

# Visualizing the Enemy: Anti-American Propaganda in Soviet Georgian Political Caricature

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100300259>

Received: 12 March 2026; Accepted: 17 March 2026; Published: 03 April 2026

## ABSTRACT

This article examines anti-American propaganda in Soviet Georgian political caricature during the early Cold War period, with particular attention to works created by Mikheil Chiaureli and published in the satirical magazine “Niangi.” The study argues that caricature in Soviet Georgia functioned not merely as humorous illustration but as an important instrument of ideological communication embedded within the wider propaganda system of the Soviet state. By combining art-historical analysis, visual semiotics, and historical context, the article explores how exaggerated bodies, symbolic props, compositional distortion, and accompanying texts were used to construct hostile images of Western political leaders, especially Harry S. Truman and Ernest Bevin. The research is based on archival work conducted in the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia and in the Art Palace – the Georgian State Museum of Theatre, Cinema and Music, as well as on the study of Georgian satirical periodicals published between 1900 and 1950. The article situates the Georgian material within broader debates on the political force of satire, the visual culture of the Cold War, and the role of caricature in shaping public perception. It demonstrates that Soviet Georgian caricature translated international political conflict into emotionally legible visual narratives for a Georgian-speaking readership and contributed to the formation of a stable ideological image of the West as aggressive, deceptive, and morally degraded. In doing so, the study highlights the value of Georgian satirical graphics as a major yet still insufficiently studied source for understanding twentieth-century visual propaganda. It also demonstrates that Georgian satirical material deserves a more prominent place in international scholarship on Soviet visual culture because it reveals how local media adapted global ideological narratives for regional audiences.

**Keywords:** Political caricature; Soviet propaganda; Cold War visual culture; Georgian satire; Niangi; Mikheil Chiaureli

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to show how political caricature published in Georgian humorous periodicals during the first half of the twentieth century both reflected and shaped major historical transformations. The central focus is anti-American propaganda in Soviet Georgian caricature, especially in the works of Mikheil Chiaureli published in the satirical magazine “Niangi.” More broadly, however, the study is concerned with the place of caricature in the history of Georgian visual culture and with the ways in which satire became an ideologically effective artistic language in periods of political crisis.

Political caricature is often treated as a minor or secondary genre, a merely entertaining by-product of journalism. Yet this view overlooks its unique capacity to condense large political processes into direct and memorable visual form. By means of exaggeration, deformation, ridicule, and symbolic simplification, caricature can communicate complex political meanings rapidly, sometimes more rapidly than prose. Because it unites image and implication, and often image and text, it possesses an unusual ability to influence emotion, sharpen social attitudes, and shape the public perception of political actors and institutions.

This insight is especially important in the context of the twentieth century. The first half of that century witnessed war, revolution, ideological polarization, and mass politics on an unprecedented scale. These processes radically expanded the role of visual media. Posters, cinema, illustrated magazines, and caricatures became part of the machinery through which societies interpreted conflict and power. Satire did not remain outside politics, it became one of the forms through which politics was dramatized and made visible.

In the Soviet context, caricature acquired a double character. On the one hand, it retained the energetic visual language of mockery, grotesque embodiment, and symbolic compression that characterized modern political satire more generally. On the other hand, it increasingly became integrated into the state's propaganda system. As a result, the political targets of satire were carefully structured by ideological priorities. The West, and especially the United States, could be represented as dangerous, hypocritical, and predatory; the Soviet system, by contrast, was positioned as morally justified, historically progressive, and threatened by external aggression.

The Georgian case is especially revealing. Located at the crossroads of Eastern Europe and Western Asia, Georgia developed a lively satirical press in the late imperial and early Soviet periods. By the early twentieth century, caricature had become an important medium for commenting on social inequality, local politics, cultural conflict, and foreign policy. After the Sovietization of Georgia, however, the institutional frame of satire changed. The new political order did not eliminate humorous graphics; instead, it redirected them. Satire became one of the channels through which official ideology was circulated in locally intelligible form.

