



ACTIVATING THE 'HUMAN FACTOR': DO THE ROOTS OF NEOLIBERAL SUBJECTIVITY LIE IN THE 'STAGNATION'?

Sergei Alymov

Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences
32a Leninskiy Av., Moscow, Russia
alymovs@mail.ru

Abstract: This article examines the ideas of Soviet philosophers and economists of the 1970s and 80s about personality / Soviet man. The author analyses the views of official philosophers of the conservative and liberal camps on the nature of developed socialism. The reformers (A. P. Butenko, A. S. Tsipko) stressed the growth of the significance of the individual in a modern society and economy, connecting the 'humanisation' of society with a growth in consumption and the development of the personality. The orthodox (R. I. Kosolapov) cited the definition of labour as the native essence of man given by Marx. In creating the model of Soviet man, they orientated themselves on the image of the industrial worker (G. L. Smirnov). In their opinion his activity was founded on the coincidence of the interests of the personality and society. This concept was attacked by the criticism that it took no account of 'human nature'. The reformers pointed to the 'selfish interests of the person' and activity connected with them as a biological given. The 'tough' peasant often figured as a symbol of this. 'Activating the human factor' became a topical point on the reformers' agenda. T. I. Zaslavskaya put forward a programme for revitalising the economy and the labour ethics of Soviet people by means of market mechanisms. The sociologist Yu. A. Levada radicalised the critique of the idea of Soviet man by putting forward the image of *Homo sovieticus* and the alternative model of the pragmatic individualist. The article concludes that the image of *Homo oeconomicus* as a socially approved model was hatched by representatives of the liberal wing of the expert community as early as the 1970s and 80s. The author considers that the roots of 'neoliberal subjectivity' are to be found in the period before the market reforms of the 1990s.

Keywords: ideology, Soviet philosophy, personality, subjectivity, Soviet man, Soviet economists, neoliberalism.

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This article examines the ideas of Soviet philosophers and economists of the 1970s and 80s about personality / Soviet man. The author analyses the views of official philosophers of the conservative and liberal camps on the nature of developed socialism. The reformers (A. P. Butenko, A. S. Tsipko) stressed the growth of the significance of the individual in a modern society and economy, connecting the ‘humanisation’ of society with a growth in consumption and the development of the personality. The orthodox (R. I. Kosolapov) cited the definition of labour as the native essence of man given by Marx. In creating the model of Soviet man, they orientated themselves on the image of the industrial worker (G. L. Smirnov). In their opinion his activity was founded on the coincidence of the interests of the personality and society. This concept was attacked by the criticism that it took no account of ‘human nature’. The reformers pointed to the ‘selfish interests of the person’ and activity connected with them as a biological given. The ‘tough’ peasant often figured as a symbol of this. ‘Activating the human factor’ became a topical point on the reformers’ agenda. T. I. Zaslavskaya put forward a programme for revitalising the economy and the labour ethics of Soviet people by means of market mechanisms. The sociologist Yu. A. Levada radicalised the critique of the idea of Soviet man by putting forward the image of *Homo sovieticus* and the alternative model of the pragmatic individualist. The article concludes that the image of *Homo oeconomicus* as a socially approved model was hatched by representatives of the liberal wing of the expert community as early as the 1970s and 80s. The author considers that the roots of ‘neoliberal subjectivity’ are to be found in the period before the market reforms of the 1990s.

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It is generally agreed that in the Soviet socio-cultural sphere, the period from the 1960s to 80s was characterised by heightened attention to the concept of personality and by declarations about ‘humanism’ and about the development of a harmonious human being as the highest value of the socialist order [Kharkhordin 2002; Bikbov 2014]. Whereas, as historians of ‘subjectivity’ show, the ‘Soviet man’ of the 1920s and 30s¹ aimed at a radical re-making of himself with the goal of fitting into the class models that were offered to him, at becoming a ‘new man’, the individual under late socialism, to all appearances, had inklings of a wider autonomy of personality [Pinsky 2017]. Nevertheless the ideologists, philosophers and sociologists of the 1960s to 80s put great effort not only into creating a normative image of ‘Soviet man’, but also into deliberations on the changing nature of this

Sergei Alymov

Institute of Ethnology
and Anthropology,
Russian Academy of Sciences
32a Leninskiy Av.,
Moscow, Russia
alymovs@mail.ru

¹ Following established practice, rather than the general preference in this journal for inclusive language, *sovetskiiy chelovek* is rendered here as ‘Soviet man’. While the term (cf. German *Mensch*) ostensibly refers to both sexes, in practice the norm has a strongly masculine colouration, as is clear from the separate discussions of *sovetskaya zhenshchina*, ‘Soviet woman’, when issues such as gender parity were at stake. Cf. the old joke about medical textbooks, ‘The patient is always male except when she is pregnant’ [Eds.].

subjectivity in the period of developed socialism. Moreover, one may speak of several models of Soviet man in the official socio-philosophical literature, corresponding to the ideological preferences of its authors.

‘Soviet intellectual life prior to perestroika was both diverse and conflictual,’ maintains the historian Mark Sandle, suggesting that researchers should not over-estimate the significance of dissidents and should pay special attention to academic experts and apparatchiks, who had much more influence on the course of events in the country [Sandle 2002a: 156]. In this article I shall analyse the concepts of some prominent intellectuals of the late Soviet epoch: A. P. Butenko, T. I. Zaslavskaya, R. I. Kosolapov, G. L. Smirnov, and A. S. Tsipko, who belonged to the category designated by Sandle. Almost all of them had higher doctorates in philosophy, with the exception of Zaslavskaya, who was an academician and whose doctorate was in economics. They were all directly involved in producing the ‘authoritative discourse’ of the period [Yurchak 2005], being involved in preparing programmatic party documents and working in the Central Committee apparatus. As will become evident below, these authors used to meet each other in person, worked in the same institutions, supported or opposed each other in the ideological struggle, so that a juxtaposition of their concepts of personality / Soviet man provides a sufficiently comprehensive embrace of the palette of ideas in that field that were accessible in official socio-political literature.

