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The “Kitchen Debate” Revisited: Abundance and Anti-domesticity in Cold War America

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ABSTRACT

This article examines two conflicting perspectives on home cooking in Cold War America. The 1959 American National Exhibition in Moscow featured a vocal exchange between Richard Nixon and his Soviet rival Nikita Khrushchev, during a tour of a model American home. This “Kitchen Debate,” positioned American food and cooking as part of an outpouring of consumerism, demonstrating capitalist superiority by providing for the conveniences and comforts of housewives. In contrast, humorist Peg Bracken’s 1960 *I Hate to Cook Book* argued that American women could pursue a lifestyle and self-identity that didn’t focus on daily meals or culinary panache. Although her recipes (relying on mixes and canned ingredients) were similar to other popular cookbook authors and relied on the same products showcased at the Moscow exhibition, Bracken differed from mainstream food writers and political ideologues, insisting that cooking was a tedious chore that should be side-stepped whenever possible.

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In July, 1959, at the height of the Cold War, U.S. Vice President Richard Nixon traveled to Moscow to meet his Soviet rival, Nikita Khrushchev. The setting for this superpower tete a tete wasn’t a nuclear arms summit or geopolitical crisis. Instead, the two leaders argued during the American National Exhibition in Moscow [hereafter ANEM], a huge showcase of American industrial and cultural output designed to overawe millions of Soviet visitors with visions of capitalist superabundance. One particularly tense exchange took place within a model of a suburban American home, labeled the RCA “Miracle Kitchen” and showcasing electrical appliances, color televisions, a washing machine, canned goods, and frozen foods, prompting American journalists to label the leaders’ conversation “the kitchen debate.”

Nixon biographer Rick Perlstein identifies this “surreal Cold War moment” as an expression of “American consumerist ideology.”¹ Likewise, historian Elaine Tyler May focuses her discussion of Cold War families on the model kitchen and its “peculiar notion of domestic tranquility in the midst of the cold war.” “This self-contained home,” she continues, “held out the promise of security in an insecure world. It also offered a vision of abundance and fulfillment.”²

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Nixon and Khrushchev took this claim of American consumerist superiority seriously. In his memoirs, Nixon reflected that the “Kitchen Clash with Khrushchev” was not mere posturing – “At stake was world peace and the survival of freedom.”³ Not to be outdone, Khrushchev chided American visitors for their smug superiority “You think the Russian people will be dumbfounded to see these things” on display at the ANEM, he remarked. But “Many things you’ve shown us are . . . not needed in life. They have no useful purpose.”⁴ Both leaders understood that the ANEM’s display of American abundance in general and kitchenware in particular was an attempt “to ‘win’ the cold war through global promotion of the ‘American way of life.’”⁵

Yet, at the same time, that Nixon was speaking in Moscow, an American woman was writing a book that would challenge this feature of Cold War identity. Humorist Peg Bracken, an Oregon journalist, published her bestselling *I Hate to Cook Book* [hereafter *IHTCB*] the following year as an anti-domesticity manifesto, rejecting Nixon’s celebration of kitchen gadgets and culinary bliss. Bracken begins the *IHTCB* by observing “Some women, it is said, like to cook. This is not a book for them. This book is for those of us who hate to, who have learned, through hard experience that some activities become no less painful through repetition: childbearing, paying taxes, cooking. This book is for those of us who want to fold our big dishwater hands around a dry Martini instead of a wet flounder, come the end of a long day.”⁶ In what follows, I examine these two contrasting views of the Cold War kitchen – the ANEM’s celebration of women as homemakers surrounded by abundance and convenience and Bracken’s witty anti-domesticity. Beneath its humor, the *IHTCB* carries a serious message, insisting that women could define their lives outside of the Cold War confines of the kitchen. At stake in these divergent visions of domesticity were fundamental questions of overlapping national and gender identities – could kitchen conveniences define Cold War American identity, and could women (following Bracken’s lead) express an identity apart from culinary pursuits?

“Everything from Biscuits to Boston Cream Pie”

Ellen Mickiewicz, reflecting on the ANEM for its fiftieth anniversary in 2009, called the exposition “the grandest, most complex, most ambitious cultural diplomacy project ever launched.” Mickiewicz, who had learned to speak Russian in college and served as a guide during the ANEM in 1959, noted that the showcase in Moscow’s Sokolniki Park featured more than 400,000 square feet of new buildings “filled with new, dazzling arrays of consumer goods” and stood out as “a project that would reconstruct American life and be crammed with its objects and ideas.”⁷ A cornucopia of food emphasized this display of superabundance. An ANEM press release promised “The aroma of fried chicken and freshly-baked pies will lead Soviet crowds to a busy kitchen at the American National Exhibition in Moscow” with U.S. companies General Mills and General Foods contributing “110 varieties of food adding up to seven tons” so that “Soviet visitors will see for themselves how an American housewife can dish up a full-course dinner in a matter of minutes using frozen foods and ready-mixes.”⁸

ANEM pavilions featured three kitchens, each emphasizing this dual promise – plentiful food prepared seemingly without effort. The volume and variety of food shipped to Moscow was staggering. ANEM organizers boasted that Muscovites would enjoy “beef pies, fish, turkey and chicken dinners, 32 different fruit and vegetable products, and many

other specialties.” For visitors with a sweet tooth, General Mills shipped “4,500 packages of mixes for cakes, frostings, cookies, cereals – everything from biscuits to Boston Cream Pie” all in an effort to demonstrate “the part that ‘convenience foods,’ the mixes and frozen products, play in the life of the average American homemakers and her family.”⁹ Newspaper coverage of the ANEM raved that American guides would conduct ongoing demonstrations of convenience foods and new culinary technology. “This on-the-spot look at kitchen activities of a U.S. homemaker will help meet the exhibit objectives” wrote one journalist, suggesting that one goal of American food displays was to inspire Russian onlookers with a mixture of awe and envy at the “dessert mixes and frozen foods” alongside “appliances found in typical American homes.”¹⁰ A Soviet visitor, taking in the overwhelming scene of American consumerism compared the ANEM to “a haberdashery store ... It resembles an advertisement more than an exhibition.” Another Sokolniki observer noted “Leaving the Exhibition I carry with me an impression of glittering metal saucepans.”¹¹

Believing the ANEM could “have an explosive effect upon the Soviet public and lead to important political consequences,” U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, Llewellyn Thompson, cheered the exhibition. Its ultimate goal, Thompson hoped, would be “to sow dissatisfaction and dissent among Moscow’s visitors, showing them that ‘the US has superiority in both quality and quantity in all aspects of its cultural and economic life.’”¹² Nixon beamed when *Time Magazine* described his handling of the “Kitchen conference” as “a ringing retort to the Soviet internal propaganda” that reflected American values and standard of living.¹³