Despite the importance of this material, Georgian political caricature remains insufficiently studied in international scholarship. Much of the existing discussion has come from literary studies and journalism rather than from art history. The present article seeks to contribute to this field by combining close visual reading with historical contextualization. It asks how Soviet Georgian caricature constructed anti-American propaganda narratives, what artistic means it used, and how these images functioned in relation to a readership living within conditions of censorship and informational restriction. The study employs an interdisciplinary methodological approach combining art-historical analysis, visual semiotics, comparative observation, and historical contextualization.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Georgian satirical graphics have only recently begun to receive sustained scholarly attention, and the field remains relatively underdeveloped. In many earlier studies, caricature has been examined primarily within the broader framework of satirical literature or journalism rather than as an independent visual practice with its own formal and ideological structures. As a result, much of the existing scholarship provides valuable contextual information but offers limited visual and art-historical analysis. Revaz Mishveladze's work is a significant contribution in terms of documenting Georgian print culture. In the twenty-fourth volume of his collected works, he provides detailed information about periodicals, their publication history, editorial structures, and key figures (Mishveladze, 2013). However, his approach remains largely descriptive and focused on literary aspects, leaving the visual language of caricature insufficiently explored. This highlights a broader tendency within Georgian scholarship to prioritize textual over visual analysis.

Similarly, Gizo Nishnianidze's study of satire within the revolutionary context offers important insights into the ideological function of humor in Soviet Georgian culture (Nishnianidze, 1971). His work helps to clarify how satire could be mobilized as a political tool. Nevertheless, it does not engage deeply with the visual strategies of caricature, such as composition, symbolism, or exaggeration. Journalistic writings by Mark Kipnisi, Otar Chkhartishvili, and Otar Sepiashvili are also valuable for preserving historical observations about satirical publications and artists, yet they tend to lack systematic analytical frameworks.

From an art-historical perspective, Mary Karbelashvili's research represents a more relevant approach, as it situates caricature within the broader development of Georgian graphic art. Her discussion of Oskar Schmerling is particularly important, demonstrating that Georgian caricature had already developed a sophisticated visual language before the Soviet period. However, even in this case, the Cold War period and its ideological implications are not examined in detail. More recent research supported by the Shota Rustaveli National Science

Foundation has begun to systematize Georgian caricature as a historical and artistic phenomenon. Scholars such as N. Chogoshvili, I. Abesadze, K. Darchia, and S. Chanturidze have contributed to the recovery of archival material and to the recognition of caricature as an important visual source. Irine Abesadze's work on the origins of Georgian caricature is especially valuable for understanding the emergence of visual satire within local print culture. However, these studies still focus primarily on historical reconstruction and less on the analytical interpretation of visual propaganda. In contrast, international scholarship provides a more developed theoretical framework for understanding caricature as a form of political communication.

Eric Hobsbawm's *The Age of Extremes* offers a broad historical context for the ideological conflicts of the twentieth century (Hobsbawm, 1994), while Margaret MacMillan and Piers Brendon analyze the geopolitical tensions that shaped modern political narratives (MacMillan, 2014; Brendon, 2008). However, these works do not address visual media in detail. Studies specifically focused on political caricature, such as Victor Navasky's *The Art of Controversy* and Richard Scully's research on political cartoons, emphasize the emotional and ideological power of visual satire (Navasky, 2013; Scully, 2015).

These scholars demonstrate that caricature is not merely a humorous form, but a medium capable of shaping public perception and political discourse. Nevertheless, their analyses are largely centered on Western contexts, leaving Soviet and especially Georgian caricature underrepresented. Therefore, despite the existence of valuable historical and theoretical studies, there remains a clear gap in the scholarship. Georgian political caricature of the Cold War period has not been sufficiently analyzed as a visual and ideological system in its own right. In particular, there is a lack of research that combines formal visual analysis with historical and political interpretation. This article addresses this gap by examining Soviet Georgian caricature as a distinct form of visual propaganda. Focusing on the works of Mikheil Chiaureli published in the satirical magazine "Niangi," the study applies an interdisciplinary approach that integrates art-historical analysis, visual semiotics, and historical contextualization. In doing so, it demonstrates how caricature functioned not only as illustration, but as an active instrument in the construction of ideological narratives during the Cold War.

