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A Community in the Clouds

Advertising Tobacco and Gender in Pre-revolutionary Russia

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In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when western advertisers used women as bait for the male smoker, Russian manufacturers displayed a more relaxed attitude toward policing gender boundaries than in western democracies, and offered images of empowered female consumers who made rational choices in the marketplace. Advertising images of women smoking in Russia were distinctive in their subject, number, and early appearance. The examination of Russian tobacco advertisements complicates scholarly studies of the Russian business community and advertising that emphasizes the conservative tendencies of these industries, and counters studies of global tobacco culture that tie smoking to liberal male political identity in the period before 1914. Russian women's smoking, like Russian women's early suffrage, does not fit the established paradigms.

The poster for Isadzhanov tobacco products, issued a few years prior to World War I, was not meant to melt into the shadows of the urban landscape (Figure 1). Invention transforms an advertisement for humble cigarette tubes into a work of art that stood out against the city's dusty walls and faded fences.[1] With its bold coloring, clean design, and elegant female figure, the poster calls to mind the works of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Alphonse Mucha.[2] The subtext of the image is equally arresting. A woman in authoritative, wide-legged stance, wielding both a riding crop and a cigarette, contemplates the burning end of her smoke while standing against the high, white fence of a horse paddock.[3] Tobacco manufacturers worldwide were quick to use women in posters, but usually these were "primitives" designed to entice the male eye.[4] To be certain, Russian tobacco marketing used stereotypical Asiatic women and their seductive glances, but the images of women who smoked seemingly for their own pleasure are distinctive in Russia in their subject, number, and early appearance.[5]

While alluring, the Isadzhanov beauty works not just to persuade men. She does not acknowledge the viewer's gaze nor does she seek his or her affirmation. Instead she focuses her attention on a more compelling companion; one she regards with a bemused but controlled attraction. She does not need a man in her life. She has another passion—tobacco. Her assuredness and glamour form a compelling inducement to smoke. Her figure is formidable; her coiffure, make-up, and outfit are exquisite.

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Figure 1. Courtesy of the Russian State Library.

The cigarette tubes became the ultimate accessory to her chic, modern ensemble, but the poster hints at other benefits. Our subject's complexion and implied predilection for equestrian activities confirm her robust health and insinuate her confident sexuality. Riding horses disquieted many turn-of-the-century moralists for the freedom it gave women to roam outside the confines of home and hearth and because the undulating motion was deemed too agitating for the already erratic female genitalia. Putting such a sexually charged activity in the company of smoking could not have been an accident when tobacco was also invested with erotic danger. The make-up, the horseback riding, and the tobacco together all point to a woman

of a certain experience. Yet the Isadzhanov woman is not a Turkish trollop or receptive Indian maiden. She is a shockingly modern woman who is in command of, and seemingly relishing, her sexuality.

The advertisement suggests that lighting up will spark more than sexual satisfaction. In setting and costume, the poster indicates a broader field of play for this urbane, smoking woman. She stands at the fence of public life. The riding habit, when united with the setting, indicates the woman's aspirations. Comfortably wielding a crop with all the masculine qualities of authority, control, and even cruelty that it symbolizes, she is as at home in the newly-expanded, public arena as the horse arena. She confounds restrictions by consuming the correct brand and performing the appropriate manner. In addition to her masculine-style hat and clothing, she has taken up a male-identified behavior—smoking—to signal her taking up of male-dominated pursuits.

A study of progressive gender constructs in Russian tobacco advertisements challenges the prevailing image of Russian business and advertising communities as largely conservative. While western advertising excluded women from smoking and the political liberty it represented, Russian advertisements admitted women to the smoking community as full members well before 1914. The Isadzhanov poster stood in contrast to those produced in the United States, Britain, and Canada. While western advertisers used women as bait for the male smoker, Russian manufacturers displayed a more relaxed attitude towards women's intrusion into areas of patriarchal authority and offered images of empowered female consumers who made rational choices in the marketplace. Perhaps because autocracy deprived all citizens of rights, such challenges to patriarchal authority occasioned less anxiety than in western democracies.

Russian women's smoking, like Russian women's suffrage, does not fit the established paradigms. Global anti-tobacco advocates contended that large numbers of female smokers, as evidenced in East European and Asian countries, signaled a civilization in decline, but western feminists associated tobacco consumption with progressive women's rights.[6] The historian Rochelle Goldberg Ruthchild points out in her study of Russian women's activism that in some ways Russian women were ahead of their western counterparts, including winning the vote in 1917. She contends that the freedoms offered by western democracies were often illusory and that it was Russia's distance from democracy, and proximity to war and revolution, that allowed women further progress.[7] Perhaps the vision of women freely smoking in public was yet another symptom of Russian women's progress in comparison to their western counterparts.

While the Isadzhanov poster is compelling, it does not mean that thousands of women tooled around the paddocks of Russia smoking their way to liberation. The reception of these images is impossible to divine. Even when advertisers feature a purportedly average customer, they present instead of the life as lived, a life lived better—what the sociologist Michael Schudson termed "capitalist realism."[8] Not only do the producers of these images tweak the facts to affect an "upscale" image, they very likely do not know exactly how their buyer lives or even who their buyer is. Manufacturers, artists, and advertisers are not always well acquainted with the life of the everyman—or woman.

Advertisements may not directly reflect society, but they can be more responsive to popular opinion than fiction and film. Because selling is built on persuasion, advertisements seldom try to provoke. Marketers, focused on the reception of their message, are more likely to modify their work to correspond to popular attitudes. Yet advertisers influence the way the public regards or discusses products by creating images, slogans, and concepts that are repeated often and disseminated widely.[9] The gulf between seller and consumer was wide in the late nineteenth century, when the absence of marketing surveys left an undifferentiated mass, but even without a detailed picture of the shopper, advertisers still showed interest in persuading their potential customers.