The exhibition’s description of food assumed a militaristic, even menacing tone. The commonplace food items in Americans’ refrigerators and pantries became an ideological arsenal when shipped to Sokolniki park, important armaments in “an all-out war of ideas.”¹⁴ Under the innocuous headline “Russians to Learn American Cooking,” one journalist described how two home economists “will fly to Russia this summer armed with a unique cold war weapon—348 pounds of brownie cake mix and enough frozen concentrate to make 2,400 quarts of orange juice.”¹⁵ One of these women, Marylee Duehring, confided “Americans and Russians seem to have one thing in common – they love chocolate.”¹⁶ The ANEM sponsoring agency, the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), comprised of industrialists and diplomats insisted in its final report that embarking on the exhibition to Moscow meant “venturing into the very heart of the Soviet Republic.”¹⁷ The American kitchen, “tricked out with Tupperware and modern labor-saving devices” had become “a central front in the war on Communism.” This was true not only at the ANEM but throughout Europe as well, since these goods were “redeployed as Cold War weapons” in the form of Marshall Plan exports “as an antidote to the Soviet Block” making the U.S. “a civilization of bathtubs and Frigidaires.”¹⁸

“Manifest Domesticity”

Despite the ideological posturing of the rival superpower leaders, Nixon and Khrushchev had considerable overlap in their domestic agendas. Robert Haddow points out that, like Nixon, Khrushchev saw an improved standard of living as a critical matter of policy: “Khrushchev had risen to power by promising more production of basic amenities ... [and] promised the Soviet people more consumer goods, an increase in the minimum

wage.” Indeed, Khrushchev once distanced himself from Communist Party ideologues, by arguing “You cannot put theory into your soup or Marxism into your clothes.”¹⁹ Despite Soviet leaders’ halting efforts, the USIA, displaying a “shining cornucopia” of products, particularly “food and clothing” and “Bird’s Eye frozen ready meals” expressed Americans’ superior standard of living and consumer comforts.²⁰ Noting the importance of the home in American ideology, Amy Kaplan has coined the term “Manifest Domesticity” (a play on the term Manifest Destiny coined by John O’Sullivan in 1845) to describe the creation of “an American empire by imagining the nation as a home at a time when its geopolitical borders were expanding rapidly.”²¹ While Kaplan focuses primarily in the mid nineteenth century, particularly the Mexican-American War, this concept of a home-centered empire also applies to the post World War II era of the 1900s, as evidenced by the ANEM’s “Miracle Kitchen” and outpouring of culinary conveniences.

In both centuries, Manifest Domesticity emphasized a specific vision of the archetypal white, middle-class American housewife. While there were a small number of black volunteer guides at the ANEM, the USIA consistently diminished black experiences in showcasing the bountiful American suburbs, most of which were racially segregated. U.S. diplomats, in turn, fended off questions from Muscovites inquiring about civil rights, and USIA planners canceled a proposed clothing demonstration during the ANEM, because it planned to feature both black and white fashion models. As Tomas Tolvaisas notes in his discussion of Cold War exhibitions during the 1950s and 1960s, “Among U.S. domestic matters, the issue of race relations came up more often than did politics, economics, science, technology, culture, religion, welfare, and social life.”²² While Tolvaisas contends that Soviet visitors overlooked U.S. advances in Civil Rights, it is equally true that exhibition planners side-stepped racial inequality by presenting white housewives as both the beneficiaries and advocates for Americanism.

Nixon, in particular, relied on this image of the white middle-class American homemaker during his Kitchen Debate with Khrushchev and, later, when pursuing a “southern strategy” based on white supremacy during his presidential campaigns in the following decade.²³ Ironically, Peg Bracken, a middle-class, white wife and mother, would seem to exemplify Nixon’s celebration of the white suburban housewife. Bracken’s rejection of Cold War domesticity thus makes her writing not simply a witty retort to Nixon’s Kitchen Debate, but an affront to U.S. culinary diplomacy and Nixon’s political agenda – a rejection of Nixon’s Cold War ideology by someone who should have been its exemplar. In the same way, ANEM organizers showcased white suburban woman in culinary exhibitions – newsreel coverage and newspaper snapshots of the Kitchen Debate depicted only white visitors, exhibitors, or guests.²⁴

Moscow’s ANEM visitors responded to this culinary Manifest Domesticity with a mixture of reactions. As Mickiewicz points out, Soviets viewed some American meals with skepticism. “Guests didn’t like or understand frozen corn on the cob” she told me during an interview. “They thought it was food for animals.” There was also a logistical glitch – the U.S. frozen food company Birdseye (named for the innovator in quick-frozen technology, Clarence Birdseye) was shocking to Soviets – “They thought they were literally eating birds’ eyes.” Despite these setbacks, Mickiewicz reflected, the ANEM’s food displays largely fulfilled the exhibitions overall mission of showcasing typical American experiences. She suggested that neither the visitors nor the guides had “the

most elite kind of palates.” Rather, both the demonstrators and the foods they prepared in Moscow reflected Eisenhower’s vision that the ANEM should reflect life “on a streetcorner somewhere in the Midwest.” Ultimately, the pavilions, the huge structures, and the myriad of objects filling them made the ANEM a “monument to American creativity.”²⁵

Offering “A Taste of U.S.A. in Moscow,” exhibitors brought tons of “convenience products” (juice concentrate, frozen ready-to-eat meals, canned fruits and vegetables, heat-and-eat desserts, breads, and biscuits, and a variety of frozen meat and fish.)²⁶ One journalist covering the ANEM boasted “U.S. Frozen Foods Intrigue Soviets,” noting “the aroma, color, freshness and availability of the frozen vegetables and fruits was a constant source of amazement to visitors.” While American housewives have come to rely on these culinary staples “Yet, to the Soviet people this bit of Americana represents something very much out of the ordinary.”²⁷ Promising “samples of capitalist cooking,” demonstrators offered “112 different types [of] food items.”²⁸ And, while year-round availability of frozen fruits and vegetables was certainly a novelty, Mickiewicz recalls the one product that truly awed Moscow visitors – cakes made from hundreds of boxes of cake mix. “They were luscious looking.” Yet, ironically, visitors couldn’t actually taste these delicious offerings. While demonstrators like Mickiewicz initially distributed food samples, Moscow authorities objected, noting a U.S.-Soviet agreement that nothing be given away to Soviet visitors at the exhibition. As a result, in what likely seemed like a cruel irony to Muscovites eyeing the beautiful cakes and sweets, nearly all of the food prepared at the ANEM was shown and described to Russians but eaten by their American visitors.²⁹

“Far Behind in the Kitchen Competition”

The avalanche of ready mixes and convenience foods that helped make the ANEM “a runaway success” mirrored the transformation underway in Americans’ own pantries and refrigerators.³⁰ By the time Nixon traveled to Moscow in 1959, electric kitchen gadgets, heat-and-eat meals, and frozen entrees, desserts, and juice concentrates had become culinary staples in the booming American suburbs. As Paul Gansky points out in his study of American refrigeration, household refrigerator-freezers and similar appliances and the foods surrounding them, symbolized “family health and middle-class privilege through the preservation of an endless chilled feast of food.”³¹ While electric refrigerators had replaced older “ice boxes” in previous decades, these shining refrigerators became larger and assumed a more central role in preparing household meals as postwar Americans flocked to the suburbs following 1945. Per capita sales of canned and frozen foods nearly doubled from 1955–1960, even as similar sales in fresh produce declined. The average suburban supermarket in the 1950s, notes Laura Shapiro, offered almost 5,000 “short cut foods.”³² Prior to World War II, frozen foods were typically luxury items, but new technologies in retail freezers, cold-storage warehouses and transportation, and improved marketing made them kitchen staples and helped the industry become emblematic of suburban convenience and culinary abundance by the 1950s.