## METHODOLOGY

For the creation of a solid methodological basis, archival materials were processed alongside a close reading of political caricatures published in Georgian periodicals. The study was designed to reconstruct the historical and political context in which political and social caricatures appeared in Georgian humorous print media in the first half of the twentieth century. Because the material under discussion is separated from the present by nearly a century, it was necessary to work not only with the images themselves but also with the broader textual and historical frameworks that made them intelligible at the time.

To achieve this, I relied on historical texts of different kinds—Soviet, foreign, and contemporary—as well as historiographical works that illuminate the key events, political movements, and social transformations of the period. The central aim was to understand the impulses behind the creation of particular caricatures and to identify the relationship between visual form and the changing socio-political dynamics of Georgia from the 1910s to the beginning of the 1950s.

A stylistic and comparative analysis was conducted on caricatures published in selected Georgian periodicals between 1900 and 1950. This analysis revealed both the thematic breadth of Georgian satirical graphics and the individual artistic manner of specific caricaturists. With attention to historical realities, the research also sought to establish a typology of political caricature—both domestic and foreign-policy related—as well as social caricature. The systematization of material and the selective identification of representative examples made it possible to determine the contribution of Georgian caricaturists to the development of Georgian satirical graphics more generally.

The research material was gathered primarily from the collections of the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia and from the holdings of the Art Palace—the Georgian State Museum of Theatre, Cinema and Music—where Mikheil Chiaureli's personal archive was also consulted. From the large body of humorous and satirical illustrated magazines published between 1900 and 1950, only those caricatures were selected that were

thematically significant, politically or socially distinctive, and especially revealing of an artist's stylistic individuality.

It should be noted that some years within this chronological span are underrepresented in the available material because the publication of certain journals was banned by censorship, and some magazines ceased publication for periods of time. Comparative analysis was therefore also used in order to identify connections and parallels between Georgian caricatures and caricatures published in accessible socialist and capitalist periodicals abroad. This comparative perspective was not designed to erase local specificity, but to clarify visual borrowings, shared satirical devices, and ideological divergences.

The content-analysis scheme used in the research included the following categories: title of publication, date, title of caricature, humorous context, historical circumstances, plot details, target groups of humor, technique, and intended satirical function. Particular attention was paid to the texts attached to caricatures, since captions, verses, and editorial notes frequently guide the reader's interpretation and are an integral part of the message. The methodological assumption underlying this article is that caricature must be read as a combined visual-verbal artifact, especially in politically controlled media environments.

The selection of Mikheil Chiaureli's works as a primary case study is not incidental, but based on both historical and analytical considerations. The broader research process involved the examination of numerous Georgian satirical periodicals from the first half of the twentieth century, through which several prominent caricaturists associated with Soviet propaganda were identified. Among them, Mikheil Chiaureli occupies a particularly significant position. Known primarily as a Soviet film director and a key figure in the production of state propaganda films, he also worked as a visual artist. The examination of his archival material revealed important aspects of his artistic approach and ideological perspective. Although Chiaureli did not produce a large number of caricatures, the existing works are highly representative of Cold War propaganda themes. These caricatures are especially valuable because they reflect the intersection of artistic practice and ideological function. From both an art-historical and thematic perspective, they provide insight into how Soviet visual culture constructed political narratives. For this reason, Chiaureli's works were selected as a focused case study within the broader corpus of Georgian political caricature.

Finally, although the psychological effect of political caricature can vary according to the subjectivity, education, and experience of the viewer, it was important from a retrospective standpoint to select themes that remain legible and relevant today. This makes it possible to assess both the immediate ideological function of the caricatures and their continuing interpretive value as historical documents.

## Historical Context

The history of caricature is itself a fascinating journey through the worlds of humor and satirical representation. In the broadest sense, caricature involves the exaggeration of a person's or subject's characteristic features. As a distinct mode of artistic expression, it took shape between the late medieval and Renaissance periods. Major changes occurred in the eighteenth century, when European artists increasingly used caricature to articulate social and political views. By the modern period, caricature had become closely linked to the press and thus to mass political communication.

Political caricature may appear at first glance to belong to the sphere of entertainment, but its principal function is often critical. It can draw attention to political processes, expose abuse of power, and encourage public engagement with issues that might otherwise remain abstract or inaccessible. Because satire attracts broad audiences through wit, ridicule, and visual immediacy, it is especially effective in raising awareness. Humor has the remarkable ability to bring seemingly secondary facts to the foreground and to reveal the political significance hidden within ordinary appearances.

