an effective tool to be deployed in the propaganda system.

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<sup>33</sup> Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007), xxx.

<sup>34</sup> Figes, 607.

<sup>35</sup> Figes, 648.

<sup>36</sup> Figes, 649.

In *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*, Margot Canaday showed that American homophobia during the Cold War developed with the help of federal regulations.<sup>37</sup> Because of this, the divide between homosexuality and heterosexuality was deepened, and the fear of homosexuality in America grew. The study of Soviet defector propaganda adds to Canaday's conclusion, showing that Soviet propagandists manipulated the already existing fear of homosexuality and other types of sexual "perversions" to attack American ideology. By linking aberrations of gender, sex and family roles to American ideology, the Soviets presented American fear of these distortions as a fear of the American way of life. According to Soviet defector propaganda, the individualism so cherished by American society was at the root of the very abnormalities Americans were fearful of.

David K. Johnson's *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* argued that during the Cold War, there were many in American government and society who feared homosexuals even more than communists.<sup>38</sup> This fear was frequently based on the idea that homosexuals were at risk of being blackmailed by foreign agents. This supplemented the widely held conviction that the characteristics and actions of homosexuals were similar to those of communists. Studying how Soviet defector propaganda linked the individualism of American ideology to homosexuality builds off of the conclusions made by Johnson by showing that

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<sup>37</sup> Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America. Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

<sup>38</sup> David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

American anxiety arose from the perceived similarities between sexual deviancy and communism. American fears had their basis in American ideology itself, a fact the Soviets were keen to exploit in their propaganda.

Dan Healy's *Homosexual Desire in Revolutionary Russia: The Regulation of Sexual and Gender Dissent* showed that the Soviet state used sexuality as a rhetorical tool against their rivals for power and control.<sup>39</sup> The study of Soviet defector propaganda supports this conclusion by showing that it was not just the political rivals at home against whom the Soviet government used the rhetoric of sexuality, but against foreign enemies as well. Lynne Attwood examined Soviet definitions of gender and sexual deviancy in her study *The New Soviet Man and Woman: Sex-Role Socialization in the USSR*.<sup>40</sup> Attwood examined how the Soviet Union utilized its predefined definitions of gender and sexuality to bolster their image of the superior morality of the Soviet system abroad. An examination of Soviet defector propaganda supplements her argument by showing that the same ideal gender, sexual and family norms examined by Attwood were employed by Soviet propagandists in their presentation of defectors.

The US and the USSR deployed rhetoric about gender, sexuality, and the family about defectors in order to defend their half of the deep ideological divide between American individualism and Soviet collectivism. For the Soviets, even the most intimate and basic identities and relationships were subordinate to national ideology and goals. To

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<sup>39</sup> Dan Healy, *Homosexual Desire in Revolutionary Russia: The Regulation of Sexual and Gender Dissent* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

<sup>40</sup> Lynne Attwood, *The New Soviet Man and Woman: Sex-Role Socialization in the USSR* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

operate outside these norms as an individual was treasonous, just as defection was. In order to address this thesis, the following study consists of three sections. Chapter II establishes the cultural context in both countries in this time period. It clarifies what ideas about sex, gender and the family were in the Soviet Union and the United States, and how they developed over time. Chapter III focuses on American defectors to the Soviet Union, and how the Soviets publicized these men as refugees from American decadence. Chapter IV examines the defections of Soviet citizens to the United States, and the Soviets' attempts to portray these as the result of American infection and coercion. By showing why and how the Soviet Union formed their defector propaganda, a clear connection is made between the historiographies of Cold War gender, sexuality and the family. It fills in the gaps between the historiographies, and shows how they all acted together in the cultural Cold War battle for moral and ideological superiority.

## CHAPTER II

### COLD WAR GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND FAMILY

Gender ideals are some of the deepest and most tenacious cultural constructs. The diametric opposition created by the US and the USSR in the Cold War led them to draw from this cultural well. Those who were perceived to act outside national gender norms were not trustworthy, and potentially dangerous to the nation. George L. Mosse discussed masculine gender roles in the West in his *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe*. He presented a definition of masculinity that was evident in both the American defector propaganda, and, to some extent, in the Soviet propaganda: “Manliness symbolized the nation’s spiritual and material vitality. It called for strength of body and mind, but not brute force-- the individual’s energies had to be kept under control.”<sup>1</sup> Masculine strength and self-control were seen as vital to safeguarding the nation, its way of life, and its international reputation.

Masculinity also played a key role in Elaine Taylor May’s *Homeward Bound*. Americans reasoned that “national strength depended upon the ability of strong, manly men to stand up against communist threats.”<sup>2</sup> The prevailing belief was that the American family needed to raise strong boys, not “passive, weak and effeminate ‘perverts.’”<sup>3</sup> Because such perversion was the result of overindulgent mothers, the American woman

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<sup>1</sup> George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: H. Fertig, 1985), 23.

<sup>2</sup> May, 91.

<sup>3</sup> May, 93.

had to “be a loving wife rather than a domineering mother.”<sup>4</sup> To insure that the mother did not smother the children and raise effeminate boys, women had to be married to strong men “who assumed their rightful and economic and sexual dominance in the home.”<sup>5</sup> The men would then “channel their sexual energy in marriage,” which meant they would not partake in any form of “perverted” or effeminate actions. Likewise, women would be sexually controlled under the command of strong husbands. This would stop the mothers from turning “their perverted desires towards their sons, thwarting the boy’s natural masculine development.”<sup>6</sup> The proper family in which to raise strong men included a dominant male breadwinner and a submissive housewife. Strong and self-sufficient women were, by definition, unnatural, just as submissive and needy men were. American and Soviet officials had to present their society as the ideal place for raising strong men, and to promote women as important, if less powerful.

Gender roles were intertwined with ideals about sexuality. The US government directly intervened in defining American sexuality after World War II, in part due to the question of what to do about demobilized homosexual soldiers. “As homosexuality began to crystallize as the opposite of heterosexuality in the postwar period,” Margot Canaday wrote, “the latter was more explicitly connected to (while the former was more estranged

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<sup>4</sup> May, 93.

<sup>5</sup> May, 93.

<sup>6</sup> May, 93; Philip Wylie, *Generation of Vipers* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1942); Edward Strecker, *Their Mothers’ Sons: The Psychiatrist Examines an American Problem* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1946); and Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia F. Farnham, *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1947).

from) first-class citizenship.”<sup>7</sup> After the war, the government established a system with the GI Bill that would “build a closet within federal social policy.”<sup>8</sup> Canaday stated that it was well known that there were homosexual soldiers during the war, but the government did not acknowledge this publicly. Within the system for funding returning soldiers, they pushed homosexuals to maintain their silence about their sexuality. To be homosexual was to not be a good citizen. Gay men must remain invisible, according to the GI Bill system, which “drove deeper the wedge separating homosexuality and citizenship by enabling military and VA officials to pretend that homosexual soldiers had not defended their country, and that they could not meet the obligations of good citizens.”<sup>9</sup> Public opinion and official government policies created a cycle of homosexual men hiding their true sexuality, and not only because of how others might view them. The US government created a system that could only benefit the homosexual soldiers if they returned to roles after the war that fit within the traditional gender stereotypes for men in the United States, such as starting a family.

Robert J. Corber provided another way of examining mid-century American culture and sexuality through film. In his book, *Homosexuality in Cold War America: Resistance and the Crisis of Masculinity*, Corber pointed out that film noir could be used to discuss the politicization of homosexuality.<sup>10</sup> Film noir showed that homosexuality was harmful to society, and the international safety of the U.S. The representation of

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<sup>7</sup> Canaday, 169.

<sup>8</sup> Canaday, 170.

<sup>9</sup> Canaday, 170.

<sup>10</sup> Robert J. Corber, *Homosexuality in Cold War America: Resistance and the Crisis of Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 10.

male homosexual characters in film noir “drew on the traditional signifiers of male homosexuality in classical Hollywood cinema (upper-crust accent, effeminate mannerisms, impeccable taste, and so on).” The homosexual was then likened to “the femme fatale who lures the hero to his ruin.”<sup>11</sup> But when Americans defected to the Soviet Union, they were not so easily identifiable as the effeminate man in film noir.

*Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, published in 1948, caused the nation’s propagandists to respond. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, otherwise known as the Kinsey report, found that persons with homosexual histories were to be found in every age group, at every social level, in every conceivable occupation, in cities and on farms, married and unmarried.<sup>12</sup> The sense that homosexuals were hidden all around made them even more threatening. Homosexual men could be found in all walks of life, and they did not adhere to the traditional cultural stereotypes of how a gay man should act. Corber describes this thought process: “If gay men did not differ significantly from straight men and were to be found in every level of American society, then they could infiltrate the nation’s cultural and political institutions and subvert them from within.”<sup>13</sup> The Kinsey report made the homosexual man into a more dangerous threat. Homosexuals did not conform to acceptable definitions of masculinity, or of heterosexuality and raising a family, and they were secretly everywhere.

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<sup>11</sup> Corber, 10.

<sup>12</sup> Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell Baxter Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1948), 627.

<sup>13</sup> Corber, 11.

The widespread beliefs about homosexuality in America were evident in how the US government handled federal personnel who did not adhere to the sexual and gender roles of the United States. David K. Johnson's *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* examined Americans' reaction to the realization that there were numerous homosexuals who worked for the federal government. Johnson used an example pulled from a memorandum written by advisors to Truman in 1950. They asked Truman if he could "think of a person who could be more dangerous to the United States of America than a pervert?"<sup>14</sup> If a so-called pervert was more dangerous than a communist in the federal government, it goes beyond being simply different and immoral in the minds of American citizens. The fear of homosexuals led to investigations into government agencies to search out and remove anyone who could be considered a sexual pervert. This required "many government agencies to step up efforts to uncover and remove homosexuals from their ranks."<sup>15</sup>

This search for homosexuals coincided with Senator Joseph McCarthy's investigations into possible communist links. McCarthy believed the search for homosexuals within the American government was a good idea. He linked homosexuals to communists by saying that if homosexuals were discovered and removed from official government positions, it would greatly damage "Communist espionage activities" in America.<sup>16</sup> If homosexuals were unable to control their urges, they were more open to foreign coercion as well. Homosexuals could not be allowed to hold positions of power,

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<sup>14</sup> Johnson, 2.

<sup>15</sup> Johnson, 98.

<sup>16</sup> Johnson, 99.

because of the belief that “if they are generally lacking in moral character, homosexuals would be unable to do an effective job in these occupations” of authority.<sup>17</sup> Even more important, “they are considered to be vulnerable to bribery and blackmail and to be poor security risks.”<sup>18</sup> This belief in the vulnerability of homosexuals to coercion was one of the key factors behind what Johnson deemed the Lavender Scare, and why the resulting investigations into finding homosexuals within the government proceeded during the 1950s. Even after the gains of feminism and the “gay liberation” of the 1970s, sexual conservatives in the 1980s largely sought “the restoration of ‘traditional’ values.”<sup>19</sup>

The 1989 Kinsey Institute report *Sex and Morality in the U.S.* provided evidence of public opinions about sexuality towards the end of the Cold War. Homosexuals were still perceived by the U.S. population, as “sick, effeminate, and dangerous.”<sup>20</sup> Over the length of the Cold War, American beliefs of what homosexuality entailed stayed relatively consistent. Homosexuals were perceived as dangerous to the safety of American citizens. Homosexuals were thought to be secretive and irrational. They preyed on children. If “people cannot control the direction of their sexual desires, this argument runs, no more can they control objects, quantity, frequency, or anything else

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<sup>17</sup> Albert D. Klassen, Colin J. Williams, Eugene E. Levitt, Hubert J. O’Gorman, and Alfred C. Kinsey Institute for Sex Research, *Sex and Morality in the U.S.: An Empirical Enquiry Under the Auspices of the Kinsey Institute* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1989), 182.

<sup>18</sup> Klassen, 182.

<sup>19</sup> John D’Emilio, and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 345.

<sup>20</sup> Klassen, Williams, Levitt, and O’Gorman, 166.

having to do with their sexual behavior.”<sup>21</sup> By extension, they could not be trusted to act as loyal citizens, either.

Sexuality was a complicated issue that changed over time and was influenced by multiple factors. Heterosexuality, masculinity and motherhood were all important aspects of what determined the right kind of gender and family relations. By the post-war period, homosexuality had been clearly identified as morally wrong. Homosexuals were untrustworthy and morally depraved. Their sexuality made them secretive, irrational, dishonest, and weak. These traits made them dangerous to the well-being of the state. In the United States, the use of homosexuality as a tool of propaganda relied on this idea. If a person was unable to control their urges, they “would inevitably drift into abnormality.”<sup>22</sup> In postwar culture, to be sexually “perverted”—or even to be thought so—was “threatening to middle-class life,” and very damaging to one’s public image.<sup>23</sup> The need for “secrecy that accompanied deviant sexuality resembled a conspiracy sowing hatred against the state; men and women who practiced such vices lacked either moral sense or civic responsibility.”<sup>24</sup> Homosexuality did not fit into the framework of what constituted strong moral character or civic duty in the US, therefore it was dangerous to American national security. By linking defectors to this deviancy, propaganda turned them into dangerous outsiders. However, because in the United States a belief in individualism was strong, it allowed the Soviet Union to tie the American sense of

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<sup>21</sup> Klassen, Williams, Levitt, and O’Gorman, 167.

<sup>22</sup> Mosse, 10.

<sup>23</sup> Mosse, 25.

<sup>24</sup> Mosse, 29.

individualism to the perversions of gender, sexuality and the family. It will be shown that in the Soviet Union, officially at least, the perversions that derived from individualism did not exist.

