



BRILL

CANADIAN-AMERICAN
SLAVIC STUDIES 51 (2017) 64–85

CANADIAN-
AMERICAN
SLAVIC STUDIES



brill.com/css

The Concept of the “New Soviet Man” and Its Short History

*Maja Soboleva**

University of Marburg

soboleva@mail.uni-marburg.de

Abstract

The concept of the New Soviet Man remains a topic of on-going scholarly interest for a number of reasons: it reflects a vital part of Russian history, it remains associated with positive and negative connotations that still need to be explored, and it functions as a crossroads for different scholarly perspectives. It remains a topic of interest also because there are still a number of unexplored questions about the concept from the perspective of the history of ideas and philosophy. This article focuses on the reconstruction of the ethical concept of a New Soviet Man over time. It argues that there were three periods in the history of this concept: The first period – between the 1900s and 1930s – can be called the period of theoretical reflection on the nature of a New Man. The second period – from the 1930s to the 1950s – can be characterized as the period of the development of norms of Soviet morality. The third period – since the 1960s – is marked by the transition of ethical thought from the ideology propagating socialist morality to moral theory and Marxist scientific ethics. This article argues that the process of forming a new type of man was not a continuous and unilinear process of change throughout the entire period of socialism. On the contrary, this dramatic process can be successfully analyzed with the help of the ethical concept of the New Soviet Man.

Keywords

New Soviet Man – Soviet philosophy – Soviet ethics – utopia – modernization

* This article could not have been written without the support of the Aleksanteri Institute at the University of Helsinki. I am very grateful for the assistance offered to me by this institution. I am grateful to Alyssa DeBlasio for her assistance editing the text.

The idea of a New Soviet Man remains an interesting problem for scholars for a number of reasons. It reflects a part of Russian history and the history of Marxist ideas in general, it is connected with positive and negative connotations, and because it is a crossroads for different scientific perspectives. This article focuses on one important aspect of the social modernization of Soviet Russia, namely the creation of a New Soviet Man. Traditionally, this subject has attracted the attention of scholars because of its unprecedented character. Many different approaches have indeed been proposed to assess, describe, and apprehend this phenomenon. The leading disciplines in this field are social and cultural history, political science, and sociology, and these studies have concentrated on cultural, economic, and political practices and institutions.¹ Even though the *praxis* of the formation of a New Man has been investigated previously, there are still open questions if we approach the problem from the perspective of the history of ideas and philosophy.

The concept "Soviet man" has a dramatic history, which runs the range between two poles: the idea of the renewal of humanity according to socialist ideals, and the practical embodying of this idea in the Soviet Union. The first pole is marked with the utopian term "New Soviet Man," and the second pole with the sarcastic term "homo sovieticus."

The nature of the real Soviet man has been *a posteriori* clearly defined as negative. One well-known definition was given by Alexander Zinoviev in his 1981 novel *Homo Sovieticus*. Zinoviev characterizes *homo sovieticus* ("homosos") "as a type of living creature, and not as a citizen of the USSR. Not every citizen of the USSR is homosos.... This is a human being who is generated by the conditions of communist (socialist) society, who is a bearer of the principles of the life of this society, preserving its inter-collective relationships by the very way of his life. Homosos ... is a product of adaptation to specific social conditions. That is why he cannot be understood outside his normal environment."² However, Zinoviev was not the inventor of this term. The man who seems to have used the term for the first time is Joseph Novak in his book *Homo sovieticus, der Mensch unter Hammer und Sichel* (1962). Józef Tischner, the author of *The Ethics of Solidarity and Homo Sovieticus* (1992), also used this term after Zinoviev.

Guided by this pejorative attitude, there has been a great amount of theoretical reflection and empirical research over the decades on the mentality, morality, habitus, and the way of life of the Soviet people living in the totalitar-

1 For example, the well-known Levada-Center, a Russian non-governmental research organization, has been conducting sociological research on the theme "Homo Sovieticus" since 1989.

2 A.A. Zinoviev, *Homo Sovieticus* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986), 202.

ian communist system.³ Before this scientific reflection began, literature had already taken strides to describe the basic features of the real Soviet man.⁴ In all cases, *homo sovieticus* is viewed as a species that happens to live and work in

-
- 3 Iu. N. Afanas'ev, ed., *Sovetskoe obshchestvo: vznikovenie, razvitie, istoricheskii final*. 2 vols. (Moscow: Progress, 1997); A.S. Achiezer, A.P. Davydov, M.A. Shurovskii, I.G. Iakovenko, E.N. Iarova, *Sotsio-kul'turnye osnovaniia i smysl bol'shevizma* (Novosibirsk: Sibirskii chronograph, 2002); V.S. Barulin, *Rossiiskii chelovek v XX veke. Poteri i obreteniia sebii* (St. Petersburg: Aleteia, 2000); T.A. Bulygina, *Sovetskaia ideologiia i obshchestvennye nauki* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo MGU, 1999); E. Dobrenko, *Formovka sovetskogo chitatelia. Sotsial'nye i esticheskie predposylki rezepitsii sovetskoi literatury* (St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 1997); O.V. Kharkhordin, *Oblichtat' i litsmerit': geneologiia sovetskoi lichnosti* (Moscow and St. Petersburg: Press of the European University of St. Petersburg, Letnii sad, 2002); Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); idem, *Tear off the Masks! Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-Century Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); V. Garros, N. Korenevskaiia, Th. Lahusen, *Intimacy and Terror: Soviet Diaries of the 1930s* (New York: New Press, 1995); V.I. Il'in, *Gosudarstvo i sotsial'naia stratifikatsiia sovetskogo i postsovetskogo obshchestva. 1917–1996 gg.: Opyt konstruktivistsko-strukturalistskogo analiza*. (Syktyvkar: Izdatel'stvo Syktyvkarского universiteta, 1996); S.G. Kara-Murza, *Sovetskaia tsivilizatsiia*. 2 vols. (Moscow: Algoritm, 2001–2002); N.N. Kozlova, *Horizonty povsednevosti sovetskoi epokhi: (Golosa iz khora)* (Moscow: Institut Filosofii RAN, 1996); S. Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Iu. A. Levada, ed., *Sovetskii prostoi chelovek: opyt sotsial'nogo portreta na rubezhe 90-kh* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Mirovoi okean", 1993); F.X. Nérard, *Piat' protsentov pravdy: Razoblachenie i donositel'stvo v stalinskom sssr (1928–1941)*, trans. E.I. Balachovskaia (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2011); I. Paperno, *Stories of the Soviet Experience: Memoirs, Diaries* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2009); Z.V. Sikevich, *Raskolotoe soznanie* (St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg State University Press, 1996); A.D. Siniavskii, *Osnovy sovetskoi tsivilizatsii* (Moscow: Agraf, 2001); P. Vail, A. Genis, *60-e. Mir sovetskogo cheloveka* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2001); A.G. Vishnevskii, *Serp i rubl': Konservativnaia modernizatsiia v sssr* (Moscow: OGI, 1998); Zinoviev, *Kommunizm kak real'nost'* (Moscow: Centrpoligraf, 1994); E. Iu. Zubkova, *Poslevoennoe sovetskoe obshchestvo: Politika i povsednevnost', 1945–1953* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1999).
- 4 E.S. Zamiatin, *My* (Moscow: AST, 1920), René Fülöp-Miller, *Geist und Gesicht des Bolschewismus* (Wien: Amalthea-Verlag, 1926), Alia Rakhmanowa, *Die Fabrik des neuen Menschen* (Leipzig: Pustet, 1935), Klaus Mehnert, *Der Sowjetmensch. Versuch eines Porträts nach 12 Reisen in die Sowjetunion 1929–1957* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1958), Lois Fisher-Ruge, *Alltag in Moskau* (Lingen: Econ, 1984). The process of forming the New Soviet Man was constantly accompanied by irreconcilable contradictions and by reflection on those contradictions on the part of intellectuals. The real portrait of the Soviet Man would be incomplete without taking into consideration the work of contemporary critics of this organized, teleological, political-pedagogical process. These critical impulses came first of all from literature: satirical literature in particular, both from its official and non-official representatives. An investigation