This aspect has been stressed by a number of scholars. Victor Navasky notes that for many years art critics, historians, and even artists themselves often dismissed caricature and illustrated satire as unserious or childish forms. Yet, as he insists, under certain circumstances they possess a unique emotional power: they can disturb, irritate, anger, or disorient viewers, and precisely for that reason they can be politically potent (Navasky, 2013).

The same point may be formulated differently: tyrants and dishonest political actors often fear ridicule because satire is capable of exposing weakness, contradiction, and moral failure with devastating economy.

Political caricature also gains power from the interaction of image and text. The image intensifies the text's content, while text may anchor the image or introduce an additional comic layer. This combination permits caricaturists to exert considerable influence on viewers. In both the Soviet Union and the United States, caricature played a significant role in shaping political and social atmosphere. In Georgia, located at the intersection of Eastern Europe and Western Asia, political caricatures became increasingly visible from the 1900s onward, while social caricatures had appeared even earlier, for example in the Russian-language newspaper "Falanga" published in Tbilisi in the 1880s.

From the beginning of the twentieth century and throughout most of the Soviet period, political caricature in Georgia became a powerful ideological instrument. At the same time, caricatures often reflected the cultural values, norms, and anxieties of Georgian society and thus contributed to a broader socio-cultural picture of the period. Some Georgian journals cultivated political satire very consciously in order to strengthen Soviet propaganda narratives. The magazine "Niangi," launched in Tbilisi in 1923, is one of the clearest examples. After the forced Sovietization of Georgia, its political line became openly pro-government. Issue after issue contained anti-European and anti-Western caricatures and articles, insisting that the world beyond Soviet borders—the so-called imperialist-capitalist space—was undemocratic, dangerous, and morally decayed.

The visual demonstration of this worldview often took the form of caricatured portraits of foreign politicians. Through explicit and implicit symbolism, they were accused of provoking war, engaging in anti-democratic behavior, and threatening peace. As a publication linked to the editorial structures of the newspaper "Komunisti," "Niangi" was directly subordinated to the ideological line of the Soviet state. Yet even within such pressure, the magazine remained visually interesting, and artists found ways to work creatively within ideological constraints.

The Cold War intensified the political function of caricature. Satire that deviated from the official ideological line or criticized Soviet power itself was impermissible. What was needed instead were images capable of producing aggressive attitudes toward political opponents. In that context, caricature became a particularly effective means for shaping perception, since in a censored media environment viewers had limited access to alternative interpretations of international events. If a newspaper article still required some degree of reading and reflection, a caricature could govern mood almost instantaneously.

### **Case Study I: Truman's Rhapsody**

One of the clearest examples of anti-American propaganda in Georgian caricature is Mikheil Chiaureli's "Truman's Rhapsody," published in "Niangi" on 22 February 1948 (No. 13). The caricature is openly pro-Soviet and directed against the doctrine associated with United States President Harry S. Truman, a doctrine many historians identify as one of the strategic foundations of the Cold War. The image is designed to present Truman's involvement in Europe not as support, but as crude and manipulative intervention. This was precisely the angle that served Soviet ideological needs.

Historically, Truman's address to the U.S. Congress on 12 March 1947 proposed containment of Soviet expansion and the provision of economic and military support to countries under pressure. Greece and Turkey became the first recipients of aid under the doctrine. In American political rhetoric, this policy was framed as assistance designed to help those states resist communist expansion and stabilize fragile regional conditions. Soviet propaganda, however, sought to reinterpret the same policy as imperialist intervention motivated by the desire for global domination.

Chiaureli translates this ideological accusation into a vivid visual metaphor. The caricaturist skillfully operates with semicircular forms repeated rhythmically across the composition. The first such form is Truman's flexible and elongated body, which stretches from the American shore toward Europe. His unnaturally extended limbs reach two pianos positioned at the opposite end of the image. Both instruments have bombs attached to them, and each bears the name of a country: one is labeled Turkey and the other Greece. At first glance the president seems merely to be playing music, but the context makes the symbolism unmistakable. The artist is clearly

alluding to American military and humanitarian aid to Greece and Turkey, and he presents that aid in sharply negative terms.

