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Большевистское проектирование «нового человека» в раннесоветский период: теоретические основы, политико-идеологические приоритеты, эволюция подходов

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Bolshevik Engineering of the “New Man” in the Early Soviet Period: Theoretical Bases, Political and Ideological Priorities, Evolution of Approaches

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Abstract: The article examines theoretical preconditions, as well as the political and ideological priorities of Bolshevik efforts to engineer of the “New Man” in the early Soviet period. The author shows the Marxist origins of the Bolshevik project and their transformation in the works of V.I. Lenin and other leaders of the Communist Party and the Soviet state. It describes the principal mechanisms and tools used to design the New Man, as well as practice of social mobilization and exposure to the political culture of Bolshevism. Emphasis is given to the role of the legacy of World War I in the Bolshevik institutionalization of social engineering, coercion and violence to create *new human material*. The article also shows disagreements among the Bolshevik leadership during the period from 1917 until the late 1920s regarding the ways of designing the New Man in the context of the proletarian culture, the role of the moral character concept for an ideal communist person as the builder of new society. Analysis is given to the gender aspect of the problem, the Bolshevik vision of the ways to design the New Woman and reshape the *old way of life*. The article traces the transformation of the Bolshevik leadership’s vision of the New Man and the New Woman throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The author singles out two stages in the Bolshevik engineering of the New Man in the early Soviet period (1917 – mid-1920s, late 1920s – mid-1930s), and describes the project’s evolution.

Keywords: the New Man, the New Woman, Bolshevik Design, Early Soviet Society

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Introduction

The task of reshaping the consciousness, behavior, lifestyle, and the entire image of a person was an important component of the Bolshevik project to create the new world. In some respects, this was its central task, since Marxists believed that the comprehensive and free development of the individual was the ultimate goal of communist society¹.

Cultivating the New Man is often seen in contemporary historiography as a component of the Revolutionary Soviet project. The Soviet project encompassed Bolshevik schemes that determined the structure and workings of the Soviet system². Scholars accordingly look at the nature and features of social engineering in the early Soviet period. Studying the New Man involves its doctrinal, discursive, as well as pragmatic aspects³. The authors place the question into the European context, as one of the variants of modern social engineering more generally⁴. The numerous works discuss actual transformations in the consciousness and behavior of Soviet people, significantly contributing to the field. The studies are also highly relevant to understanding the transformation of the individual in early Soviet society. As many authors stress, the most appropriate methods for

¹ K. Marx, and F. Engels, “Manifest kommunisticheskoy partii,” [Manifesto of the Communist Party] in *Sochineniya* (Moscow: Publishing House of Political Literature, 1955), 4: 447.

² O.V. Gorbachev, “Sovetskiy proyekt v zapadnoy istoriografii,” [Soviet Project in Western Historiography] in *The Epoch of Socialist Reconstruction: Ideas, Myths and social transformation programs* (Yekaterinburg: Ural University Publishing house, 2017), 19–29.

³ Olga Porshneva, “Novyy chelovek v revolyutsionno-sovetskom projekte: klyuchevyye problemy sovremennoy istoriografii,” [The New Man in the Revolutionary Soviet Project: Key Problems of Modern Historiography] in *The Epoch of Socialist Reconstruction: Ideas, Myths and social transformation programs* (Yekaterinburg: Ural University Publishing house, 2017), 6–18.

⁴ P. Holquist, “‘Information is the Alpha and Omega of Our Work’: Bolshevik Surveillance in Its Pan-European Context,” in *American Russian Studies: Milestones of Historiography of the Recent Years. The Soviet Period: Anthology* (Samara: Samara University Press, 2001); D.L. Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values. The Cultural Norms of the Soviet Modernity, 1917–1941* (Ithaca and London: [S.n], 2003); P. Fritzsche, and J. Hellbeck, “The New Man in Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany,” in Michael Geyer, Sh. Fitzpatrick, *Beyond Totalitarianism / Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

studying the New Person are qualitative, rather than quantitative. Assessing the totality and accuracy of the sources remains a challenge⁵.

Modern historiography examines both the activities of subjects (party, state structures, public organizations, theorists and ideologists) of the Bolshevik project to make the New Man, and the object itself – Soviet Russia's population, or the “human material” the party endeavored to alter, as well as the actual state of people's consciousness and behavior⁶. The studies show that the latter were not only subjected to social planning, but also participated, whether voluntarily or otherwise, in implementing the project. At the same time, the articles allow us to reach some conclusions about the different dynamics and character of Soviet social engineering on the one hand and the actual outcome in the people's consciousness and behavior, on the other.

To understand why good intentions often lead to the opposite result, more study of the Bolshevik Project itself is needed. Using the “project approach” will allow us to measure the ratio between the thoughts and aspirations of people and the results of their practical activities⁷. It remains important to analyze the Bolshevik effort to shape the New Man.