To show the social superiority of the Soviet Union, the Soviet government worked hard to cultivate the definition of correct gender, sex and family norms, just as the United States did. Officially, all Soviets were dedicated to and working for the betterment of the Soviet collective. If an individual was homosexual, an adulterer, or acted in a manner outside of the official ideology than according to the official definitions they were not an upstanding citizen. Because they were outside the norms according to official ideology, they must be secretive and hide their true individual nature. This made these individuals a threat to the Soviet ideology. Someone who lied and kept personal secrets in order to fulfill their own personal desires, such as homosexual relations or not having a family to further bolster the strength of the Soviet Union, was an enemy to the Soviet Union. Secret personal desires and satisfaction were traits of the West. And by pursuing their own personal satisfaction, disregarding the collective good, made those individuals traitors to the Soviet Union.

Though few studies of Soviet masculinity have been written, Soviet women's history has grown in the last few decades. As Barbara Evans Clements showed in her *History of Russian Women*, gender roles after the Bolshevik Revolution underwent a dramatic shift. Before the establishment of the Soviet Union, as in the United States, Russia adhered to gender norms that limited women's ability to strive for a position

outside of the domestic sphere. Elizabeth Wood argues in *The Baba and the Comrade* that Russian women before the Bolshevik Revolution were traditionally “considered to be illiterate, superstitious, and generally ‘backward,’” which served as the “foil for the ideal of the comrade.”<sup>25</sup> Women were labeled “the reserve army of the revolution, a group to be drawn into the labor pool and into the political struggle when needed and to be dismissed when no longer needed.”<sup>26</sup> Men were seen as far more important in the political realm. Women’s use outside the domestic sphere was based on necessity, not on a belief in gender equality. The gap in equality would need to shrink, and roles be redefined, before the ideal Soviet man and woman became a key part of defector propaganda.

Under Soviet control, the women question was a long lasting, but rarely high priority issue for leaders of the government. Like the bourgeois wife in the West, the expected relationship of women to men in the USSR remained subordinate, and their natural inclinations were domestic. “Like nursing, work in the kitchen was considered ‘natural’ for women.”<sup>27</sup> In constructing the ideal female comrade in revolutionary Russia there was one major difference from America, however. The revolution would get women out of the kitchen or the individual home, because “she should serve in the public cafeterias and other communal facilities,” among many other employment

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<sup>25</sup> Elizabeth A. Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 1.

<sup>26</sup> Wood, 1.

<sup>27</sup> Wood, 62.

opportunities.<sup>28</sup> This need to get women into the national workforce was a result of ideological changes implemented by the Bolshevik party and the post-World War I deficit of men that led to a labor shortage. Women had to adopt a dual function as “workers and as the bearers of future workers.”<sup>29</sup> Soviet women should not serve only in the individual home, directly under a dominant husband: “The socialist woman should still have a strong commitment to marriage and the family, but should also expect to play an important role in economic and social life and have a strongly developed sense of the greater social need.”<sup>30</sup> They still were expected, among others, to maintain the domestic activities such as preparing food. The difference was that it would now be a communal facility that would provide for the new comrades. This was not the only position available to women, but is an example of how potential jobs outside of the home were presented. Following the civil war, Soviet officials recognized that policies had greatly weakened the family. Seeing a need for a more stable family and greater number of children after the population had been devastated, *The Marriage Laws of Soviet Russia* were established to help define a more stable family Soviet family. Even with these changes, Soviet women remained the bearers and upbringers of children, while socialism grafted new qualities onto the female personality and role in society.<sup>31</sup>

Gender roles for men shifted along with women’s roles under Soviet control. The new Soviet masculinity was forged by “voluntary submission to the experiments of the

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<sup>28</sup> Wood, 62.

<sup>29</sup> Attwood, 120.

<sup>30</sup> Attwood, 122.

<sup>31</sup> Attwood, 122.

new Soviet state.”<sup>32</sup> To be a strong man and a good comrade meant one did not avoid his duty, and that he would work for the Soviet cause. The traditional nuclear family had been pushed to the wayside by the rise of the Bolshevik party and the creation of the Soviet Union. Men, instead of defining themselves as a family patriarch, were subservient to the “state’s ideological claim of providing primary control over and care for individuals and the family.”<sup>33</sup> What men were supposed to do was to realize themselves in their work, which would result in having good personal character. At the same time, they were to assist in the furthering of the new regime’s political and ideological goals.<sup>34</sup> Men were to work not for themselves or their families, but for the state. The state, in essence, became the father of the family. Masculinity “became socialised and embodied in the Soviet state, the masculinity of individual men being officially defined by their position in the service of that state.”<sup>35</sup> Women bought into this new definition of masculine roles. During the 1930s, rural women were more receptive to criticisms of the patriarchy, and rejected the old ways more than ever before because of a belief that peasant customs “gave too much power to men and oppressed women.”<sup>36</sup> The changing norms were stripping men of some of their traditional patriarchal duties, exemplifying that “fundamental to the Soviet approach to gender was that the relationship of women and men to the state was to take priority over their private relations with each

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<sup>32</sup> Goscilo, 94.

<sup>33</sup> Helena Goscilo and Andrea Lanoux, *Gender and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Russian Culture* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006), 132.

<sup>34</sup> Goscilo and Lanoux, 132.

<sup>35</sup> Sarah Ashwin, *Gender, State and Society in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2012), 1. <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/cwu/reader.action?docID=5003123> (accessed July 27, 2016).

<sup>36</sup> Barbara Evans Clements, *A History of Women in Russia: From Earliest Times to the Present* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012), 217.

other.”<sup>37</sup> Once the war came, women were encouraged to shame men into serving in World War II. Women “were to tell their loved ones that if they did not go to the front, they would ‘no longer be our husbands and brothers.’”<sup>38</sup> Soviet women were placing the welfare of the USSR above their own or their loved ones. During war, men had to fulfill their duty to the collective by taking up arms and defending the Soviet Union. The changing definition of Soviet masculinity was a difficult situation that the Soviet government had to clarify. By the 1960s, men were encouraged by the government to “instruct their sons in the masculine virtues of diligence, self-control, sobriety, patriotism and athleticism,” while at the same time women were still urged to help with housework.<sup>39</sup> Men were placed in a position subservient to the state, but still maintaining some duties of the father and were to teach young boys to be hard-working members of the collective. The qualities of the new ideal man were applied to the discussion of defectors, showing them to either fulfill or fall short of that ideal.

By World War II, the Soviet state “insistently broadcast” the message that “women were now men’s equals.”<sup>40</sup> But the claims of gender equality were increasingly hollow. There was a renewed emphasis of women as child bearers and minders, practical “ideals of femininity that combined Bolshevik feminism with an updated cult of domesticity.”<sup>41</sup> While Soviet women were being told they had been “freed from the sexist traditions of the past,” they still had to fulfill the role of mothers, and of domestic

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<sup>37</sup> Ashwin, 13.

<sup>38</sup> Wood, 60.

<sup>39</sup> Clements, *A History of Women in Russia: From Earliest Times to the Present*, 275.

<sup>40</sup> Clements, *A History of Women in Russia: From Earliest Times to the Present*, 211.

<sup>41</sup> Clements, *A History of Women in Russia: From Earliest Times to the Present*, 211.

supporters for “male achievement.”<sup>42</sup> This was a different ideal than the Bolsheviks put forth in 1917. The defector propaganda reflected the ideal that depicted women as good comrades when they assumed aspects of traditionally-defined “female” gender roles.

Once Stalin died, the Soviet government instituted new norms to justify the position of women at work and in the home. Soviet women had taken up positions in society they had never been able to before.<sup>43</sup> But even Soviet leaders recognized that women were still not equal to men. Nikita Khrushchev was more sensitive to the issue of women in society. He blamed the sexism that existed in the Party on the state’s inability early on to pay for the required public services.<sup>44</sup> To alleviate some of the pressure, Khrushchev appointed more women to government positions, and even training for female cosmonauts.<sup>45</sup> He also addressed the double burden of work and home. Women “suffered from the double shift,” and as a result of such prejudice, few Soviet women took positions of leadership in the Party.<sup>46</sup> Women were unable to attain positions of power because society maintained their position as the domestic half of a marriage. Women had joined the workforce in higher numbers than ever before, but the majority of domestic work, including raising a family, was still their responsibility. But recognition of the problem did little to change the rhetoric. Soviet officials continued to insist on the blend of formerly masculine and feminine qualities that the Revolution had achieved,

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<sup>42</sup> Clements, *A History of Women in Russia: From Earliest Times to the Present*, 222.

<sup>43</sup> Clements, *A History of Women in Russia: From Earliest Times to the Present*, 253.

<sup>44</sup> Clements, *A History of Women in Russia: From Earliest Times to the Present*, 254.

<sup>45</sup> Clements, *A History of Women in Russia: From Earliest Times to the Present*, 255.

<sup>46</sup> Clements, *A History of Women in Russia: From Earliest Times to the Present*, 254.

“the successful combination of maternal duties and professional work.”<sup>47</sup> Women appeared to buy into the same idea. In Lynne Attwood’s book, *The New Soviet Man and Woman*, “women acknowledge the positive benefits they have derived from working outside the home.”<sup>48</sup>

The article “Man’s Job,” printed in June 1965, presents an opportunity to examine masculine roles that Soviet officials were using as the basis for defector propaganda. The article discussed the work done in Siberia, which was described as very hard. “Here in Siberia it’s a man’s job!” it exclaims.<sup>49</sup> Present in the article is an example of a lullaby sung to a small boy by his mother. The message it conveyed supports the Soviet media proclamation that good hardworking family men lived in the Soviet Union. The lyrics of this lullaby, said to be sung by the fiancée of a Soviet worker to their small boy, provides an example of the Soviet message to the world. “Sleep, my little one, and you’ll grow up to be the man your father is.”<sup>50</sup> This line could simply be telling the child that his father is a good man, but as it goes on, the message of Soviet strength becomes more evident. “You will conquer giants, rescue a princess and discover an unknown land.”<sup>51</sup> At this point in the lullaby, the message to not only the child but to the readers of *Soviet Life* comes into focus. The boy needs to get sleep to be able to be like his father, that is, a man who does the so-called man’s work. Through that man’s work, he will be a good Soviet, and be able to provide for his family and the collective, as his father does.

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<sup>47</sup> Attwood, 123.

<sup>48</sup> Attwood, 121.

<sup>49</sup> “Man’s Job,” *Soviet Life*, June 1965.

<sup>50</sup> “Man’s Job.”

<sup>51</sup> “Man’s Job.”

“You will conquer giants, rescue a princess and discover an unknown land” can be split into three distinct sections that present similar messages to the portrayal of American defectors. The first part, stating that becoming like his father, the boy “will conquer giants.”<sup>52</sup> This lyric shows remarkable similarity to the manner in which defections were presented. Many defectors stated their motivations for defecting, part of which was that the United States was acting recklessly, spying on their allies, and behaving in a manner that could lead to nuclear war.<sup>53</sup> When the lullaby is examined in comparison to statements from defectors, the United States is the giant that the young boy will grow up to conquer. It will take strong Soviet men to overcome the giant that is the evil United States.

The next section of this lyric that mirrors the defection of Americans is the line stating that the boy will also “rescue a princess.”<sup>54</sup> This lyric is clear to see in the Soviet presentation of some American defectors at their news conferences. By fulfilling his duty as a strong Soviet man, the boy would rescue a princess. In essence, the boy will find a good partner, specifically a female partner. For Americans, the message was that they had to come to work hard in the Soviet Union and support Soviets in the struggle against the West. And to support them in that struggle would be a hardworking Soviet woman to fulfil the roles of wife and domestic partner.

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<sup>52</sup> “Man’s Job.”

<sup>53</sup> “2 Missing Americans Now Soviet Citizens: Tell Why They Left Native Land,” *The Age*, September 7, 1960.

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1300&dat=19600907&id=UaYTAAAAIBAJ&sjid=GbADAAAAIBA J&pg=5298,982496&hl=en> (accessed January 7, 2015).

<sup>54</sup> “Man’s Job.”

The article “Man’s Job” was not written directly about American defectors. But the lessons of the lullaby sung to the small child were representative of the gender norms used in the defector propaganda. Only there could the defectors find their own version of the princess from the lullaby, an ideal Soviet woman that fulfilled domestic and patriotic duties, while being able to continue their preferred vocation unmolested by the reckless United States. The lullaby was teaching children that Soviet sexuality and gender roles allowed men to be strong, marry good women, and pursue their passions, all while strengthening the USSR and the communist ideological system that they chose to live under.

“The Role of Children’s Games,” another TASS article written in 1963, shows ideal male and female roles in the USSR. The article compared the type of games played by young boys and girls. Children’s games played an important role in shaping what a good Soviet man and woman should grow into. Men and women needed training as children in specific gender spheres, in order to enter into the greater population of workers and to fulfill their private and public lives in marriages.<sup>55</sup>

The boys’ games centered on activities that had long been associated with masculine duties. The boys were described as “mischievous children” who “were catching spies according to all the rules of war.”<sup>56</sup> A clear link was made between the children’s game and the kind of masculinity depicted by TASS when describing American defectors. The young boys were “imagining themselves to be border guards,”

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<sup>55</sup> “The Role of Children’s Games,” *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Volume XV, No 8, 24.

<sup>56</sup> “The Role of Children’s Games.”

defending the Soviet Union against its aggressive and devious enemy, the United States, and they were playing by the rules.<sup>57</sup> In essence, the boys pictured themselves fulfilling the manly duties prescribed to them by Soviet gender roles, just as defectors to the Soviet Union did: defensive strength, healthy innocence, and honesty. Defectors often claimed the US was acting aggressively towards its enemies, such as providing “money and arms to overthrow foreign governments if it considers these governments unfriendly to the United States.”<sup>58</sup> This is the reason why the Soviet media said it was good that young boys played games where the goal was to defend against spies.<sup>59</sup> Unlike America, they were to strongly defend their homeland in a manner that helped avoid a nuclear war. As the boys were defending the nation, defectors came to the USSR to hinder the aggressive actions of the United States because they believed those actions would inevitably lead to even more destructive nuclear war.<sup>60</sup>

The article also provides understanding of the prescribed roles for Soviet girls. The Soviet family was “more than a structure which gave life shape and form, a wellspring of happiness, and an economic unit; it became a public duty as well.”<sup>61</sup> The typical Soviet girls’ playtime in *The Role of Children’s Games* was described by a mother who wanted to know why young girls played as they did. “A mother returns from work and sees that Tanya and her girlfriend are engaged in ‘playing house.’ They are dressing

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<sup>57</sup> “The Role of Children’s Games.”