At the same time the article attempts to see Soviet ‘discursive formations’ in the light of the global process of the collapse of socialism and other forms of the social state that was happening at that period. In the area of ideas about man and his actual behaviour, this transformation has been described by some analysts as *Homo sovieticus* turning into *Homo oeconomicus* [Ryvkina 2001: 270–90]. However, while *Homo oeconomicus* in the West has a pedigree that goes back several centuries [Laval 2007], the genesis of our native version of ‘neoliberal subjectivity’ is as a rule presented as a process which began immediately after the fall of the USSR. Were there any premises for such a development in the theories and practices of late socialism? How were the economic motives for the activity of Soviet man perceived? What were the alternative treatments of the evolution of man and society that existed in the official press? Ultimately, can we speak of any elements of the model of neoliberal subjectivity that were already accepted by Soviet intellectuals in the 1970s and 80s?

Neoliberalism is a wide and polyvalent concept, often used in the social sciences in the West (usually of a critical tendency),¹ but much

¹ For a rare attempt at a neutral discussion of neoliberalism, see: Stephen J. Collier, *Post-Soviet Social: Neoliberalism, Social Modernity, Biopolitics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011 [Eds.].

less widespread among Russian researchers. There is a consensus that neoliberalism is to be defined as 'a new political, economic and social order of society, which stresses the role of market relations, the change in the role of the state and in the responsibility of individuals'. This order is defined above all as 'the extension of market competition into all spheres of life, including economics, politics and society' [Springer et al. 2016: 2]. Neoliberalism 'disseminates the model of the market to all domains and activities — even where money is not at issue — and configures human beings exhaustively as market actors, always, only, and everywhere as *homo oeconomicus*' [Brown 2015: 31]. The establishment of this order is connected with a series of political and economic reforms that took place in the 1970s and 80s in Chile, Great Britain, North America, China, the USSR / Russia and other countries and which were directed towards the deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation of the economy. From a Marxist point of view the ideology of neoliberalism, which proclaimed the unbreakable link between the values of individual liberty, the market and private property, served as a legitimisation of the strengthening of the economic and political power of the corporate elites and the concentration of capital [Harvey 2005: 3–38].

Before it became dominant, this ideology underwent a long process of development and struggle for conceptual hegemony. The details of this process have been studied by historians who identify various schools and national and academic traditions within the movement. For example, Jamie Peck points to the need to study 'proto-neoliberalism', the history of the movement in its early stages. At that time it was 'an experimental and polycentric project' of intellectuals who were united by a set of common values and deliberations on the basic problem — the means and mechanisms of combining a free economy with a strong state [Peck 2008]. The economic historians Philip Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe regard neoliberalism as a 'thought collective', the coordinating centre of which was the Mont Pèlerin Society, founded in Switzerland in 1947. All the key neoliberal thinkers took part in it, the most well-known being Friedrich von Hayek, Ludwig von Mises and Milton Friedman. Like its predecessor, the Walter Lippmann Colloquium, organised in Paris in 1938, the Society made it its aim to defend the chief values of civilisation and 'Western Man', such as freedom and human dignity, which, in their opinion, were unattainable without private property, the market and competition. Neoliberalism was thus a project to revive liberal ideology in a world dominated by totalitarianism, socialism and Keynesianism [Mirowski, Plehwe 2009: 22–6].

The concept of neoliberalism came into active use in anthropology at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Two basic trends were identified: politico-economic research into the effects of privatisation, the winding-up of the social state and structural reforms in various

parts of the world, as a rule under a Marxist paradigm, and the study of the technologies of the formation of subjectivity on the basis of the values of individualism, enterprise and market competition, based on the work of Foucault [Ganti 2014: 94]. Summing up the ideas about ‘the neoliberal subject’, the anthropologist Ilona Gershon identifies two fundamental features: the idea of the subject (in such categories as the market, competition and so on) firstly as ‘socially constructed’, and therefore requiring constant conscious management, and secondly as possessing ‘a set of traits or even skills’ which, by analogy with business management, need to be constantly developed and invested on the basis of rational calculation [Gershon 2011: 539–43].

Research into the formation of ‘neoliberal subjectivity’ has been actively pursued using Russian material also. It concentrates on the contents and effects of various forms of business training, manuals for achieving success and psychological consultations for developing the personality. Alexei Yurchak has described the formation of the model of the neoliberal *Homo oeconomicus* in Russia in the 1990s — ‘a real careerist’ who makes business the basis of his way of life and does not separate his private life from his work [Yurchak 2003]. Tomas Matza analyses Mikhail Labkovskiy’s psychological talk show as an example of the neoliberal construction of the ego which offers techniques for self-control and raising of self-esteem as a means of solving psychological and social problems, and also psychological training programmes for developing ‘good individualism’ [Matza 2009; 2012] (see also: [Honey 2014]).