Theoretical Prerequisites and Political and Ideological Foundations of Social Engineering: Reflections on the Design Characteristics

The solution to the problem of cultivating the New Man was based on the Marxist understanding of the ways to overcome the alienation of a person under capitalism through the proletarian revolution and transformations promoting the comprehensive development of the individual. These conditions, according to Marxist doctrine, created a set of measures for the establishment of socialist relations in society during the transition period, ultimately leading to communism. The main condition for reshaping a person was considered to be a certain radical transformation of the socio-economic relations (the basis), creating the prerequisites necessary to change the whole system of social relations. In this regard, F. Engels wrote, “Just as the peasants and manufacturing workers of the last century changed their whole way of life and became quite different people

⁵ L. Siegelbaum, A. Sokolov, *Stalinism as a Way of Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press., 2000), 9–10; *Pis'ma k vlasti v epokhu revolyutsii i grazhdanskoj vojny (mart 1917 – may 1921). Sbornik dokumentov* [Letters to power in the era of the Revolution and the Civil War (March 1917 – May 1921). Collection of documents], comps A.Ya. Livshin, I.B. Orlov (Novosibirsk: Avtograf, 2015), 6; O.V. Velikanova, *Popular perceptions of Soviet politics in the 1920s: disenchantment of the dreamers* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 18.

⁶ Olga Porshneva, “Novyy chelovek v revolyutsionno-sovetskom projekte [The New Man in the Revolutionary Soviet Project], 12–16.

⁷ O.V. Gorbachev, “Sovetskiy proyekt v zapadnoy istoriografii” [Soviet in Western Historiography], 28.

when they were drawn into big industry, in the same way, communal control over production by society as a whole, and the new development resulting from this production, will both require an entirely different kind of human material... Communist society will, in this way, make it possible for its members to put their comprehensively developed faculties to full use.”⁸

In 1902, in his Draft Program of the RSDLP, V.I. Lenin also noted the importance of achieving this fundamental goal, “The real emancipation of the working class requires a social revolution – which is being prepared by the entire development of capitalism... with the object of ensuring *full well-being and free, all-round development for all its members* [italics added – O.P.]”⁹ At the same time, Lenin considered the creation of *the New Man* and his *emancipation* from the bonds of the past in close connection with the idea of a world revolution, the liberation of the entire human race¹⁰.

The Marxist interpretation of the theory of progress had several features that influenced the Bolsheviks’ general vision of prospects and the understanding of methods necessary to implement the New Man project. Lenin, together with other theorists of the Bolshevik state, were aware of the difficulties and problems stemming from the properties of *the object* of social engineering, i.e. the people and the society of Soviet Russia in the late 1910s–early 1920s, which emerged from the hardships of World War I and lacked sufficient cultural preconditions to build socialism.

Guiding the actual changes in the first years after the revolution, Lenin formulated a number of provisions becoming the bases for the Bolshevik policy. The principal one, regarding the problem under consideration, appears to be the idea of *educating* the masses. Comprehensively trained people, according to Lenin, is the goal for communism to reach in the long run. In 1920 he wrote, “To attempt in practice today to anticipate this future result of a fully developed, fully [...] mature communism would be like trying to teach higher mathematics to a four year old child.”¹¹ Therefore, the Bolshevik leader’s agenda included more specific and pragmatic tasks of *educating* the working people in

⁸ F. Engels, “Printsipy kommunizma,” [The Principles of Communism] in K. Marx, F. Engels, *Sochineniya* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat Publ., 1955), 334–335.

⁹ V.I. Lenin, “Proekt programmy Rossiyskoy sotsial-demokraticheskoy rabochey partii,” [Draft Program of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party] vol. 6. V.I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochineniy* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat Publ., 1963), 204.

¹⁰ V.I. Lenin, “O ‘levom’ rebichestve i o melkoburzhnaznosti,” [“Left-Wing” Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality] vol. 36. V.I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochineniy* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat Publ., 1969), 306.

¹¹ V.I. Lenin, “Detskaia bolezn’ ‘levizny’ v kommunizme,” [“Left-Wing” Communism, an Infantile Disorder”] vol. 41. V.I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochineniy* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat Publ., 1981), 33.

the interests of building socialism. “We educated the party of the proletariat with the aid of the Marxist program, and the tens of millions of working people in our country must be educated in the same way,” he wrote¹².