<sup>58</sup> “2 Missing Americans Now Soviet Citizens: Tell Why They Left Native Land.”

<sup>59</sup> “The Role of Children’s Games,” 24.

<sup>60</sup> “2 Missing Americans Now Soviet Citizens: Tell Why They Left Native Land.”

<sup>61</sup> Shtern, Mikhail, Shtern, Avgust, Howson, Mark, and Ryan, Cary. *Sex in the USSR*. New York: Times Books, 1980, 37.

dolls, talking with them affectionately and discussing domestic affairs.”<sup>62</sup> This depiction includes multiple aspects of what a Soviet girl should aspire to be. From a young age a Soviet girl should be concerned with domestic affairs, and to exhibit appropriate “dreams and aspirations” as “grown sisters” within the public sphere.<sup>63</sup> The girls were preparing to take on the role of mothers. The boys played as border guards and soldiers, while the girls focused on the domestic issues of running a household. The beginning of the anecdote, however, provides an interesting contrast to the girls playing house, and thereby expressing their dreams and aspirations: “A mother returns from work.”<sup>64</sup> While the bulk of the article revolves around the young girls’ focus on domestic issues, the authors make sure to introduce the grown woman, the mother, as returning from work. Soviet society, beginning in 1917, demanded that women work outside the home. Public work as the key to national success and self-fulfillment had been an important part of Bolshevik ideology from the start.

Soviet ideas about sexuality, briefly shaken up after 1917, settled into fairly static norms by the 1960s. Early Bolshevik leaders wrote about homosexuality, but only peripherally. Aleksandra Kollontai was “particularly famous as an outspoken advocate for women’s emancipation,” and a leader in the Bolshevik party.<sup>65</sup> While promoting a libertarian view of sexuality and acknowledging the value of heterosexual

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<sup>62</sup> “The Role of Children’s Games, Current Digest of the Soviet Press,” 24.

<sup>63</sup> Attwood, 120.

<sup>64</sup> “The Role of Children’s Games,” 24.

<sup>65</sup> Barbara Evans Clements, *Bolshevik Women* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 2.

experimentation, she never addressed homosexuality directly.<sup>66</sup> This trend continued with Vladimir Lenin. The “few sources on Lenin’s views on sex say nothing about same-sex relations.”<sup>67</sup> But what they did say shows that according to the beliefs held by the leaders of the Bolshevik government, homosexuality would be harmful to the construction of the communist state. Those who were homosexual, described by Lenin as those with a personal abnormality in sexual life, should suffer “in silence, while working for the revolution. Indulging in transgressive sexual behavior was ‘really quite bourgeois,’ while seeking the sympathy of middle-class morality was capitulation to the enemy.”<sup>68</sup> From the very beginning, the Soviet strategy was to link homosexuality to the bourgeois individualism of the West, the opposite of Soviet collectivism and patriotism. If one sought out their own personal satisfaction in the form of sexual perversions, it meant they valued the individual over the collective, making them traitors of the Soviet ideology.

Marxism, with its claims to scientific objectivity, also introduced medical definitions for sexuality. To Marxists, sex, “understood as part of untamed nature, was to be channeled toward ‘natural,’ procreative heterosexuality through self-discipline and the inculcation of social responsibility in personal relations.”<sup>69</sup> The purpose of defining what was sexually healthy and unhealthy was to stymy any increase of “perversion,” so there would be no “spread of non-procreative practices.”<sup>70</sup> By defining healthy sexual relationships as those resulting in procreation, the woman’s role was to be a mother.

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<sup>66</sup> Healy, 111.

<sup>67</sup> Healy, 112.

<sup>68</sup> Healy, 113.

<sup>69</sup> Healy, 111.

<sup>70</sup> Healy, 112.

Soviet men who did not adhere to these strict rules of procreation on behalf of the nation were therefore sick, selfish, and alien. Political traitors, such as the defectors, were seen in almost exactly the same way.

In *Homosexual Desire in Revolutionary Russia*, Dan Healy investigated how the Soviet state used the idea of sexual deviancy in the 1920s to undermine its enemies. “Homosexuality as a diagnosis was deployed by scientists in tsarist and Communist Russia.”<sup>71</sup> The belief was spread that homosexuality did not exist in the Communist state the Bolsheviks established. As Healy stated, “Socialism had constructed “hygienic” conditions (economic stability, rational marriage legislation, maternity and childcare support) in which an unproblematic natural heterosexuality could take its course. Sexual perversions. . . had apparently ceased to exist, for socialism had eliminated the wellsprings of satiety, excess, and exploitation of women said to produce such distortions in capitalist societies.”<sup>72</sup> Sexuality was a weapon used to defame defectors and the West, based on the idea that homosexuality, or abnormal sexual behaviors, did not exist in the Soviet Union. Because homosexuality was considered abnormal and wrong, linking it to the West and the economic system of capitalism provided the Soviet Union with an easy opportunity to defame the defectors. Additionally, by proclaiming that homosexuality did not exist in the Soviet Union, it provided the Soviet media a method of presenting American defectors as those who came to the Soviet Union in search of a better, more moral life.

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<sup>71</sup> Healy, 10.

<sup>72</sup> Healy, 2.

The discourse of sexuality in the Soviet Union and the United States created an environment where homosexuality was defined not only as disgusting but also frightening; it threatened the security and integrity of the nation. Plainly the discourse that defined homosexuality as unpatriotic, seditious, and sick was still alive and well at the end of the Cold War. Throughout, both governments and the media forged the public perception of homosexuality into a weapon in the propaganda battle being waged between the two superpowers. As a result, claims of homosexuality were used to publicly discredit any defector who left the nation to seek asylum with the enemy. Defections became advertisements for national morality and health.

For the Soviet Union, defections provided a highly publicized opportunity for upholding the strength, simplicity, and strength of the Soviet man, woman, and family, against the weakness, perversion and sickness of bourgeois capitalism in the United States. Although reached by a different path, similar beliefs about the gender, sexual and family perversions were held by both the American and Soviet people. But the difference in ideologies when it came to the individual and the collective supported the belief of Soviet purity to the point where it was impossible for a Soviet citizen to suffer from such perversions of the West. If a person were to indulge in such actions, they were acting out of their own self-interest and not deferring their own personal interests in favor of the Soviet state, which is how all Soviet men behaved according to official doctrine. An examination of American defectors as presented by Soviet officials from 1960 through

1988 provides a window that shows how Soviet sexual, gender, and family definitions were applied to the American defectors to claim moral superiority over the United States.

### CHAPTER III

#### AMERICAN DEFECTORS

The defection of Americans to the Soviet Union simultaneously presented the Soviet media with an opportunity and a problem. Defections gave them a worldwide platform on which to promote their superiority over the United States. But at the same time the Soviet media had to counter attacks leveled at the defectors by the media in the United States. The defection of William Martin and Bernon Mitchell in 1960 was the first widely reported case of Americans seeking political asylum in the Soviet Union. The main propaganda tactic of the American media was to attack the perceived character qualities of the two defectors by insinuating or flat out stating that they were homosexuals. The Soviet response was not the usual “growls from the Russian bear” described by an American reporter whenever a Soviet diplomat was “caught in a homosexual caper.”<sup>1</sup> Instead, the Soviets propagandized the defection using rhetoric that claimed gender, sexual, and family morality in the USSR was superior to that of the United States. The Soviet Union needed to present itself as the correct and manly choice of a political and social system to the rest of the world during the Cold War. The vision of ideal communist family life they constructed, including healthy sexual and gender roles, was remarkably durable, as propaganda surrounding defectors in later decades showed.

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<sup>1</sup> Jack Anderson, “Diplomatic Digest,” *The Evening News*, September 18, 1981. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1982&dat=19810918&id=RnhGAAAIBAJ&sjid=HCsNAAAAIBA&pg=1188,2173720&hl=en> (accessed April 16, 2016).

In 1960, when William Hamilton Martin and Bernon F. Mitchell defected to the Soviet Union from the United States, both nations employed discourses of gender and sexuality in their propaganda. But the way the two powers used gender, sexual, and family norms differed. The Soviet media had to disprove American claims of the pair's past abnormal sexual behavior. They did so by claiming the defectors had left the United States behind to seek out the "hygienic" moral conditions of the Soviet Union as described by Healy. In the USSR sexual perversions no longer existed. The private lives of Soviet men and women were directed toward the healthy and natural production of workers for the collective nation, and thus had removed or avoided sexual and gender "distortions in capitalist societies."<sup>2</sup>

Martin and Mitchell were employed as cryptologists for the United States National Security Agency. They joined the National Security Agency on the same day in 1957, and three years later defected to the Soviet Union. Testimony given after the defection by J. Vincent Burke Jr., a Defense Department General Counsel, is an example of how American officials and the media emphasized the sexuality of the defectors. Burke worried about what possible information the pair may have defected with, given their "personal habits" and sexuality.<sup>3</sup> It had only been a few years since the Lavender Scare, in which the fear of homosexuals in American government agencies had led to

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<sup>2</sup> Healy, 2

<sup>3</sup> "Briefing Notes Missing: No Evidence Defectors Part of Espionage Ring," *Park City Daily News*, September 15, 1960.  
<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1697&dat=19600915&id=utAdAAAAIABAJ&sjid=2EUEAAAAIABAJ&pg=5722,983709&hl=en> (accessed January 6, 2015).

“efforts to uncover and remove homosexuals from their ranks.”<sup>4</sup> The fear of homosexuals in government positions returned to the forefront of American national security anxieties. Congressional sources reported that “there were indications that at least one of the pair was a sexual deviate.”<sup>5</sup> Burke reported that both had passed security checks, including lie detector tests. But Mitchell had revealed that “before he was 19 he had experimented in abnormal sexual practices.”<sup>6</sup> In 1985 as part of a discussion of defectors, American newspapers went so far as to claim “that Mitchell had sexual experiences with chickens and dogs.”<sup>7</sup> The reporter stated that “NSA security people” were aware of this perversity, but Martin and Mitchell’s security clearance had not been taken away.<sup>8</sup> For many observers, this might have looked like toleration or connivance. But once Martin and Mitchell defected, American officials had to discredit the pair in the eyes of the world. Francis Walter, a Democratic Representative from the state of Pennsylvania, added to the allegations. He charged that “at least one of the two men was a ‘notorious homosexual’ who should have been barred from any government job.”<sup>9</sup> The common mistrust of homosexuals and anyone with a history of abnormal sexual behavior was a key strategy to make Martin and Mitchell appear untrustworthy and un-American.

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<sup>4</sup> Johnson, 98.

<sup>5</sup> “Briefing Notes Missing: No Evidence Defectors Part of Espionage Ring.”

<sup>6</sup> “Briefing Notes Missing: No Evidence Defectors Part of Espionage Ring.”

<sup>7</sup> Alex P. Dobish, “Spying: Risky, Nasty Business,” *The Milwaukee Journal*, June 11, 1985.

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1499&dat=19850611&id=rWoaAAAAIBAJ&sjid=TioEAAAAIBAJ&pg=7194,577413&hl=en> (accessed June 3, 2016).

<sup>8</sup> Dobish, “Spying: Risky, Nasty Business.”

<sup>9</sup> “Public Misled About Defectors, Says Pennsylvania Legislator,” *Lodi News-Sentinel*, September 14, 1960.

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2245&dat=19600914&id=vegzaAAAIBA J&sjid=5O4HAAAAIBA J&pg=7143,5418411&hl=en> (accessed January 7, 2015).

In response to the American attempts to depict the defectors as men who live outside the ideal norms, the Soviet media, on the other hand, put the “two on display under television lights” at a press conference.<sup>10</sup> In this media event, Martin and Mitchell explained their reasons for defecting to the Soviet Union. They stated that their motivation was world peace. American espionage, they believed, would inevitably lead to the outbreak of World War III.<sup>11</sup> They “would attempt to crawl to the moon if we thought it would lessen the threat of an atomic war.”<sup>12</sup> Martin and Mitchell believed that American hostility towards communism arose “out of a feeling of insecurity engendered by Communist achievements in science, culture and industry.”<sup>13</sup> They were convinced this insecurity was a “poor excuse for endangering world peace,” and they would no longer help the US spy on its enemies and allies alike.<sup>14</sup> This initial explanation focused only on the threat of atomic war. Martin and Mitchell painted the US as insecure and hostile. Now Soviet officials used the opportunity to showcase Soviet “hygienic” sexuality as compared to American sexual degeneracy.

Shortly after the first media event with Martin and Mitchell, the American press gathered quotes from individuals who knew the defectors before they joined the NSA.

The purpose was to present the pair as unworldly, nerdy, and weak. Much focus was

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<sup>10</sup> Stanley Johnson, “Russians Parade Missing Code Clerks On TV Show to Blast U.S. Espionage,” *Gettysburg Times*, September 6, 1960.  
<http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2202&dat=19600906&id=TD8mAAAAIBAJ&sjid=3P4FAAAAIBAJ&pg=1043,3772940> (accessed January 7, 2015).

<sup>11</sup> Johnson, “Russians Parade Missing Code Clerks On TV Show to Blast U.S. Espionage.”

<sup>12</sup> Johnson, “Russians Parade Missing Code Clerks On TV Show to Blast U.S. Espionage.”