The visual composition intensifies this argument. Not only Truman's body but even the horizon line echoes a curved, arch-like form, creating a compositional unity in which the body itself becomes the image's organizing principle. Truman's lean face is animated by an ironic smile. The formal structure and ideological message thus reinforce each other: elasticity becomes intervention, rhythm becomes manipulation, and theatrical performance becomes geopolitical violence.

The caricature is accompanied by a text written by the poet Karlo Kaladze, who was known for his loyalty to Soviet ideology. His verses mock Truman as an overreaching performer whose words conceal his true purpose. The poem compares the international situation to an absurd concert staged across the ocean. The effect is to fuse visual and verbal propaganda into one coherent message: the United States is not helping smaller countries but turning them into instruments in a destructive political performance.

What is especially important here is the way Chiaureli transforms foreign policy into bodily spectacle. The long body signifies territorial overreach; the pianos signify orchestration and performance; the bombs signify the hidden violence allegedly embedded in American policy. The caricature is therefore not only an attack on Truman as a person but also a compressed visual thesis about the nature of U.S. interventionism. It is an exemplary case of how Soviet Georgian satire translated global politics into emotionally persuasive visual form.



Figure 1. Mikheil Chiaureli, "Truman's Rhapsody," *Niangi*, 22 February 1948, No. 13.

### Case Study II: Builders Of the Temporary Committee

A second important work is Chiaureli's 1947 caricature "Builders of the Temporary Committee," which expresses a concealed but unmistakably aggressive attitude toward the United States, Great Britain, and the United Nations. In front of the UN building, Ernest Bevin and an "American uncle" figure construct a house of cards. This immediately unstable architectural metaphor conveys the claim that Western diplomacy rests on deception and fragility.

Ernest Bevin, who served as British Foreign Secretary from 1945 to 1951, played a central role in shaping postwar British foreign policy and was later associated with the creation of NATO. In Soviet discourse, he was presented as a negative figure closely aligned with anti-Soviet Western interests. The caricature responds to the creation of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) in 1947. Rather than presenting the committee as a serious diplomatic mechanism, Chiaureli depicts it as a fraudulent and temporary construction built by cynical political gamblers.

The style of the caricature is notable. Bevin's facial expression conveys aggressively heightened emotion. The image provides a vivid example of how propaganda could sow hostility through visual means. Karlo Kaladze again amplifies the image through verse, and a textual comment attached to the caricature suggests that the committee was created not to strengthen the United Nations but to weaken it. The verbal frame guides the viewer toward the intended ideological reading: Western political actors are not architects of peace, but schemers engaged in manipulation.

Historically, the Palestine question in 1947 involved great power politics, competing national projects, and the violent consequences of postwar territorial arrangements. The United States framed its role as constructive, but Soviet propaganda sought to represent Western involvement as self-interested and destabilizing. Chiaureli's card-house metaphor communicates that view effectively. The committee is shown as structurally unsound; the diplomatic process becomes a game of chance rather than a serious political undertaking.

In broader ideological terms, the caricature helps explain how the Soviet image of the West was built. The United States appears as a monstrous force threatening not only the Soviet system but the civilized world at large. This narrative was especially effective under conditions of informational vacuum. Because the Soviet Union strictly controlled the circulation of information, people were cut off from alternative realities, and distorted representations could become normalized in public consciousness. In such a setting, caricature was not a marginal art form; it was a central instrument in the construction of political perception.

The visual logic of the image is therefore both artistic and propagandistic. On the formal level, expressive faces, symbolic architecture, and simplified staging generate clarity and force. On the ideological level, the image turns diplomacy into gambling, multilateralism into fraud, and Western politics into a spectacle of instability. Like "Truman's Rhapsody," it demonstrates how local satirical art could be mobilized to stage the global Cold War in a specifically Georgian print context.