the socialist system. The general assumption for the negative-connoted understanding of *homo sovieticus* is that the defective socio-economic system of real socialism reproduces itself in the deficient structure of the people's character and mentality. Though *homo sovieticus* has many faces, s/he possess some general characteristics, including dependence on the authorities, social and political passivity and an avoidance of initiative and individual responsibility, indifference to common property and to the results of labour, conformism emerging from the fear of the ruling regime, selective memory, and unreliability in his or her actions.

While we have a negative definition of Soviet man, the positive aspect of this phenomenon has not yet been adequately investigated. The most perplexing problem raised by this phenomenon emerges from the inconsistent relationship between theory and praxis, and concerns the confusion of the concept “Soviet man” with the empiric phenomenon. As a result, most authors assume that the formation of a new type of man was a continuous and unilinear process of change throughout the entire period of socialist transformations. This tends to be the official view of the social sciences as they have developed in Russia and the West, as well as that upon which broad public opinion is most often based. In my view, this continuous perspective is only acceptable if one uses the concept “Soviet Man” as *terminus technicus* in political, sociological, and philosophical discourses and practices. However, this political and sociological concept should be differentiated from the philosophical or, better, moral and ethical concept of Soviet Man, which implies distinct theoretical foundations.

This article reconstructs the history of this ethical concept, which had a different meaning in comparison with the political concept of “Soviet Man.” My hypothesis is that there are three periods in the history of this concept. The first period – between the 1900s and 1930s – can be described as the period of theoretical reflections on the nature of a New Man. It is connected with the theoretical debate over proletarian culture initiated by Alexander Bogdanov. It ended with Bogdanov's political defeat and the collapse of the very idea of proletarian culture. The second period – during the 1930s and 1950s – can be characterized as the development of norms of Soviet morality. Throughout this time, the opposition of the “purely theoretical” and the “practical” sphere was

into the history of the concept of the Soviet Man benefits greatly from reading Maiakovsky, Zamiatin, Kharms, Il'f and Petrov, Zoshchenko, Bulgakov, Voinovich and Zinoviev, or analyzing Soviet political folklore from the era. This approach is used by Ernest J. Simmons, ed., *Through the Glass of Soviet Literature: Views of Russian Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953); and Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*.

rejected; philosophical and ethical problems were mostly viewed as political and ideological. The practiced approach tended to a kind of normative and constructivist ethics that codified moral criteria, principles, and norms adapted to a given political system and applied them in practice.

The third period – from the 1960s to the early 1990s – is constituted by the transition of ethical thought from the propaganda of socialist morality to moral theory. During this period, Soviet ethics as a theoretical discipline finally emerged: Alexander F. Shishkin, the founder of Soviet moral philosophy, published his *Foundations of Marxist Ethics* in 1961. With this we see the beginning of theoretical reflections on the nature of Soviet ethics and Soviet Man.⁵

The First Period: 1900s–1930s

In this period, theoretical reflections on the New Man were carried out in the context of proletarian culture. The concept the “New Man” did not refer to the individual, but rather to the working class and to society as a whole. The social body was supposed to be renewed according to new, progressive, communistic ideals. It was Alexander Bogdanov who primarily worked out the idea of proletarian culture. His idea is based on two premises: on the idea of the scientific-rational organization of nature and society and on the idea of a new form of social interaction, a new form of collectivism, which he called “comradely cooperation” (“tovarishchestskoe sotrudnichestvo”). The foundation of proletarian culture must be founded on the general theory of organization, which he called Tectology.

Tectology is currently regarded as the first fundamental variant of general systems theory and a precursor of cybernetics. However, it is also the first attempt at socialist modernization of a society on a scientific basis.⁶ This

5 V.N. Nazarov offers an alternative approach to the systematization of Soviet ethics, one that is based on different premises. According to Nazarov, the first period (1900–1922) is characterized by the free development of, and confrontation between, different currents of ethical thought; the second (1923–1959) is marked by the split between the ethics of the Russian diaspora abroad and Marxist-Leninist ethics; and the third (1960–1990) is the period of Soviet ethics. See V.N. Nazarov, *Eticheskaia mysl'* 2 vols. (Moscow: Institut filosofii RAN, 2000), 1:107–131, 2:169–191. See also Nazarov, “Iz istorii otechestvennoi etiki” at http://iph.ras.ru/elib/EM1_7.html.