While wooing might have been the intent, appeals did not always attend directly to consumer desires. Producers were invested in their own and their company's image and while profit might be supreme, social standing, esteem, and personal politics often intruded in the margins. Many manufacturers used in-house talent to create their posters and pitches, but some hired out to newly-founded agencies that struggled with their own plan to sell an emerging expertise and build a client base. Finally, censorship from government agencies and self-censorship by newspaper and magazine editors tempered the messages placed before the public. Advertisements emerged on a field of production where manufacturers, agencies, artists, censors, and others negotiated a message designed to shape opinion and tastes as much as cater to them.[10]

Russian tobacco advertising was rooted in the Russian land and culture. Russian or Russian-Jewish owners managed almost all firms in the country, and they likely employed native artists and targeted local audiences.[11] The historian Sally West argues that Russian manufacturers and advertisers, like most businessmen of the time, were not radicals; they encouraged conservative outlooks in their target audiences especially concerning issues of status and gender. Marketers often took a paternalistic approach and urged contentment with one's lot or refrained from sexually suggestive content. Some marketing for lower-class smokers, however, implied

educated consumption could improve one's status though always by rising through the existing system.[12] The poster images featured here do not line up with the strictures seen in print advertising, as they are more progressive with images of women that challenge conventions. This may have been a direct reflection of the feminine make-up of tobacco manufacturers, where a woman controlled one of the largest firms of the late nineteenth century.[13]

Marketing in Russia grew in importance and volume as consumer culture blossomed. Advertisements assaulted the urbanite at almost every step appearing in the pages of the increasingly available mass-circulation press; on stage curtains, programs, flyers, and booklets; on combs, calendars, and knick-knacks; and in direct-mail pleas. Posters joined the repertoire in the same period cropping up around cities on almost any upright object, including specially designed poster columns that dotted the urban landscape. Tobacco manufacturers were some of the more enthusiastic and creative in hawking their wares.[14]

As advertising rose, so did smoking, but the rise in consumption was not necessarily a reflection of successful marketing. Technical innovations in production, surges in supply, and changes in popular tastes all contributed to increases in smoking. In the late nineteenth century, consumption of tobacco worldwide exploded with the invention of cigarette-rolling machines, which made cigarettes more available and affordable.[15] In roughly the last decade of the nineteenth century, the amount of tobacco harvested in Russia increased two-fold, and the percentage of that tobacco rolled into cigarettes doubled as well. By 1913, 46 percent of tobacco production went to cigarettes and growth was especially evident in the lower, cheaper grades of tobacco.[16] Innovation created a massive supply of cigarettes, brought down costs, and encouraged producers to differentiate their products through aggressive marketing.[17]

Cigarettes, though initially denigrated in most of Europe as low-class, effeminate, and of inferior quality, grew in popularity not just because of advancements in production, but because of their advantages over tobacco chewed, snuffed, or smoked in pipes and cigars. For Russian consumers, cigarettes proved more portable than pipes, cleaner than chaw, cheaper than cigars, and more fashionable than snuff. While cigar and pipe smoke is alkaline and must be absorbed through the mouth, cigarette smoke is acidic allowing it to be inhaled into the lungs. The smoother, acidic smoke might have lured new consumers.[18] Finally, inhaled nicotine rapidly spreads from the lungs to the blood and then throughout the body. A cigarette smoker absorbs over 90 percent of the nicotine in under half a minute.[19] Potent, portable, cheap, and smooth— modern cigarettes satisfied the needs of the man at the lathe, the clerk with a quick break, or the woman interested in a mild blend.

Smoking a cigarette allowed consumers to display their superiority over cigar-chomping bourgeoisie, pipe-puffing peasants, or snuff-taking aristocrats. Smokers could further distinguish themselves by their choice of brand. Tobacco was cheap enough for many to afford, but the price range allowed product choice to serve as a means of distinction. The cheapest cigarettes went for three kopecks for ten, while the most expensive could be purchased at between six and twelve kopecks for ten.[20] Cigarette brands could function as a quick signifier of status or aspirations. Manufacturers relayed and invented the distinctions between products through advertising. Recent histories of the culture of tobacco use in turn-of-the-century Canada and Britain focus on the relationship between the cigarette and increasing class distinctions, the advent of consumer culture, and liberal conceptions of the individual. The social historian Matthew Hilton details how smoking became integral to middle-class group and individual identity in Britain over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and argues that this incorporation of smoking into middle-class identity was rooted in liberal notions of independence and individuality.[21] The historian Jarrett Rudy transfers the theory on liberal smoking identity to turn-of-the-century Canada and contends that tobacco's association with individualism, rationality, and self-possession excluded women who purportedly did not possess self-control, were not discerning consumers, and could not smoke respectably.[22]

Russia may not have enjoyed a liberal government in the nineteenth century, but advertisements encouraged consumption as a means of individuation as well as an entrée into a society of consumers. For an emerging urban group, with more money available to them for discretionary spending, a growing base of industrial goods, and less tolerance for traditions and class barriers, consumption became a way to express modernity and to challenge tradition. Consumer culture promoted individual and group identities that ultimately undermined the power of the autocratic state.[23] Consumption, if properly trained and engaged in, could be a sign of cultivation—a key means of marking status.[24] If educated consumerism was a sign of bourgeois attainment, then Russian women were as progressive in their consumption as they were in their politics.