Frozen food advertising and packaging insisted that quick-frozen fruits and vegetables tasted better than farm-fresh counterparts. Birdseye frozen foods which would have

a large presence at the ANEM, jubilantly announced: “Here is the most wondrous magic of all! June peas, as gloriously green as any you will see next summer, Red raspberries, plump and tender and deliciously flavored . . . Imagine having them all summer-fresh in March!”³³ Similarly, Shane Hamilton’s study of one such convenience item – frozen concentrated orange juice – demonstrates a ten-fold increase in sales during the 1950s, pointing out that during that decade, frozen foods comprised the “fastest-growing sector in the food business.”³⁴ In his study, aptly titled “Cold Capitalism,” Hamilton notes that, during the 1950s, “frozen orange juice had decisively replaced fresh orange juice as the breakfast drink of choice.”³⁵

The food that came to symbolize the transformation underway in American suburban homes during the 1950s was the Swanson T.V. Dinner, which first appeared in supermarkets in 1953. In just three years, the company sold 13 million T.V. Dinners annually. By the time the ANEM opened in 1959, a quarter of a billion had been sold and frozen food sales of all types skyrocketed to 2.7 billion annually. Food historian Andy Smith demonstrates that this represented “a 2,700% increase since 1949” and, during the 1960s, frozen food sales continued to soar, and “reached \$5.2 billion.”³⁶

It’s obvious why Nixon and ANEM organizers would rush to emphasize such culinary achievements as home refrigerators and frozen foods, given America’s shortcomings in other scientific pursuits. Susan Reid likewise observes, “In the cosmos, socialist science had proved its superiority with the launch of the first Sputnik in October 1957. The kitchen, meanwhile – and the conditions of women’s work in general – remained the site of the Soviet system’s humiliation and a symbol of its backwardness . . . if US superiority in the space race and arms race was in doubt, capitalism’s victory in the standard-of-living race seemed assured.”³⁷ Likewise, Shane Hamilton notes the U.S. supremacy in the “farms race” outpacing Soviet rivals in agricultural production and, therefore, consumer food choice. “Supermarkets,” he argues, “could serve as powerful tools in the Cold War ideological battle with communism, manifestly demonstrating the agricultural productivity and consumer abundance produce by American ‘free enterprise.’”³⁸

Americans accompanying the ANEM to Moscow took the opportunity to point out the limitations of Soviet food. Marylee Duehring, who organized ANEM food demonstrations for General Mills, noted that “fresh fruit was practically non-existent” in Moscow and canned and frozen items were practically unheard of. Russian homes didn’t have ovens large enough to bake an angel food cake, she notes, although this hardly mattered, since Muscovites could rarely get the baking mixes or ingredients necessary to prepare the dessert. Beef and pork were also of low quality – about the only food that Duehring approved of while touring Moscow as the bread (which was “plentiful and tasty.”) The chronicle of Duehring’s culinary tour of Moscow concluded with the observation “It is apparent the Russians are not raising the standard of living for their people as they are making advancement in space exploration.”³⁹ An Indiana newspaper echoed this observation – “Russia may be leading in the race for the moon, but it’s far behind in the kitchen competition.”⁴⁰

Recent memoirs and cookbooks agree that mid twentieth-century Soviets viewed daily meals with a mixture of anxiety, deprivation, and longing. In their recollections of life in the Soviet Union (subtitled “True Stories of Soviet Cuisine,”) Olga and Pavel Syutkin point out “Centralised government exercised total control over every aspect of Soviet life – and food was no exception.” Overall, the Soviet food system “was based on under-

investment and fraud,” and of low quality, declining over the successive decades of the Cold War. They point out the great regionalism in Soviet cooking, incorporating such wildly divergent dishes as “Tashkent salad” featuring tabo (a green radish), squid from the Sea of Okhotsk, canned sardines, cucumber soup from Leningrad, and a humble one-pot meal of Kharcho (a Georgian spiced soup). Yet, their chronicle of Soviet cooking lacks the ease of ingredients, the utility of prepared foods, and overall emphasis on convenience and domestic wonder extolled by the ANEM. In recollecting their Soviet-era upbringings, Olga and Pavel Syutkin insist that, while leaders proclaimed a future of agricultural abundance, for ordinary Soviets, “The variety of available foodstuffs was dwindling, and the path to the abundance promised by communism seemed to grow longer and more winding every day.”⁴¹

Likewise, in her autobiographical account of growing up in the Soviet Union, Anya Von Bremzen notes, “Even in calmer times, under Khrushchev and Brezhnev, the daily drama of putting a meal on the table trumped most concerns. Food anchored the domestic realities of our totalitarian state, supplying a shimmer of desire to a life that was mostly drab.” Her first food memory, upon arriving in the United States, is the thrilling experience of eating a slice of Oscar Meyer bologna.⁴² Summarizing the meals on both sides of the Iron Curtain, William B. Murphy, president of the Campbell’s Soup Company, declared “Communism is utterly incompatible with the production of food . . . The best example of the American dream of plenty is in food.”⁴³ Glittering kitchens and tasty meals were more than a matter of Cold War pride, they were essential to American identity in the 1950s.⁴⁴

“The Endless, Silent, Tyranny of Cooking”

It’s safe to say that, if Peg Bracken had been in Moscow in 1959, she would have been rolling her eyes. While Bracken made liberal use of the convenience foods (canned vegetables, frozen meals, and ready mixes) featured at the ANEM, she viewed the appliances and “Miracle Kitchen” on display as tiresome and tedious, not objects worth celebrating. Although Nixon extolled the virtues of modern kitchen appliances, Bracken simply shrugged off cooking as unsatisfying drudgery that need not be part of a woman’s self-identity. Combining her acidic wit and her contempt for culinary pretention, Bracken introduced a later edition of her popular “I Hate to Cook Book” by stating matter-of-factly “My standard position in regard to cooking, is . . . on the sofa with my feet up.”⁴⁵

Unlike most cooks, Bracken’s followers (“the *I Hate to Cook people*”) are “those of us who find other things more interesting. . . we who hate to cook have had our own Olympics for years, seeing who can get out of the kitchen the fastest and stay out the longest.”⁴⁶ These comments underscore the tremendous popularity of Bracken’s writings over the course of several decades – combining her wry sense of humor with the reassurance that women who see cooking as a tedious daily chore are not alone. At the same time as ANEM organizers were presenting cooking and housework as quintessential parts of American women’s identity, Bracken was gathering a group of followers who insisted on the exact opposite.