6 See M. Soboleva, *A. Bogdanov und der philosophische Diskurs in Russland zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts. Zur Geschichte des russischen Positivismus* (Hildesheim: Olms-Verlag, 2007), 146–172.

project considers the proletariat as the bearer of socialist ideology and as the executer of the socialist reorganization of that society. Bogdanov deduces the unique political role of the proletariat from its unique position in the system of social knowledge. He argues that, due to its involvement in the highly technological process of production, the proletariat is becoming the most educated part of modern society. Thus, according to the very logic of cultural and scientific-technical development, the proletariat must develop the faculty of rational thought. It is because of the proletariat’s scientifically founded rationality that it can play a leading role in the political transformation of society. The proletariat spontaneously extends the norms of rationality to all spheres of social life, including politics. Now, with the ability for objective thought, the proletariat is a “universal class” capable of representing the interests of all society. In Bogdanov’s theory, the term “proletariat” is therefore not just a socio-economic and political term used to describe the class of wage-earners in a capitalist society whose only possession is their labour-power. It is rather a term of social epistemology and social ontology, which defined the proletariat as the bearer of the norms of scientific rationality and collective consciousness.

Bogdanov’s plan for the tectological reconstruction of society comprises the following: 1) the modernization of society must be total and include the personal level, the social level, the level of nature, and the whole universe; 2) in order to be able to conduct societal reconstruction, the proletariat must acquire knowledge of “general science” in the form of the general theory of organization; and 3) since the proletariat should lead the process of socialist reconstruction, it must be properly educated. Bogdanov’s strategy foresees a “cultural program” aimed at the creation of “proletarian culture” and the formation of a new organizer-class. His program of proletarian culture is signified through three tasks, including the working-out of: a) scientific ideology, b) “conscious collectivism” (anti-individualism and the recognition of the commonality of group interests), and c) social rationality based on the “norms of expediency” (“normy tselesoobraznosti”). Bogdanov recommends that the proletariat “direct all its efforts toward mastering the organizational means and their systematic solutions according to the scale of the problems.”⁷

One of Bogdanov’s contributions to the modernization of Marxism is his demand that the working class create and adapt proletarian culture before the revolution. To Marx, “communist consciousness” was a product of the social

7 A.A. Bogdanov, “Programma kul’tury,” in A.A. Bogdanov, *Voprosy sotsializma: raboty raznykh let*, ed. L.I. Albakina (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1990), 332.

revolution, not its prerequisite.⁸ To Bogdanov, proletarian culture was not a consequence, but a premise of the socialist modernization of society. From the tectological point of view, culture appears as a subsystem of the social system and as the most important instrument of social reorganization. It is directed at forming a New Man, the Proletarian, who symbolizes for Bogdanov the ideal human being, combining rationalism and collectivism. This New Man is able to coordinate all-human actions and establish ideologically homogeneous social structures, which are necessary for social progress and evolutionary social development. Thus, Bogdanov's idea of proletarian culture implies the idea of social progress and social engineering. The term "proletarian culture" can therefore be interpreted as a term within the theory of general organization and not merely as belonging to political jargon.

The debates over proletarian culture continued in the period between 1905 and 1932. Bogdanov's most significant opponents were Trotsky and Lenin. In contrast to Bogdanov, Trotsky believed in 1923 that "there is no proletarian culture, and that there never will be any and in fact there is no reason to regret this. The proletariat acquires power for the purpose of doing away forever with class culture and to make way for human culture."⁹ According to Trotsky, the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat is temporary, and it is only necessary for the transition from one social system to another, from capitalism to socialism. The goal of this transitional period was to solve many political, economic and cultural problems. Trotsky was convinced that "at any rate, the twenty, thirty, or fifty years of the proletarian world revolution will go down in history as the most difficult climb from one system to another, but in no case as an independent epoch of proletarian culture."¹⁰ What marks this transition period is, according to him, the coexistence of different types of culture.

In Trotsky's opinion, terms such as "proletarian literature" and "proletarian culture" are even "dangerous, because they erroneously compress the culture of the future into the narrow limits of the present day."¹¹ Instead of the term "proletarian culture," he suggests the terms "revolutionary culture" and "socialist culture." The former should be applied to the contemporary period; the latter describes the ideal future society. Trotsky's rejection of the term "proletarian culture" can be explained by his general understanding of culture. He defines

8 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Socialist Revolution* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1979), 44.

9 Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960), 185–186.

10 *Ibid.*, 190.

11 *Ibid.*, 205.

culture as “the organic sum of knowledge and capacity, which characterizes all of society, or at least its ruling class. It embraces and penetrates all fields of human work and unifies them into a system. Individual achievements rise above this level and elevate it gradually.”¹²

When we look at the discrepancies between Bogdanov and Trotsky in their apprehension of the notion of proletarian culture, we see that, for the former, proletarian culture is a necessary condition of socialism and, for the latter, it is a consequence of socialism. However, there are some points that unite them. For both it is, primarily, the understanding of culture in general as ideology that influences mass consciousness and underlies and penetrates all social structures. They use the term “culture” to mean the way people relate to the world and to each other in society. According to Bogdanov and Trotsky, the term “culture” refers to consciousness, actions, dominant worldviews, and lifestyles; it refers to forms of knowledge, skills, values, dispositions, and expectations. Using Pierre Bourdieu’s terminology, culture in Bogdanov’s and Trotsky’s theories can be characterized as a *habitus* of a dominant social group.¹³ The *habitus* of an individual appears to be the result of the objectification of the social structure at the level of subjectivity. Therefore, in order to renew the human being, the social structure must be completely renewed. The creation of a New Man demands the creation of new elements in the proletariat itself, in its conditions of life, and in its internal and external relations.

For both authors, culture comes forth as a genuine element of the historical process itself and can be understood in the context of social and historical transformations. The development of culture is therefore connected with the ontological changes of the entire social structure. This assumption explains why the formation of a new kind of humanity was not seen by Bogdanov and Trotsky as a special ethical task. There was no need for ethics here, since the moral transformation of humanity was expected to result from the ontological transformation of society and from the correlating transformation of the mental structures of humanity. In other words, the new conditions of life would provide a solid ontological foundation for the formation of a new human being with a new morality. Ideas, views and conceptions – i.e., human consciousness – change with every change in the conditions of human material existence, in its social relations, its epistemic culture and in its social life. Thus, the ontological approach to historical processes and the ontological under-

12 Ibid., 200.

13 Trotsky expressed this idea as following: “Style is class, not alone in art, but above all in politics”. Ibid., 206. His term “style” can be seen as an equivalent to the term “*habitus*.”

standing of socialism exclude the necessity of ethics as a particular task and a specific activity in addition to the general cultural reconstruction of society. Ethics can be replaced with studies of the general historical stages of cultural development, which would casually lead to the formation of a new moral consciousness.