Lenin rationalized, with allowance for the Russian conditions, the task of designing a new type of person, a Soviet person, sharing socialist/communist values (as opposed to those bourgeois and petty-bourgeois), actively and consciously participating in state affairs. “A state is strong when the people are politically conscious. It is strong when the people know everything, can form an opinion of everything and do everything consciously,”¹³ he wrote. H.C. d’Encausse, a French historian, is right in linking Lenin’s approach to the New Man and the ways of its formation with his understanding of the historical development dialectics as a conflict between spontaneity and consciousness. “For Lenin, human progress was reduced to depriving society and the individual of spontaneous consciousness and the gradual introduction of genuine consciousness. The New Man was to be the outcome of this process, but, just as in the preparation for the revolution, there was a need for a vanguard team. This struggle against spontaneity both in the party and in Marxism presupposed the expulsion of all political ideas alien to Marxism,”¹⁴ writes the researcher.

Lenin’s provisions became the basis of the Bolshevik program. The RCP(b) Program, adopted at the 8th Congress in March 1919, gave the Soviet school the task of “educating a generation capable of decisively establishing communism,”¹⁵ ensuring “development of the most far-reaching propaganda of communist ideas, for which purpose the machinery and means of state power must be utilized.”¹⁶ These instructions determined the enormous role of the system of education, propaganda, and various forms and methods of controlling the consciousness and behavior of the population in the process of its *transformation* to become New People. The subjects of social design were Bolshevik ideologists and leaders of the Communist Party and the Soviet state, who determined the institutional and regulatory requirements for the processes of upbringing, education,

¹² V.I. Lenin, “Zaklyuchitel’noe slovo po dokladu o partiinoi programme 19 marta,” [Speech Closing the Debate on the Party Program, March 19] vol. 38. V.I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochineniy* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat Publ., 1968), 180.

¹³ V.I. Lenin, “Zaklyuchitel’noe slovo po dokladu o mire 26 oktyabrya (8 noyabrya),” [Concluding Speech Following the Discussion on the Report of Peace, October 26 (8 November)] vol. 35. V.I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochineniy* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat Publ., 1974), 21.

¹⁴ H. Carrere d’Encausse, *Lenin* [Lenin] (Moscow: ROSSPEN Publ.; Charitable Foundation of the first President of Russia Boris Yeltsin, 2008), 319.

¹⁵ V.I. Lenin, et al. “Programma Rossiyskoy kommunisticheskoy partii (bol’shevikov),” [The Program of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)] vol. 38. V.I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochineniy* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat Publ., 1968), 431.

¹⁶ Ibid., 433.

and propaganda. This group also included some specialists of the media, culture and art, who applied creativity to the narrative of the official discourse, creating vivid images and symbols to embody the values of the New Man.

Formation of Approaches to Shaping the New Man in the Post-revolutionary Period

Promotion of the New Man ideal was a component of the cultural policy of the Soviet state. Part of the Bolshevik leadership, including A.A. Bogdanov, A.V. Lunacharsky, V.F. Pletnev and others supported the idea of creating a *proletarian culture* capable of producing the New Man. However, V.I. Lenin, L.D. Trotsky and others opposed the idea of reducing the emerging Soviet culture to purely *proletarian* images, created by the proletarians themselves. They defended the need for building a new culture based on the development of the best cultural traditions created by humanity as a whole, however redesigned from the Marxist point of view¹⁷.

The image of the New Man as an idealized proletarian subject was developing in the socialist discourse and leftist artistic expression even before the 1917 Revolution, yet received a powerful affirmation as a new moral ideal after the October Socialist Revolution. H.C. d'Encausse is correct when she notes that according to the official mythology, the collective protagonist of the 1917 Revolution was the proletariat. People dreamed of a society of brotherhood and equality, with the central figure being a proletarian, an ordinary person, a person from below, endowed with innate virtues. The ideology of Proletcult fit well into this vision of the person and the society of the future¹⁸. However, the practical tasks of building a new state, and developing its economy, technology, science, and culture, required reliance on professional knowledge and specialists, and demanded that the masses master the progressive cultural skills of the industrial era. For Lenin and several other pragmatic Bolshevik leaders, this fact became evident soon after they began the construction of a *regular* proletarian state, and the failure of the commune government project by the spring of 1918.

The formation of the New Man, according to Marxism, implied a radical change in human morality. This attitude was developed in the writings and speeches of V.I. Lenin, who denounced the old bourgeois morality, and declared the existence of certain communist morality, which “stems from the interests

¹⁷ V.I. Lenin, “O proletarskoy kul'ture,” [On Proletarian Culture] vol. 41. V.I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochineniy* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat Publ., 1981), 337; L.D. Trotsky, *Literatura i revoliutsiya* [Literature and Revolution] (Moscow: Gospolitizdat Publ., 1991), 147, 175–176.