Recommendations and manuals for ‘business people’ were published in the USSR. As early as the beginning of the 1980s the most progressive economic journal, *EKO*, published in Novosibirsk, carried sections headed ‘Socio-psychological practical’ and ‘Advice for the businessman’, which printed both translations of American management gurus and the work of native pioneers of market enlightenment [Lipsits 1982]. It is not, of course, the aim of the present article to prove the thesis of the direct descent of the post-Soviet neoliberal from the ‘ideal types’ of Soviet man. I will, however, raise the question of the diversity of treatments of the first ‘type’, which allows certain ideas expressed by the reforming wing of Soviet intellectuals to be regarded as congruent with the models which were developed in the post-Soviet period. Johanna Bockman’s study of the left-wing origins of neoliberalism shows the possibilities, and at the same time the complexities, of tracing this sort of descent. In her history of the neoclassical school of economics, which is often identified with neoliberalism, the author demonstrates that the economic models of socialism played a major role in the development of this theory, and the tenets of ‘a necessary connection between markets and capitalism and a necessary disjunction between markets

and socialism', which are taken for granted, are an aberration of the post-socialist period [Bockman 2011]. Bockman points to the forgotten tradition of neoclassical economics which lay at the root of market socialism in Hungary, Yugoslavia and other socialist countries. She writes that many neoclassical economists regarded a state of 'general equilibrium' as attainable both through markets and through planning, and they divided into supporters not so much of socialism or capitalism as of 'decentralised democratic institutions' (such as employee stock ownership, cooperatives, etc.) and of authoritarian hierarchical institutions, both of these being equally possible under socialism and under capitalism. In Bockman's opinion, many supporters of democratic market socialism, both in the East and in the West, saw the reforms of 1989–90 at first as a transition not to capitalism, but to market socialism, the idea of which had been developed by them for the whole of the twentieth century. In my view the approach put forward in her research allows us to follow genealogies of ideas that are not obvious, and that is the aim of the present article (see also: [Bruisch 2016]).

Neither in theory or practice was socialism limited to the planned economy on the Soviet model, and the different models of market socialism had their supporters even in the USSR. Before examining ideas of the Soviet man, we should consider ideas of the socialist society.

Competing images of developed socialism

The field of ideological production in the late USSR included many social institutions that served quite diverse positions which were at odds with each other. The most important centres that supervised this production were the Central Committee apparatus and its departments (ideology, propaganda, international, etc.), academic institutions within the system of the Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Social Sciences, and the editorial offices of the central newspapers and journals. The most prominent ideologists of that time worked within the system of the aforementioned organisations, migrating from one to another (e.g. from the journal *Kommunist* to a Central Committee department, from the Central Committee to an academic institute, and back again), changing and combining the 'registers' of their influence (from publicist and newspaper work to intrigues in the apparatus and censorship). Supporters of different views often worked side by side on the same corridors, which did not prevent them from engaging in polemics and feuds with each other. The degree of influence which particular authors had on the authorities and on society varied depending on the period (the 1960s, the period of 'stagnation', perestroika), as did their ability to express their views sincerely. As we have already said, official discourse

permitted a certain diversity of views and evaluations. Within certain limits one can identify the basic tendencies — reforming and conservative [Mitrokhin 2013].

A typical representative of the reforming wing was Anatoliy Pavlovich Butenko (1925–2005). Having graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy as a specialist on revisionism and the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe, Butenko worked at the journal *Kommunist* at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s. In 1964 he went to become head of the Department of General Problems of Socialism at the Institute of Economics of the World Socialist System (IEMSS), at which (under its new name) he worked to the end of his days, and also taught at Moscow State University. Founded in 1960 to further the integration of socialist countries into Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon), this institution was, under the leadership of Academician O. T. Bogomolov in the 1970s, the citadel of the supporters of market socialism. The Institute helped ‘the ideas of reform to penetrate the social consciousness and the heads of the leaders, and helped them to approach perestroika in the Soviet Union’ [Bogomolov 2007: 19]. Indeed, the ‘marketeer’ economists O. R. Latsis, G. S. Lisichkin, N. P. Shmelev, G. I. Shmelev, and the philosopher A. S. Tshipko were among its members of staff. Although Butenko had declined Andropov’s invitation to work under him in the Central Committee department for relations with socialist countries, he was in the 1970s and 80s one of the groups of ghostwriters who prepared the most important party documents of the period of ‘stagnation’ [Butenko 2000a: 118–21]. One of the bright spots of the ghostwriters’ activities was preparing the Central Committee’s report to the Twenty-Fourth Congress of the CPSU (1971). At Butenko’s suggestion, the sentence ‘A developed socialist society will be built by the self-sacrificing labour of Soviet people’ was added to the draft of the report, reflecting his idea of the ‘modest’ and ‘realistic’ evaluation of the achievements and prospects of Soviet socialism. However, according to the philosopher’s memoirs, Brezhnev was displeased at such a pallid assessment and proposed writing that ‘we have nevertheless built developed socialism’, thereby marking the beginning of that epoch [Ibid.: 181]. (We should note that the term ‘developed socialism’ was not invented by Butenko, it first came into being in Czechoslovakia in 1960 and was used in the 1960s in Hungary and other socialist countries as the theoretical basis for reform [Sandle 2002b: 172].)

After thus establishing the definition of the social order of the USSR, Butenko defended the reformist platform to the extent that it was permitted. In his opinion, the achievement of the conception of developed socialism was the conclusion that socialism had its ‘own basis’, or social relations specific to socialism: ‘Socialism is not at all a temporary condition combining features of immature communism

with “birthmarks of capitalism”, but a social order characterised by features, signs and principles that are coherent in their social essence.’ This allowed the acknowledgement as ‘socialist in their nature’ both of nationalised and cooperative property, and of the social structure of Soviet society with the classes inherent in it, and likewise permitted the perception of ‘the production of commodities and the whole system of commodity-money relations’ as an essential attribute of socialism [Butenko 1989: 77–8]. In his efforts to legitimise commodity production, economic accounting and ‘such categories as money, prices, profit, etc.’ Butenko, like all the reformers, appealed to the authority of Lenin and his works during New Economic Policy (NEP). Analysing the history of the first years of the Revolution, he showed that Lenin had enriched Marxism, confronted with building a new society in a predominantly peasant country. During the Revolution and ‘war communism’ he had proceeded from the orthodox notion of socialism as a classless society founded on a single form of property and the exchange of goods which did away with commodity-money relations. By 1921 Lenin had corrected this notion in three respects: instead of only social / state property there was a combination of property belonging to the whole people and to cooperatives, and, accordingly, the recognition of the peasants as a class; the acknowledgement of commodity-money relations instead of the exchange of goods; the recognition of personal material interest as the basic stimulus to the building of socialism. Butenko proposed that these ideas from NEP should not be regarded as ‘a temporary concession to bourgeois elements’ but important statements about socialism as such, which were topical and ‘internationally significant’ [Butenko 1974: 186–9]. In the course of perestroika, of which he became an active proponent, Butenko severely criticised Stalin’s ‘barracks socialism’, and after 1991 he wrote a series of works in which he explained the construction of socialism in the USSR and other countries as a ‘historical diversion’ which was premature in conditions of economic underdevelopment [Butenko 2000b].