The Second Period: 1930s–1950s

According to Marxist historical theory, the 1917 Bolshevik revolution in Russia should be regarded as non-Socialist, since there were neither technical-economical nor social-political foundations for the transition to socialism. This is, in fact, a highly controversial question, but, on all accounts, Russia had low industrial productivity, an underdeveloped economic structure, and the vast majority of its population had a non-Socialist outlook. The Revolution had a political character. As a result, socialism was achieved in Russia through the long, hard, and tedious work of the economic and social reconstruction of the country, and through the political education of the population. After the revolution, the Bolshevik party was forced to adapt its program to the undeveloped conditions of the country and to launch the struggle for a socialist state. One important aspect of this struggle was the creation of support for the Soviet regime by shaping a specific mentality and specific morality amongst the Soviet people.

According to Lenin, the Party had to conduct its pedagogical work among the working class and peasants. In his uncompleted draft “On the Mixing of Politics with Pedagogy,” Lenin writes: “In the political activity of the social-democratic party there is and will be a certain element of pedagogy: we must educate the working class toward its role as the fighter for freedom of humanity from exploitation. ... The social-democrat who forgets this is not a social-democrat.”¹⁴

Lenin’s followers put a great deal of effort into the political education of the population. Almost every leader of the ruling Communist Party dedicated himself to this activity. Lunacharsky, Krupskaya, Kalinin and many others contributed to the idea of a New Man.¹⁵ The image of the New Man was formed by

14 VI. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 5th ed., vol. 10 (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1967), 357.

15 One can mention, for example, N.K. Krupskaya's *Leninskie ustanovki v oblasti kul'tury* (Moscow: Partizdat, 1934); idem, *Vospitanie molodezhi v leninskom dukhe* (Moscow: Molo-

authors, who articulated their desired moral qualities. The New Man was a collective product; positive features were consequently added and compounded in the distinct portrait of the new Soviet human being. Thus, in 1923, Trotsky's new type of person was a revolutionist. He wrote: "We want to create fighters, revolutionists who would be inheritors and successors of the revolutionary tradition, which is not yet historically completed."¹⁶ At a meeting devoted to the ten-year anniversary of the Komsomol, held on October 28, 1928, Kalinin said: "Previously, the main intention of the revolutionary education of our youth was an upbringing in civil courage, to prepare political fighters who are devoted to the core to the proletariat and working people, and to nurture hate for bourgeois life so that one must, at any moment, be ready to sacrifice himself in the struggle against this regime."¹⁷ But he believed that now "in the first place, there is the task of development or, rather, the task of propaganda and agitation for the respect for knowledge and for the work among Komsomol members in order to develop an aspiration to useful knowledge."¹⁸ In his talk on May 23, 1928, Lunacharsky said: "We are facing the extraordinarily tense issue of the development of the new man – the new, because education means for us the upbringing of such a new man, since the old man, who was brought up in a chaotic and acultural capitalist society, is unsatisfactory."¹⁹ He continues: "In raising the question about creating a new, more perfect human person for the economy, we must, of course, also think about cultural development from all sides.... For this, one needs a broad political education, a high level of general and special education, and we must direct our attention to this agenda."²⁰ The discussion that unfolded in 1928 in *Komsomolskaia Pravda* about the socio-cultural type that this builder of socialism was to be, finalized the theoretical reflections on this subject. To give a short description of the New Man, she or he

diia gvardiia, 1925); A. Lunacharsky's "Novyi russkii chelovek," in *Sobranie sochinenii v vos'mi tomakh*, vol. 7 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaja literatura, 1967); idem, *Vospitanie novogo cheloveka* (Leningrad: Priboi, 1928); and idem, "Kakoi chelovek nam nuzhen," in *Komsomol'skaia pravdaia pravda* (22 July, 24 July, 25 July 1928); M.I. Kalinin's "Bor'ba za novogo cheloveka" in M.I. Kalinin, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia v chetyrekh tomakh*, vol. 2. 1926–1932 gg. (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1960).

16 Trotsky, "Zadachi kommunisticheskogo vospitaniia (Rech na piatiletnem iubilee Kommunisticheskogo Universiteta im. Sverdlova 18 iunija 1923 g.)," in *Sochineniia*, vol. 21 (Moscow-Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1927).

17 Kalinin, "Bor'ba za novogo cheloveka," in *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, 2:249.

18 Ibid., 2:251.

19 Lunacharsky, *Vospitanie novogo cheloveka*, 7.

20 Ibid., 15.

has to be committed to Marxist ideology, to be internationalist and collectivist, and to be socially active and harmonious as a person. The last means that he or she has to be developed from all sides: learned, skilled, interested, and healthy. One further important feature of Soviet humanity is its readiness to sacrifice itself for the benefit of society and future generations. Therefore, to a certain extent, we can describe this moral attitude as being eschatological.

Characterizing Lenin's theoretical contribution to the idea of the New Man, Richard T. DeGeorge writes: "Lenin, despite the claims of Soviet philosophers, brought little of an ethical or moral dimension to Marxism except to adopt the Nechaevan dictum that what helps the revolution is moral and what hinders it immoral, what helps the building of communism is moral and what hinders it is immoral – a formula which in fact forms the basis of the new Soviet Moral Code of the Builder of Communism."²¹ One can agree that Lenin was not creative in this regard; nevertheless, his approach to the ideological melioration of the Russian people influenced later generations of Soviet politicians and ideologists.

In his famous draft of the resolution *On Proletarian Culture* from 1920, Lenin formulated the main principles of moral-political education, which were then adapted by Soviet authorities. Lenin's principles can be summarized as following: first, "all educational work in the Soviet Republic of workers and peasants, in the field of political education in general and in the field of art in particular, should be imbued with a spirit of class struggle."²² Second, "the proletariat, both through its vanguard, the Communist Party, and by means of all possible types of proletarian organizations in general, should play the leading role in the whole work of the peoples' education."²³ Third, "Marxism conquered its universal-historic significance as the ideology of the revolutionary proletariat,"²⁴ i.e., it should become the basis for the new worldview. Due to the later adoption of these principles, the spheres of culture and morality lost their independence and became part of state politics. The Communist Party, which had committed to Marxist theory and aimed at building a classless society, received the right to determine and define morality.