Tobacco did not just serve as a sign to outsiders. The meanings attached to cigarettes cling to and penetrate the body in a manner dissimilar to other consumer goods.[25] Tobacco transforms the bodies, behaviors, and identities of its aficionados marking the flesh in ways easily identifiable for hours or even days after consumption becoming an ideal display of the ways in which things and bodies interact, mingle, and dance.[26] A husky voice or spasmodic hacking reveals the smoker. The smell of tobacco saturates clothing, hair, and skin.[27] While a change of clothing might mask the scent, the smoker's

cough could be mistaken for tuberculosis, or the aroma might be attributed to other smokers, certain clues expose people who themselves smoked rather than one simply caught in the cloud.[28] In heavier smokers, the stale odor of tobacco betrays the habit as they sweat. The stained fingers, blackened teeth, and yellowed nails remain well after the cigarette is stubbed out. For a woman, these indelible markers of tobacco could overwhelm the signs of her sex, according to Russian hygienists. N. P. Preis, doctor and instructor of hygiene at the Kharkhov City Trade School, elaborated in his 1902 pamphlet *Tobacco: The Enemy of Mankind*: "If you see a woman sucking on a cigarette, the unavoidable consequence is the awful odor from the throat, black and sooty teeth, and smoky fingers. A smoking woman falls unavoidably from aesthetic quality without which, in my opinion, a woman cannot exist."[29]

The taint of smoking was visited unequally on the classes as well as the genders. As the late nineteenth century became associated with efforts to deodorize, tobacco brought with it a belligerent aroma with connotations of manliness, lower classes, and attendant worries of disorder. Musk brings up connotations of sex and putrefaction and echoes aromas burnt, animalistic, and unsophisticated.[30] To imbibe tobacco was to take on this odor and all attendant anxieties of urban mobility, permeability, and promiscuity. Men of greater means could afford separate smoking areas and special clothing, but those of the lower orders often smoked in venues, like the tavern, that mingled the whiff of societal opprobrium with the odor of tobacco. If men carried the stench of the tavern with them, it became a mark of bad breeding. Turn-of-the-century Russian etiquette manuals warned that the smell of liquor or tobacco on the breath could bring disdain at the theatre.[31]

Women suffered further from the mark of smoking. In the West, for a woman to smell of tobacco could have repercussions to her reputation. In Canada, a man of good etiquette forfeited his right to smoke in the presence of a woman, showing his fortitude and good breeding. The western woman who smelled of smoke thus either frequented questionable public spaces or shared intimate space with poorly-mannered men. Neither option reflected well on her character. Respectable Canadian women avoided smoke, did not smoke themselves, and did not mingle with smokers according to Rudy's analysis. As a consequence, "smoking was more and more used as a ritual to exclude women from the public sphere and fuller rights" and thus "gave odour and visible shape to spaces socially constructed as male."[32]

Anxiety about the intermingling of male and female bodies permeated worries over odor, but so too did fear of the sexualized danger of smoking itself. In Russia, the risk that tobacco bore not just the body but the soul had been party to the extraordinary seventeenth-century ban of the weed.[33] Orthodox churchmen continued their diatribes against tobacco even after Peter the Great began to import it.[34] By the late nineteenth century, others

joined in the attack. Tolstoy infamously warned of the morally degrading effects of tobacco on the conscience and control.[35] Others took up his strident cry. As Dr. Preis solemnly cautioned, "tobacco awakens your mind and nerves to disgraceful things."[36] A 1904 anti-smoking pamphlet threatened that tobacco led to scandalous acts and deadened the soul to their consequences: "People do not numb themselves for fun and not from boredom do they resort to stupefying drugs, but so as to muddy their mind and to hide from themselves the dirtying of their conscience, which denounces their foul life."[37]

The association of tobacco and moral depravity applied equally to men and women, but for women, there were added medicalized worries.[38] In pamphlets and articles, doctors, religious leaders, and public figures warned that smoking caused miscarriage, nervous disorder, and general weakness.[39] A Professor Bek cautioned, "In the opinion of the author, smoking by pregnant women harms not just the mother but also the fetus."[40] And Archpriest Arsenii sprinkled his moral advice about smoking with concern that the poison of nicotine travels from mother to child through the breast.[41] Already marked by the stain of tobacco, the female smoker lost her abilities to gestate and nurture an infant; she was unsexed.

More disturbing to hygienists than a woman stained or sterilized by tobacco was a woman overcome by it, who then became more masculine or sexually voracious as a result of tobacco's invigorating effects. Some veiled their sexual concerns with discussions of women's weakened will power.[42] Others, such as the prolific Dr. Preis, admonished: "Need I remind you that the cigarette is the first step towards moral laxity."[43] One 1914 pamphlet abandoned all dissembling: "among young women smoking prematurely arouses sexual desire and easily leads to secret vices" and intimated that tobacco, by awakening a masculine, libidinous quality in women, led to masturbation and the host of ills related to it—insanity, degeneracy, and general wasting.[44] A strong tradition of disquiet over tobacco as the gateway to promiscuity revealed itself in literature and movies as well.[45]

The general public did not seem to take a great deal of stock in the dire warnings, as tobacco consumption continued to rise, and cigarettes in particular became more and more popular. Advertisers embraced the uncertainty and countered worries over tobacco's moral and sexual effects with posters that implied the invigorating powers of tobacco. For men advertisements emphasized phallic power or made direct pleas to male virility with scantily clad women.[46] Women's advertisements accentuated female consumers in control of, and enlivened by, tobacco. Tobacco's association with liberation rested on long-standing connections of smoking with resistance. Peter the Great's overturn of the tobacco ban had not rooted out the already well-established vision of it as anti-orthodox and

western.[47] With time, tobacco became even more linked with opposition. The cigarette furthered this distinction because of the modern methods of production and the near omnipresence of smoking in cities. Russian literature of the period revealed a connection of tobacco smoking with liberation, and authors extended the progressive meaning of the habit to both male and female characters.[48] By the late nineteenth century, female progressives and nihilists smoked as a symbol of their distaste for convention and connection to modern ideas.[49]