¹⁸ H. Carrere d'Encausse, *Lenin*, 320.

of the class struggle of the proletariat”¹⁹. The core of the communist morality of the New Man was the ideal image of a Bolshevik, the builder of a bright future, shaped with exposure to the experience of underground revolutionary struggle and the Civil War. V.S. Tyazhelnikova notes that “Events before and during the revolution gave rise to a system of values with the social ideal of the bright tomorrow dominating the whole universal picture of the world”²⁰. This ideal was based on the apology of fair class violence, ruthlessness and hatred of enemies, selfless sacrifice, uncompromising stand and inclemency. The Civil War contributed to the development of stereotypes regarding communist consciousness and behavior, characterized with disregard to the value of human life, a general spirit of permanent mobilization alertness, determination against class enemies, opinion categoricalness, resoluteness and discipline, combined with lack of education²¹. These features of the mental and psychological image of the communists found expression in the *military syndrome* in their behavior during the early Soviet period²².

In the 1920s, Bolshevik ideologists E.M. Yaroslavsky, D.Z. Manuisky, E.I. Kvirng, A.A. Soltz and others paid close attention to the problems of morality and life of the proletariat during the transition period, studying the questions of party ethics, and communist behavior in the family and in everyday life²³. The military-communist narrative was permanently present in the propaganda of the new morality, considered mandatory for the communists themselves in the first place”²⁴.

To embed the ideals of the New Man in the consciousness of the masses (the object of social design), the Soviet ideologists employed methods of social

¹⁹ V.I. Lenin, “Zadachi soyuzov molodezhi,” [The Tasks of the Youth Leagues] vol. 41. V.I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochineniy* (Moscow: State Publishing House of Political Literature, 1981), 309.

²⁰ V.S. Tyazhelnikova, “ ‘Vy zhertvoyu pali v bor’be rokovoy...’ Genezis i evoliutsiya revoliutsionnoy zhertvennosti kommunistov,” [‘You Fell Victim to a Fateful Struggle...’ Genesis and Evolution of Revolutionary Communist Self-Sacrifice] *Socialnaya istoriya. Ezhegodnik. 1998/99* (Moscow: ROSSPEN Publ., 1999), 412.

²¹ V.S. Tyazhelnikova, “ ‘Voennyi sindrom’ v povedenii kommunistov 1920-kh gg.,” [‘The Military Syndrome’ in Communist Behavior of the 1920s] in *Voenno-istoricheskaya antropologiya. Ezhegodnik, 2002. Predmet, zadachi, perspektivy razvitiya* (Moscow: ROSSPEN Publ., 2002), 303.

²² Ibid.

²³ *Partiynaya etika. Diskussii 1920-h gg.*, [Party ethics. Discussions of the 1920s] eds. A.A. Guseynova, M.V. Iskrova, and R.V. Petropavlovskogo (Moscow: Gospolitizdat Publ., 1989).

²⁴ A.A. Soltz, “O partiynoy etike. Doklad na sobranii yacheiki TsKK i NK RKI” [On Party Ethics. Report at the Meeting of the Chapter of the Central Control Commission and the People’s Commissariat of Workers’ and Peasants’ Inspection] in *Partiynaya etika. Diskussii 1920-h gg.*, eds. A.A. Guseynova, M.V. Iskrova, and R.V. Petropavlovskogo (Moscow: Izdatel’svo politicheskoi literatury, 1989), 260–269.

mobilization. Modern researchers define the term *social mobilization* as “the purposeful influence of government institutions on the society, based on the suppression or distortion of free and rational preferences, motivations and actions of individuals and social groups in order to catalyze the society and make it support and pursue the goals and tasks declared priority and recognized by the public majority.”²⁵ Social mobilization was not just an instrument, a resource, but a cornerstone of the development of the Soviet society, based on the strong belief of the Bolshevik leaders in the actual possibility of a radical transformation of society and people²⁶. The transformation of men and women into *a new breed of human beings* was a necessary condition to carry out the Bolshevik project of social transformation, implying their maximum involvement in the affairs of the Soviet state. To this end, the Bolsheviks were promoting a social and historical myth, a narrative, which, upon digestion, was capable of formatting an individual’s consciousness, creating a new vision of the world, a new social identity. The process of *reattaching* the notions of the past and the present in the post-revolutionary period expanded to a truly colossal scale, being introduced in various spheres of life, ranging from the system of comprehensive and political education to new holidays and rituals, as well as campaigns of mass propaganda, activism, and performance (games, theater, etc.)²⁷.

The Bolsheviks viewed the success of the New Man project as a result of transforming both economic production and everyday life, introducing the so-called *new way of life*. The Program of the RCP(b), adopted at the 8th Congress in March 1919, called on the communists to “improve the housing conditions of the toiling masses,” “to abolish overcrowding and the unsanitary state of the old residential districts, to demolish houses unfit for habitation, to reconstruct old and construct new houses which will correspond to the new conditions of life of the working masses, and to distribute the working population in a rational

²⁵ *Sotsial'naya mobilizatsiya v stalinskom obshchestve (konets 1920-h – 1930-e gg.): Kollektivnaya monografiya* [Social mobilization in Stalin’s society (late 1920s – 1930s): Collective monograph], eds. N.B. Arnautov, S.A. Krasil’nikov, I.S. Kuznetsov, at al. (Novosibirsk: Novosibirskiy gos. un-t Publ., 2013), 5.