<sup>13</sup> Johnson, “Russians Parade Missing Code Clerks On TV Show to Blast U.S. Espionage.”

<sup>14</sup> Johnson, “Russians Parade Missing Code Clerks On TV Show to Blast U.S. Espionage.”

given to the men's skills at chess, their disinterest in sports, and their fascination with "statistics, averages, probabilities, the relationships of numbers," activities that did not require the characteristics of a physically strong male.<sup>15</sup> Mitchell was described as politically naïve, and he never was interested in any "difficult" activities.<sup>16</sup> Mitchell was presented as meek and timid in contrast to his older brother, Emery Mitchell, who "was a campus hero, the star fullback on the football team, the 'inspirational leader' on the field."<sup>17</sup> In the US, the message was make Martin and Mitchell to appear weak, lacking strong masculine qualities, and uninterested in the politics of the Cold War, to discredit their justifications for leaving the US.

TASS, or the the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union, was the news agency from which all Soviet media sources got their news. It was the mouthpiece of all official opinion. TASS was prepared to respond to claims about Martin and Mitchell, to take the traits the US media presented as weaknesses and make them into strengths of the morally superior USSR. Not long after the initial media spectacle, the defectors divulged information about their new lives in the USSR. A fact that was reported in many stories written about the pair was that Martin, under fire in America for rumors of abnormal sexual practices, had in Moscow married "a wonderful Soviet girl and excellent

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<sup>15</sup> John McDonald, "No One Ever Understood U.S. Defector to Russians," *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, September 18, 1960.

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1368&dat=19600918&id=2ykxAAAAIBAJ&sjid=MhAEAAAAIBAJ&pg=5660,4298936&hl=en> (accessed June 3, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> McDonald, "No One Ever Understood U.S. Defector to Russians."

<sup>17</sup> McDonald, "No One Ever Understood U.S. Defector to Russians."

housekeeper.”<sup>18</sup> By focusing on Martin’s marriage, the Soviet media hoped to promote the idea that the defectors were morally sound, and fit within healthy Soviet sexual parameters. By describing his new wife as an “excellent housekeeper,” the USSR proclaimed to the rest of the world that the USSR believed women were the domestic half of a heterosexual marriage.<sup>19</sup> Martin, the man in the relationship, stated that he, along with his wife and Mitchell, planned to “devote themselves to ‘peaceful, scientific work.’”<sup>20</sup> His new wife, in joining him in scientific work, neatly met Soviet definitions of the second half of women’s double burden, as part of the nation’s workforce, in addition to her role as domestic housekeeper. In this brief statement, she was held up as the Soviet women of the 1950s and ‘60s, who, as Barbara Evans Clements described “First Lady” Nina Khrushcheva and astronaut Valentina Tereshkova, “exemplified Soviet gender ideals that valorized both homemaking and breaking down gender barriers.”<sup>21</sup>

This focus on moral respectability, honesty, and working for the public good continued in further TASS reports. Martin and Mitchell were described as believing that the Soviet Union was more honest and socially responsible than the U.S., and did not practice activities that would in their estimation lead to atomic war.<sup>22</sup> They stated that the United States was spying on enemies and allies alike, including Turkey, France, Italy,

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<sup>18</sup> “American Traitors Say U.S. is Continuing Subversive Activity,” *The Dispatch*, December 17, 1960. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1734&dat=19601217&id=GzUgAAAAIBAJ&sjid=X1EEAAAAIBAJ&pg=1500,2844087&hl=en> (accessed January 8, 2015).

<sup>19</sup> “American Traitors Say U.S. is Continuing Subversive Activity.”

<sup>20</sup> “American Traitors Say U.S. is Continuing Subversive Activity.”

<sup>21</sup> Clements, *A History of Women in Russia: From Earliest Times to the Present*, 256.

<sup>22</sup> “2 Missing Americans Now Soviet Citizens: Tell Why They Left Native Land.”

Yugoslavia, Indonesia, among others.<sup>23</sup> Martin and Mitchell were portrayed as honest and responsible, hoping to live respectable lives in the USSR, in contrast to the immoral and reckless US. TASS stated that the “Soviet government had allowed them to choose where they wanted to live and promised to help them learn Russian, continue their studies, and receive employment in the field of mathematics.”<sup>24</sup> To the public, this stated that Martin and Mitchell adhered to the discourse of masculinity. They would not become freeloaders, but instead they would continue to work in their field, living and working to support the Soviet Union. For its part, the USSR would do what it did for all of its good citizens: help them to achieve their straightforward and respectable lifestyle.

It is remarkable that there was little expressed interest in whatever sensitive information Martin and Mitchell may have had. Instead, the worldwide media event allowed the Soviet media to say that the USSR was the superior place to live, in the minds of these two mathematicians. It was a place to continue their work, earn a reasonable wage, and fulfill their appropriate role as husbands and citizens. The focus on Martin and Mitchell in Soviet propaganda shows the importance of the statement made by Nicolas O’Shaughnessy, that a political issue is more than a singular issue to discuss, it can also be a symbol of value for individuals’ sense of identity.<sup>25</sup> The two men were presented as symbols of the superior life provided by the Soviet Union. Because of the manner in which the Soviet media presented the pair of defectors, the conversation about them became farther reaching than simply the political issue of two Americans defecting

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<sup>23</sup> “2 Missing Americans Now Soviet Citizens: Tell Why They Left Native Land.”

<sup>24</sup> “2 Missing Americans Now Soviet Citizens: Tell Why They Left Native Land.”

<sup>25</sup> O’Shaughnessy, 158.

to the USSR. They became the “vibrant value symbol” that promoted Soviet sexual, gender, and family norms and blackened devious actions and perverted suspicions in the US. Even when Martin was asked why he believed the US was so dangerous, the Soviet interviewer made sure to mention again that he married a Soviet woman. While Martin discussed the presidential election and the influence of “what he called the suicidal course of Washington’s foreign policy,” he also disclosed that “he had married a Soviet woman.”<sup>26</sup> The equal billing given to both topics reinforced that the Cold War was about more than geopolitics.

The Soviet media was accustomed to promoting its vision of morally correct sexual behavior and gender roles abroad. The TASS article “Manners and Morals,” published in 1963, camouflaged these ideals in an advice column. The advice given to a reader asking about marital trouble openly touted the idea of the Soviet family as the foundation of the morally righteous Soviet people, just as the press conference for Martin and Mitchell showed how they became good, contributing members of that same society.<sup>27</sup> It was important that Martin and Mitchell became Soviet citizens but also part of the Soviet family, which played “a crucial role in their struggle against capitalism and toward a better life.”<sup>28</sup> Only through the monogamous family could a couple contribute to the success of the USSR, and therefore be happy. “As the true unit of society, our Soviet

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<sup>26</sup> “U.S. Defector Sees More Yank Spying,” *The Spokesman Review*, December 20, 1960. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1314&dat=19601220&id=ADRWAAAIBAJ&sjid=zucDAAAIBA J&pg=6504,1591449&hl=en> (accessed January 7, 2015).

<sup>27</sup> “Manners and Morals,” *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Volume XV, No 3, 34.

<sup>28</sup> Jean Bethke Elshtain, *The Family in Political Thought* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982), 222.

family also bears, or in any case should also bear, within itself the moral foundations of that society—humanism, equality and kindness.”<sup>29</sup> Martin’s marriage showed that he shared Soviet ideals of humanism, equality and kindness, too.

The article hinted at the fate of those who did not subscribe to these sexual, gender, and family ideals: “It happens sometimes that society intervenes directly in the private life of some family if its way of life and aspirations conflict with public interests and norms. In such a case society has a right to treat the family as it would treat any of its cells that was ‘diseased.’”<sup>30</sup> Martin and Mitchell, happily married in the USSR, evidently left such “disease” behind in the US, or so the press conference would have the world believe. If they had not, the Soviet media would not repeatedly and forcefully insist that Martin had married an appropriate Soviet woman.<sup>31</sup> Two further extensions of this strategy are possible. On the one hand, the Soviet press hoped to declare that Martin and Mitchell could not possibly be homosexuals or even have experimented with their sexuality, as claimed by United States security officials; on the other hand, the healthy communist environment may have cured them of any American sexual sickness. It was only in the healthy environment of the Soviet Union that either of them could find wives, pursue their careers, and work for the betterment of humankind. The Soviet government, since the time of Lenin, had long proclaimed that homosexuality, among other immoral

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<sup>29</sup> “Manners and Morals,” 34.

<sup>30</sup> “Manners and Morals,” 34-35.

<sup>31</sup> “American Traitors Says U.S. is Continuing Subversive Activity.”

activities, “no longer exists in the Soviet Union.”<sup>32</sup> The destruction of capitalist exploitation got rid of its excesses, too. In essence, Martin and Mitchell chose the family model that contained “within itself the moral foundations” of a better society.<sup>33</sup>

The Russian woman whom Martin married was not yet a mother, or if she was it was not made public knowledge. But she would maintain a position as the domestic housekeeper, even while assisting in scientific work.<sup>34</sup> In their first public statement, Martin Mitchell noted that “Talents of women are encouraged and utilized to a much greater extent in the Soviet Union than in the United States.”<sup>35</sup> The propaganda value of the statement was that the Soviet Union was a better place, not just for two good men who were out of place in aggressive and corrupt America, but for women in general. Martin and Mitchell stated that they felt “this enriches Soviet society and makes Soviet women more desirable as mates.”<sup>36</sup>

Almost immediately, American journalists used this quote in particular to attack the sexuality and respectability of the pair. One American response to claims that Soviet women were more desirable as mates insinuated that the pair are homosexuals, since it was “perhaps unlikely the two defectors have a personal interest in finding mates” in the

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<sup>32</sup> “Anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, April 3, 1964.  
<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1301&dat=19640403&id=DXtWAAAAIBAJ&sjid=z-UDAAAIAIBAJ&pg=7209,377083&hl=en> (accessed, April 16, 2016).

<sup>33</sup> “Manners and Morals,” 34.

<sup>34</sup> “American Traitors Say U.S. is Continuing Subversive Activity.”

<sup>35</sup> Johnson, “Russians Parade Missing Code Clerks On TV Show to Blast U.S. Espionage.”

<sup>36</sup> Johnson, “Russians Parade Missing Code Clerks On TV Show to Blast U.S. Espionage.”

USSR.<sup>37</sup> In this way, the American media explained away political criticism and treason by suggesting that Martin and Mitchell were alien to the American body politic anyway, because of their unnatural sexual lives. The Soviet media, on the other hand, gained an opportunity to show the world that the Soviet system was the only place that heterosexual men and women who worked honestly and openly together for the betterment and enrichment of their society could flourish. The United States could not claim this, given American insecurity, aggression, and sneakiness, as well as its corrupt and selfish individualism.<sup>38</sup>

A few years after the first public statements given by Martin and Mitchell, an article published in the April 1965 edition of *Soviet Life* provided additional support for Soviet claims of sexual health. The article, "Love, Sex, The Young Family," stated that sex was not the "only basis of a family relationship."<sup>39</sup> It was "equally absurd to deny that sex has always been at the foundation of family relations, of the relations between man and woman in general."<sup>40</sup> The Soviet Union was not sexless: it was the home of morally correct sexuality: heterosexual, hardworking, and patriotic. The family was the natural institution for "the striving of our people to acquire for themselves and instill in

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<sup>37</sup> Joy Miller, "Russian Women: Do They Make Better Wives?," *Daytona Beach Morning Journal*, September 14, 1960.

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1873&dat=19600914&id=f4keAAAAIBAJ&sjid=rswEAAAAIBAJ&pg=901,2046989&hl=en> (accessed June 3, 2016).

<sup>38</sup> Johnson, "Russians Parade Missing Code Clerks On TV Show to Blast U.S. Espionage."

<sup>39</sup> "Love, Sex, The Young Family," *Soviet Life*, April, 1965.

<sup>40</sup> "Love, Sex, The Young Family."

others the values of communist morality and psychology.”<sup>41</sup> Martin, through his marriage and rebirth as a Soviet citizen, was the product of that uplifting message.

Official Soviet definitions of appropriate sexual, gender, and family roles changed very little until the collapse in the 1990s. Twenty-two years after the Soviet media presented the defectors Martin and Mitchell to the public, an article was printed in the January 1982 issue of *Soviet Life* that discussed what boys and girls desired their future mates to be like. The article, “A Dream Image,” espoused the same qualities that the Soviet media had portrayed in Martin and Mitchell’s time. Boys were looking for the same type of mate whom Martin had found only after he had defected to the Soviet Union, one who possessed “kindness,” “compassion,” “understanding,” and “the ability to be a good friend.”<sup>42</sup> The boys believed “a wife is a friend who understands a man’s creature aspirations, the ups and downs of his job and his relationships with people at work.” In other words, women were to be supportive and nurturing in their relationships with men, but also capable of understanding the problems of work outside the home.<sup>43</sup> Appearance was not the most important attribute, according to the article’s author. Instead, the “first thing that struck me was that looks, if they were mentioned at all, did not come first in order of importance.”<sup>44</sup> Instead, the attributes that “came first were moral and ethical qualities.”<sup>45</sup> This told the readers of *Soviet Life* what even the youngest children aspired to be, and whom they hoped to marry, to achieve what the defectors

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<sup>41</sup> “Love, Sex, The Young Family.”

<sup>42</sup> “A Dream Image,” *Soviet Life*, January 1982.

<sup>43</sup> “A Dream Image.”

<sup>44</sup> “A Dream Image.”

<sup>45</sup> “A Dream Image.”