A prominent representative of the orthodox conservative Marxists, and the chief opponent of Butenko and the other reformers was Richard Ivanovich Kosolapov (b. 1930). After graduating from the Faculty of Philosophy of Moscow State University he worked under Butenko at IEMSS in 1964–6, and from 1966 to 1974 worked with G. L. Smirnov at the propaganda department of the Central Committee; from 1976 to 1986 he was editor in chief of the journal *Kommunist*. Kosolapov’s departure from this post was evidently connected with his rejection of Gorbachev’s policies. In a personal letter to the latter, Kosolapov objected to ‘the discrediting of the form of property that belongs to the whole people’ and to gambling on the market, competition and small business [Kosolapov 1996: 38–40]. From his very first publications he expressed himself on the side of

the ‘anticommoditarians’, who thought that under socialism value, money, commodities and other categories of political economy retained only their form, or else died out, giving way to the direct exchange of consumer values in a single planned economy. In 1971 Kosolapov published his brochure *Not a Hint of Utopia*, where he formulated the theoretical foundations of the struggle against revisionists of the left (China) and of the right (Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia). To the latter’s attempts to revive ‘a multiform economy with the extensive entrepreneurial initiative of private owners’ and ‘cooperative socialism’ he opposed the only criteria of developed socialism, in relation to which the various ‘cooperative variants’ were a retrograde step in the evolutionary scheme that he had constructed [Kosolapov 1971: 94, 136–7]. This scheme boiled down to a classification of labour (and, consequently, historical periods) on the criteria of the individuality / collectivity of the use of tools, the organisation of labour and the acquisition of the product. World history, according to this scheme, proceeded regularly towards collectivity in all three spheres. It was state industry that corresponded to the formula of the ‘three Cs’ (collective use of resources, collective organisation of labour, and collective acquisition of products) that was the embodiment of mature socialism. For the ultimate triumph of this formula it was necessary to eliminate individual labour (i.e. to mechanise it completely in industry), amalgamate cooperative forms of property with common ownership, and for the personal plots of collective and state farm workers, with their individual form of labour organisation and consumption, to disappear [Ibid.: 95–6]. The USSR did not entirely correspond to these criteria, still less the countries of Central and Eastern Europe which had retained a significant stratum of peasant and small private businesses, so that they were still at a transitional stage on the way to developed socialism.

While the supporters of reform and ‘revisionists’ did their best to ‘rely’ on Lenin as the creator of a model of socialism that was different from Marx’s and founded on the existence of two forms of property, Kosolapov was a savage opponent of such views. NEP played no part in his historical and philosophical constructs. Collectivisation, by contrast, was a regular stage in the establishment of ‘socialist economic uniformity’. In his polemic with the ‘marketeters’ he criticised the ‘reinforcement of the contradictions of the ‘nepman’ environment’ and the inclusion of petty trading and one-man businesses among socialist social forces [Kosolapov 1984: 167–8]. The philosopher also pointed to the industrialisation of agriculture, the creation of agro-industrial complexes and ‘the growth of the level of socialist socialisation’ as the basic tendencies of the evolution of agriculture [Kosolapov 1975: 400–1]. The prospect of the annihilation of classes and the amalgamation of nations was an important

component of Kosolapov's philosophy: 'Noticeable signs of the formation of a classless society may be observed at present in the USSR' [Kosolapov 1975: 427]. At the same time he stressed the central role of the working class as 'the social heart' of the emerging classless society: '[A]s agricultural labour approximates to industrial labour in its technical equipment, the peasants of the collective farms acquire more and more features of similarity with the working class,' resembling 'the mass of workers of modern scientifically organised industrial production' [Ibid.: 440–2]. To sum up, Kosolapov may be called the chief opponent of the reformers' 'commodity-money romanticism', while he in turn 'romanticised' large-scale industrial production and collective forms of labour and consumption. He was not, however, a blind apologist for 'developed socialism'. In a report to A. N. Yakovlev in 1970, Kosolapov proposed combatting the realities of pilfering, black-marketeering, and unearned income by introducing strict supervision over the people's incomes and winding up the closed supply of goods to the apparatus [Kosolapov 1995].

The Soviet man / personality between revisionism and orthodoxy

The variants of official doctrine characterised above corresponded to different ideas about personality and human nature. The 'reformers' ideas in this area were strikingly reflected in the works of Aleksandr Sergeevich Tsipko (b. 1941). This author's career took shape within the 'ideological field' described above between the press (working at *Komsomolskaya pravda*), the Academy of Sciences (IEMSS) and the Central Committee apparatus (as a consultant to the international department of the Central Committee in 1986–90). He was a close acquaintance and in sympathy with 'the ideologists of the three revolutions: Czech in 1968, Polish in 1980 and Soviet in 1986–1991'. In his memoirs entitled *Confessions of an Anti-Soviet Odessa Native: A Solidarność Agent in Gorbachev's Team* he describes the way he became a Russian nationalist, an admirer of *Vekhi* and Berdyaev, and a conscious opponent of Marxism, who from the sixties to the eighties published criticism of that ideology 'in footnotes' and 'in little bits' [Tsipko 2011: 115–9]. Through the mediation of G. L. Smirnov the ideas of Tsipko's 1983 book on cooperation and 'humane civilisation' were used in Gorbachev's speeches at the Twenty-Seventh Congress, and he himself was protected from persecution by his ideological enemy Kosolapov [Ibid.: 120–33]. In the initial period of perestroika Smirnov did indeed support the criticism of Stalinism in Butenko's and Tsipko's works, but the latter was only using revisionism as the only legal means of 'affirming humane values' while not believing in the possibility of 'reforming Marxism' [Ibid.: 138–9].