²⁶ P. Holquist, “‘Information is the Alpha and Omega of Our Work’: Bolshevik Surveillance in Its Pan-European Context,” 69–72.

²⁷ The concept of staged dictatorship was proposed by M. Rolf, who demonstrated the role of staging/dramatization/new theatricality in achieving the goal of Soviet mass festivals, designed to form new social communities and a new social identity. See about it: M. Rolf *Sovetskie massovye prazdniki* [Soviet mass holidays] (Moscow: ROSSPEN Publ.); The Boris Yeltsin Presidential Center Foundation, 2009); About the role of *performative* (staging or gaming) campaigns in mastering new behaviors, see also: Elizabeth A. Wood. *Performing Justice: Agitation Trials in Early Soviet Russia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005).

manner”²⁸. During the first years of Soviet power, the existing housing stock was actually reshaped and reformed, featuring forced relocation, joint accommodation for different families, eviction, and creation of communal homes. People were forced to organize working and living collectives in terms of both administration and shared space, through arrangement of housing, settlement planning, and ultimately through the accommodation structure as a whole²⁹.

In the process of reshaping everyday life, the family structure was to be transformed, with introduction of collectivism, important for creating the New Woman. Gender model construction became one of the elements of Bolshevik social engineering. The Bolsheviks connected the solution to the question of *women's rights*, the women's *emancipation from semi-slavery*³⁰ with the rationalization and collectivization of the household matters and everyday life.

The discussion of the problems of *women's emancipation*, family and marriage was brought up by many leaders of the Communist Party and the Bolshevik women's movement, including A. Kollontai, I. Armand, S.N. Smidovich, N.K. Krupskaya, L.D. Trotsky, N.I. Bukharin, A.V. Lunacharsky and others. Despite the fact that in 1918–1928, members of the Bolshevik elite had very different views on the problems of gender relations³¹, which they constantly expressed in sharp discussions between themselves, one can also single out several common features inherent to the Bolshevik *gender discourse*. These include the notion that a radical change in the status and appearance of women would be achieved through the transformation of the system of socio-economic relations based on socialist principles; the implementation of legislative measures to ensure the equality of women; a social policy aimed at protecting maternity and infancy; the transfer of a part of the family's functions to government and

²⁸ V.I. Lenin, et al. “Programma Rossiyskoy kommunisticheskoy partii (bol'shevikov),” [The Program of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)] vol. 38. V.I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochineniy* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat Publ., 1968), 443.

²⁹ M. Meyerovich, “Sotsialisticheskiy gorod: formirovaniye gorodskogo soobshchestva i sovetskaya zhilishchnaya politika v 30-ye gody,” [The Socialist City: Urban Community Formation and the Soviet Housing Policy in the 1930s] in *The Soviet Social Policy of the 1920s and 1930s: Ideology and Everyday Life* (Moscow: Variant LLC, the Center for Social Policy and Gender Studies, 2007), 84–117.

³⁰ V.I. Lenin, “Velikiy pochin,” [A Great Beginning] vol. 39. V.I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochineniy* (Moscow: State Publishing House of Political Literature, 1970), 23–24; V.I. Lenin, “Pis'mo Inesse Armand, 24 yanvarya 1915 g.,” [Letter to Inessa Armand, January 24, 1915] vol. 49. V.I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochineniy* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat Publ., 1970), 56.

³¹ A. Pushkarev, and N. Pushkareva, “Rannaya sovetskaya ideologiya 1918–1928 gg. i ‘seksual’nyy vopros’ (o popytках uregulirovaniya sotsial’noy politiki v oblasti seksual’nosti),” [Early Soviet Ideology of 1918–1928 and the “Sexual Question” (on Attempts to Regulate Social Policy in the Field of Sexuality)] in *Sovetskaya sotsial'naya politika 1920–1930-h godov: ideologiya i povsednevnost'* (Moscow: Variant Ltd.; TSSPGI Publ., 2007), 205–215.

community organizations; and motivating women to take an active part in communist construction.

As A. Pushkarev and N. Pushkareva stressed, the socialist revolution's decisive role in "solving" the *sexual problems* in fact meant that the Bolshevik government started manipulating individual sexual preferences, interfering with the lives of individuals for the purpose of their political mobilization, and violating the principle of family sovereignty³².

The methods of shaping the New Man, as the Bolshevik elite understood them, included both conviction and coercion, punishment, and training those who were *unconscious* aliens and class aliens by means of compulsory labor. These measures were carried out through legal mechanisms providing for the introduction of universal labor service, the creation of labor armies, correctional labor institutions, and forced labor camps³³. Violence against the regime's apparent or potential opponents was not only ideologically justified, but it also played a specific role in the development of "the new human material."³⁴ The Soviet state, born at the time of total war, institutionalized some wartime practices, like concentration camps, surveillance, censorship, and coercion, turning them into permanent tools of management. This was done both to contain external threats and develop the economy by reorganizing the whole society³⁵.