Martin and Mitchell had and to reject what they left behind in America. According to “A Dream Life,” the girls’ ideal mates were “hard-working,” and they possessed a “love of learning, purposefulness and respect for others.”<sup>46</sup> Even though Martin and Mitchell’s defection and the media storm that formed around them had occurred twenty-five years earlier, the Soviet media was still spreading the same message to the rest of the world. The Soviet Union was the home to good, honest, hardworking and peace-loving men and their similarly hardworking, nurturing, and understanding wives. By contrast, the United States continued to be an environment that produced self-interested, immoral and lazy individuals bent on war.

The family roles portrayed in “A Dream Image” were also evident in the media coverage of defections in the late 1980s. Arnold Lockshin was an “American chemist given political asylum in the Soviet Union” in 1986.<sup>47</sup> He explained his defection was “because his opposition to some U.S. policies made him a target of a persecution campaign ‘organized by some political police.’”<sup>48</sup> Lockshin claimed that his openly socialist political views resulted in official harassment, including the loss of his job. This was contrary to official American claims that he was fired from his job as a cancer researcher because of poor performance. In either case, TASS pushed the story that he was an extremely intelligent man who fled the United States in search of a free life.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> “A Dream Image.”

<sup>47</sup> Jack Redden, “Moscow Gives U.S. Family Political Asylum,” *Mohave Daily Miner*, October 7, 1986. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=943&dat=19861007&id=wjFTAAAAIBAJ&sjid=aIMDAAAIBAJ&pg=5665,3808440&hl=en> (accessed March 15, 2015).

<sup>48</sup> Redden, “Moscow Gives U.S. Family Political Asylum.”

<sup>49</sup> Redden, “Moscow Gives U.S. Family Political Asylum.”

Once again, the defection had to do with competing Soviet and American family morality. Lockshin sought asylum for his family in the USSR because he “thought this was a place where we could raise our children without harassment, where I would be able to work.”<sup>50</sup> Just as in the children’s description of an ideal Soviet mate, Lockshin was presented as hardworking, learned, purposeful, and respectful family man. Lockshin’s rationale for defecting was similar to that of Martin and Mitchell: in the Soviet Union “his family will be able to lead ‘a normal, productive life.’”<sup>51</sup> The American media commented that on the Lockshin defection, Soviet “publicity was similar to that given to Americans who defected in the 1960s.”<sup>52</sup> Lockshin wished to continue to work in peace, a desire that all defectors to the USSR were said to possess. Lockshin even asserted that Andrei Gromyko, president of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, had personally “assured him he can continue his scientific work in Moscow.”<sup>53</sup>

Lockshin’s comments, publicized by Soviet propagandists, focused heavily on his family and the claims of harassment they had to endure while they lived in the United States. It was another example of a good family who could not live and work at peace in the US. Only the USSR offered peaceful refuge for work and home life. Lockshin

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<sup>50</sup> Alison Smale, “Researcher Claims Harassment Prompted Defection,” *The Free Lance-Star*, October 9, 1986.

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1298&dat=19861009&id=A4QwAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=YosDAAAAIBA J&pg=7322,1564685&hl=en> (accessed March 15, 2015).

<sup>51</sup> Smale, “Researcher Claims Harassment Prompted Defection.”

<sup>52</sup> Smale, “Researcher Claims Harassment Prompted Defection.”

<sup>53</sup> “Defecting Scientist Says CIA Harassed,” *Gadsden Times*, October 11, 1986.

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1891&dat=19861011&id=b7UfAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=VtcEAAAAIIBAJ &pg=3007,2092042&hl=en> (accessed March 15, 2015).

referred to his wife and himself as “doting parents.”<sup>54</sup> He expressed deep concern for his wife, who was subject to the “worst harassment.” She received “‘obscene, provocative and life-threatening phone calls’ and was accosted by a man with a weapon.”<sup>55</sup> The purpose of these statements was to emphasize that in the US, respectable, right-thinking families were not safe. Such lack of safety was the cause of Lockshin’s defection to the Soviet Union, not because, as Lockshin’s father theorized, “he must be mentally disturbed.”<sup>56</sup> Lockshin had “positive impressions” of the Soviet Union and believed it to be a safe and supportive place to raise his family, not the totalitarian nightmare “portrayed by the U.S. press.”<sup>57</sup> Unlike the average American citizen, Lockshin stood by his righteous beliefs, shown by his openly socialist political views, and took the drastic measure of defection to protect his family from suffering at the hands of the corrupt West.

Not all defectors matched the ideal of family harmony that Soviet officials wanted to broadcast. If the defectors fell short, the Soviet Union did not hesitate to cut them loose once their usefulness ended. In spring 1987, US Army Private Wade E. Roberts deserted his post in West Germany and fled to Russia with his West German girlfriend, Petra Neuman. The AP reported that he was the first American serviceman to defect since

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<sup>54</sup> “American Defector Claims He was Persecuted,” *Ottawa Citizen*, October 11, 1986. [https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2194&dat=19861011&id=\\_e4yAAAAIBAJ&sjid=ie8FAAAAIBAJ&pg=1260,97714&hl=en](https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2194&dat=19861011&id=_e4yAAAAIBAJ&sjid=ie8FAAAAIBAJ&pg=1260,97714&hl=en) (accessed March 15, 2015).

<sup>55</sup> “American Defector Claims He was Persecuted.”

<sup>56</sup> “American Defector Claims He was Persecuted.”

<sup>57</sup> “American Defector Claims He was Persecuted.”

the Vietnam War.<sup>58</sup> Although the Berlin Wall was soon to fall, the Soviet Union was still using the defection of Americans to broadcast the Soviet sexual, gender, and family ideals to the rest of the world. In August TASS published an interview to showcase how much Roberts and his new wife enjoyed their life in the Soviet Union. Roberts said that he and Neumann were “perhaps the happiest people on earth” after their nuptials.<sup>59</sup> To top off the announcement of their marriage, TASS added that the couple was expecting a baby.<sup>60</sup> Roberts expressed his happiness that their “new friends” joined them to celebrate.<sup>61</sup> The couple’s new Soviet friends seemed to celebrate the couple’s rebirth as Soviet citizens, too.

What the initial reports of Roberts and his new bride failed to mention was that Neumann was already married to a West German man when the couple defected.<sup>62</sup> The Soviet propaganda could not mention that the defectors were actually destroying a marriage in order to create a new one. That would have contradicted the message of the ideal Soviet gender and sexuality norms. This information was made public only after Roberts became disillusioned with the Soviet way of life. He sought an interview with Western reporters with “at least the tacit consent of the Soviet authorities.”<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> “U.S. Soldier Who Defected Weds,” *Gasden Times*, August 9, 1987.

[https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1891&dat=19870809&id=ZABHAAAAIBAJ&sjid=\\_v0MAAAAIBA J&pg=2150,1425916&hl=en](https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1891&dat=19870809&id=ZABHAAAAIBAJ&sjid=_v0MAAAAIBA J&pg=2150,1425916&hl=en) (accessed January 12, 2015).

<sup>59</sup> “U.S. Soldier Who Defected Weds.”

<sup>60</sup> “U.S. Soldier Who Defected Weds.”

<sup>61</sup> “U.S. Soldier Who Defected Weds.”

<sup>62</sup> Phillip Taubman, “G.I. Defector Disillusioned With Soviet,” *The New York Times*, October 15, 1987.

<http://www.nytimes.com/1987/10/15/world/gi-defector-disillusioned-with-soviet.html> (accessed July 3, 2016).

<sup>63</sup> Taubman, “G.I. Defector Disillusioned With Soviet.”

Soviet officials let Roberts go because they had no further need of him, either as a source of intelligence or a symbol of Soviet virtuous family life. He was only a private in the army when he defected, and he claimed that he had been unable or unwilling to divulge what military secrets he knew to Soviet authorities.<sup>64</sup> Instead of continuing to use him as an example of a morally reformed American, they now allowed him to speak to the media. He sought a return to the West, where infidelity and divorce were the accepted norm. In both Roberts' defection and in his desire to return to the US, the Soviet authorities gained another high profile event to express the superiority of the Soviet Union's gender and family norms. When Roberts returned to America the following year, he was convicted by court martial of "having been absent without leave, but was cleared of the more serious charge of desertion."<sup>65</sup> This outcome fit right within the narrative that the Soviets had been spreading throughout the length of the Cold War. The United States was far more accepting of immoral family behavior.

Defectors were used to explain the superiority of the Soviet Union in comparison to the United States. Always present in the Soviet discussion of American defectors were the details of the defectors' lives that cast a bright light on sexuality and gender within the Soviet Union. Men in the Soviet Union, living within a socially and morally superior communist system, naturally followed their professional dreams and worked in their chosen field to promote domestic prosperity and international peace. Wives had the

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<sup>64</sup> Taubman, "G.I. Defector Disillusioned With Soviet."

<sup>65</sup> "G.I. Who Fled to Soviet Escapes Prison Term," *The New York Times*, February 26, 1988. <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/02/26/us/gi-who-fled-to-soviet-escapes-prison-term.html> (accessed July 3, 2016).

ability to express their dreams and aspirations in the home, as well as the workforce. The Soviet media presentation did not simply say to the world that they had gained defectors who held valuable American secrets essential to victory in the Cold War. Instead, defections highlighted the message that the Soviet Union was superior in every way of life, that men and women were happier and more fulfilled by a life that adhered to Soviet norms of sexuality and gender.

Once American defectors had served their purpose of highlighting the superior life of the Soviet Union, they disappeared from public view. After Soviet propaganda was finished parading Martin and Mitchell around, the two men were rarely heard from again. Once the cameras were off them, the pair found that, in reality, life was not the same as depicted in the propaganda they were used to spread. In 1965, Mitchell met with Dr. Claude Shannon, an American, after Shannon gave a lecture at the Electro Technical Institute in Leningrad. Shannon came away from the meeting with the impression that “Mitchell was not happy with his life in the Soviet Union.”<sup>66</sup> In 1968, Martin requested help from a Canadian press correspondent, hoping for permission to meet his parents in Vancouver. After meeting with Martin, the Canadian correspondent, William Buckley, commented that he “didn’t really know what to make of Martin, who was rather outspoken in his discussion of the shortcomings of life in the USSR.”<sup>67</sup> Once the Soviets decided the defectors were no longer useful, the defectors were pushed to the wayside.

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<sup>66</sup> United States Government, National Security Agency, Document ID 3094643, *Memorandum*, June 19, 1978, 13. <http://documents.theblackvault.com/documents/nsa/75791A.pdf> (accessed July 27, 2016).

<sup>67</sup> United States Government, National Security Agency, Document ID 3094643, *Memorandum*, 13.

But what life was actually like for the average Soviet was unimportant, only the message of superior morality that existed in the Soviet Union.

## CHAPTER IV

### SOVIET DEFECTORS

The USSR touted “the perfect Communist family, based on the twin principles of labor and duty to the motherland, its children educated ‘in the Communist spirit’ (as Lenin put it), renouncing all self-interest and individual emotion for the sake of the ‘collective good.’”<sup>1</sup> Soviet rhetoric promoting American defectors and the ideal Soviet family was also employed when a Soviet citizen defected to the United States. Soviet officials and the media consistently claimed that the defectors had been coerced, forced, or kidnapped, to suggest that no right-thinking, rational person could leave the Soviet Union of his own free will. The target of these accusations was the CIA. When the Soviet press provided more detailed depictions of the defections by Soviets, sexuality and gender discourses once again became visible. In the cases that follow, the official Soviet explanation for Soviet defection was that the CIA forced the defectors into extramarital sexual relations to induce them to defect.

Soviet defections took two forms. The first type of defector left for the United States for good; others defected, only to return, or wish to return, to the USSR. Both types were fodder for the Soviet propaganda machine about the moral superiority of the Soviet family, and the consequent sexual abnormality, corrupt family, and decadent morals of the United States. Soviet defectors were the mirror image of Soviet propaganda pointing to the defection of Americans such as Martin and Mitchell, who rationally chose

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<sup>1</sup> Shtern, 45.

to defect to the Soviet Union in order to finally live in a place that promoted peace and healthy family life. It had to be clear, however, that Soviet defectors would not willingly have turned their backs on the communist paradise. Instead such defectors had been coerced and rendered incapable of making rational decisions. The only rational decision was, of course, to make their way back to the moral purity and “hygienic” social conditions of the Soviet Union. If the defector chose not to return, that was a sign that he was morally rotten and belonged in the United States anyway.

When Yuri Nosenko defected to the United States in 1964, he had been a member of the KGB for years, lately spying for the US. He claimed his defection was motivated by his desire for the Western way of life. More specifically, he needed ready cash to repay the KGB after spending a night in Geneva with a bottle of vodka and a prostitute.<sup>2</sup> In America, “authoritative sources” described Nosenko as a very important acquisition for the US, a high-level KGB operative who possessed top secret information on Soviet nuclear arms and production, as well as Soviet strategy and defensive plans.<sup>3</sup> Possession of this information was important at the time, since Nosenko was in Geneva as part of the Soviet delegation attending a 17-nation disarmament conference. According to American sources, his defection had been planned for an extended period of time.<sup>4</sup> However, as time passed, American officials released more information that in actuality he was not so

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<sup>2</sup> David Stout, “Yuri Nosenko, Soviet Spy Who Defected, Dies at 81,” *The New York Times*, August 17, 2008. [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/28/us/28nosenko.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/28/us/28nosenko.html?_r=0) (accessed January 7, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> UPI, “Soviet Defector Knows Top Secrets, Is Claims,” *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, February 11, 1964. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1338&dat=19640211&id=TFpYAAAAIBAJ&sjid=bPcDAAAAIBAJ&pg=1905,2395251&hl=en> (accessed July 2, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> “Soviet Defector Knows Top Secrets, Is Claims.”

high ranking as originally claimed, and that he was not an expert on Soviet nuclear plans. Instead, sources claimed, he passed information to his American handlers about “Soviet agents who had penetrated American and European embassies” and planted microphones. Further, he had gone over the KGB file on Lee Harvey Oswald and revealed that Oswald was not associated with the KGB. Oswald, he said, had been deemed too “unstable and unfit for espionage work.”<sup>5</sup> Although Nosenko was a KGB officer, he was not the Soviet nuclear expert that the US led people to believe.