The *IHTCB* was both a recipe catalog and a series of hints, anecdotes, and witticisms, calculated to produce food with a healthy dose of indifference, even disdain, for kitchen

tasks. A recipe appearing on the very first page of the *IHTCB* sets this tone. Bracken's "Stayabed Stew" (basically beef stew meat baked with frozen vegetables and a can of cream of tomato soup) was designed "for those days when you're en negligee, en bed, with a murder story and a box of bonbons or possibly a good case of flu." Other similar meals include: "idiot carrots," "skid row stroganoff," a scheme for using up leftovers called "Beef Encore," and "sweep steak" (beef pot roast sprinkled with onion soup mix.) Describing her tuna casserole recipe, Bracken concedes, it "will never make Escoffier" but it's "good, easy, filling, and gets remarkable mileage."⁴⁷

Although born Ruth Eleanor Bracken in Filer Idaho in 1918, she took on the nickname "Peg as a young woman" according to a biography in the *New York Times*. Bracken graduated from Antioch College in 1940, and lived in several states, working as a freelance writer for various projects before settling in Oregon and writing the *IHTCB*, which proved instantly successful.⁴⁸ According to later recollections, Bracken first pitched the idea of an "anti-cookbook" to several male publicists, who rejected the premise that women could view cooking with dread and antipathy. Finally, Bracken found a sympathetic female editor at Harcourt who pushed for publication, and the *IHTCB* quickly sold three million copies, making Bracken a minor celebrity in the early 1960s.⁴⁹ She was the author of fourteen books, particularly memoirs and criticisms of all things domestic, including *The I Hate to Housekeep Book* (1962), *Appendix to the I Hate to Cook Book* (1966), *The I Hate to Cook Almanac* (1980) and *The Complete I Hate to Cook Book* (1988). But her original *I Hate to Cook Book* (which was rereleased in 2010, following Bracken's death, to mark its fiftieth anniversary) remains her best known and most iconic contribution to generations of readers who share her contempt for the kitchen. Bracken, who died in 2007, was praised in one obituary, for realizing "that the daily drudge and tedium was perhaps more than women could bear" and providing "a way for . . . readers to break 'the endless, silent tyranny of cooking.'"⁵⁰

Following her publishing success, Bracken started making regular television appearances when Birds Eye hired her as their spokeswoman for their line of frozen vegetables. In a 1968 commercial, Bracken states "I wrote the I Hate to Cook Book for people like me who don't think it's a crime to cook easy if you cook good." She lauds the company's frozen carrots with brown sugar glaze and punctuates the advertisement with the catchphrase "I may hate to cook, but I do like to eat." In her forward to the fiftieth anniversary edition of the *IHTCB*, Peg's daughter, Jo Bracken, remembered eating lots of trial recipes for her mother's books, as well as lots of frozen vegetables, given to her mother for her endorsement.⁵¹

Reviews of the *IHTCB* were overwhelmingly positive, both during its initial publication and in subsequent decades. One critic pronounced it "an amusing, unusual, informative, and enthusiastically reviewed," inspiring home cooks for whom "a fine piece of meat means dinner with a capital D."⁵² Another review called Bracken's book "fun from start to finish" with recipes to fit any occasion.⁵³ A Texas critic clearly grasped the premise of the *IHTCB* in a review titled "Book for Cooks Who Just Can't." The description of Bracken hit the nail on the head in a glowing review: "Miss Bracken begins with the premise that you want to sustain life in your family as painlessly as possible, from the standpoint of the expenditure of both money and time."⁵⁴ Some reviewers dismissed the *IHTCB* as purely humorous entertainment (one opined that Bracken provided "enough laughs to give the reader a good appetite, but concluded "This is for laughs, not food.")⁵⁵

Yet most readers raved about the tasty and easy-to-prepare dishes. A St. Louis reviewer tasting some of Bracken's meals concluded: "the proof of the pudding . . . has something to do with eating. And that's what my family has been doing ever since the book arrived – eating . . . They even think I'm a good cook."⁵⁶

Bracken's books brought together women who wanted to avoid postwar expectations, compelling them to embrace the ethos of domesticity on display at the ANEM. In fact, Bracken warned readers in her introduction to the *IHTCB*, "if you hate to cook, expect no actual magic here . . . At the very least, you should find a hands-across-the-pantry feeling, coming through the ink. It is always nice to know you're not alone."⁵⁷ Bracken pointed out that the inspiration behind the *IHTCB* was having lunch with friends, who would collectively despair over daily meal prep – "they all have to cook and hate to."⁵⁸ The *IHTCB* thus highlighted a community of women in Cold War America who, as food historian Laura Shapiro puts it, keenly felt "the pressure to meet [cooking's] emotional demands . . . women for whom guilt was as fundamental to cooking as their pots and pans and loved meeting an expert who . . . understood the social and emotional baggage."⁵⁹ In her obituary of Bracken in 2007, Shapiro cheered Bracken for a legacy of "culinary sanity." Her "easy recipes were a lot like everyone else's – except for the writing . . . The food didn't have to change, your perspective on life and dinner had to change, and she could make the shackles of guilt fall away just by eyeing them with a dry and relentless skepticism."⁶⁰

As Shapiro's comment makes clear, the *IHTCB* featured menu items that were remarkably similar to more traditional cooking manuals. A review of Bracken's work contrasted the *IHTCB* (which provided "solace" for "the cook who cooks from necessity") with the more conventional *Ladies Home Journal Cookbook* (a "good old 'stand by'").⁶¹ Yet the irony is that the recipes in these two books were virtually identical. *The Ladies Home Journal Cookbook* is massive (weighing in at over 700 pages compared to a slim 176 for Bracken's *IHTCB*) but there is tremendous overlap in the recipes and cooking instructions in both books. Recipes for chicken dinners, salad dressings, desserts, and a host of other dishes are nearly identical in terms of ingredients, methods of preparation, utensils and appliances required, and cooking times. The "Molasses Cookies" described in *The Ladies Home Journal Cookbook* are practically interchangeable with Bracken's Spice cookies. Nobody snacking on these desserts would be able to tell whether they were from the well-established (and a bit full of itself) *Ladies Home Journal Cookbook*, which extolled the virtues of baking, or from Bracken's "I Hate to Cook" manifesto. However, on the following page, Bracken adds another recipe for "Afterthought Cookies" which states simply "Should you ever need cookies for children and do not feel up to making any" just mix confectioner's sugar with cream and spread this makeshift frosting between store-bought graham crackers.⁶² This no-bake improvisation that can be made in seconds reflects Bracken's philosophy of side-stepping aspirations and simply making do with minimal effort.