Stalin's cultural politics continued Lenin's approach to the formation of the Soviet people. The creation of the Soviet man was a partial task in the real process of building socialism in one country. It is distinctive for the period of

21 Richard T. DeGeorge, *Soviet Ethics and Morality* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969), 2.

22 Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 336.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid., 337.

Stalin's socialism that the political and cultural education of the working class was inevitably a permanent concern of the Party-state apparatus. At that time, there were no longer any theoretical debates taking place over the concept of the New Man; the New Soviet Man had been born. The idea of a New Man ceased to be just utopia; it had already been realized in praxis. Moreover, the concept of Soviet man and socialist morality were not products of academic, theoretical reflection. They were, rather, implemented in revolutionary practice and aimed at resolving the problems that surrounded this practice. The concept "Soviet man" emerged along with and from the actual needs of the political and economic development of the country. This concept was worked out not in academic papers, but in Party resolutions and mass media propaganda. In the 1930s, the term "Soviet man" became a stable and constant part of ordinary language and, thus, a constitutive element of everyday life in Russia.

Here it is important to note that the New Man was not only a social-political category; it was at the same time a category of ethics. It corresponded to the specific worldview that can be described in Valentin Kataev's words, when he wrote in *Literaturnaia gazeta* on November 5, 1947, that "Soviet power is not a state form. It is a moral category."²⁵ There was a mute consensus about the profoundly ethical nature of the Bolsheviks' goals and the need for intensive moral education to overcome the vestiges of capitalism.

To the extent that the Bolshevik party had well-defined moral principles, they fell within the utilitarian tradition. According to the Bolsheviks, the behavior of an individual is right if it maximizes general welfare (interpreted in the sense of Marxism-Leninism). Based on this premise, the practice of proletarian utilitarianism in Russia has never accepted the human being in Kant's sense, but always considers the human being as a means for achieving state and Party ends. One clear example of the utilitarian character of Bolshevik morality is apparent in Lenin's address, entitled *The Tasks of the Youth Leagues*, which was presented in 1920 before the Third All-Russia Congress of the Russian Young Communist League. Here Lenin formulated the main issue of communist morality. He writes: "We say: morality is what serves to destroy the old exploitative society and to unite all working people around the proletariat, who is building up a new communist society."²⁶ He continues: "The basis of communist morality is the struggle for the consolidation and completion of commu-

25 V. Kataev, "Strana nashei dushi," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, November 5, 1947; reprinted in *Sobranie sochinenii v devyati tomakh*, vol. 8 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1971), 49–60.

26 Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 41:311.

nism."²⁷ The understanding of proletarian morality as utilitarianism explains the high level of expectations and demands placed on an individual by the state, on the one hand, and the high degree of coercion and cruelty that the state applied to individuals to pursue its goals, on the other. The Soviet human being should be a perfect component part of the state machinery.

The distinctive feature of the idea of the New Soviet Man during that period is that it was not discursive, but mostly visual. It was not systematically formulated in general sentences, but rather sporadically embodied in particular images. This idea had to work for the organization and mobilization of the Russian people; and it could achieve this in the best possible way if it were perceived through the senses. The constructive power of the idea of the New Soviet Man was realized by means of the production of patterns that everyone could follow and emulate.

In order to prove my claim about the visual approach of constructivist socialist ethics, it is enough to look at the social structure and cultural production of that time. The propaganda of socialist values was omnipresent and omnipotent, emotional and multi-faceted. The relevant political structures, including the Young Pioneer Organization, the Komsomol, and the Communist Party, were established and competitive mobilizing campaigns were carried out regularly. Each of these institutions had its own well-known heroes such as Pavlik Morozov and Alexei Stakhanov. Soviet literature created a pantheon of heroes with whom one could identify. We could also look to, for example, such best-sellers as Gorky's *Mother* and Ostrovskii's *How the Steel Was Tempered*. The system of education paid enormous attention to the moral upbringing of the population by means of the romanticization of the revolution and the struggle for socialism. One significant element of this endeavour was the poetization and cultivation of Lenin's personality, to which Vladimir D. Bonch-Bruyevich,²⁸ Marietta S. Shaginian and Afanasii Koptelov have significantly contributed. In general, Soviet ethics of this period can be characterized as pragmatic and constructivist ethics, most widespread method of which was exemplification. In such ethics, norms and values were personalized in a set of sensually perceivable archetypes – heroic individuals with certain desired qualities.

27 Ibid., 313.

28 "The Memoirs of Comrade Bonch-Bruyevich about Lenin were published in newspapers, magazines and in separate brochures many times, as many as 95 separate publications." Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI; formerly the Center for the Preservation of Contemporary Documents, or TskhSD), font 5, opis' 16, delo 680, ll. 7-8; cited in T. Kuz'micheva, "95 vospominanii," *Istochnik. Dokumenty russkoi istorii*, no. 4 (35) (1998): 81–84.

One of the most important tasks of Soviet art was to create and distribute this new morality. I share the opinion of Evgenii Dobrenko, who writes: “The widespread thesis about ‘politization of aesthetics and aestheticizing of politics’ should be complemented with a factor of pedagogizing.”²⁹ I also completely agree with his thesis that Soviet culture formed a new “political-pedagogical space – pedagogizing politics.”³⁰ Art turned out to be a kind of social pedagogy, using symbols that helped to transform Russian inhabitants into Soviet citizens (to use Andrei Zhdanov’s terms). In fact, official Soviet art collaborated closely with different state and government departments, including the Main Department of Social Instruction (Glavnoe upravlenie sotsial’nogo vospitanija, or Glavsotsvos).