Evolution of the New Man ideal in the 1930s: factors and characteristics

The development of approaches to the implementation of the New Man project from 1917 until the 1930s carried out by the Bolshevik leadership can be divided into two stages of significant evolution. The first stage takes up the period from 1917 until the late 1920s, comprising the first decade of Soviet power,

³² A. Pushkarev, and N. Pushkareva, "Rannyya sovetskaya ideologiya 1918–1928 gg. i 'seksual'nyy vopros' (o popytkakh uregulirovaniya sotsial'noy politiki v oblasti seksual'nosti)," [Early Soviet Ideology of 1918–1928 and the "Sexual Question" (on Attempts to Regulate Social Policy in the Field of Sexuality)] in *Sovetskaya sotsial'naya politika 1920–1930-h godov: ideologiya i povsednevnost'* (Moscow: Variant Ltd.; TSSPGI Publ., 2007), 221–222.

³³ S. Krasilnikov, "Mezhdru pravom i nakazaniyem: trud v rannesovetskom obshchestve," [Between Rights and Punishment: Labor in the Early Years of Soviet Society] *Quaestio Rossica*, no. 4 (2017), 1027–1046.

³⁴ S.S. Brazevich, "Istoricheskaya sotsiologiya revolyutsionnogo nasiliya: kontsentratsionnyye lagerya kak organizovannaya forma nasiliya vo vremya grazhdanskoy voyny," [Historical Sociology of Revolutionary Violence: Concentration Camps as an Organized Form of Violence during the Civil War] in *Revolutsiya 1917 goda v Rossii: sobytiya i kontseptsii, posledstviya i pamyat'. Materialy mezhdunarodnoy konferentsii, posvyashchennoy 100-letiyu Revolyutsii 1917 g. v Rossii*. St. Petersburg: Spb. Institut istorii RAN Publ., 2017, 285.

³⁵ David L. Hoffmann, "The Great Socialist Experiment? The Soviet State in its International Context", *Slavic Review*, no. 3 (2017): 626.

rich in interpretations and experiments with the New Man concept. The second stage, beginning in the late 1920s to include the 1930s, was marked by the onset of *the Stalinist period* in engineering the New Man. The first phase was rather experimental, characterized by the search for an idealized proletarian subject, the use of industrial technology advantages, and the scientific arrangement of collective labor to help it take the necessary shape³⁶. The ideas of the Marxist founding fathers were developed by N.I. Bukharin in his works of the early 1920s, devoted to socialist education of the transition period.³⁷ This approach was also propagated by A.K. Gastev, the creator and head of the Central Institute of Labor. The Institute carried out research work to find out whether rhythmicized and mechanized factory labor is able to *teach* the muscles and nerves of the worker. By 1938, over a million workers had participated in this research program at the Institute and its branches across the country³⁸. A.K. Gastev and other *proletarian poets* even praised these ideas in verse³⁹.

The second stage of designing the New Man, which began after *the Great Turn*, was marked by the Bolshevik leaders' rejecting extensive social experiments and a rollback towards some traditional values and ideals of steady social order. By the mid-1930s, the transformation of approaches to this matter led to the emergence and confirmation of an updated concept of the New Man. The essence of the change was that the anthropological ideal of the Stalinist state of the 1930s was rather focused on individual traits (will, heroism, etc.) than on collective ones. The soul of the individual was *rehabilitated* as a source of conscious will⁴⁰.

The transition to cultivating the individual will of the New Man, the builder of socialism, was stemming from the ambitious plans for industrialization, collectivization, the *cultural revolution*, and the establishment of the accelerated development model, the *big leap* ideology of the "Great Break" at the turn of 1920s–1930s. The updated New Man was to acquire the features of a *superman*, to accomplish the impossible, something that a man of bourgeois society is unable to perform: to change the historical time, sharply accelerating its flow.

³⁶ P. Fritzsche, and J. Hellbeck, "The New Man in Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany," in M. Geyer, and Sh. Fitzpatrick, *Beyond Totalitarianism/ Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 315.

³⁷ N. Bukharin, "Problema kul'tury v epokhu rabochey revolyutsii," [The Problem of Culture in the Age of the Workers' Revolution] *Pravda*, October 11, 1922; N. Bukharin, *Proletarskaya revolyutsiya i kul'tura*, [Proletarskaya revolyutsiya i kul'tura] (Petrograd: Priboy Publ., 1923), 37, 48–50.

³⁸ P. Fritzsche, and J. Hellbeck, *The New Man in Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany*, 315–316.