In 1964, it was critical to make Nosenko look like a major intelligence win for the US. As the spin took shape, Nosenko was a nuclear expert who defected in the middle of a key disarmament conference. The defection would make it seem as though the US held the upper hand in the talks. More than this, if the US received secret intelligence from Nosenko, it might be able to push the disarmament conference in the direction of its own goals. The Soviet Union could not allow the US such a large intelligence victory, either in perception or reality. Soviet officials turned to the media to once again claim the moral high ground during the Cold War.

The first Soviet statements to acknowledge the apparent defection of Nosenko were short, and avoided being too inflammatory. But this changed from one day to the next. On February 15, 1964, the Associated Press reported that Nosenko had been moved to Washington D.C. after Soviet and Swiss embassy representatives interviewed him in

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<sup>5</sup> Stout, “Yuri Nosenko, Soviet Spy Who Defected, Dies at 81.”

Geneva.<sup>6</sup> In these interviews Nosenko “reconfirmed his desire for asylum.”<sup>7</sup> The AP also reported, however, the Soviet Foreign Minister’s “stiff oral protest” against “improper behavior” on the part of the US.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the AP release continued, “the Russians have not accused the United States of kidnapping and have not threatened to pull out of the disarmament conference at Geneva.”<sup>9</sup> At this early point there was no mention from Soviet officials about Nosenko’s sexual habits, and even the accusations against the US were mundane. Still, the Soviets were building the groundwork for a harsher response once it became clear that Nosenko did not intend to return to the USSR.

The next day, the United Press International reported that the Soviets were using Nosenko as part of their negotiation tactics at the disarmament talks, “as a means to confuse the West and ‘keep the pot boiling.’”<sup>10</sup> Sources reported that the Soviets were using the Nosenko’s defection as the basis for a threat to boycott of the disarmament talks.<sup>11</sup> Now there were no vague Soviet claims that the US acted inappropriately in the defection. Instead, sources reported a “Russian charge that the United States had kidnapped the 36-year-old intelligence agent.”<sup>12</sup> Evidently, however, the CIA did not actually trust Nosenko. As a result he was placed in solitary confinement for three years

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<sup>6</sup> Lewis Gulick, “Russian Defector Given Asylum, But U.S. Discloses Few Details,” *The Free-Lance Star*, February 15, 1964. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1298&dat=19640215&id=m-xNAAAIAIAJ&sjid=l4oDAAAIAIAJ&pg=5805,3348310&hl=en> (accessed July 2, 2016).

<sup>7</sup> Gulick, “Russian Defector Given Asylum, But U.S. Discloses Few Details.”

<sup>8</sup> Gulick, “Russian Defector Given Asylum, But U.S. Discloses Few Details.”

<sup>9</sup> Gulick, “Russian Defector Given Asylum, But U.S. Discloses Few Details.”

<sup>10</sup> United Press International, “Reds Use Nosenko Case to Confuse Geneva Talks,” *Star News*, February 16, 1964.

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1454&dat=19640216&id=8kNjAAAAIAIAJ&sjid=OXQNAAAIAIAJ&pg=848,2416780&hl=en> (accessed July 2, 2016).

<sup>11</sup> “Reds Use Nosenko Case to Confuse Geneva Talk.”

<sup>12</sup> “Reds Use Nosenko Case to Confuse Geneva Talk.”

“in a concrete vault with little food, suffered mental harassment.” An unnamed CIA official believed him to be a “prime candidate” for being “driven ‘to the looney bin.’”<sup>13</sup>

Nosenko was not thrust into the public eye by the US as other defectors were, so the Soviet Union used his defection to throw the talks in Geneva off balance. As was later public knowledge, the reason Nosenko gave for his defection was that he owed money to pay for a drinking binge with a prostitute. In this case, Soviet officials did not even have to make claims of immoral behavior, because the American press reported it on their own. Nosenko had engaged in immoral behavior and sexual relations with a prostitute, and the United States loaned him the money to cover his indiscretion. Whether Nosenko defected because he was kidnapped or because he sought out Western immoral sexual habits, he ended up in the United States. Once the CIA determined he was not a KGB plant, he received an informal apology for his imprisonment.<sup>14</sup> If the US kidnapped Nosenko, it seemed as if the US was no better than a criminal. If Americans accepted his dissolute behavior, then the Soviet Union could again point to the US as the home of sexual deviancy.

When Soviet pilot Viktor Belenko defected to the United States in 1976, it was a major victory for America during the Cold War. Belenko abandoned his squadron during training exercises and flew his top-secret MiG-25 “Foxbat” interceptor to a Japanese

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<sup>13</sup> “Helms: Warren Commission Should Have Known of Anti-Castro Plots,” *Star-News*, September 23, 1978. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1454&dat=19780923&id=YbssAAAAIBAJ&sjid=LRMEAAAAIBAJ&pg=7189,4651072&hl=en> (accessed July 2, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> Stout, “Yuri Nosenko, Soviet Spy Who Defected, Dies at 81.”

airfield.<sup>15</sup> Belenko asked for asylum in the United States. He was quickly granted asylum, since he represented a rare opportunity for the US to examine the most advanced fighter jet in the Soviet military. Belenko became a US citizen and worked as a consultant and as an aerospace engineer.

For Soviet propagandists, Belenko's defection was difficult. They had to tell a story explaining why a pilot of their most advanced jet fighter would leave the Soviet Union behind, and seek asylum in the West. As a pilot, he was considered as one of the best and brightest the Soviets had to offer, and he enjoyed a higher standard of living than most Russians. As such, Soviet officials fell back on their most consistent explanation for defection: drugging and kidnapping. The AP reported, "Soviet Embassy officials maintain Belenko was forced to make an emergency landing at Hakodate and had no intention of seeking political asylum in the United States."<sup>16</sup> Officials attempted to call into question why he would want to defect, "citing his high standard of living as a MIG fighter pilot and his membership in the Communist party."<sup>17</sup> Beyond accusations of coercion, the Soviets made public a letter from Belenko's wife. In it, she told him to find the strength to return home to her, their child, and the Soviet Union.<sup>18</sup> In her letter, Belenko's wife expressed disbelief that he would "let people consider us the wife and son

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<sup>15</sup> "Spies Convinced Pilot to Defect," *Reading Eagle*, May 11, 1981.

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1955&dat=19810511&id=w90hAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=56AFAAAAIIBAJ&pg=6185,87401> (accessed February 2, 2015).

<sup>16</sup> "Letter Begs Soviet Pilot to Return Home," *Lawrence-Journal World*, September 11, 1976.

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2199&dat=19760911&id=47YrAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=A-YFAAAIIBAJ&pg=6728,1581442&hl=en> (accessed February 2, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> "Letter Begs Soviet Pilot to Return Home."

<sup>18</sup> "Letter Begs Soviet Pilot to Return Home."

of a traitor.”<sup>19</sup> In the minds of Soviets, Belenko had been a prime example of the good Soviet family man. He was a Communist party member, a talented pilot, a good husband and father. He could not have defected; he had to have been the victim of anti-Soviet activities carried out by the US. How could he abandon his family and his nation?

In October 1976, Peter Osnos, a journalist stationed in Moscow, presented his interpretation of the message Soviet officials had been spreading since the defection of Belenko. Osnos examined why Belenko was still being described by Soviet officials as an honorable man, whereas other Soviet defectors were “pilloried for excessive vanity.”<sup>20</sup> Osnos stated that the honor of Belenko was not attacked because he was not a dancer or athlete, like many defectors before and after him. Instead, Osnos noted, a Soviet journalist declared that Belenko was “one of our very best people, a pilot in the air force, entrusted to fly a top secret plane. We are a patriotic country and it was incredible that he could do such a thing. A sensation.”<sup>21</sup> It was unacceptable in the minds of Soviet citizens that Belenko had behaved in such a traitorous fashion. Soviet officials claimed the defection was the foul work of Japan and the US, Belenko had not meant to land his jet on a Japanese airfield.<sup>22</sup> Instead, the official Soviet story also maintained “that Belenko had been drugged” for almost a month after his defection.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> “Letter Begs Soviet Pilot to Return Home.”

<sup>20</sup> Peter Osnos, “Defection of Soviet Pilot Poses Dilemma for Officials,” *The Spokesman-Review*, October 1, 1976.

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1314&dat=19761001&id=DvQjAAAAIbAJ&sjid=nu0DAAAAIbAJ&pg=5187,68737&hl=en> (accessed February 2, 2015).

<sup>21</sup> Osnos, “Defection of Soviet Pilot Poses Dilemma for Officials.”

<sup>22</sup> Osnos, “Defection of Soviet Pilot Poses Dilemma for Officials.”

<sup>23</sup> Osnos, “Defection of Soviet Pilot Poses Dilemma for Officials.”

This explanation once again painted the US as an immoral and evil threat to good and honest Soviets. Not even a shining example and trusted pilot was safe from the clutches of the decadent West. While discussing the defections of Belenko and chess grandmaster Viktor Korchnoi, Osnos states that the defection of Korchnoi, although embarrassing to the Soviets, was not nearly as damaging as the defection of Belenko. While Korchnoi may have been a well-known chess master, Belenko had “fled with a head full of military secrets... and the Kremlin is clearly desperate to have him back. Hence the sweet talk... and the display the other day of his weeping wife and mother.”<sup>24</sup> But Osnos’ interpretation of the Soviet reaction to Belenko’s defection only takes into consideration one goal of the Soviet “sweet talk.” It was not simply that the Soviet Union wanted their pilot with military secrets back. They publicly made promises that he would come to no harm were he to return. The promise served to make the Soviet Union appear welcoming and forgiving. It also provided support for why the Soviet Union was the superior place to live, and why it was so ludicrous to suggest that Belenko had willingly considered defection.

The claims that Belenko was drugged and kidnapped by the US were meant to show that the US had a complete lack of respect for the honor of a good man like Belenko. By putting his weeping wife and mother on display, and asking how he could let people consider his son’s father to be a traitor, the US looked like a nation that did not respect the family. As Osnos mentioned, the Soviets could not attack the character of Belenko. He had to continue to be a shining example for the Soviet people. They never

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<sup>24</sup> Osnos, “Defection of Soviet Pilot Poses Dilemma for Officials.”

accused him of infidelity, homosexuality, or any other sexual acts that were considered immoral or opposed the gender and sexual norms of the Soviet Union. But they were still able to attack the morality, gender and sexual norms of the United States. America did not hold the family in such high regard as the Soviets did. Americans had no qualms about drugging and kidnapping a good husband, father, and patriot, if it served the American goal of weakening the USSR. By refraining from personal attacks against Belenko, Soviet officials were still able to use gender, family and sexual norms of the ideal Soviet family as a key part of their propaganda. Belenko surely would return to his duties as Soviet pilot, Party member, and devoted family man, if the US did not render him incapable.

In the 1976 defection of Arkady Shevchenko, however, Soviet propaganda reverted to its usual open attacks against American immorality. In 1978, Shevchenko was the highest ranking Soviet employed at the United Nations, the Undersecretary for Political and Security Council Affairs.<sup>25</sup> According to American reports, his reason for leaving the Soviet Union was “differences with his government.”<sup>26</sup> This was the usual explanation for Soviet defection provided by American sources. At the time of Shevchenko’s defection he also had a family, including a wife, daughter, and a grown son

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<sup>25</sup> “Shevchenko Wants Money, Protection,” *Observer-Reporter*, April 13, 1978.

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2519&dat=19780413&id=2VtdAAAAIABJ&sjid=8lsNAAAAIABJ&pg=2325,1661332&hl=en> (accessed February 16, 2015).

<sup>26</sup> “Shevchenko Wants Money, Protection.”

in the Soviet foreign service.<sup>27</sup> Once it became clear that Shevchenko was not going to return to the Soviet Union, the Soviets launched an attack that depicted Shevchenko as avoiding his family duties, as a result of American sexual corruption.

The initial Soviet reaction to Shevchenko leaving his post at the United Nations was formulaic. Put simply, they blamed the U.S. of coercing him. “The Soviet Union charged that Shevchenko was a victim of ‘premeditated provocation’ and a ‘detestable frame-up.’”<sup>28</sup> Just as the Soviets had said America was holding Belenko against his will, they claimed “that U.S. intelligence services were holding Shevchenko under duress.”<sup>29</sup> But these charges were denied by the American State Department.<sup>30</sup> In fact, the initial story coming from the American media did not present Shevchenko in the most favorable light. On April 11, 1978, an “American official mentioned a liaison Mr. Shevchenko had had with a woman in New York.”<sup>31</sup> Further, “Western diplomats said he had a ‘health problem’ and remarked that he had been known as a heavy drinker.”<sup>32</sup> The American officials seemed to provide another simple explanation for Shevchenko’s actions to disprove the accusations of coercion coming from the Soviets. However, one month later the information and rhetoric coming from the Soviet Union underwent a vast shift. The

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<sup>27</sup> “Soviet Employee At U.N. May Seek Asylum,” *The Telegraph*, April 11, 1978.  
<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2209&dat=19780411&id=EZkrAAAAIABJ&sjid=oPUFAAAAIBA J&pg=7027,2499329&hl=en> (accessed February 16, 2016).

<sup>28</sup> “Lawyer Tells of Shevchenko Contact,” *The Ledger*, April 13, 1978.  
<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1346&dat=19780413&id=om9NAAAAIABJ&sjid=BPdAAAAIBA J&pg=7129,3499283&hl=en> (accessed February 16, 2015).

<sup>29</sup> “Shevchenko Wants Money, Protection.”

<sup>30</sup> “Shevchenko Wants Money, Protection.”

<sup>31</sup> “Soviet Employee At U.N. May Seek Asylum.”