First introduced on May 23, 1932, in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, the term “socialist realism” had the task of representing real life in art from the perspective of socialist ideals. The important thing about this phenomenon is that it cannot be restricted to the sphere of art and aesthetics; it also played an educational role in society. The term “socialist realism” indicates clearly that art in Soviet Russia was completely subordinated to moral education and the promotion of the socialist way of life. In contrast to the mainstream view on this issue, which identifies this type of art with fiction, I believe that this educational goal could not be achieved by means of pure simulation and the production of illusions. Socialist realism could only propagate socialist morality if it could persuade everyone of the reality of socialism and of the reality of this kind of morality. Therefore, art had to fulfill this function; and this was only possible because of the correspondence between art and reality. For instance, a famous representative of socialist realism, the painter Arkadii Plastov, once said that everything he created “was truth and only truth, and it couldn’t be anything else.”³¹ Valentin Kataev’s deliberations on the artistic notion of truth are very similar. He writes: “How does a hero educate a reader? ... I must believe in a hero. ... Only the hero who can educate is the hero in whom one can believe.”³²

The logic of socialist realism was not the logic of paradox, as Boris Groys argues in his book *The Total Art of Stalinism*, but it was the logic of typifying. A

29 E. Dobrenko, *Formovka sovetskogo chitatelia. Sotsial’nye i esteticheskie predposylki rezepcii sovetskoi literatury* (St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 1997), 130.

30 Ibid., 131.

31 E.V. Vuchetich, *Khudozhnik i sovremennost’* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii khudozhestv SSSR, 1960), 101. See also: “Pis'ma Arkadiia Plastova iz sbornika *Khudozhnik i sovremennost’*” at <http://www.artprima.ru/articles/o-xudozhnikax/pisma-arkadiya-plastova-iz-sbornika-xudozhnik-i-sovremennost.html> (accessed November 22, 2016).

32 Kataev, “Mysli o tvorchestve,” in *Sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomakh*, 10:523.

single fact was represented as a type: social reality is constructed through generalizing a single fact and by further disseminating this generalization.³³ We see an interdependence of reality and the symbolic world, which made socialist realism an effective means of social construction and an educational tool, as well. Even if the social order that people called socialism was merely a symbolic construction of reality in a collective consciousness, this construction was not any less real than the reality beyond it. We can therefore draw some distinctive parallels between Stalin's political, economic, architectural and ethical constructivism, which practically supported his theory of socialism and implemented it in real life.

In general, Soviet ethics of this period can be characterized as pragmatic and constructivist ethics, of which the most widespread method was exemplification. In such ethics, norms and values were personalized in a set of archetypes perceivable through the senses – heroic individuals with certain desired qualities.

In sum, I argue that Soviet ethical thought in the USSR was not only made up of scientific research into ethical problems, but also, and above all, of propaganda and the dissemination of socialist morality among the masses. During the 1930s through 1950s, ethics was reduced to a set of normative requirements including the moral obligations and duties of individuals, which corresponded with the Party's conception of socialism. This approach to ethics had an applied character and was part of state politics.

In fact, this reality corresponded to Trotsky's vision from the year 1923 that "side by side with technique, education, in the broad sense of the psychophysical moulding of new generations, will take its place as the crown of social thinking."³⁴ The Soviet system of education and Soviet political structures, as well as literature, painting, performance, theatre, movies and music, must become spaces for the promotion of socialist ideas in an accessible, sensory form.

The idea of constructing a New Socialist Man – the Proletarian – that Bogdanov described in 1904 as "gathering the Man" (or "compositing the Man"),³⁵ was in practice turned into the process of constructing a New Soviet Man. The difference between Bogdanov's vision of Socialist man and the real "Soviet Man" consisted of the fact that the first implies the evolutionary, free and

33 Compare for example with Kataev, who wrote: "How is an image been creating? Through observations The second, the third, the fourth – and then a generalization, a type is created. Then you start to believe in its typicality." *Ibid.*, 522.

34 Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*, 253–254.

35 Bogdanov, "Sobiranie cheloveka," in *Voprosy sotsializma*, 28–45.

rational development of a person on a proper scientific basis as a condition of socialist society. On the contrary, the real cultural-political praxis was violent, because it was targeted at the quickest possible homogenization of Soviet society according to the proclaimed socialist ideals, which were supposed to guarantee the stability of the new social order. While Bogdanov's Socialist man could freely form himself, the real Soviet man was formed by means of the centralized system of communistic education.

The concept the New Soviet Man can be regarded as a main moral category of constructivist socialist applied ethics, and the crucial traits of this concept were defined by Bolshevik ideology. The real existence of a Soviet Man as a collective singular was officially recognized in 1961, when in his speech at the Twenty-Second Communist Party Congress, Nikita Khrushchev declared that a new historical community of people of diverse nationalities had formed in the USSR, and that these people shared common characteristics: they were the Soviet people. The Twenty-Second Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union confirmed this fact and finalized this definition. The "Soviet people" were said to be a "new historical, social, and international community of people with a common territory, economy, and socialist content; a culture that reflected the particularities of multiple nationalities; a federal state; and possessing a common ultimate goal: the construction of communism."³⁶

The Third Period: 1960s–1990s

Before continuing my analysis, I must first clarify my use of the notion of "ethics." I differentiate between ethics as a complex of moral beliefs and convictions, on the one hand, and ethics as a philosophical discipline, on the other hand. Until now, I have been using the term "ethics" in the first sense, as a category of social praxis and a synonym for the term "morality," but starting from now, I will use it in the second meaning.

Ethics as a philosophical discipline reflecting and justifying the idea of the Soviet Man is a late product of Soviet thought. There was a nearly 40-year gap between the first textbooks on dialectical and historical materialism and the first textbook on Marxist ethics: Alexander F. Shishkin's *Foundations of Marxist Ethics* (published in 1961). The appearance of this book marked the transition of ethical thought from the production of socialist morality as a system of prac-

36 *Materialy XXIV sezda Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza (17–31 October 1961): Stenograficheskij otchet*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1962), 153.

ticed values and norms, to moral theory as systematic knowledge about these values and norms. In my view, this turn became possible after the abovementioned declaration of the Communist Party that the Soviet Man really does exist. This existential sentence created the object of ethical investigation.

The idea to establish Soviet ethics as a special science is quite significant, since it marks the moment at which morality ceased to be just an instrument of regulation and control of mass behavior and a form of collective consciousness; it refers now to the individual. The individual, together with his or her inner world, moved to the center of moral investigation. The individual was investigated not only according to her or his external qualities; now the structure of her or his subjectivity became the focus of attention. The most well-known theory of subjectivity was based upon the “activity theory” approach, developed by Alexei N. Leontiev. He was influenced by Marxism and viewed the self as an active being embedded within a sociocultural context and intrinsically interwoven with it. This theory served as a starting point for the theoretical reflections on subjectivity among such authors as Georgy P. Schedrovitsky and Evald V. Ilyenkov.