In the United States, Britain, and Canada cigarette smoking was overwhelmingly a male pastime. When women were depicted as smokers it was denigrated as an affectation—not a habit.[50] Exclusion of women from the community of smokers in the West extended to advertising. While products for female smokers appeared in the 1880s in the United States, advertisers shied away from directly marketing to women even in the face of profitability. Instead women appeared as enticements for men. A series of posters for Job papers in France showed women smoking, but these beauties, created by artists like Toulouse-Lautrec and isolated in Art Nouveau labyrinths of design with otherworldly settings, appear as mystical contemplations—an update of the Asiatic beauty— rather than advertisements for women.[51] One scholar suggests that during the period "to show a woman actually smoking a cigarette…or even suggesting it. To do so was in utterly poor taste."[52] In Britain women did not appear regularly in tobacco advertisements until World War I, and even then they were not shown smoking but as targets for seduction outrageously sharing tobacco with men. It was not until the 1920s and 1930s that independent women were shown smoking for their own pleasure.[53] In 1927, the Lucky Strike celebrity endorsement campaign in the United States gave a positive spin to the still publicly-frowned upon habit with their legendary slogan "Reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet!"[54]

In contrast to the reserve of their contemporaries, Russian manufacturers began marketing brands to women in the late nineteenth century. Russian advertisements did not shy away from images of women smoking, but neither did they necessarily cater to radicals. The Isadzhanov beauty hints of a masculine-style but contains these challenges within an acceptable —if slightly expanded—sphere of female activity. Of the nearly eighty tobacco advertising posters in the Russian State Library's graphics department, roughly 25 percent included females, and ten of these featured female smokers. The first poster in the collection featuring a woman smoking came from 1887.[55] Although production numbers or distribution statistics were not systematically reported, that there are any advertisements aimed at women at all stands in sharp contrast to American, British, and Canadian examples. The number and variety of such posters for the period is larger in Russia than in France, and is perhaps only comparable to the Chinese market.[56]

Women in Russia may have been a more tempting market for advertisers as they retained legal authority over their own property after marriage.[57]

These posters were joined by other appeals. The first Russian print advertisements catering to women began in 1892 when the Ottoman factory suggested ladies substitute Vizitnyia for candies. In 1903, a St. Petersburg company began publicizing a woman's brand— provocatively named Pioneer—noting its lack of dust and odor. But while print advertisements for women's brands appeared earlier, it was only after 1905 when the Krem factory debuted the Eva brand that a woman was shown smoking, though in a format that basically substituted a woman in place of the man in their long-running template. [58]

The year 1905 is considered a breaking point in pre-revolutionary culture, as relaxed governmental and societal strictures in the wake of the disturbances led to the flourishing of the decadent movement and societal anxiety over sexuality.[59] The reticence of newspaper advertisers to feature smoking women until after 1905 indicates this stricture may have held, but no such break is evident in posters, which moved into female marketing earlier than newspapers and with more playful pitches. Perhaps the predominantly male audience of newspapers curtailed such experimentation. The Shaposhnikov firm's poster for their Sladkiia (Sweets) cigarettes playfully parodied those who worried smoking would create manly women by presenting an overtly feminine consumer with a product that could not have been named in a more non-threatening manner (Figure 2). The coloring, posing, and decoration of the advertisement are all very feminine. Dated to 1900, the poster utilizes umbers and lavenders tying it to the fashionable hues of the 1890s, the so-called "mauve decade" because of the prevalence of new purple aniline dyes. Art deco flowers and fonts stress the feminine appeal of the brand. The name hints that the blend might be one of the sweet, perfumed tobacco mixtures often associated with women's smoking and may have been an attempt to market tobacco as a candy substitute. At twenty for five kopeks, Sladkiia was a cheaper brand. While smoking in the West was associated with elite women, here a lower-priced brand was presented for the female market. Either women were not expected to spend as much as men on their habit, or Sladkiia was envisaged as an aspirational brand.

The pose of the coquette toys with the engaging gaze of an Orientalist advertisement, but instead of suggestive, this young woman is coy. While not provocative, she shows no shame but displays a gentle, relaxed smile at being caught with her tobacco. Although she engages the viewer, she is not shown smoking in the company of others. The coquette appeared almost a decade before the Isadzhanov woman, and the subsequent changes in politics and growth of the civil sphere may have contributed to the style of art, clothing, and hair all looking quaintly old-fashioned in comparison,

Figure 2. Courtesy of the Russian State Library.

but it might have been part of the appeal—a way to take a product seen as dangerous and wrap it securely in the warmth of nostalgia. Sladkiia is comforting, attractive, and non-threatening.

The 1901 poster for the smoking papers of the G. V. Frenkel firm had similarly feminine tropes, but with a slightly different smoker (Figure 3). Again the smoking woman dresses elegantly, however, she is of a different age, style, and outlook. For those who implied that smoking lay waste to not just women's health, but their sexuality, the Frenkel advertisement offered a stunning counter. Seated in an elegant and homey rocking chair, our female smoker is romantically appointed in lace, flowers, and a gold hair comb.

She is enjoying a smoke in the privacy of her own house or perhaps parlor. The maternal air to the smoker is noticeable, as is her health, dignity, and social standing. To soften a habit that might have been seen as too forward for a woman, the clock is turned back. Like the Sladkiia advertisement, the poster appears almost retrograde in its style implying that Frenkel traded in traditional and respectable goods.

While the Frenkel woman has not taken on male clothing styles, her pose has something of the male smoker to it. The image of the male connoisseur in smoking jacket and easy chair relaxing next to a table displaying the accoutrements of his hobby was a regular feature of smoking advertisements, portraiture, and literature in the West and in Russia. The slogan below reminds women that they should choose Frenkel papers because they were of higher quality. In Frenkel's reverie, a woman takes on the role of the aficionado interested in quality. In the West, this role was reserved for men because they could appreciate a commodity and escape shallow consumerism by gathering knowledge and choosing objects rationally. Here, the ability to value tobacco is transferred to a woman. With this power, came the individualization of informed consumption and the promise of liberation through bourgeois consumerism.