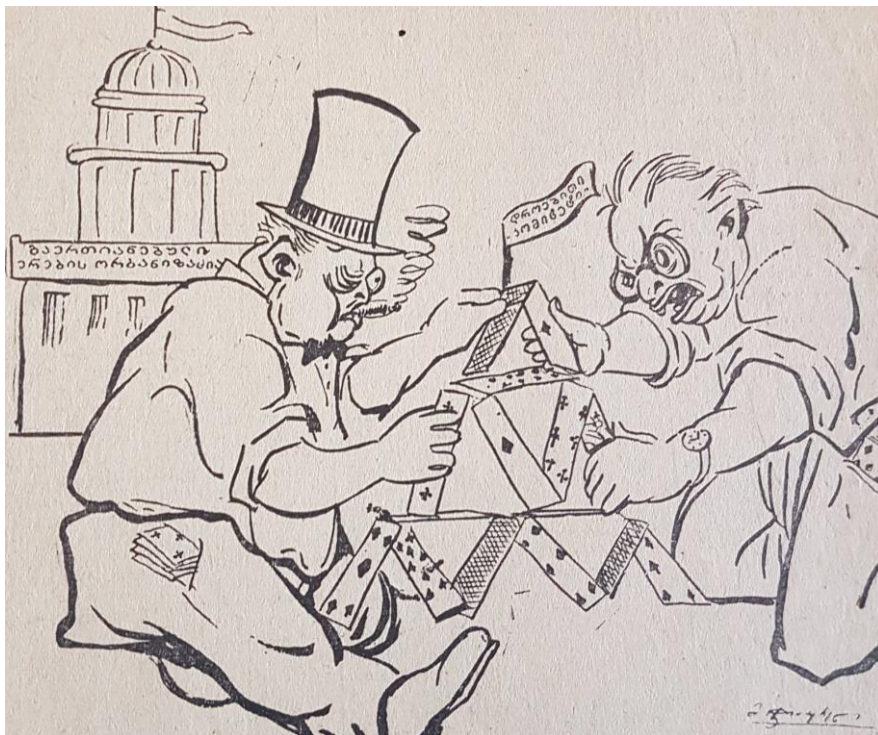


Figure 2. Mikheil Chiaureli, "Builders of the Temporary Committee," Niangi, 1947.

## DISCUSSION

The broader survey of Georgian political and social caricature from 1900 to 1950 reveals several important tendencies. First, Georgian caricaturists working in political and social satire frequently relied on grotesque representation as a way of ridiculing politicians or social types perceived as unacceptable. Beyond politics narrowly understood, they addressed economic inequality, social hardship, corruption, abuse of power, and the

moral contradictions of public life. The artistic language and symbolism used in these caricatures open a wide view onto the social development and cultural horizons of Georgian society.

The Soviet period fundamentally altered the institutional environment of satire. In “Niangi,” especially, the artistic language of caricature was increasingly shaped by the ideological demands of socialist realism. Even a slight deviation could become an object of censorship. Yet this does not mean that all artistic interest disappeared. Up to around 1935, social caricatures still appeared with considerable intensity, and alongside official propaganda some artists and satirists cautiously managed to produce veiled criticism of the regime or to preserve a degree of formal inventiveness.

Georgian caricature should be understood as part of a broader history of propaganda and misinformation. Soviet caricaturists often participated in the spread of false or heavily distorted images of political reality. In a system where information was tightly controlled and alternative accounts of international events were inaccessible, caricature could shape perception very powerfully. A citizen may have lived in poverty, but when propaganda constantly insisted that life elsewhere was even worse, the system could still seem defensible. Repeated visual messages about Western misery, corruption, and instability helped normalize such beliefs.

From today’s perspective, it is clear that in the Soviet period caricature played a role in the creation of an illusory reality. What newspaper prose might require the reader to process analytically, caricature could deliver immediately. It acted directly on mood and emotion. This was one of the state’s most effective propaganda weapons. Repetition of hostile visual stereotypes contributed to the formation of a durable enemy image in public consciousness.

At the same time, the Georgian material demonstrates real artistic complexity. Caricaturists worked with satire, irony, grotesque distortion, allegory, and symbolism, and for that reason caricature in Georgia was not only amusing but also socially and politically consequential. Georgian and non-Georgian artists working in Georgia played a decisive role in forming the visual narratives of their time. The development of Georgian political caricature reveals how the most difficult historical contradictions of the twentieth century could be absorbed into a graphic language that remained memorable, immediate, and visually inventive.