The area of moral theory stretches over such fields as moral consciousness, moral relationships, moral actions, moral character, and personal moral values.³⁷ The problem-oriented ethics that analyzed the nature and inner world of the Soviet Man took the place of the directive and prescriptive ethics that had constructed the New Soviet Man. This does not mean that ethics lost its normative functions, but that they were augmented with theoretical reflections on the origin of morals, types of morals, the specifics of Soviet morals, and Soviet personality. Thus Shishkin defines ethics as a “science of the social essence and lawful regularities of the development of morality as a particular form of social consciousness; of the lawful regularities of moral progress, the result of which is communist morality, a higher stage of the moral development of society and personality; of the lawful regularities of the development of communist morality, of its principles and norms, of its role in the struggle for Communism.”³⁸

It is beyond the scope of this paper to analyse the development of Soviet ethics in any detail, but some relevant moments concerning the topic of the New Soviet Man must be noted.³⁹

37 See, for example, F.A. Selivanov, *Etika. Ocherki* (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 1962).

38 A.F. Shishkin, *Osnovy marksistskoi etiki* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Instituta mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii, 1961), 43.

39 See studies on Soviet ethics in the bibliographical directory by Vincentas Zhiamaitis, *Etika: bibliograficheski spravochnik* (Vilnius: n. p., 1990), which includes a complete bibliography

The term "Soviet ethics" accounts for a variant of Marxist ethics. Methodologically, it is based on Soviet dialectical and historical materialism and on the Marxist-Leninist dialectical approach to the understanding of the world. Due to its Marxist origins, its fundamental view of the individual was determined by the principle of the constitutive dependence of the individual on the social structure. From this assumption emerged the view that the inner life of humanity was a derivative of social relationships and that a single person was expected to conform to the collective. In contrast to most ethical systems, which are rooted in the idea of the moral autonomy of individual, the starting point of Marxist Soviet ethics is the primacy of the social and the dependence of the individual on the collective. Here, the human being comes forth as a phenomenon fundamentally determined by social being.

This methodological approach predetermined both the themes of ethical reflection and the ways that problems were solved. Thus, Soviet ethical thought engaged in the themes of defining socialist morals,⁴⁰ identifying the structures that form the personality,⁴¹ the analysis of this formation and the choice of moral values,⁴² moral ideals,⁴³ and the relationship between morals and knowledge. A significant amount of intellectual space went toward investigating themes concerning the interactions between individuals and society, such as the norms of socialist and communist morals,⁴⁴ the place of the individual in society, the tasks and responsibilities of the individual in socialist society,⁴⁵

of Soviet ethics for the period from 1976 until 1985. See also DeGeorge, *Soviet Ethics and Morality*; and Phillip T. Grier, *Marxist Ethical Theory in the Soviet Union* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1978).

- 40 L.M. Archangel'skii, *Lektsii po marksistskoi etike* (Sverdlovsk: Izdatel'stvo Ural'skogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 1969); O.G. Drobnitskii, *Poniatie morali* (Moscow: Nauka, 1974).
- 41 O.G. Drobnitskii, "Struktura moral'nogo soznaniia," *Voprosy filosofii*, no. 2 (1972): 6; A.I. Titarenko, *Struktury npravstvennogo soznaniia* (Moscow: Mysl', 1974); Archangel'skii, *Sotsial'no-eticheskie problemy teorii lichnosti* (Moscow: Mysl', 1974); A.A. Guseinov, *Sotsial'naia priroda npravstvennosti* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 1974); V.A. Bliumkin, *Moral'nye kachestva lichnosti* (Voronezh: Izdatel'stvo Voronezhskogo universiteta, 1974).
- 42 A.A. Ivin, *Osnovnaia logika otsenok* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 1970).
- 43 E.L. Dubko, V.A. Titova, *Ideal, spravledlivost', schastie* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 1989).
- 44 Archangel'skii, *Metodologiiia eticheskikh issledovanii* (Moscow: Nauka, 1982).
- 45 A.I. Titarenko, *Kriterii bravstvennogo progressa* (Moscow: Mysl', 1967); V.T. Efimov, *Sotsial'nye determinizm i moral'* (Moscow: Vysshiaia shkola, 1974); A.I. Titarenko, *Marksitskaia etika* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1980).

and the norms of inter-individual relations in socialist society.⁴⁶ There has been some research on morals related to various aspects of social life, for example morals and economics, morals and politics,⁴⁷ morals and science,⁴⁸ and morals and culture.⁴⁹ Some interesting ethical theories were developed, including, for example, Vasilii P. Tugarinov's theory of values,⁵⁰ Oleg G. Drobnitskii's ethical conceptualism,⁵¹ and Alexander I. Titarenko's normative structuralism.⁵²

Notwithstanding the many divergences within Soviet ethical theories, they identify the person by the combination of some fundamental features. These features are subjective activity and objective knowledge, whereby all knowledge must be part of human practical activity in a collective that masters social reality according to the idea of socialism. I would like to stress that the human being in general is not the object of Soviet ethics, but rather this object is the socialist or Soviet human being. Therefore, it is significant for its methodology that it combined and sometimes erroneously identified in its reflections an ideological collective, i.e. class consciousness, with an individual moral consciousness.

Morality was considered to be one of the elements of social consciousness ranking alongside "philosophy, political and juridical ideology, art and religion."⁵³ From the Marxist point of view, morality in general and communist morality in particular, is a social phenomenon related to the character of society. On the level of the individual, this social aspect is displayed in its "socialist

46 N.V. Rybakova, *Moral'nye otnosheniia i ikh struktura* (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 1974).

47 Titarenko, *Moral' i politika* (Moscow: Mysl', 1968).

48 V.I. Tolstykh, *Nauka i nrvstvennost'* (Moscow: Nauka, 1969).

49 V.F. Zybkovets, *Prosikhozhdenie nrvstvennosti* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1974).

50 V.P. Tugarinov, *O tsennostiakh zhizni i kul'tury* (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 1960); V.P. Tugarinov, *Lichnost' i obshchestvo* (Moscow: Mysl', 1965); V.P. Tugarinov, *Teoriia tsennosti v marksizme* (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 1968).