Despite the scepticism towards humane socialism and its partisans expressed in his memoirs, Tsipko actively promoted this agenda throughout the 1970s and 80s. An interesting property of his thought was his positive attitude to successive evolutionary development, in the process of which he discerned discontinuities, and his attention to the qualitative changes taking place in modern life. The essence of these changes was that 'without the constant evolution of individuals, without the cultivation of active forms of self-realisation in production and in everyday life, modern production cannot evolve.' Spheres previously indifferent to production such as education, consumption, public health, leisure and 'the whole structure of human life' in contemporary conditions 'have a direct relation to the creation of that productive force that will become the central component of the production of progress' [Tsipko 1974: 186]. 'As they enter the period of building and perfecting developed socialism, the European countries that are members of Comecon are at the same time entering a period of the increasing significance of the "subjective", personal factors of that development' [Tsipko 1980: 44].

In a section with the characteristic title 'The Justification of Everyday Life', the philosopher analysed the changes in the character of Soviet man's motivations: while the 1920s and 30s were the time of 'the exaltation, and sometimes the fetishisation of <...> ideals', for which people sacrificed their personal interests and even their lives, man under developed socialism is more and more drawn to the delights of 'peaceful labour, love, leisure and, why deny it, a well-stocked table', in which, the author stresses, there is nothing to be ashamed of, it is merely a return to 'the copy-book truths of human existence'. Tsipko presented himself as the defender of the interests of the 'ordinary' man and his everyday life, which was threatened by the proponents of yet another 'heroic' leap towards communism. Promoting the ideals of 'European humanism', he claimed that it should be distinguished from the capitalist society of selfish consumption. Orientating itself on the antique and renaissance models of man, founded on a balance between 'being' and 'having', socialism could, in his words, avoid the false dichotomy between the consumerist overabundance of the West and 'the traditional poverty of the East' [Tsipko 1980: 148–51].

However attractive the 'antique ideal' of man might be, for Tsipko and the theoreticians of his circle it was the peasant who offered a realistic model of the harmonious combination of the personal and the social that antiquity embodied. Being partisans and propagandists of 'the Leninist plan of cooperation' and NEP, it was in cooperation that they saw the possibility of 'activating' the worker, involving him / her in creative interested activity. Tsipko's first major publication, in 1968, included a chapter entitled 'Does the Village Need the

Peasant?' in which he discussed the experiments in introducing economic accounting links in the USSR and Hungary [Kokashinskiy et al. 1968]. His academic monograph, *Some Philosophical Aspects of the Theory of Socialism* (1983), continued this line. In this work Lenin is presented primarily as the theoretician of the socialism 'of civilised cooperators', who ensures 'a certain economic decentralisation in society, and the presence therein of many independent subjects of economic activity'. The cooperative form, Tsipko stressed, 'preserves the conditions for satisfying "personal interests" and "the interests of profit", i.e. for preserving traditional economic stimuli to labour, and at the same time it ensures the collectivity of labour and favours its unification' [Tsipko 1983: 152–6]. Tsipko claimed that the main point of Leninist doctrine was that it was the individual who was the subject of this form of economic activity, and 'working for oneself and one's neighbours may also obliquely assist in the development of socialism' [Ibid.: 165].

In 1985 Tsipko published an article entitled 'The increasing role of the human factor in the economic development of socialism' in which he proclaimed the humanisation and even 'anthropocentrism' of the modern approach to economics. Criticising the 'technocratic approach to the development of socialism' connected with manufacturing industry, he considered it essential to encourage by every possible means 'human subjectivity' in labour, 'to restore the rights of the realm of 'human subjectivity', characteristic of artisanal, semi-artistic labour' [Tsipko 1985: 28]. At the same time he pointed out that even under socialism the defining motives to labour are material interests and spoke up for 'the development of economic forms of control of people's behaviour in production': 'Whereas before it was a commonplace to assert that the individual's spiritual and personal development begin where the power of economic necessity ends, now the development of personal capacities is connected precisely with the strengthening of economic stimuli to productive labour' [Ibid.: 30].

Tsipko's intellectual career reached a sort of peak with the appearance of his cycle of articles 'The Sources of Stalinism', published with the active collaboration of Khrushchev's daughter, Rada Adzhubei.¹ In Tsipko's words, it was 'an openly anti-communist article', which began his 'struggle against the Soviet system' in the popular press [Tsipko 2011: 112]. It was directed against the 'left radicalism' of the Russian intelligentsia, of which tradition Stalinism, as Tsipko asserted, was the organic continuation. The main enemy of

¹ Rada Khrushcheva (1929–2016) married in 1949 Aleksei Adzhubei, the editor in the Khrushchev period of *Komsomolskaya pravda* and (from 1959) *Izvestiya*, after which he was demoted to head of department on *Sovetsky soyuz* magazine. She too had a distinguished career in journalism, working for many years as a leading editor of *Nauka i zhizn* magazine [Eds.].