The Frenkel woman parodies marketing for the male expert in yet another way. In both Russia and abroad, tobacco is often depicted as a woman who brings with her many comforts.[60] Advertisers translated this into ardor for the product that superseded romantic love.[61] This standard for the relationship of men to tobacco became part of the image of the Frenkel woman. A chubby cupid, whose quiver is filled not by the arrows of love, but instead by cigarettes, attends to her. The shot to the heart of this domestic smoker comes not from a handsome husband or her beloved children; the high quality papers of the Frenkel factory replace traditional objects of affection. Just as our Isadzhanov woman, the Frenkel connoisseur has transferred her attentions to smoking, and she seeks to assuage her passion for tobacco by swathing her beloved in premium rolling papers.

In the Isadzhanov, Sladkiia, and Frenkel posters, the advertisers created a respectable portrait of the female smoker. These women were assured, rational consumers. Still, each of these posters featured a woman in isolation.[62] The Talisman factory of St. Petersburg produced an incredibly detailed poster for their products that kept the smoking woman and placed her with the smoking man (Figure 4). Produced on the occasion of their grand reopening in 1887, it was the first poster to feature females smoking in the collection, appeared a full eighteen years before women were seen smoking in newspaper advertisements, and a full forty years before Lucky Strike urged American women to watch their waistlines. The Talisman im-

Figure 3. Courtesy of the Russian State Library.

age conveys succinctly the concept of tobacco as a transformative product for not just women but society as a whole. The cigarette solves gender troubles, social conflicts, and class antagonisms. Like the modern city, Talisman throws people together, and as a progressive commodity it could unite Russian smokers into an equal partnership of consumers.

A large, male figure standing on a podium, which still further emphasizes his height and authority, dominates the center of the poster. Draped in a golden robe over a blue tunic with alchemic symbols scattered across it, this magical figure serves as a transition—a portal—between the two crowds

Figure 4. Courtesy of the Russian State Library.

at his sides. The alchemist's power rests in the box of cigarettes, which he distributes freely to the crowd around him. His wand takes the form of a large cigarette, and its placement connects tobacco to phallic power. The magician's gestures mirror iconic forms, transforming him into a Christ of the modern age. On the left, the sick, the lame, and the blind all clamor for attention as the tobacco messiah scatters cigarettes like petals before the distressed. Other elements of the figure draw him away from sacred imagery to more comical cant. The beard, mustache, and hair flying away in disarray along with his too short robe, spindly ankles, and pink booties all give an air of head-to-toe farce that destroys any hints of staid sanctity.

The otherworldly magician does more than herald the factory's reopening; he presides over the contested sphere of tobacco's meaning for health

and gender. In the late nineteenth century, tobacco's dangers were still not fully known, thus a manufacturer could produce a poster that trumpeted the healing effects of smoking. The maladies on display on the left of the poster range from blindness and baldness to the invalid on the chair in the foreground, who clearly suffers from a toothache and indigestion. Behind the poor fellow in the chair, a threesome under the yoke of another nineteenth-century set of ailments huddles together in misery and is tied together in meaning. The two women are cursed with the peculiar sexual frailties of the late Victorian period. The woman on the left swoons in the throes of hysteria, a symptom of female hyper-sexuality; the woman on the right suffers from lack of sexual contact and subsequently has withered into an old crone. In between these two women of too easy and uneasy virtue stands their pale, trembling, and desiccated male companion. The stooped shoulders, concave chest, limp, phallus-like hand, and general frailty imply, in the context of his companions, that he suffers from the nervous disease of the modern age—neurasthenia.

The Talisman advertisement counters health experts' warnings by implying the product enhanced potency and cured sexual maladies. To the right, a crowd of fulsome, virile individuals mixes amiably, chats energetically, and preens happily all while enveloped in a dense cloud of smoke that mills promiscuously through the scene. The two most assured figures—the man and woman in the foreground—stare directly at the viewer. They challenge the audience to interpret them and mirror, yet contrast, the passive hysteric and neurasthenic of the left-hand side. The man sports a similar style of suit, collar, and hat, but his florid complexion, plumpness, and confidence imbue his image with glowing health and prosperity. The woman has features comparable to her invalid counterpart but is now invigorated by health as indicated by her lovely "blood and cream" complexion. Her clothing does not imply an aggressive radical, but her stare is almost brazen in its confrontation of the viewer. This is not, however, the gaze of the Oriental female, because the man behind her has the same look. Instead, the Talisman woman is a smoker equally able to look at the viewer as the male. The placement and pose of the smoking man and woman goad the viewer to answer the question of virility and smoking. The woman's hands are both placed suggestively—one clasps a rather prominent and obvious umbrella while the other is situated in front of but still over the genitals of the male in an evocative cupping where the cigarette is obscured. With these gestural and spatial signals, the satisfied look of the smokers takes on sexual meaning.[63]

The cast of characters on the left and right convey a message not just of tobacco consumption's therapeutic effects but its possible benefits to society. On the left, pallid features, canes, and bandages bind the ill in

democratic suffering. On the right, ruddy complexions and an invasive haze unite the Russian city in a democracy of desire fulfilled—from the rural woman's kerchiefed head in the background to the worker in peak cap and the lower class woman in the middle ground and on to the more affluent figures of the foreground. The price chart at bottom, which hints at the individualization allowed through brand choice, belies the leveling effects of tobacco.[64] Listed are cigarettes not just with and without filter, but those more expensive (Direktorsha and Salonnyia at 100 for a ruble) and more affordable (like Evropiskiia at 100 for 60k; Buket at 100 for 50k). The presence of females among the smokers indicates that at least one of these varieties might be marketed for women.