51 Drobnitskii, *Mir ozhivshikh predmetov: Problema tsennoszi i marksistskaia filosofii* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1967); idem, *Poniatie morali*; idem, *Problemy nrvstvennosti* (Moscow: Nauka, 1977) (see also the review by Z. Katvan in *Studies in Soviet Thought* 25, no. 1 [Jan. 1983]: 72–75).

52 About the works of Titarenko and Drobnitskii, see P. Kirschenmann, "Neuere Probleme einer sozialistischen Moraltheorie," *Studies in Soviet Thought* 9 (1969): 112–142; H. Fleischer, *Wertphilosophie in der Sowjet Union*, in the series *Berichte des Osteuropa Instituts der Freuen Universität Berlin: Reihe Philosophie und Soziologie*, 88 (Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin, 1969).

53 Shishkin, *Osnovy marksistskoi etiki*, 8.

orientation.” According to Georgii L. Smirnov, “socialist orientation” includes three main groups of personal features: communist ideology, social labor as an ultimate goal of human life, and collectivism.⁵⁴ This example illustrates that the very idea of a Soviet human being is founded on the idea of a special social type of personality. Soviet ethics explored Soviet people from the normative perspective, based on the conception of the socialist type of person, who was interpreted as a product of cultural-historical development. The collective image of the New Soviet Man – since the 1960s, of the heroic Builder of Communism – remained a valid ideal and a criterion that guided ethical research until the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The recognition of the individual as an object of ethics can be seen as a symptom of the humanization of Soviet society, the culmination of which has been expressed in the controversial description “socialism with a human face.” Here the Soviet people were granted a certain autonomy from the state, and also a certain amount of privacy. They received a restricted right to their individuality instead of being only the faceless functional part of the anonymous collective whole. One can say that the Soviet Man as a singular noun was officially born during the 1960s.

On the other hand, this Soviet Man was expected to have an essentially social existence and to embody the typical properties of the idealized collective whole. The New Soviet Man had to be endowed, first of all, with a new moral outlook according to which the individual had to realize herself not just in society, but for society. Since ethical analysis was guided by the presuppositions of Marxist materialist sociology, it became something of a hostage to its own methodology and terminology. The assumptions of Soviet ethical theory held an inherent potential for conflict between ideal and reality and between theory and praxis. In fact, Soviet ethics was permanently confronted with problems like the discrepancy between social and personal interests and the non-coincidental nature of social and personal values.

These tensions can explain the enormous attention that Soviet ethics paid to the moral education of the Soviet people. Since the discipline was engaged in politics, it could not allow views that were incompatible with the doctrine and ultimate goals of the state. The moral principles listed in the code of the Builder of Communism continued the tradition of the codification of moral norms; the core of Party morality needed to inculcate its ideology in the consciousness of the Soviet people. In particular, the problem of the theoretical foundation and renovation of the system of socialist morality again took up an acute role at

54 G.L. Smirnov, *Sovetskii chelovek: formirovanie sotsialisticheskogo tipa lichnosti* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1971), 123.

the final stage of the development of Soviet ethics (in the second half of the 1980s) and shortly before the breakup of the USSR.⁵⁵ Thus, until its final stage, Soviet ethics remained true to the Marxist principle that “as every Marxist science, Marxist ethics not only plays the role of a tool of world-cognition, but also reconstructs the world.”⁵⁶ Because it had to orient moral behaviour and promote the socialist social order, it also had to fulfil pedagogical functions. The image of the New Soviet Man, embodied in the combined theoretical efforts of Soviet ethical thought, still fulfilled the role of the “North Star” in this endeavour.

At that time, the official morality of an ideal Soviet Man began to compete with the non-official moral of the real Soviet man. The real self-understanding of the population of the Soviet Union began to challenge state Soviet ideology. The term “Soviet” gained a more and more pejorative and ironic meaning due to the increasing awareness of the discrepancy between the means and ends of the state and the contradictions between the existing conditions of life and official ideology. Perestroika came about in the 1980s as a way to change the dangerous social situation and for Soviet society to avoid becoming alienated from Soviet values. Using early socialist rhetoric that was aimed at strengthening the Soviet regime, perestroika ended with the collapse of the USSR.

I have focused in this study on the unprecedented efforts of the Party’s political elite to experiment with public consciousness and create a bearer of the socialist worldview and socialist morality. The concept of the New Soviet Man was central to the Soviet approach to building a new society, since, with its help, Bolshevik politicians hoped to support their political decisions and, in this way, establish and advance social stability.

The history of this concept in Russia embraces two aspects: the first is a normative realism connected with the view that moral norms arise from the social position of people, i.e., they are casually determined by social structures, social needs, and interests. This approach, which is based on the methodological unity of the historical, the logical, and the moral, denies the role of ethics as a special discipline and leads to the dissolution of ethics into sociology.⁵⁷

55 V.I. Bakshtanovskii, *Prikladnaia etika i upravlenie npravstvennym vospitaniem* (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 1980); V.I. Bakshtanovskii, V.T. Ganzhin, Iu. V. Sogomonov, *Nravstvennoe vospitanie (sotsiologicheskie i upravlencheskie aspekty)* (Tiumen: Izdatel'stvo Tiumenskogo industrial'nogo instituta, 1982); Iu. V. Sogomonov, “Etika i teoriia npravstvennogo vospitaniia,” *Voprosy filosofii*, no. 2 (1982): 39–51.

56 Shishkin, *Osnovy marksistskoi etiki*, 46.

57 One typical representative of this view is Abram M. Deborin, who claims that “[e]thics,

The opposite view proceeds from the necessity of ethics, which must correspond to the socialist ideal and serve as a tool for achieving this ideal. The central issue of this approach was the problem of how to construct communist forms of upbringing and how to modify people's moral consciousness and worldview. These ethical reflections resulted in the permanent updating of the idea of the New Soviet Man in accordance with the changing requirements of society. Such an instrumentally interpreted ethics included pedagogical tasks and operated as a tutor, providing constant moral-political education by designing valid patterns and discourses. In a simplified form, one can say that since the 1960s Soviet ethics was stretched between two poles, namely: materialist sociology and materialist pedagogies. We can also say that Soviet ethics was in principle the ethics of the Soviet Man.

generally speaking, is nothing other than the study of the behavior or life of people corresponding to ideas in which are formulated definite requirements arising from the social position of these people." A.M. Deborin, "Revizionizm pod maskoi ortodoksii" (Part 3), *Pod znamenem marksizma*, no. 1 (1928): 7.