<sup>32</sup> “Soviet Employee At U.N. May Seek Asylum.”

change came when the Soviets determined that Shevchenko would not be seeking a return to the Soviet Union.

In early May 1978, the story broke that Shevchenko's wife had died, an apparent suicide, in Moscow.<sup>33</sup> After Shevchenko had left his position at the United Nations in New York, his wife and daughter had returned to Moscow.<sup>34</sup> With the suicide, the Soviet press began an attack on Shevchenko's character, with new information that separated him from Soviet sexual and gender norms. Shevchenko had been corrupted by life in America, they alleged, which led to his defection. He turned his back on his homeland, which in turn caused the destruction of his ideal Soviet family.

The details painted a picture of a family destroyed by Shevchenko's actions. "Soviet sources with good official contacts made the first disclosure of the suicide, saying Mrs. Shevchenko died from an overdose of sleeping pills and that her body was found in a closet of the family apartment where she had been living with her 16-year old daughter since her return from New York in April."<sup>35</sup> The Soviet sources made sure that it was known she had died in the "family apartment."<sup>36</sup> Even though she had maintained the opinion that "her husband's action was a 'crude provocation' by American authorities," the Soviet sources had already planted the seeds required to attack Shevchenko's sexual behavior. The initial reports of his affair and drinking came from information provided by

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<sup>33</sup> "Wife Of Soviet Diplomat Shevchenko Takes Own Life," *Lewiston Evening Journal*, May 10, 1978. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1913&dat=19780510&id=LpAtAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=CGYFAAAAIBAJ&pg=3233,1554070&hl=en> (accessed February 16, 2015).

<sup>34</sup> "Wife Of Soviet Diplomat Shevchenko Takes Own Life."

<sup>35</sup> "Wife Of Soviet Diplomat Shevchenko Takes Own Life."

<sup>36</sup> "Wife Of Soviet Diplomat Shevchenko Takes Own Life."

an “American official,” and “Western diplomats.”<sup>37</sup> But after the suicide of Mrs. Shevchenko, that same information came from different sources: “Soviet diplomats at the United Nations circulated stories at the time that Shevchenko was having an affair with an American woman and also had a drinking problem.”<sup>38</sup> This indicates that right from the moment Shevchenko left his position at the United Nations to seek asylum in the U.S., the Soviet government hoped to discredit him by attacking his attraction to American sexual immorality.

On May 16, the AP reported further on the death of Mrs. Shevchenko, with additional comments by Soviet sources who presented Shevchenko’s immorality as the reason for the death of his wife and the destruction of his family. The Soviet sources said, “Mrs. Shevchenko had been severely depressed by recent reports from the United States indicating that her husband had maintained links to Western intelligence agents for several years and that he was seeing other women.”<sup>39</sup> Not only did the Soviet sources point to his actions as the cause of her suicide, but they also put the blame for her death on the very information that Soviet officials spread initially. The Soviets used every detail of Shevchenko’s defection to present him as a counter example of a good Soviet man, husband and father: an alcoholic, a bad father, an adulterer, and a traitor.

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<sup>37</sup> “Wife Of Soviet Diplomat Shevchenko Takes Own Life.”

<sup>38</sup> “Wife Of Soviet Diplomat Shevchenko Takes Own Life.”

<sup>39</sup> “Wife of Red Defector Killed Self, Son Says,” *Reading Eagle*, May 16, 1978.

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1955&dat=19780516&id=-PQhAAAAIABAJ&sjid=Z6AFAAAAIABAJ&pg=5719,5857954&hl=en>

(accessed February 16, 2015).

In a 1980 study, American sociologists reported that Soviet “authorities continue to insist that the Soviet family is the happiest in the world and thus that adultery simply does not exist.”<sup>40</sup> In reality, the authors argued, “family ties are very fragile and that the moral values which they depend on are crumbling.”<sup>41</sup> But reality is not what Soviet propagandists wanted to portray. An American columnist described Soviet reporting about Shevchenko as “the sort of smear job that the Soviets customarily use to discredit defectors.”<sup>42</sup> To the Soviets, the most important idea to convey was that Shevchenko was morally inferior and that the Soviet Union could not and would not foster weak characters who practiced adultery and alcoholism. Shevchenko had abandoned his patriotic and family duties and fled to the United States, a place and system that fostered and accepted his immoral lifestyle wholeheartedly.

In late August, 1979 Soviet ballet dancer Aleksandr Godunov was walking back to his hotel in New York, where he was staying while dancing as a soloist for the Bolshoi Ballet. When he realized he was out past the strict curfew set by Soviet officials, he “decided to seek asylum on the spur of the moment.”<sup>43</sup> He contacted American officials, and was quickly granted asylum. Lyudmilla Vlasova, wife of Godunov and a fellow dancer in the Bolshoi Ballet, was whisked away by Soviet officials and put on a plane

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<sup>40</sup> Shtern, 119.

<sup>41</sup> Shtern, 51.

<sup>42</sup> Jack Anderson, “Shevchenko Suicide,” *The Evening News*, May 17, 1978.

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1982&dat=19780517&id=W4dGAAAAIBAJ&sjid=pC0NAAAAIBAJ&pg=1485,2796294&hl=en> (accessed February 16, 2015).

<sup>43</sup> “‘Artistic Reasons’ Led Ballet Star to Defect,” *Eugene Register-Guard*, August 29, 1979.

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1310&dat=19790829&id=mnw1AAAAIBAJ&sjid=LOIDAAAAIBAJ&pg=5523,8705777&hl=en> (accessed January 12, 2015).

bound for Moscow. But before the plane carrying Vlasova could take off, US officials surrounded the plane while still on the runway, and kept it there for three days. The US officials explained their actions as being a desire to make sure Vlasova was returning to Moscow “of her own free will.”<sup>44</sup> Godunov said his wife might want to stay in America with him, but did not provide any further explanation for why she did not defect with him in the first place.<sup>45</sup>

TASS did not mention the defection of Godunov for the first few days. Instead, they focused on his wife Vlasova, the events that occurred at the Kennedy International Airport and her return to Moscow. The US described the initial reaction of the Soviet media as reverting “back to a harshness of language not often heard in recent years.”<sup>46</sup> In what the Soviets called “a ‘dirty’ anti-Soviet operation pursued for an unexplained reason,” the US kept Vlasova, “a Soviet woman visitor, and without regard for the suffering of the other Soviet passengers aboard the plane, including the children who could not stretch their legs” and stopped the plane from taking off for days.<sup>47</sup>

Once Vlasova landed in Moscow, “Soviet authorities welcomed” Godunov’s wife “as the heroine of a political thriller.”<sup>48</sup> She had been the victim of the US, who kept her

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<sup>44</sup> David Cate, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy during the Cold War* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 509.

<sup>45</sup> Cate, 509.

<sup>46</sup> “Russians Sad, Angry Over Defection,” *Lakeland Ledger*, August 27, 1979. <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1346&dat=19790827&id=zbMwAAAAIABAJ&sjid=-PoDAAAAIABAJ&pg=3794,4712433> (accessed January 12, 2015).

<sup>47</sup> “Russians Sad, Angry Over Defection.”

<sup>48</sup> New York Times News Service, “Tass Hints Plot In Defection,” *Daytona Beach Morning Journal*, August 29, 1979.

from returning to her home, and forced her to languish on a plane for days. When the Soviets finally acknowledged Godunov's defection, TASS said he had "disappeared. . . under circumstances which are not yet clear."<sup>49</sup> The American media called the Soviet response "a propaganda offensive."<sup>50</sup> It depicted the US as irrational and threatening to Soviet citizens, including wives and children, and insinuated that the US was kidnapping Soviets in America. The US was forcing Soviets to defect by putting them "under some kind of underhanded American pressure."<sup>51</sup> According to Soviet propagandists, the US forced Soviet citizens to abandon their lives and their families in the USSR. In the case of Godunov and Vlasova, the US forcibly stopped a plane from taking off, which directly caused the suffering of Soviet adults, and most importantly, women and children.<sup>52</sup> America did not respect the family as the USSR did.

When a Soviet citizen defected and then either returned, or made it publicly known that he wished to return home, the Soviet media gained a perfect opportunity to proclaim the superior lifestyle that existed only under socialism. In June 1983, a Soviet soldier named Nikolai Ryzhkov was working as part of a military construction unit in Afghanistan.<sup>53</sup> On June 16, "Ryzhkov, a private, slipped away from a Soviet military construction unit during an outdoor movie," and made contact with anti-Soviet Afghan

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<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1873&dat=19790829&id=81AfAAAAIBAJ&sjid=6NEEAAAAIBAJ&pg=4058,5990738&hl=en> (accessed January 12, 2015).

<sup>49</sup> "Tass Hints Plot In Defection."

<sup>50</sup> "Russians Sad, Angry Over Defection."

<sup>51</sup> "Russians Sad, Angry Over Defection."

<sup>52</sup> "Russians Sad, Angry Over Defection."

<sup>53</sup> Lawrence L. Knutson, "Defector From 'Dirty Afghan War' Now Wants to Return to Soviet Union," *Schenectady Gazette*, December 18, 1984.

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1917&dat=19841218&id=DhEhAAAAIBAJ&sjid=HHQFAAAAIBA J&pg=2942,474878&hl=en> (accessed, February 15, 2015).

resistance fighters.<sup>54</sup> After making contact, the resistance fighters hid him in Kabul for several months, and eventually smuggled him to Europe.<sup>55</sup> Once he arrived in the United States, he began making predictable defector comments. In December 1983 he “painted a picture of widespread disillusionment and low morale among Soviet soldiers serving in Afghanistan.”<sup>56</sup> However, by late 1984, Ryzhkov’s tone about the Soviet Union had undergone a dramatic shift. This shift resulted in Ryzhkov contacting the Soviet embassy and asking “for help in leaving the United States.”<sup>57</sup> How did American and Soviet officials explain this shift? The Soviet media employed their rhetoric about gender and sexuality to explain why a Soviet soldier fled to the United States.

When Ryzhkov expressed his wish to return to the Soviet Union, US State Department Deputy Spokesman Alan Romberg stated that Ryzhkov “declared he wished to return to the Soviet Union... and he stated firmly that he had made this decision voluntarily.”<sup>58</sup> According to the State Department, Ryzhkov’s desire “to be reunited with his parents and an older brother was genuine and not the result of coercion.”<sup>59</sup> Ryzhkov, it was reported, had most recently been living with a former Soviet dissident, and he had become distraught because of “his inability to find a job, the unfamiliarity of American customs, and his inability to speak English.”<sup>60</sup> According to American government officials, Ryzhkov simply was not suited for the American way of life, its customs, or its

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<sup>54</sup> “Defector From ‘Dirty Afghan War’ Now Wants to Return to Soviet Union.”

<sup>55</sup> “Defector From ‘Dirty Afghan War’ Now Wants to Return to Soviet Union.”

<sup>56</sup> “Defector From ‘Dirty Afghan War’ Now Wants to Return to Soviet Union.”

<sup>57</sup> “Defector From ‘Dirty Afghan War’ Now Wants to Return to Soviet Union.”

<sup>58</sup> “Defector From ‘Dirty Afghan War’ Now Wants to Return to Soviet Union.”

<sup>59</sup> “Defector From ‘Dirty Afghan War’ Now Wants to Return to Soviet Union.”

<sup>60</sup> “Defector From ‘Dirty Afghan War’ Now Wants to Return to Soviet Union.”

language. Likely American officials discovered that he possessed little information of use, beyond his report of low morale in the Soviet army. But once the Soviet media and TASS entered into the discussion of Ryzhkov's defection and his desire to return home, it became an attack on US morality. In particular, Soviet sources held, the CIA forced abnormal sexual practices on Ryzhkov. This was what drove his request to return to his homeland, despite the possible consequences.

Marina Wells was described as a friend of Ryzhkov and provided him a home for part of his time in Washington D.C.<sup>61</sup> A reporter interviewed Wells and discussed Ryzhkov's decision to return home. The story she told served as support for the portrayal given by Soviet officials. "When he first came here, he was a jolly happy-go-lucky, bubbly kid. And then he went to live for three weeks with a man here in Washington who refused to let us see him."<sup>62</sup> It was after the three week stay with that man that something changed for Ryzhkov. When he returned, he "was nervous, agitated, arrogant and pale. His eyes looked funny," and she believed that he may have been drugged and brainwashed.<sup>63</sup> He had "never indicated any desire to return."<sup>64</sup> This story became part of the propaganda that TASS presented in explaining the defection of Ryzhkov and what drove him to return to the Soviet Union after more than a year in the United States.

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<sup>61</sup> "Defector Returning to Russia," *The Day*, December 18, 1984.  
<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1915&dat=19841218&id=wjdSAAAAIBAJ&sjid=XjYNAAAAIBAJ&pg=2504,4003926&hl=en> (accessed February 15, 2015).

<sup>62</sup> "Defector Returning to Russia."

<sup>63</sup> "Defector Returning to Russia."

<sup>64</sup> "Defector Returning to Russia."

On January 16, 1985, the Soviet press released statements regarding the defection of Ryzhkov. According to an AP article, this was the first acknowledged desertion of a Soviet soldier since the invasion of Afghanistan.<sup>65</sup> The AP article reported the Kremlin's view that Ryzhkov "chose to return to his homeland after finding only 'sleazy propaganda and dubious love' in the West."<sup>66</sup> Immediately the focus of the Soviet official explanation was centered on the so-called "dubious love" present in the West. The author of the AP article called coercion a common propagandistic accusation by the Soviets. "Official Soviet news media routinely portray missing military personnel in Afghanistan as having been captured by anti-Marxist rebels then coerced or tricked into making anti-Soviet proclamations."<sup>67</sup> But even so, the "case of Nikolai Ryzhkov, TASS said, was 'exceptional.'"<sup>68</sup>

The Soviet depiction of Ryzhkov's defection made far-reaching claims of just how prevalent "dubious love" was in the US, and how such depravity was utilized by the CIA. "Tass said he was drugged, nearly starved and visited by lovers of both sexes with CIA links in an attempt to get him to make anti-Soviet statements."<sup>69</sup> The allegations went even further, stating that Ryzhkov had been kept at a guerrilla base for four months, drugged, and "told he would be executed or returned to unsympathetic Soviet authorities

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<sup>65</sup> "Kremlin Acknowledges Soldier Deserted," *Herald-Journal*, January 16, 1985. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1876&dat=19850116&id=cFosAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=yc4EAAAAIIBAJ&pg=5001,4096199&hl=en> (accessed January 7, 2015).