Indeed, Bracken's recipes would be indistinguishable from other culinary mainstays – her Beef Stroganoff, for instance, is virtually identical to the same dish outlined in the venerable 1931 *Joy of Cooking*.⁶³ The classic *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook* (released in 1950 and a culinary staple of the Cold War era) contained dozens of recipes that are similar to the *IHTCB* in preparation, though quite distinct in tone. Betty Crocker's Pot Roast is nearly identical to Bracken's "Stayabed Stew," though Bracken makes liberal use

of canned vegetables and includes instructions to go back to bed while the stew simmers away.⁶⁴ Likewise, Betty Crocker's Fish Filets are the same as Bracken's recipe for "Sole Survivor," along with scores of other essentially similar dishes. If a houseguest sat down to dinner in 1960, it is unlikely that she or he would know which cookbook the hostess used in preparing dinner, but the experiences of the home cook using the two volumes, and how they encouraged her to feel about the act of preparing a meal, would be completely opposite.⁶⁵

In short, there was a remarkably different conversation going on between the readers and texts. *The Betty Crocker Cookbook* promised readers that, having mastered the intricate cooking methods outlined in the book's dessert section, "We now proclaim you a member of the Society of Cake Artisans!" Bracken, for her part, shrugs off desserts, reasoning that, in any group, several participants will be on a diet (and others will feel that they should be) so nobody will really appreciate the food anyway. Bracken reasons "in the ordinary course of human events, there is no reason why you should ever have to cook a dessert."⁶⁶

Indeed, Bracken's recipes were identical to the food celebrated in the ANEM's "Miracle Kitchen." Under the headline "They're Showing Russia How America Eats," an Iowa newspaper presented three typical recipes: "Oven Fried Chicken," Easy Beef and Vegetable Pie," and "Strawberry Dream Angel Cake." Together, they presented Soviets with the bounty of American kitchen (featuring electric ovens, stoves, and refrigerators, frozen fruit, vegetables, and pie crusts, and gadgets like eggbeaters, and abundant meat and sweets.) But these quintessential dishes also suggested that American housewives could take pride and derive a sense of accomplishment from making quick and tasty dishes, despite their no-sweat convenience, during "the largest food fest ever."⁶⁷ And, while Bracken downplayed the role of cooking in a woman's life, she did appreciate conveniences and shortcuts, like those displayed in Sokolniki Park. In a typical *IHTCB* recipe (for "Beef a la King") Bracken includes three different types of canned products. Don't worry about the details, Bracken explains, "Just shut your eyes and go on opening those cans."⁶⁸

Bracken's embrace of canned goods reflects the premise of another notable Cold War cookbook author, Poppy Cannon. Like Bracken, Cannon began her career as a copywriter before publishing a series of highly successful cookbooks focused on a similar theme. Cannon wrote for *Mademoiselle Magazine* before publishing her tremendously successful *The Can-Opener Cookbook* in 1951 (and several other variations on this theme in subsequent years).⁶⁹ Shane Hamilton and Sarah Phillips describe Cannon's approach to cooking, saying, "With the assistance of convenience products, she insisted, meals could be prepared swiftly yet glamorously."⁷⁰

It would seem like Bracken and Cannon would be kindred spirits – both women were professional writers who made frequent use of canned ingredients and other conveniences to get food on the table quickly. But, beneath the surface, there are important differences between these culinary icons of Cold War kitchens. Cannon's *Can-Opener Cookbook* takes as a given that women enjoy the mystique and majesty of cooking, but might not have the time to perform this culinary wizardry. With the right approach and planning, she insists, even busy working women can still produce gastronomical greatness. "Today the can opener is fast becoming a magic wand," Cannon insists, "especially in the hands of those brave, young women, nine million of them (give or take a few

thousand her and there), who are engaged in frying as well as bringing home the bacon.”⁷¹ Cannon insists that, even pressed for time, busy women can still produce show-stopping delicacies and take pride in their culinary prowess. Can-opener chefs, Cannon insists, “are becoming classists,” producing the time-honored tastes of the past with modern speed and efficiency.⁷² With a can opener as your favorite tool, “It’s easy to cook like a gourmet.” In fact, the cover of Cannon’s book describes it as “a guide to gourmet cooking.”⁷³

Nearly every page of *The Can-Opener Cookbook* features French recipes and exotic cooking techniques, alongside canned and jarred ingredients. Touting her recipe for “Roast canned chicken flambe with black cherries,” Cannon encourages her readers to serve canned poultry, but nevertheless to brush the dish with brandy and flambe it tableside for guest to ooh and aah over.⁷⁴

Cannon’s descriptions of producing “Drama at the Table” and turning every dining experience into “a quick gourmet meal” were not priorities for Bracken. Although her respect for canned ingredients was similar to Cannon’s, Bracken’s culinary philosophy was not. Bracken wrote for the women who, working or not, busy or carefree, did not define herself through her cooking. The recipes in *The Can-Opener Cookbook* and the *IHTCB* were often identical in terms of ingredients, but vastly different in their description and level of culinary pretension. Both writers, for instance, include a vegetable dish consisting of frozen spinach, sour cream, vinegar, and some spices. But Cannon describes her dish as “blanketed with paprika-pink” while Bracken calls hers simply “Spinach Surprise” (the “surprise” is that you’ll actually get your family to eat spinach by covering it with enough cream sauce.)⁷⁵

Bracken’s no-fuss approach proved remarkably durable, attracting later generations of home cooks well into the twenty-first century. Later editions of the *IHTCB* included a wide range of vegetarian entrees and several regional or “foreign specialty” offerings, including some meals that would be considered somewhat ambitious (such as a quiche made with store-bought pie crust) and others that would seem unexpected for a mainstream cookbook (such as Kiowa Indian Fry Bread.⁷⁶) Yet, she mostly stuck to easy-to-prepare and hearty dishes, heavy on canned soup as well as canned, frozen, and pre-made items. The *IHTCB* continued to be mentioned in later decades, particularly in newspaper columns which praised Bracken’s books as trustworthy volumes for reliable recipes or a good laugh. A 1972 article described how a Pennsylvania woman found “A worn copy of Peg Bracken’s ‘I Hate to Cook Book’” just in time to make quick goodies for “a mob of picky pre-kindergarteners” and a 1981 writer confided “I was a charter member of Peg Bracken’s ‘I Hate to Cook’ Club’ . . . After all, I have been busy with more important projects. Surely a perfect tan is a better accomplishment than a spotless house.”⁷⁷