It is also worth noting that “Niangi” shows traces of broader artistic tendencies, including the influence of constructivist visual discipline, especially in the 1930s. This gave the magazine’s structure a greater sense of rigidity and graphic sharpness. Although “Niangi” and the German magazine “Simplicissimus” existed in very different political environments, certain stylistic and conceptual parallels may nevertheless be observed: sharp line, dynamic composition, and a strong tendency toward concentrated ideological messaging. Such similarities do not erase political difference, but they remind us that satirical graphics were shaped by transnational modern visual vocabularies even when those vocabularies were put to sharply different political ends.

A comparative perspective helps to clarify the position of Georgian caricature within the broader field of political satire. On the one hand, Georgian caricature shares important formal features with both Soviet and Western traditions. These include the use of exaggeration, symbolic imagery, visual metaphor, and simplified narrative structures in order to communicate complex political ideas in an accessible way.

However, the ideological function of caricature differs significantly across these contexts. In Western political cartoon traditions, satire often operates as a tool of criticism directed not only at external enemies but also at domestic political authority. This allows for a plurality of viewpoints and a more flexible use of humor.

In contrast, Soviet caricature, including Georgian examples, was largely integrated into the official ideological system. As a result, satire was primarily directed outward, targeting Western political leaders and reinforcing state narratives. The range of acceptable themes and interpretations was therefore more limited.

At the same time, Georgian caricature demonstrates certain local characteristics that distinguish it from both central Soviet and Western examples. These include the integration of poetic texts, specific compositional dynamics, and a visual language shaped by local artistic traditions. Thus, Georgian caricature can be understood as both part of the Soviet propaganda system and as a distinct cultural expression with its own stylistic identity.

Propagandistic caricatures loaded with false accusations continued in Georgia for decades, essentially until the collapse of the Soviet Union. Yet it should also be emphasized that artists and writers often worked creatively within difficult conditions. Their works remained preserved on the pages of famous journals, and this artistic legacy continues to resonate. The material reflected in satirical magazines once again confirms the enduring force of art: even when deeply entangled with ideology, it does not lose interpretive power. For the art historian, this is precisely why caricature matters so much.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Soviet anti-American propaganda in Georgian political caricature was not an accidental or peripheral phenomenon. It was one of the principal strategies through which the propaganda machine of the USSR cultivated hostile and aggressive attitudes toward the United States and the West more broadly. The satirical magazine “Niangi” played a particularly important role in this process. Although the journal was published in Georgia and addressed a mainly Georgian-language readership, one of its central ideological functions was the demonization of foreign politicians and the construction of a stable image of the enemy.

The political caricatures published in “Niangi” deliberately represented Western actors—especially Americans—as morally degraded and politically dangerous figures. Through such images, a stereotyped enemy was created, one that appeared to threaten the stability and peace of the Soviet order. These visual strategies served systematic disinformation. They produced a false reality in which the Soviet Union could appear at once as an innocent victim and as the leading force of world history. Caricature thus became not merely a weapon of humor but a major ideological instrument through which Soviet propaganda consolidated political discourse.

From an art-historical perspective, the Soviet-period Georgian satirical tradition must be assessed with full recognition of both its constraints and its formal achievements. The genre’s demands encouraged the use of grotesque expressiveness, deformation, and exaggeration, while the broader visual culture of the time introduced new compositional and stylistic resources. Despite the pressure of censorship and propaganda, artists still managed to create works of striking visual force. Their legacy remains important not only for the history of Georgian art but also for the study of twentieth-century visual propaganda. Information reflected on the pages of satirical journals once again confirms the immense power of art—a power that does not lose relevance over time.

Future research can build on this material by examining wider comparative constellations: Georgian caricature and other Soviet republican satirical journals, Soviet and Western cartoon traditions, and the intersection of propaganda with local visual idioms. Such work would deepen our understanding of how ideological conflict was visualized, localized, and emotionally transmitted through the medium of caricature.

## Ethical Considerations

This research does not involve human participants or animals; therefore, ethical approval was not required.

## Conflict Of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

## Data Availability

The archival and periodical materials used in this study are available in the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia, the Art Palace – Georgian State Museum of Theatre, Cinema and Music, and in the publications cited in the reference list.

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