The distinctive clothing of the figures at right indicates the advertisement was made for the Russian market. Class, gender, and experience of the urban milieu separate the crowd, but all that is overcome and in both sickness and health they are brought together by Talisman. While other print advertisements touted the leveling effects of their product, few stooped so low as to allow women into the society of smokers.[65] But in the Talisman poster, the crowd, the prices, and the circling fog together clarify that the cigarette was a luxury that even the lowliest could taste and with which each could transcend their background and enter into an idyllic community in the clouds—hindered by neither gender nor class.

Conclusion

While statistical evidence is impossible to obtain, pamphlets decrying female smoking, speeches against women's tobacco use, special women's brands and accessories, and foreign accounts all indicate that larger numbers of women smoked and used other forms of tobacco in Russia than in the West. The move away from displaying exotic female smokers to less erotic imagery may have been an acknowledgment of the everyday nature of the habit. These posters, appearing decades before similar appeals in the West, are one more indication that there was a strong market for female tobacco products. The historian Louise McReynolds details a similar tolerance for women in Russian public life in her studies of female celebrity, and the Slavicist Beth Holmgren has shown that in some areas of the popular press women appear as equals to men.[66]

More remarkable than the presence of women are the attainments attributed to female consumers. In his investigation of British tobacco culture, Hilton argues that consumption, economic power, independence, connoisseurship, and individualism are central to the image of the male smoker in Britain.[67] Russian advertisements attribute the same to women smokers. In the "capitalist realist" portrait of the Russian, female smoker,

she chooses and even rolls her own cigarettes, enjoys them in public or in contemplative isolation, and distinguishes herself through her brand choice. The advertisements show Russian women as less circumscribed by domestic ideals and notions of female gentility than their western sisters.

Other historians have seen a similar reluctance by cultural and social authorities in the period to police gender boundaries and keep women in circumscribed, domestic roles. Laura Engelstein notes the hesitancy of doctors to pathologize homosexuality and prostitution, and Dan Healey illustrates the relatively moderate attitude towards hermaphrodites from medical authorities.[68] Both argue this is a response by doctors to the weakness of their profession in an autocratic society, but as shown here this more relaxed attitude in regards to patriarchal authority extended beyond the boundaries of the medical profession seemingly reaching tobacco advertisers and manufacturers, who assumedly invited women to sample their wares in part because they did not fear the negative reaction of their mostly male clientele. Advertisers were not just disinterested in protecting the prerogatives of the male connoisseur; they encouraged these attainments in the female. Perhaps the tradition of female smokers and ownership of large firms by women alongside the peculiar influence of absolutism on public life made depictions of powerful, smoking women less incendiary in Russia. At the turn of the century, Russia saw a public sphere invaded by exceedingly willful, dangerous, and sexually active women in print and fiction who occasioned great anxiety and made the women of the tobacco posters seem almost cute in their attention to bourgeois attainment.[69]

Not only did the Russian female smoker escape the gendered distinctions of consumption, she confounded medical and moral luminaries by overcoming the disruptive effects of tobacco on her frail, feminine physique. Instead of hysterics and neurotics puffing away without consideration, moderation, or taste, advertisements portrayed female smokers as controlled, discerning, and stable. Without sacrificing their femininity, women could indulge in masculine behaviors. The smoking woman in advertisements was neither a slave to the habit nor unfeminine; she was respectable, healthy, and modern.[70] This may indicate that western anti-smoking arguments, especially those that charged smoking sterilized women, had less hold in Russia.[71] While Russian advertising played with western themes, remarkably, the anti-smoking cause in Russia does not seem to have found success with any of these arguments.

Posters depict female smoking as acceptable, but the images promise more. Advertisers included women as full citizens of the consumer community with the hint of entrée into other arenas. Not only could they enjoy the invigorating effects of tobacco, they could now take on the markers of its use without shame and enter into the Russian society of smokers.

Instead of a conservative worldview, marketers sold a powerful role for women. In posters, women smoked alongside men. They smoked in their homes. They smoked outside. And they did so without shame. The posters contributed to the representation of the modern woman and validated the inclusion of her in mixed society and the urban scene. Even for the woman who chose not to smoke, these images of secure, strong, and independent female consumers had to be enticing.

Notes

This article was presented at the Ohio State University and at the St. Petersburg conference Gender Equality in Russia and benefitted from critiques at both events. Barbara Alpern Engel and Sally West also brought energetic and appreciated criticisms as reviewers for the *JWH*. My colleagues Lynda Coon, Michael Pierce, Matt Romaniello, Beth Schweiger, and Kathy Sloan commented on drafts and listened to endless "ideas" about smoking. The University of Illinois, the Kennan Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, and the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Arkansas provided support.

[1]*Gilzy* were cardboard tubes packed with the consumer's own tobacco.

[2]The highly contrasted figure with dark outlines recalls the wood block inspiration for many post-impressionists.While unsigned, the print may have been by a famous artist, as many produced advertisements for pay, see Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd, eds. *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution: 1881–1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 149–152. Nina Baburina and Svetlana Artamonova date the poster 1910s *Russkii reklamnyi plakat* (Moscow: Kontakt-kul'tura, 2001), Plate 40.

[3]In nineteenth-century Russian, the term "cigarette" meant a cigarillo. The Russian cigarette— the cardboard-paper-wrapped *papirosy*—first appeared in records in 1844. "Tabak" *Entsiklopedicheskie slovar'* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'skoe delo, 1901), 32: 429. Distinctions evaporated over time with *papirosy* and cigarettes used almost interchangeably.