‘the leaders of the left’ was the peasant, with whom everything that did not fit into their utopian ideal was connected, including ‘the market’, commerce, common human morality and culture. The Bolsheviks and the left-wing intelligentsia, in Tsipko’s opinion, had had a ‘Rousseauiste’, idealised idea of human nature, in the pursuit of which they had destroyed ‘the nepman, market, commercial, peasant world’ of eighty percent of the Russian population, together with all civilised and ‘common human’ mechanisms for ‘restraining man’s natural selfishness’ [Tsipko 1988: 45–7]. In an article with the characteristic title ‘Man Cannot Change His Nature’, the philosopher continued his apology for ‘the selfish interests of personality’ [Tsipko 1989: 77]. To his critique of collectivisation as ‘the policy of anti-selection’ was added the assertion that in the course of it ‘the active genotype of personality’ and ‘everyone who was “attached” to the soil and could work harmoniously, properly and energetically’ had been annihilated. ‘Everyone’s life experience confirms N. Amosov’s proposition that forceful people, with a strongly expressed desire to work by themselves and for themselves, constitute 5–10% of any population. For example, in the Russian village there were indeed 4–5% of genuine *kulaks*’ [Ibid.: 73]. Thus by the end of the 1980s the reformers’ denunciation of the crimes of Stalinism and their ‘defence’ of the peasantry as a class gradually developed their idea of ‘active’ selfish human nature, the most outstanding expression of which was the image of the peasant *kulak*.

Tsipko defended ‘man’ against the artificially constructed ideal on which the ‘absurd’ economic model of Stalinism, which continued in the ‘stagnation’, had been built. The reformers, however, had no monopoly on ‘personality’. It is enough to remember the collection of articles *What Is Personality?* edited by the reformers’ chief adversary Kosolapov, who, if Tsipko is to be believed, not only tried to prevent his work from being published, but ‘frankly and sincerely detested the Russian peasantry’ [Tsipko 2011: 175]. Kosolapov’s early publications, for example *Communism and Freedom* (1960), were already to a large extent an attempt to create a concept of personality based on Marx’s definition of labour as ‘the native essence of man’. Commenting on another of Marx’s well-known definitions, of the essence of man as ‘the totality of all social relations’, he found it necessary to specify that these relations should not be understood as ‘transient economic structures’ which are different for different formations (in which case it would have been necessary to acknowledge a ‘plurality’ of such essences), but ‘the relations that directly concern labour and are common to many periods’. In this way the ‘need for labour’ becomes ‘a material need’, which ‘is distinguished from other material needs by owing its origin to man’s social, and not biological nature, man’s need for self-assertion as an active and social being’ [Kosolapov 1985: 294].

While working out his conception of the development of 'a creative stimulus to labour' and the conversion of labour into 'a consumer value', Kosolapov pointed to 'the impossibility of the arrival of communism without an active development of individual, personal interest', and the inadequacy of 'ideal' or moral stimuli such as the individual's duty to society [Kosolapov 1975: 295–6]. However, he saw 'personal interest' as an interest in labour as such, in the process of labour, which, with the development of automation and the conversion of science into a productive force was to become more and more creative and varied, thus manifesting man's 'creative essence'. In these deliberations Kosolapov relied on a sociology of labour that was popular in the 1960s, according to which workers valued in their work above all their relations with their comrades in the collective, a convenient timetable and enjoyable work, and, after all these, their pay. 'Personal interest' was less important to the workers than 'moral and creative values'. The establishment of 'a need for labour' stimulates an expansion of distribution 'according to need', that is, to increase distribution at the expense of social funds, and not wages: '[T]he growth in the role of social funds in satisfying the needs of members of society is evidence of the growth in the specific gravity of work according to need in the general mass of societal labour' [Ibid.: 279]. It is interesting that Kosolapov (like Tsipko later) strove to support his position with biological and psychological hypotheses. Referring to the psychologists Lev Vygotsky and Aleksei Leontiev, he called for research into 'the bio-social structure' of human activity, since the need for labour was most likely reflected in the structure of the brain. 'The formation of the functional organs of creative labour' in the rising generation was, in Kosolapov's opinion, the fundamental task of various disciplines in forming the new man [Ibid.: 310].

Kosolapov resisted 'the attempts, which became more frequent in the 60s and 70s, to put forward not the proletariat, but the middle ranks, small-scale producers, as a consistently revolutionary force' as a recrudescence of 'petty-bourgeois socialism' [Kosolapov 1985: 103]. He maintained that the new man was formed 'in the image and likeness of the best representatives of the industrial and manufacturing section of the working class', and also pointed to the growing role of mental labour in the workers' activity. Speaking of the Soviet peasantry, he stressed their 'communion <...> with the collective type of economic activity and way of life', and characterised them as a social group 'that had acquired many of the essential features' of the working class and which acted only in unity with it [Ibid.: 122–6]. One further trait of Kosolapov's position, reflected in his polemic with the 'reformers' was his dislike of the 'justification of everyday life' put forward in Tsipko's work. 'Socialism is a labour, not a consumer society,' and individual freedom within it begins 'not

with equal access to material and spiritual goods <...> but with equal access to labour according to one's abilities' [Kosolapov 1985: 138].

As can be seen from the above, the ideological opposition between the orthodox and the reformers was reflected in their ideas about 'Soviet man' as a contemporary phenomenon, and also about the nature of 'man / personality'. The revisionist reformers stressed the idea of 'humanisation' and the growing role of 'subjectivity' in the socialist economy and society, connecting these concepts with the growth of consumption and with the significance of personal advantage in the process of labour. They saw the 'market, commercial, peasant world' as an expression of a certain primordial 'human subjectivity'. The orthodox insisted in turn on a concept of human nature founded on the idea of labour as an expression of 'the native essence' of man, which could be creatively developed to the maximum in the process of establishing the need for labour as such. Industrial and scientific development held a central place in the thought of the orthodox, and they regarded the 'commercial peasant world' and the joys of consumption as a petty-bourgeois heresy. The attempt to find a compromise, a sort of 'golden mean' between these two positions, was made by the chief specialist on 'Soviet man', G. L. Smirnov. As the next section will show, this compromise proved unstable, and this was reflected in the fates of both the concept itself and its author.