<sup>66</sup> "Kremlin Acknowledges Soldier Deserted."

<sup>67</sup> "Kremlin Acknowledges Soldier Deserted."

<sup>68</sup> "Kremlin Acknowledges Soldier Deserted."

<sup>69</sup> "Kremlin Acknowledges Soldier Deserted."

unless he cooperated in anti-Soviet slander.”<sup>70</sup> Sex was also used to force cooperation. He became lovers with a “34-year-old Soviet émigré working under CIA cover,” who prepared for him anti-Soviet statements detailing the “Soviet atrocities in Afghanistan.”<sup>71</sup> Ryzhkov was further visited by “lovers of both sexes with CIA links.”<sup>72</sup> The Soviet message about such practices was clear. Sexuality in the capitalist United States had been so corrupted that willing men and women were brought in by the CIA to engage in sexual activities with the express purpose of corrupting a good Soviet soldier.

The Soviets implied that actions such as these would not occur in the USSR, certainly not the use of homosexuality to coerce a soldier into making negative statements. As Healy pointed out in his discussion of sex in the Soviet Union, official ideology held that there were no more sexual perversions in a socialist society, where “an unproblematic heterosexuality could take its course.”<sup>73</sup> According to Healy, in the USSR sex “was to be channeled toward ‘natural,’ procreative heterosexuality through self-discipline and the inculcation of social responsibility in personal relations.”<sup>74</sup> By drawing attention to allegations about forcible homosexual relations in order to force Ryzhkov into making anti-Soviet statements, the Soviet Union also drew attention to the American exploitation of sexuality as a tool of coercion, for political ends.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> “Tass Concedes Fighter Defected in Afghanistan,” *Gadsden Times*, January 16, 1985. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1891&dat=19850116&id=vbUfAAAAIBAJ&sjid=iNcEAAAAIBAJ&pg=2062,2695893&hl=en> (accessed January 7, 2015).

<sup>71</sup> “Tass Concedes Fighter Defected in Afghanistan.”

<sup>72</sup> “Kremlin Acknowledges Soldier Deserted.”

<sup>73</sup> Healy, 10.

<sup>74</sup> Healy, 111.

<sup>75</sup> Healy, 10.

The Soviet media continued to use Ryzhkov's defection to promote the ideal Soviet family. Soviet officials explained Ryzhkov's decision to return home as the desperate attempts of a man at his breaking point. After he "had his share of the dirty anti-Soviet propaganda... and venal love in New York," Ryzhkov moved to Washington D.C.<sup>76</sup> According to TASS, once in D.C. Ryzhkov again became involved in immoral sexual relations.<sup>77</sup> Most important for the Soviet depiction of not just Ryzhkov's defection but of the American way of life in general, again he "fell into the hands of a homosexual man with CIA connections."<sup>78</sup>

Marina Wells had stated that Ryzhkov lived with a man in D.C. who isolated him, and that he grew nervous, agitated and pale.<sup>79</sup> The Soviet depiction alleges that the man Ryzhkov went to stay with for three weeks was the homosexual man with CIA connections that Ryzhkov had fallen "into the hands of."<sup>80</sup> By approaching the Soviet embassy and requesting his return to the Soviet Union, Ryzhkov attempted to escape the sexual culture that led him both to engage in homosexual relations and to criticize the USSR.

Ryzhkov wanted to escape the United States so badly that he "no longer feared any punishment at home."<sup>81</sup> TASS did not make any mention of what fate awaited him

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<sup>76</sup> "Tass Concedes Fighter Defected in Afghanistan."

<sup>77</sup> "Tass Concedes Fighter Defected in Afghanistan."

<sup>78</sup> "Tass Concedes Fighter Defected in Afghanistan."

<sup>79</sup> "Defector Returning to Russia."

<sup>80</sup> "Tass Concedes Fighter Defected in Afghanistan."

<sup>81</sup> "Kremlin Acknowledges Soldier Deserted."

once he returned.<sup>82</sup> The Soviet message here was that American sexual mores were far more frightening to a Soviet citizen than any possible punishment. The desire to return to the Soviet Union and the way of life that socialism had created was far more appealing, whatever the cost. Just as the Soviet media had presented the Martin and Mitchell defection twenty years earlier, the American system drove Ryzhkov back to the morally superior Soviet Union.

The United States' rebuttal to allegations about the Ryzhkov defection tells a much different and far less scandalous story. In November 1985, an article written by Robert Barr of the Associated Press examined the return of Soviet defectors to the Soviet Union. Barr acknowledged that each defector seemed to tell a story of kidnapping, drugging, and unsatisfying life in the United States, and he included Ryzhkov as an example.<sup>83</sup> But the argument presented by Barr, representing the American explanation for defectors returning to the Soviet Union, was far simpler than what Soviet officials claimed.

Barr brushed off the idea that the CIA or other forces kidnapped the Soviet defectors, and instead argued that their reason for leaving the US was that they found life there to be difficult.<sup>84</sup> He claimed that the defectors were "startled" by life in the West, and that they were "not prepared for the expensive rents, the difficulty of finding work

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<sup>82</sup> "Kremlin Acknowledges Soldier Deserted."

<sup>83</sup> Robert Barr, "Life in the West Can Be Daunting for Soviet Emigres," *The Gainesville Sun*, November 6, 1985.

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1320&dat=19851106&id=gTxWAAAAIBAJ&sjid=vekDAAAAIBAJ&pg=2413,1555933&hl=en> (accessed January 12, 2015).

<sup>84</sup> Barr, "Life in the West Can Be Daunting for Soviet Emigres."

and the high crime in U.S. cities.”<sup>85</sup> The Soviet defectors were not able to handle the simple day-to-day facts of life in a capitalist system. They were not mistreated, especially sexually; instead the Soviet ideology did not prepare them to have to compete, to work hard, to self-improve. The defectors had been raised in a society that coddled them and dulled their competitive edge.

Even in the early years of glasnost and perestroika, Soviet propagandists clung to the same story of American moral, especially sexual, depravity. Vitaly Yurchenko, a KGB deputy director, defected in summer 1985.<sup>86</sup> Yurchenko passed lie detector tests “to establish his credibility as a defector.”<sup>87</sup> To the American public, it came as a shock when he lost his CIA handlers, and returned to the Soviet embassy seeking a return to the USSR that winter. But as the Soviet reactions from before and after Yurchenko returned make clear, once again the strategy of projecting strong and moral Soviet family and gender norms is visible.

The Canadian press reported in November 1985 that the “Central Intelligence Agency brought Yurchenko to Montreal to meet Valentina Yereskovsky, with whom he was said to have had a seven-year love affair.”<sup>88</sup> Yereskovsky was the wife of Soviet

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<sup>85</sup> Barr, “Life in the West Can Be Daunting for Soviet Emigres.”

<sup>86</sup> Lars-erik Nelson, “U.S. Bungled the Yurchenko Affair,” *Bangor Daily News*, November 12, 1985. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2457&dat=19851112&id=hBtbAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=2E4NAAAAIIBAJ&pg=3952,4067872&hl=en> (accessed June 2, 2016).

<sup>87</sup> Robert Wagman, “Why ‘Defector’ Looks Phony,” *Ludington Daily News*, November 16, 1985. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=110&dat=19851116&id=dRRQAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=21UDAAAAIIBAJ&pg=3734,5746071&hl=en> (accessed June 2, 2016).

<sup>88</sup> Gazette News Service, “Claim Wife had Affair with Defector is a Lie: City’s Soviet Consul,” *The Montreal Gazette*, November 11, 1985.

Consul General Alexander S. Yereskovsky, who was posted in Montreal.<sup>89</sup> In typical Soviet response to allegations against good, upstanding Soviet citizens, this rumor was vehemently denied: “These allegations are. . . an outrageous provocation aimed at drawing Canada into an anti-Soviet campaign in order to spoil good Soviet-Canadian relations.”<sup>90</sup> According to the Soviets, America not only was attempting to spoil diplomatic relations but also harming the Soviet family. During a telephone interview, Yereskovsky expressed his outrage at such lies and hung up on the interviewer.<sup>91</sup> Another Soviet official called the allegations “an insult to not only to the wife of the Soviet consul general, but also to all Soviet women who stay abroad with their husbands-diplomats.”<sup>92</sup> The message was that American officials cared so little about the family that they would spread sexual innuendo without worrying about the damage and offence it would cause to Soviet diplomats and their families living all across the world.

Once Yurchenko returned to the USSR, the Soviet media reverted to the same rhetoric they used for Ryzhkov. Yurchenko had never defected at all, but had been kidnapped. Yurchenko stated that “he had never defected to the U.S., but had been seized in Rome by U.S. Central Intelligence Agency agents who drugged and tortured him.”<sup>93</sup> Just as any good Soviet, he had no desire to abandon his people and flee to the decadent West. And he never had an affair with a married Soviet woman. These were malicious

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<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1946&dat=19851111&id=x8cyAAAAIBAJ&sjid=gbkFAAAAIBA J&pg=2452,15508&hl=en> (accessed June 2, 2016).

<sup>89</sup> “Claim Wife had Affair with Defector is a Lie: City’s Soviet Consul.”

<sup>90</sup> “Claim Wife had Affair with Defector is a Lie: City’s Soviet Consul.”

<sup>91</sup> “Claim Wife had Affair with Defector is a Lie: City’s Soviet Consul.”

<sup>92</sup> “Claim Wife had Affair with Defector is a Lie: City’s Soviet Consul.”

<sup>93</sup> “Claim Wife had Affair with Defector is a Lie: City’s Soviet Consul.”

American lies. Yurchenko, in short, was forced to do things that were in opposition to his Soviet beliefs and morals.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Both sides of the Cold War waged a propaganda battle about the return of Soviet defectors to the USSR. The United States presented a simple explanation; that the socialist system had not prepared its citizens for competitive capitalism. The Soviet Union argued that immoral sexuality in the United States had driven those defectors to seek the morally pure family and sexuality of the Soviet Union. When a Soviet citizen defected to the United States and did not seek a return to the Soviet Union, once again the media and officials of the USSR had to put a propaganda spin on the story to explain how such an event could occur. The Soviets used a method similar to that they had used to explain why Martin and Mitchell had defected, and why Soviet defectors returned home. Permanent defectors to the US were accused of being bad examples of Soviet family men. Essentially, those defectors did not adhere to Soviet gender, sexual and family roles, and therefore did not belong in the confines of the morally correct Soviet Union.

With the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the worst political and economic tensions of the Cold War are in the past, as are defections. The cultural battle, however, continues. Russia still claims ownership of superior gender and family norms. In the past few years, Russian officials have created laws in an attempt to maintain the ideal norms described by Soviet ideology. During the lead up to the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, for example, the Russian government pushed through discriminatory anti-LGBT laws. Such laws allow the police to arrest tourists and foreigners suspected of being gay or pro-gay

and detain them for up to 14 days. It appears as if the Russian government is attempting to ensure the survival of the ideal Soviet man, woman, and family. The laws themselves, and comments from Russian President Vladimir Putin, show that Russia still maintains that solely heterosexual men and women are getting married, raising children, and working to strengthen the nation.

Under Soviet rule, it was long claimed that perversions did not exist in society. Perversions were linked to the West, and they could not exist because Soviet citizens lived in a society that had uprooted such decadent individualism. Today, the entire country can no longer claim that only strong heterosexual families populate it, and that sexual deviants live only in the West. There is a much greater access to information that disproves that. But under Putin, a fear of non-traditional gender roles and lifestyles is still being cultivated, leading to hatred and violence against those who are outside of norms, and to new suspicion that the West is responsible. Homosexuality must be “cleansed” away, Russian officials claim, to bolster the national birthrate.<sup>1</sup> In 2013, Putin signed a law that classified ‘homosexual’ propaganda as pornography, and equated it with pedophilia: “information about homosexuality can influence a child's sexual orientation” away from heterosexuality. The wording was so vague that it could implicate anyone arguing for tolerance or educating children about homosexuality to arrest and fines.<sup>2</sup> Russia even passed a law forbidding gay couples in foreign nations, or heterosexual

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<sup>1</sup> “Putin: Russia must ‘Cleanse’ itself of Homosexuality,” January 19, 2014. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/putin-russia-must-cleanse-itself-of-homosexuality/> (accessed July 22, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> “Mr. Putin’s War on Gays,” July 27, 2014. [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/28/opinion/sunday/mr-putins-war-on-gays.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/28/opinion/sunday/mr-putins-war-on-gays.html?_r=0) (accessed July 22, 2016)

couples who come from countries that allow same sex marriage—from adopting Russian babies.<sup>3</sup>

Russia has changed in many ways since the collapse of the Soviet Union. But the vision of the person that the government wants living inside Russian borders has not changed all that much from the defectors' era. The only difference is that they no longer claim that their ideology makes it impossible for sexual deviancy to exist. And instead of spotlighting defectors to spread the message about the morally superior qualities of Russian citizens, they pass very clear laws that let the rest of the world know that in Russia, the sexual, gender and family discourse defined by the Soviet Union is still alive.

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<sup>3</sup> "Mr. Putin's War on Gays."

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