[4]Gerard S. Petrone, *Tobacco Advertising: The Great Seduction* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 1996), 221–2, 275. "Oriental" smoking featured heavily in art from Delacroix and others, see Ivan Davidson Kalmar, "The *Houkah* in the Harem: On Smoking and Orientalist Art," in *Smoke: A Global History of Smoking*, Sander L. Gilman and Zhou Xun, eds. (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 218–229.

[5]Sally West notes nineteenth-century Russian sellers displayed images of hookahs, Turks, or American Indians, *I Shop in Moscow: Advertising and the Creation of Consumer Culture in Late Tsarist Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011), 24–5. Petrone, *Tobacco Advertising*, 275; Matthew Hilton, *Smoking in British Popular Culture, 1800–2000*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 150–151.

[6]Carol Benedict, *Golden-Silk Smoke: A History of Tobacco in China, 1550–2010* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 211.

[7]I appreciate the encouragement of Rochelle Goldberg Ruthchild and the helpful materials of her *Equality and Revolution: Women's Rights in the Russian, Empire, 1905–1917* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), 1–10.

[8]Michael Schudson, *Advertising, the Uneasy Persuasion: Its Dubious Impact on American Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 209–33.

[9]Roland Marchand, *Advertising and the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), xix–xx.

[10]West, *I Shop in Moscow*, 77–90.

[11]Jews were identified with tobacco from their part in the early trade, Sander L. Gilman, "Jews and Smoking," in *Smoke*, Sander L. Gilman and Zhou Xun, eds., 278–285. For Russian advertising, West, "Smokescreens: Tobacco Manufacturers Projections of Class and Gender in Late Imperial Russian Advertising," in *Tobacco in Russian History and Culture: From the Seventeenth Century to the Present*, eds. Matthew P. Romaniello and Tricia Starks (New York: Routledge, 2009), 102–119.

[12]West, *I Shop in Moscow*, 110-21. James L. West, "The Riabushinsky Circle: *Burzhuaziia* and *obshchestvennost'* in Late Imperial Russia," in *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia*, eds. Edith W. Clowes, Samuel D. Kassow, and James L. West (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 39–56.

[13]Igor Bogdanov, *Dym otechestva, ili kratkaia istoriia tabakokureniia* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2007), 178–9.

[14]West, *I Shop in Moscow*, 28–34, 52–61.

[15]Richard Kluger, *Ashes to Ashes: America's Hundred-Year Cigarette War, the Public Health, and the Unabashed Triumph of Philip Morris* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 19–20.

[16]R. A. Brokgauz and I. A. Efron, eds. *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar XXXII*, (St. Petersburg: I.A.Efron, 1901), 433; Iu. P. Bokarev, "Tobacco Production in Russia: The Transition to Communism," in *Tobacco in Russian History,* 149; Tricia Starks, "Red Star/Black Lungs: Anti-Tobacco Campaigns in Twentieth-Century Russia," *Journal of the Social History of Alcohol and Drugs* 21, no. 1 (Fall 2006): 50–68.

[17]Hilton notes a similar effect in Britain, *Smoking in British Popular Culture,* 85.

[18]Jordan Goodman notes this milder smoke may have encouraged new smokers "Webs of Drug Dependence: Towards a Political History of Smoking and Health," in *Ashes to Ashes: The History of Smoking and Health* ed. by S. Lock, L. A. Reynolds and E. M. Tansey (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), 16.

[19]Jordan Goodman, *Tobacco in History: The Cultures of Dependence* (London: Routledge, 1993), 5–6.

[20]West, *I Shop in Moscow*, 111–112.

[21]Hilton, *Smoking in British Popular Culture,* 3–5.

[22]Jarrett Rudy, *The Freedom to Smoke: Tobacco Consumption and Identity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 6, 14–15.

[23]West, *I Shop in Moscow*, 4–8; Barbara Alpern Engel, *Breaking the Ties that Bound: The Politics of Marital Strife in Late Imperial Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 4.

[24]Engel, *Breaking the Ties that Bound,* 170.

[25]Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (1966 repr. London: Routledge, 2002), passim, esp. 141–59.

[26]Anthropologist Daniel Miller argues that bodies and things are not so easily differentiated as semioticians imply. Miller, *Stuff* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), passim, esp. 12–41.

[27]Alain Corbin details how tobacco marked lower class bodies in his seminal *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 149–51.

[28]Rudy explains that the smoking jacket and hat were used to keep the smell from offending the wife in *The Freedom to Smoke*, 32. Hilton, *Smoking in British Popular Culture.* 138–156.

[29]Preis, *Tabak,* 16.

[30]Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant,* 16, 142, 195–6, 208.

[31]This advice indicates disquiet with places where men and women of different classes mingled. A. Komilfil'do, *Khoroshii ton. Sbornik pravil, nastavlenii i sovetov, kak sleduet vesti sebia v raznykh sluchiiakh domashnoi i obshchestvennoi zhizni, s risunkama* (Moscow: Konovalov, 1911) as referenced in Louise McReynolds, *Russia at Play: Leisure Activities at the End of the Tsarist Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 55.

[32]Rudy, *The Freedom to Smoke*, 6, 14–15.

[33]Matthew P. Romaniello, "Muscovy's Extraordinary Ban on Tobacco" in *Tobacco in Russian History*, 9–25.

[34]Matthew P. Romaniello and Tricia Starks, "Tabak: An Introduction," in *Tobacco in Russian History*, 1–8.

[35]Leo Tolstoy, *Why Do Men Stupefy Themselves?: And Other Writings* (Blauvelt, NY: Strength Books, 1975).

[36]Nik. Pav. Preis, *Tabak—Vrag chelovechestva (Avto-kompiliativnyi sbornik)* (Khar'kov: Pechatnoe delo, 1902), 25.