G. L. Smirnov's *Soviet Man*

Georgiy Lukich Smirnov (1922–1999), like the other heroes of this article, combined the roles of philosopher, ideologist and party functionary. In the first half of the 1960s he was in charge of the philosophical editorial board of *Kommunist*. From 1965 to 1972 he worked in the CPSU Central Committee apparatus in the propaganda department, at the same time as the future ideologist of perestroika Alexander Yakovlev. At this time Smirnov made the acquaintance of the sociologists Igor Kon and Gennady Osipov,¹ gave support to Boris Grushin's 'Taganrog Project',² and in 1972 very nearly became the director of the Institute for Concrete Social Research. Until 1983, in his capacity as first deputy of the department he continued to 'look

¹ Igor Kon (1928–2011) was a pioneer of Western theory and methodology in the USSR, and essentially founded the scientific study of sexology, which led to conflicts with the Soviet authorities, particularly the Leningrad Regional Committee of the Communist Party before his departure to Moscow in 1974 [Eds.].

² The 'Taganrog Project' was a longitudinal sociological study of the functioning of the mass media and public opinion organised by the Department of Propaganda of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in the town of Taganrog in 1967–74. Boris Grushin (1929–2007) was a philosopher and sociologist, a leading scholar of popular opinion in the USSR and Russia. The results were published in *Massovaya informatsiya v sovetskom gorode: Opyt kompleksnogo sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniya*, ed. by B. A. Grushin, L. A. Onikov. Moscow: Izdatelstvo politicheskoy literatury, 1980. Our thanks to Sergei Alymov for this elucidation [Eds.].

after' the press, radio and television. In 1983–5 he was director of the Academy of Sciences' Institute of Philosophy. From January 1985 to January 1987 he was an assistant to Mikhail Gorbachev in ideology, and after that director of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism (IML), in which post he remained until May 1991 [Humphrey 2008].

Behind this façade of a successful career as a Soviet apparatchik lies a story not without its drama. 'My personal tragedy', he acknowledges in his memoirs, 'was not only that I misunderstood Gorbachev, but also that I completely failed to foresee the global threats to the Soviet social and state order' [Smirnov 1997: 6]. Smirnov's moderately 'progressive' views as an ideologist determined the enthusiasm for perestroika which he felt at the beginning. He understood and promoted it as 'overcoming the accretions that are alien to socialism', a renewal of socialism and 'the principles of collectivism, social justice and democracy'. However, after resigning his post as ideological adviser to the General Secretary for health reasons, Smirnov became more and more aware of 'a shift of accents' in the activity of Gorbachev and the whole ideological machine. Beginning in 1988, there appeared articles by Yu. N. Afanasyev, A. S. Tsipko and other 'democrats' which progressed from criticising Stalin to 'a devastating critique of October' and Lenin. Gradually Smirnov began to feel resistance to the work of the IML, while the radical democrats' publications were greeted in the upper reaches of the party with 'a polite silence'. Meditating on these events in his memoirs, Smirnov concluded that it was all the result of a conscious choice by Gorbachev, who preferred 'a change of system' and a return to capitalism, but was still compelled 'to say one thing, think another, and do yet another' [Ibid.: 298]. The last IML publication to be edited by Smirnov, *Lenin's Conception of Socialism*, came out in 1990 and was a polemic against Gorbachev, as were Smirnov's other belated attempts to resist the 'anti-socialist forces' in the party.

Smirnov's book *Soviet Man*, which went through three editions in the USSR (1971, 1973, 1980) and was translated into other languages, was the Soviet ideologist's most authoritative statement on the subject. It can also be regarded as a manifesto for 'socialism with a human face', whose author was aiming to combine a quite orthodox view of Soviet society and history with the 'humane' demands of the day. 'Socialist humanism' should, according to Smirnov, be set against bourgeois liberties (reduced to 'the freedom of private enterprise', 'the cult of individualism', and the freedom to propagate racism, fascism, etc., which disfigured the personality), and also against the 'humanisation of socialism' which really led, as in Czechoslovakia, to a restoration of capitalism [Smirnov 1968].

Among the orthodox aspects of this work we may count the author's interpretation of 'the fundamental stages of the formation of

a socialist personality'. Its pre-revolutionary sources, according to Smirnov, were the 'uniting' of the most progressive revolutionary class, the proletariat, with scientific socialism, producing as a result 'the personality of the revolutionary of the Bolshevik type', ideally realised in Lenin. After the revolution one of the party's main tasks was 'the development of personality in the man of labour', the main features of which were formulated by Lenin: 'devotion to the ideas of communism, acquisition of knowledge and professional skills, socio-political activity, discipline and responsibility' [Smirnov 1980: 125]. The leading role in this process was played by the working class, while the peasantry had to give up the psychology of ownership and, in the course of establishing collective farms, 'go over to the position of the working class's ideology'. In his analysis of the 'social types' of the present day, Smirnov stressed the priority of 'the personality of the working man', the bearer of such qualities as 'revolution, discipline, organisation and collectivism' [Ibid.: 301]. He also indicated that the collective farm workers still depended on their personal plots, periodically appeared on the market and were on the whole backward in their cultural and domestic level. The 'nationalisation' of collective and cooperative property and its approximation to state property seemed to him the regular process of creating a single communist form of property. The fundamental features of Soviet man, formed 'on the basis of the working class's ideology' were manifested 'in the acknowledgement of the aims and principles of communist ideology, the primacy of social interests, when the social interest — the work of communism — becomes the personal interest; in the recognition of labour for the good of society as the highest meaning of life, the means of affirming his own worth and of the development of his abilities; in the acceptance of fraternity, collectivism and internationalism as the basic norms of intercourse with other people' [Ibid.: 247–8].