A reviewer likewise praised the revised and expanded edition of the *IHTCB*, released in 1986, for introducing Bracken to “a new generation [that] has come along . . . lots of people who suffer extreme intimidation at the sight of a shallot. They do get hungry, though.”⁷⁸ More recently, food bloggers have discovered Bracken’s 1960 classic, describing the *IHTCB* in generally positive terms. One online post summed up Bracken’s appeal through the decades, praising her book as “Hilarious, easy, simple . . . it isn’t meant to outdo a fancy restaurant. But the food is good, the recipes are remarkably simple and easy, and Ms. Bracken’s sense of humor is riotously funny.”⁷⁹ Remarking, “This book is funny because it’s true,” another blog titled “The I Hate to Cook Book is the Best

Cookbook, According to Non-Cooks Everywhere,” said the *IHTCB* is still useful more than a half century after its publication “even if the only object in the kitchen that doesn’t fill you with dread is the can opener.”⁸⁰

What has made Bracken’s humor appealing, and her writing popular for generations, is its lack of culinary pretension. The *IHTCB* became a manual for women who rejected culinary ambition, as one blog explained “[The *IHTCB*] reminds you that it is ok to have realistic goals in the kitchen – such as getting through dinner with a minimum amount of work . . . rather than needing to aspire to be the next Martha Stewart with every dish that you make.”⁸¹

While agreeing that her books are funny and her recipes deliver tasty dishes with the bare minimum of fuss, later generations of readers have been divided on the question of Bracken’s feminist legacy. Her 2007 obituary in *The Guardian*, recognizing that she helped American women “escape from domestic drudgery” also cautioned “before we sweep Bracken into the proto-feminist camp, it should be noted that there is nothing in the book that encourages women to desert the kitchens for more fulfilling roles. Preferred activities seemed to be taking it easy, downing a Martini or watching TV.” Nevertheless, “Bracken embraced two facts: that women had better things to do than fret before the stove . . . and that the act of cooking was burdened by social and aspirational pressures.”⁸² A similar reflection concluded “She wanted women to have time to smoke cigarettes and drink cocktails.”⁸³ But others recognized Bracken for promoting kitchen liberation, freeing “working women who had had it up to here with the notion that their destiny was to stand by the stove and be the then-ideal June Cleaver wife.”⁸⁴

Even though her writing didn’t mention work outside the home, a Maine newspaper article reasoned, the *IHTCB* “was intended for working women who decried the notion that their destiny was to stand by the stove and be the ideal wife.”⁸⁵ Remembering Bracken’s life and legacy, *The New York Times* summarized “Long before the microwave became a fixture of every home, ‘The I Hate to Cook Book’ was creating a quiet revolution . . . Three years before Betty Friedan touched off the modern women’s movement with ‘The Feminine Mystique,’ Ms. Bracken offered at least a taste of liberation – from the oven, the broiler and the stove.”⁸⁶

“Glimpses of the U.S.A.”

The kitchen domesticity that Nixon celebrated and Bracken abhorred was clearly on display at the ANEM. As Nixon and Khrushchev exchanged verbal jabs, Soviet visitors flocked to the central pavilion of the exhibition, a huge 250-foot diameter geodesic dome designed by Buckminster Fuller (and resembling the iconic orb later built at the Epcot Center). Inside the dome, projected onto seven gigantic screens, Muscovites could view the thirteen-minute film “Glimpses of the U.S.A.” created by architects and designers Charles and Ray Eames. Presenting “a ‘typical working day’ in the life of the United States” and projected onto an area “half the length of a football field,” *Glimpses* was designed to overwhelm Soviet viewers with images of American affluence.⁸⁷ The film used more than 250 still images (often candid photographs of the Eames’ own family and friends) to outline the landscape, people, and prosperity of the United States – or, as *Glimpses*’ narrator put it, “For one nation to tell its story to another.”⁸⁸ As Beatriz Colomina puts it in her study of the film, *Glimpses* was “the ‘smash hit of the Fair.” The

Fuller dome was so large that it formed a “space within a space” in which five thousand Soviets viewed the mammoth display at a time, for sixteen shows a day for six weeks. Altogether, “Close to three million people saw the show.”⁸⁹

The sheer size of the screens (twenty feet by thirty feet) and the kaleidoscopic projection of hundreds of constant images was, by design, overwhelming to visitors. The Eames later agreed that *Glimpses*’ objective was “to produce sensory overload . . . the audience drifts through a multimedia space that exceeds their capacity to absorb it.”⁹⁰ The film opens with scenes of outer space – stars and nebulae – before descending to images of distant terrain (proclaiming “this is the land,”) and, finally, to the American home. The film surveys manufacturing plants and massive adjoining parking lots (crowded with “parked automobiles of the workers,” emphasizing that even factory employees have cars in America), forests, skylines, fields, and a host of other vistas to provide an overview of the varied American landscape. But the home is the centerpiece of this cinematic visit to the United States. Colomina notes, “Not by chance, the first signs of human life are centered upon the house and domestic space.” Indeed, while the types of homes differ (the film cascades rapidly from urban apartments to rural farmhouses, but mainly focuses on sprawling suburban homes) *Glimpses* clearly projected images of contentment, attainment, and productivity. “A day in the USA became an image of the ‘Good life’ without ghettos, poverty, domestic violence or depression,” Colomina points out.⁹¹

Food played a significant role in *Glimpses*’ story of superabundance. Some of the earliest images included close-up shots of milk bottles delivered to American doorsteps, electric coffee percolators, and school lunchboxes – setting the tone that American food was readily accessible and part of the daily routine. The film included dozens of images of farmland and fields, tractors and mechanical harvesters, orchards, and ranches, emphasizing America’s efficient and orderly food production, alongside complimentary images of food consumption. Some of the most vibrant images in the Eames’ film was of supermarket displays, featuring colorful avocados, strawberries, eggs, corn on the cobb, and carrots (different foods seemingly chosen to highlight the dizzying variety of supermarket choices as well as contrasting colors, making these images seem exceptionally vibrant). These rapid-fire scenes of fresh produce were followed immediately by overflowing supermarket shelves, chock full of canned goods, again featuring dozens of varieties.

While ANEM attendees could see three kitchens on display in Moscow, *Glimpses* showcased still more culinary wonders: electric ranges, toasters, refrigerator freezers, electric eggbeaters and kettles, and a staggering array of home-cooked meals. There were virtually no restaurants displayed in the film. Instead, Charles and Ray Eames emphasized a focus on food prepared by women in their own homes. Families sat down at kitchen tables to enjoy fried chicken, pot roast, rice, oatmeal, soup, and cakes and cookies. Although the film did show popular entertainment (movies, nightclubs, and relaxation at playgrounds and parks) most of the footage focused on “a day of working and learning” beginning with men driving along busy interstates on the way to work and children boarding school buses. Women were absent from most photographs depicting work and industry, but featured prominently in shots of “planned shopping centers” that formed “today’s version of the old marketplace.” Clearly, *Glimpses* portrayed women as engaged in domestic tasks – shopping for food, cooking, and serving meals at home.