[37]A. Appolov, comp. *Perestanem kurit! Chto takoe tabak i kokoi vred ot nego byvaet* No. 148 (Moscow: Tip. I. D. Sytin, 1904), 18.

[38]For tobacco, culture, and medicine in the early modern period, Matthew P. Romaniello, "Smoke, Sex, and 'Masculine' Women: Tobacco in the Early Modern World" unpublished paper presented at the Women's Studies Forum, presented 14 November 2008, University of Hawaii at Manoa, cited with permission of author.

[39]A. I. Il'inskii (Dr.) *Tri iada: Tabak, alkogol (vodka) i sifilis* 2-oe izd. (Moscow: Barkhudarian, 1898), 1; N. P. Preis, *Tabak i vino—Vragi chelovechestva* 5-oe izd. (Khar'khov: Pechatnoe delo, 1902), 1–3, 18; Bek (Prof), *Kurenie v obshchedostupnom izlozhenii* Bezplatnoe prilozhenie k zhurnalu "Narodnoe zdravie" No 25 (St. Peterburg: St. Peterburgskaia Elektorpechatnia, 1902), 34; A. V. *Shto govoriat uchenye liudi o kurenii tabaka* (St. Peterburg: Aleks.-Nevsk. O-va trezvosti, 1914), 9.

[40]Bek, *Kurenie*, 34.

[41]Arsenii (Arkhimandrit), *Bros'te kurit' tabak'* (Moscow: A. I. Snegireva, 1907), 3.

[42]These arguments also appeared in the west, see Rudy, *The Freedom to Smoke,* 25.

[43]Preis, *Tabak,* 16.

[44]A. V. *Shto govoriat' uchenye liudi*, 9.

[45]Konstantine Klioutchkine, "'I Smoke, Therefore I Think,' Tobacco as Liberation in Russian Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture," in *Tobacco in Russian History*, 97. Benedict finds the same concerns in China, in *Golden-Silk Smoke,* 75–87, 199.

[46]West, *I Shop in Moscow*, 151–77.

[47]Nikolaos A. Chrissidis, "Sex, Drink, and Drugs: Tobacco in Seventeenth-Century Russia," in *Tobacco in Russian History*, 26–43.

[48]Klioutchkine, "'I Smoke, Therefore I Think,'" 84, passim 83–101.

[49]Barbara Alpern Engel, *Mothers and Daughters: Women of the Intelligentsia in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 64, 80, 114; Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism, 1860–1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 102; Klioutchkine, "'I Smoke, Therefore I Think,'" 96–98.

[50]Petrone, *Tobacco Advertising,* 212–14.

[51]Juliann Sivulka, *Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes: A Cultural History of American Advertising* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1998), 86–88. Women painted some of the Job posters, and their images do impart more reality to the female smoker, see Dolores Mitchell, "Women and Nineteenth-Century Images of Smoking," in *Smoke: A Global History of Smoking* eds. Sander L. Gilman and Zhou Xun (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 300, 302.

[52]Petrone notes that even the mildly charged visions of Turkish women smoking did not begin to appear until after 1905 in advertising in the United States, in *Tobacco Advertising,* 221–2. Mitchell shows caricatures as the standard, 294–303.

[53]Hilton, *Smoking in British Popular Culture,* 150–151.

[54]Petrone, *Tobacco Advertising,* 275.

[55]Talisman (Fig 4) was the earliest, dated example featuring a female smoker in the collection. The collection is not exhaustive, but 1887 was nearly the earliest of any of the library's holding. It likely was one of, if not the first, to feature a female smoker.

[56]Benedict depicts a lively Chinese women's tobacco culture, which erodes over the course of the twentieth century, but figures for women in advertisements are not reported, in Benedict, *Golden-Silk Smoke*, 208–10.

[57]Engel, *Breaking the Ties that Bound,* 80–100, 143–8, 156.

[58]West, "Smokescreens," 103.

[59]Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de Siècle Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 6.

[60]Hilton's chapter, "Good Companions: Bourgeois Man and the Divine Lady Nicotine," teases this idea out through the centuries and in many different art forms, in *Smoking in British Popular Culture,* 17–36.

[61]West details tobacco ardor in newspapers, but it is wives and lovers that lose out, *I Shop in Moscow*, 119–21. Rudy notes a similar trope in Canadian advertising, in *The Freedom to Smoke,* 34–35.

[62]The isolation could be exclusionary or a response to the tropes of portraiture, see Beth Holmgren, "Gendering the Icon: Marketing Women Writers in Fin-De-Siècle Russia," in *Russia, Women, Culture*, eds. Helena Goscilo and Beth Holmgren (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 330–1.

[63]Thomas W. Laqueur, *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation* (New York: Zone Books, 2004), 295.

[64]Benedict notes the ways marketers created a "democratization of desire" across price points, in *Golden-Silk Smoke,* 147.

[65]West, "Smokescreens," 110–111.

[66]Louise McReynolds, "The Incomparable Anastasiia Vial'tseva and the Culture of Personality," in *Russia, Women, Culture*, 276, 279, 281; Holmgren, "Gendering the Icon," 322–3.

[67]Hilton, *Smoking in British Popular Culture,* 3–4; on connoisseurship, see 18–31; on individual consumption, see 35–36.

[68]Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, 210–11, 228–29, 296–98 as quoted in Dan Healey, *Bolshevik Sexual Forensics: Diagnosing Disorder in the Clinic and Courtroom, 1917–1939* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009), 138.

[69]Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, 359–420.

[70]Literary portrayals of smoking women became more associated with independence and power after the 1880s, and these women were increasingly seen as respectable, see Klioutchkine, "'I Smoke, Therefore I Think,'" 98–99.

[71]Benedict argues that anti-tobacco agitation was instrumental in decreasing female smoking in twentieth-century China, in *Golden-Silk Smoke*, 211.