³⁹ A.K. Gastev, *Poeziya rabochego udara* (Moscow: VTSPS Publ., 1923).

⁴⁰ P. Fritzsche, and J. Hellbeck, *The New Man in Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany*, 315–317.

It is no accident that it was the period giving rise to the cult of heroes, who performed exploits in the realms of peace, labor, and combat. In 1934, the title of *Hero of the Soviet Union* was introduced. At the same time, the concept of heroism, exalting the individual achievements of the Soviet people, did in fact assume the existence and necessity of mass heroism⁴¹. An important reason why the ideologists shifted towards the heroic ideal of the New Man, according to D. Brandenberger, was the inefficiency of impersonal Soviet propaganda, revealed in the late 1920s⁴².

One can agree with Fritzsche and Hellbeck when they claim that the appeal to individual consciousness and willpower was an innovation of Stalinism, implying a sharp rebuff to the mechanistic views of a person of the 1920s⁴³.

The most abridged formula of suggestion to activate the willpower of the people in the name of accelerated transformations was Stalin's statement, "We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make up this gap in ten years. Either we do it or they will crush us"⁴⁴. This trend was caught, supported and embodied in bright artistic images by writers, whom Stalin called *engineers of human souls*. Literature, among other arts, was most successful in designing and promoting the New Man, giving people samples to shape their life experiences and adjust the pathway of their personal development⁴⁵. Reflecting the shift in the understanding of the New Man, in his article *On the Old and the New Man* of 1932, A.M. Gorky says, "Denying bourgeois zoological individualism, *the new man perfectly understands the high integrity of individuality*, firmly connected with the collective, for *he himself is precisely this individuality* [italics added – O.P.], freely drawing energy and inspiration from the masses, form the processes of his work"⁴⁶.

⁴¹ S. Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Moscow: ROSSPEN Publ., 2001), 89.

⁴² D. Brandenberger, *Krizis stalinskogo agitpropa: Propaganda, politprosveshchenie i terror v SSSR, 1927–1941*, [Propaganda State in Crisis. Soviet Ideology, Indoctrination, and Terror under Stalin, 1927–1941] (Moscow: Political Encyclopedia, 2017), 31, 74–103.

⁴³ P. Fritzsche, and J. Hellbeck, *The New Man in Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany*, 318.

⁴⁴ J.V. Stalin, "Zadachi khozyaystvuyushchikh sub'yektov: rech', proiznesennaya na Pervoy Vsesoyuznoy konferentsii rukovodyashchikh rabotnikov sotsialisticheskoy promyshlennosti, 4 fevralya 1931 g.," [The Tasks of Economic Executives: Speech Delivered at the First All-Union Conference of Leading Personnel of Socialist Industry, February 4, 1931] vol. 13, in J.V. Stalin, *Sochineniya* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat Publ., 1951), 38.

⁴⁵ P. Fritzsche, and J. Hellbeck, *The New Man in Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany*, 320.

⁴⁶ A.M. Gorky, "O starom i novom cheloveke," [On the Old and the New Man] *Pravda*, April 27, 1932.

The researchers have noticed that all the symbolic figures of the Stalin era (miners, tractor operators, pilots) are individuals in dialogue with technology. Their records were explained by the fact that the technologies were run by liberated individuals (unlike western pilots or workers), i.e. the New Man of the Soviet generation was shown as compared and opposed to the Man of the West⁴⁷.

The First Five-Year Plan proclaimed the slogan of the *cultural revolution*, determining the offensive policy against the church and religion, the accelerated mass elimination of illiteracy, and the unification of the forms of culture and art based on the principle of *socialist realism*. However, the idea of radical reorganization of everyday life had to be discarded, since the main task was the soonest possible development of socialist industry, requiring the utmost concentration of all social, economic, and human resources. The industrialization and collectivization of everyday life, adding to the conditions necessary to shape the New Man, were not removed from the agenda altogether, but they definitely lost their paramount importance in the minds of the utilitarian policymakers.

The transformation of approaches to engineering the New Man clearly manifested itself in the evolution of attitudes to *the women's question* and the regulation of family and marital relations. It materialized in the revival of the stable family ideal and the change in the Bolshevik view of *the emancipated woman*. The propaganda extolled the notion that apart from the production and public spheres, a woman can also fulfill her potential in caring for her family, her husband and children, maintaining the family hearth, and raising her children in the spirit of Soviet ideology. This suggestion implied that in addition to her effort in the workplace, a woman was supposed to make a substantial contribution to family affairs, a burden which the ideologists of the women's movement of the 1920s were planning to mitigate, assigning the household and maternal concerns to public institutions⁴⁸. The period from the late 1920s until mid-1930s was the time when the *Soviet Man* cliché settled in, unifying the gender model, which, however, did not rule out essentialism or sexism⁴⁹.