If women's household responsibilities formed the centerpiece of this Cold War ideological attack, was it unpatriotic to voice contempt for cooking, as Bracken did throughout her career? Was her avoidance of the kitchen somehow un-American? Richard Nixon clearly thought so. As Khrushchev toured the ANEM, Nixon told him, "I want to show you this kitchen ... this is the newest model ... In America, we like to make life easier for women." Undeterred, Khrushchev rebuffed this claim "Your capitalist attitude toward women does not occur under Communism," he retorted.⁹² In her study of "The Khrushchev Kitchen," Susan Reid notes that family homes and kitchens formed "the vanguard" of American Cold War efforts to "discredit the community project in the eyes of Soviet citizens" by raising demand for products that the Soviet economy couldn't deliver.⁹³ Yet, women on both sides of the Iron Curtain faced increased burdens. Soviet culture made women responsible for caring for the home and children, on top of working full-time. Asking "Were Women Better Off in the US or the USSR During the Cold War?" Susan Reid concludes that both societies were essentially misogynistic. Discussing the United States, Reid cites Friedan's 1963 *The Feminine Mystique* to explain, "Even with all the new labor-saving appliances ... the modern American housewife probably spends more time on housework than her grandmother did."⁹⁴

Bracken recognized that American women faced a "guilt-complex," particularly regarding cooking. "We live in a cooking-happy age," she contended. "You watch your friends re-doing their kitchens and hoarding their pennies for glamorous cooking equipment and new cookbooks ... and presently you begin to feel un-American."⁹⁵ An appreciative biographer confided, "My mother never owned a copy of 'The I Hate to Cook Book,' but that was probably because she was a Communist."⁹⁶ For Bracken, the "Kitchen Debate" was not about Cold War posturing or ideological warfare. It was a debate challenging domesticity itself, attacking the assumption that preparing food was at the heart of women's national responsibility and self-worth, whether she enjoyed it or not.

More than sixty years after its publication, Bracken's *IHTCB* feels as relevant and iconoclastic as ever. Although both Nixon's political fortunes and the fate of his Soviet rival changed tremendously in the intervening decades, Bracken's biting criticism of aspirational cooking seem prescient in an age where social media normalizes Instagram posts of every meal consumed. Bracken's writing remains a potent reminder, even in an era obsessed with *The British Bake-Off* and celebrity chefs, that it's fine to cook well, but there's no shame in deciding to simply muddle through.

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Notes

1. Perlstein, *Richard Nixon: Speeches*, 88. On the origin of the term “Kitchen Debate” see Mohr “Remembrances,” 18. On the impact of the Kitchen Debate on Nixon's political trajectory, see Thomas, *Being Nixon*, ch. 6.
2. May, *Homeward Bound*, 1, 11.
3. Nixon, *Six Crises*, 245.
4. Qtd. in Larner, “Judging the Kitchen Debate,” 26. Following the ANEM, Khrushchev traveled to the United States, mirroring Nixon's trip in reverse. On Khrushchev's closely-watched visit to America, see Carlson, *K Blows Top*.
5. Hamilton and Phillips, *The Kitchen Debate*, 35.
6. Bracken, *The I Hate to Cook Book*, ix.
7. Mickiewicz, “Efficacy and Evidence,” 138, 140.
8. United States Information Agency, *Facts about the American National Exhibition*, 5.
9. Hamilton and Phillips, *The Kitchen Debate*, 40.
10. “American Foods to be Demonstrated,” 45.
11. Hamilton and Phillips, *The Kitchen Debate*, 65.
12. *Ibid.*, 36. Thompson's views echo American diplomatic strategy that stretched back to the dawn of the Cold War. George Kennan, architect of U.S. “containment” ideology in the mid 1940s, argued that “A picture spread of an average American school, a small town, or even an average American kitchen dramatized to Soviet readers ... that we have ... a superior standard of living and culture.” See, Belmonte, *Selling the American Way*, 11.
13. Nixon, *Six Crises*, 259.
14. Hamilton and Phillips, *The Kitchen Debate*, 6.
15. “Russians to Learn American Cooking,” 37.
16. “Two U.S. Women to Try to Win Russians over with Brownies,” 32.
17. United States Information Agency, *A Review of the American National Exhibition*, 1.
18. Coghlan, *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Food*, 101. On this militaristic rhetoric surrounding American Cold War kitchen displays, see also “Nixon on Stage in Battle of Exhibits,” 10; White, *Cold Warriors*. For a discussion of how the superpower rivalry represented by Nixon and Khrushchev helped to shape the American food system in the 1950s and ever since, particularly in military and scientific research, see Marx de Salcedo, *Combat-Ready Kitchen*.
19. Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*, 212–214. A significant body of scholarship on post-Soviet Russia and Eastern Europe focuses on this optimistic vision of Khrushchev-era consumerism. Paulina Bren and Mary Neuburger argue that food and consumerism evoke nostalgia, while

Neuburger and others illustrate how Eastern Europeans acquired luxuries despite ongoing food shortages. See Bren and Neuburger, eds. *Communism Unwrapped*, 3–19. Other similar contributors to this anthology that also focus on Soviet foodways include Bracewell, “Eating Up Yugoslavia” and Massino “From Black Caviar to Blackouts.” See also Neuburger, *Balkan Smoke*.

20. Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, 164.
21. Kaplan, “Manifest Domesticity,” 583. See also Takeuchi, “Cold War Manifest Domesticity.”
22. Tolvaissas, “Cold War ‘Bridge-Building,’” 26–27. On race and U.S. Cold War diplomacy, see also, Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*; and Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*.
23. On Nixon’s views on race, see Graham, “Richard Nixon and Civil Rights.” On Nixon’s Southern Strategy, see also Maxwell and Shields, *The Long Southern Strategy*.
24. Ironically, as Nixon was praising the American suburbs in Moscow, real estate covenants and “redlining” practices meant that suburban home purchases were systematically out of reach for nonwhite families. See Rothstein, *The Color of Law*. On race and Cold War ideology, see also Zeigler, *Red Scare Racism*.
25. Mickiewicz, Interview.
26. “A Taste of U.S.A. in Moscow,” 8. One of the most famous food items demonstrated to Soviets at the ANEM was Pepsi Cola – which got a significant marketing boost when a journalist snapped a photograph of Khrushchev enjoying the drink. Although a few Muscovites concluded the soda “smelled like shoe wax and tasted too sweet” others clearly liked it, because Pepsi later arranged for distribution in the U.S.S.R., making it “the first capitalistic product available in the Soviet Union.” See Wong and Thurais, *Gastro Obscura*, 48.
27. “U.S. Frozen Foods Intrigue Soviets,” 5.
28. “Soviets will get samples of capitalist cooking,” 84; “Food from U.S.,” 50. On the “Russian Average Man” and Soviet reactions at the ANEM, see also, “The Russian average man,” 41.
29. Mickiewicz, Interview. See also Mickiewicz, “Efficacy and Evidence” 156. While food samples were quickly discontinued, Russian-language recipe brochures, showing how “typical American recipes” could be prepared in modern kitchen, were distributed to ANEM attendees. See United States Information Agency, *Facts about the American National Exhibition*, 32.
30. Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, 158.
31. Gansky, “Refrigerator Design and Masculinity in Postwar Media,” 70. On the role of home appliances in 1950s culture, see also Isendstadt, “Visions of Plenty”; Cohen, *A Consumers’ Republic*; and Belasco, *Meals to Come*.
32. Shapiro, *Something from the Oven*, 20–21, 44.
33. Quoted in Zeide, *Canned*, 141. For a discussion of how frozen foods supplanted fresh produce and the growing size and popularity of American home freezers, see also, Rees, *Refrigerator Nation*.
34. Hamilton, “The Economies and Conveniences,” 37.
35. Hamilton, “Cold Capitalism,” 565.
36. Smith, *Eating History*, 173. See also Shapiro, *Something from the Oven*, 18–20.
37. Susan Reid, “The Khrushchev Kitchen,” 290.
38. Hamilton, *Supermarket USA*, 2.
39. “Food in Russia,” 4. After her visit to Moscow, Duehring also remarked that Moscow was “cold and dreary” though its people were “hard working and very likable.” See “After Moscow, She Says: See Russia, Appreciate U.S.,” 12C. A similar article, featuring critiques of Russian food stores by Duehring and another ANEM food demonstrator, Barbara Sampson, noted the long lines, minimal produce supplies and “lack of convenience foods, such as cake mixes and frozen items.” See “A Minnesotan Visits Russian Supermarket,” 137.
40. “Demonstrator Compares Foods,” 5.
41. Syutkin, *СССР Cookbook*, 8, 30, 36.
42. Von Bremzen, *Mastering the Art of Soviet Cooking*, 4.
43. Quoted in Bobrow-Strain, “Making White Bread by the Bomb’s Early Light,” 85.

44. On food and longing in Cold War Eastern Europe, see Patterson, *Bought and Sold* and Neuberger, *Ingredients of Change*.
45. Bracken, *IHTCB*, ix.
46. Ibid.
47. Bracken, *IHTCB*, 5, 47, 115, 8, 33, 69. As these recipes suggest, Bracken's meals stressed creamed soups, frozen vegetables, prepackaged desserts, and as many canned products as possible, all in an effort to reduce time spent in the kitchen. To minimize "the Women's Burden," Bracken insisted "you buy already prepared foods as often as you can. You buy frozen things and ready-mix things, as well as pizza from the pizza man and chicken pies from the chicken pie lady," *IHTC*, 20.
48. "Peg Bracken, 'I Hate to Cook' Author, Dies at 89."
49. Bracken died in 2007 and her obituaries contain details about her early life before diving into her (anti) cooking legacy. See "Peg Bracken, Cookbook Revolutionary;" "Peg Bracken: The I Hate to Cook Book Author."
50. "US author of the I Hate to Cook Book."
51. See Jo Bracken, Forward, ix-xiv.
52. "Diner with a Big 'D,'" 2. The review also praised Bracken's rejection of "food faddism" in favor of hearty and family-friendly meals.
53. "The I Hate to Cook Book by Peg Bracken," 7.
54. "Book for Cooks who Just Can't," 18.
55. "Recipes Must Go," 99.
56. "You Can Tell a Bad Cook," 66.
57. Bracken, *IHTCB*, vii. Bracken added that, rather than cooking, her reader (whom she referred to as "I Hate to Cook People" or "ready-mix people") get their "creative kicks" from "painting pictures or bathrooms, or potting geraniums or babies, or writing stories," 103. Her community, she concludes, might not add much to meal preparation, but "cute to have around the house," 21.
58. "So You Have to Cook!" 24.
59. Shapiro, *Something from the Oven*, 162.
60. Shapiro, "Culinary Sanity"
61. "Three Interesting New Cook Books," 11.
62. Truax, *The Ladies Home Journal Cookbook*. Bracken, *IHTCB*, 113–115.
63. Rombauer, *Joy of Cooking*, 312.
64. *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook*. Bracken, *IHTCB*, 270.
65. On cookbooks of the twentieth century, see also Elias, *Food on the Page*.
66. *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook*, 117. Bracken, *IHTCB*, 103.
67. "They're Showing Russia How America Eats," 83.
68. Bracken, *IHTCB*, 7.
69. Cannon, *Can-Opener Cookbook*. Shapiro describes Cannon, saying "The food industry was n enemy to her; it was Aladdin's lamp." Although Cannon differed from another Cold War icon, James Beard, in her use of ingredients, she shared the view that women's main yardstick for measuring self-worth was the meals they put in front of diners. See Shapiro, *Something from the Oven*, 5.
70. Hamilton and Phillips, *The Kitchen Debate*, 112.
71. Cannon, *Can-Opener Cookbook*, 1.
72. Ibid., 2.
73. Ibid., 3.
74. Ibid., 132–133.
75. Ibid., 171; Bracken, *IHTCB*, p. 48.
76. Bracken, *The Complete I Hate to Cook Book*, 84–85, 81.
77. "A Party-Perfect Birthday," 7; "She Clipped, and Clipped, but All She Saved Was Coupons," 49.
78. "'I Hate to Cook' series reduced to single volume," 211. Similar reviews of Bracken's writing in later decades include, "'I Hate to Cook' cookbook popular," 23; "Cookbooks Tell of a Stew of History," 76; "A Different Time," 8.

79. "The Compleat [sic] I Hate to Cook Book."
80. "The I Hate to Cook Book is the Best Cookbook."
81. "The I Hate to Cook Book."
82. "Obituary: Peg Bracken."
83. "Peg Bracken, Cookbook Revolutionary."
84. "Cookbook author who hated cooking dies," 10.
85. "Peg Bracken, wrote 'I Hate to Cook Book,'" 14.
86. "Peg Bracken, 'I Hate to Cook' Author, Dies at 89."
87. Colomina, "Enclosed by Images," 9.
88. Eames, *Glimpses of the U.S.A.* I am grateful for the Eames Office, which maintains and archives the designers' work, for allowing me to view the full-length film from their digital archives.
89. Colomina, "Enclosed by Images," 11.
90. *Ibid.*, 19.
91. *Ibid.*, 11, 13.
92. Perlstein, *Nixon Speeches*, 91.
93. Reid, "The Khrushchev Kitchen," 290.
94. Reid, "Were Women Better Off in the US or USSR."
95. Bracken, *IHTCB*, 27.
96. Fox, "A Taste of Liberation."

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