The practice of coercion used to engineer the New Man escalated after the transition to the model of accelerated development in the late 1920s – early 1930s. The *class reeducation* in that period actively relied on the GULAG

⁴⁷ P. Fritzsche, and J. Hellbeck, *The New Man in Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany*, 321.

⁴⁸ B.E. Clements, *Bolshevik Women*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 273–277.

⁴⁹ N. Pushkareva, "Gendernaya sistema Sovetskoy Rossii i povsednevnyaya zhizn' rossiyskikh zhenshchin," [Gender System of Soviet Russia and the Everyday Life of Russian Women] in *Povsednevnyaya zhizn' pri sotsializme. Nemetskiye i rossiyskiye podkhody* (Moscow: ROSSPEN Publ., 2015), 213.

system, created in 1930⁵⁰. During the grain procurement period of 1927–1928 and the all-out collectivization of 1929–1932, peasants standing up against the violence were considered hostile and *irresponsible* elements. Stalin, justifying the transition to compulsory grain procurement in 1933, was straightforward in speaking about the methods of reeducating *the “muzhik” (which means peasants)*, turning them into the New People. The rhetoric of the communist strongman, not intended for publication⁵¹, shows the recognition of the need for using *the triad*: agitation and propaganda (persuasion), economic stimulation, and repression, as the methods necessary to reshape a person. Stalin said, “All these various means ranging from the method of persuasion to the method of economic influence on the muzhik, plus repressions, must be used together”⁵². Stalin’s speech gives a vivid characteristic of his approach to the task of reshaping a person, which affected the whole image of government policy in the 1930s.

The new USSR Constitution, adopted in 1936, restored electoral and civil rights to *social aliens*, and introduced a democratic system of broad political and social rights and liberties. However, this was followed by an unprecedented scale of repressions, resulting from the state-planned measures carried out throughout the country that affected all social strata of the population, stipulating strict limits and conditions for the New Man’s self-fulfillment.

Conclusion

The Bolshevik project of the New Man was one of the phenomena of *the modern era*, which in many ways were characteristic of Europe as a whole. It was rooted in the ideals of progress and the more advanced person of the age of Enlightenment, as well as the socialist theory of the 19th and early 20th century, and it received a strong momentum during World War I. The Marxist interpretation of the theory of progress had a major influence on the Bolsheviks’ general vision of prospects and ways of shaping the New Man. However, the state of the object of social design – post-revolutionary society in Russia – led to the adjustment of Marxist provisions by Lenin, and other Bolshevik ideologists, who emphasized the idea of “educating the masses” and the need to overcome their cultural backwardness. The project was based on both utopian

⁵⁰ S. Krasilnikov, *Mezhdru pravom i nakazaniyem: trud v rannesovetskom obshchestve* [Between Rights and Punishment: Labor in the Early Years of Soviet Society], 1033–1035.

⁵¹ J.V. Stalin, *Vystupleniye na zasedanii TSK VKP (b) Yuzhnykh regionov po sboru urozhaya*, 20 maya 1933 g., [Speech Delivered at the Meeting of the Central Committee of the AUCP(b) of the Southern Regions on Harvesting, May 20, 1933] (not included in the collection of Stalin’s works, but now available on the website of the Federal Archival Agency of Russia in the *Documents of the Soviet Era* section), <http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru>.

⁵² *Dokumenty sovetskoy epokhi* [Documents of the Soviet Era], <http://sovdoc.rusarchives.ru>.

and pragmatic (rationalistic) assumptions and intentions, so its elements were worked out in the context of heated debates among Bolshevik leadership in the 1920s. It was the legacy of the World War, with its experience of social and national mobilization and the practices of violence, that influenced the institutional foundations and mechanisms of the Bolshevik design of the New Man. It evolved in the early Soviet period, as determined by the transformation of the Bolshevik policy course and the objective limits of the very phenomenon of social engineering.



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Аннотация: Статья посвящена анализу теоретических предпосылок и политико-идеологических приоритетов большевистского проектирования «нового человека» в раннесоветский период. Показаны марксистские истоки идей большевистского проектирования, их трансформация в трудах В.И. Ленина и других лидеров коммунистической партии и советского государства. Обозначены основные механизмы и инструменты конструирования нового человека, практики социальной мобилизации, приобщения к политической культуре большевизма. Подчеркивается роль наследия Первой мировой войны в институализации большевиками практик социального инжиниринга, принуждения и насилия как методов создания «нового человеческого материала». Показаны разногласия в среде большевистского руководства в трактовке путей формирования «нового человека», охарактеризован гендерный аспект проблемы. Выделены два этапа в большевистском проектировании «нового человека» в раннесоветский период (1917–1920-е гг.; конец 1920-х – середина 1930-х гг.), показаны факторы и направленность его эволюции.

Ключевые слова: «Новый человек», «новая женщина», большевистское проектирование, раннесоветское общество

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