The idea that personal and social interests should coincide was perhaps the chief support of this structure: 'For Soviet people the primacy of social interests is an unconditional law, a sort of moral imperative' [Smirnov 1968: 3]. The logic of this imperative was quite simple: with the formation of property belonging to the whole people there arises 'the perception of social riches as one's own', and the social interest essentially coincides with the interests of each individual. Socialism creates new conditions and stimuli for economic activity instead of private initiative: 'The basic motivation for activity among the workers is their interest in the development of social production, since they see in it the common source of the growth of popular wellbeing' [Smirnov 1980: 156].

'The activity of the masses', their interests and motives, were at the centre of attention in Smirnov's publicist work during perestroika. At this time he strove to maintain a centrist course, combining

the socialist principle of the 'commonality of interest' of all the workers with a rejection of 'command and administration', the development of economic accounting, cooperation and individual labour — a set of ideas which was described in those years as a revival of Lenin's principles of managing the economy. Smirnov recognised a decline in interest in effective labour and a departure from 'Lenin's testament' 'to be orientated on the personal and collective material interest' [Smirnov 1987: 16]. Economic accounting, overcoming the bureaucratic 'braking mechanism' and a transfer of rights to businesses would finally allow a real economic interest on the part of collectives and individuals, a 'sense of ownership', to come into being. By the way Smirnov criticised the transformation of collective farms into Soviet farms and contempt for cooperatives and private plots, but he protested against evaluating collectivisation and the cultural revolution 'with a minus sign'. He was also convinced that 'some analysts' (evidently a dig at T. I. Zaslavskaya) 'were going overboard' in their assertion that over the last decade and a half 'society had altogether degenerated and turned into a sort of dumb mass in which the predominant type was the indifferent person with no real interest in anything' [Ibid.: 20]. In his last major work he opposed 'Lenin's concept of socialism' as a democratic society of 'civilised cooperators' which used all 'economic methods of management' to the 'command-administrative system' created by Stalin, which deprived the workers of initiative and condemned them to 'passivity and apathy' [Smirnov 1990: 42]. This was already in opposition to the 'radicals' who rejected Lenin's vision of socialism or made him responsible for all the 'distortions' of that order.

As the 80s gave way to the 90s, Smirnov was forced to defend his convictions in open polemic. He particularly remembered his conversations with Oleg Moroz, the radical liberal journalist of *Literaturnaya Gazeta*: 'I had never encountered such a hostile attitude to Marxism, socialism, and to me personally as well' [Smirnov 1997: 254]. Moroz had indeed put forward the thesis of the fundamental errors of Marxism and the 'unreality' of socialist economics. He argued that Marxism 'had not taken account of human nature' and had reduced it to the totality of social relations. But man 'is first and foremost a biological entity' and state property and other forms of nationalisation are foreign to his nature. To illustrate this thesis Moroz turned to a critique of the policy of nationalising agriculture: after all, however fragmented peasant agriculture had been, 'these scraps of land were worked by their owners, and not by someone who didn't give a monkey's chuff.' Moroz named the peasant, whose business came into being 'naturally, on the basis of living economic laws' as the 'predominant type of person' in pre-revolutionary Russia [Smirnov 1989]. Smirnov

attempted to oppose these theses with arguments to which he had repeatedly given voice in his works: Marxism does not contain any 'Utopian' ideas of human nature, man's 'biological nature' does not by any means predispose him / her to private property, and social property had been won and defended by millions of Soviet people with arms in their hands. Nevertheless these arguments evidently had no effect either on the commentator Moroz or on many of his readers. Under the influence of 'biological' treatments of 'economic man', the image of Soviet man created by Smirnov was becoming less and less convincing.

Smirnov's book *Soviet Man* was the most authoritative statement of a late-Soviet ideologist philosopher in this area. Smirnov did not use the conservatives' argument of labour as 'the first requirement' of Soviet man, but relied on the idea of the coincidence of personal and social interests under socialism. Having been a cautious supporter of the 'commoditarians' since the 1950s, he supported and developed the ideas of economic accounting and stimulating the economic activity of the population at the beginning of perestroika, but at that point the ideal of socialist harmony between the interests of man and society was undermined by the brighter image of market regulation of these relations.

Agrarian economists and neoliberal subjectivity

The image of the peasant, a good 'owner' and worker, was one of the reformers' central ideas [Kirchik 2006]. Agrarian 'marketees' became one of the main social forces that enabled the establishment of the neoliberal model of subjectivity, connected not only with market motivation, but also with consumption. For example, the outstanding publicist and agrarian market economist G. S. Lisichkin, who worked at IEMSS, defended the thesis that socialism had outgrown the stage when society's income was limited, and its requirements minimal. At present, he thought, 'one can in a certain sense say that the freedom of the person begins with the freedom of consumption' [Strelyanny, Lisichkin 1989: 336]. A just distribution according to labour, in Lisichkin's opinion, could only be ensured by a situation in which the value of labour was measured by the demand for the 'commodity' that it produced, i.e. the tastes and requirements of consumers — an idea that later gave rise to the formula that the 'dictatorship of the producer' must be replaced by the 'dictatorship of the consumer'. Lisichkin was also a sharp critic of the conservatives' thesis that labour had become a need for Soviet man. A creative attitude to labour, a sense of ownership and other social qualities could, in his opinion, only be developed in a business that combined material stimulation and worker participation in the management of production. It was impossible to develop social

processes and form a comprehensively developed personality 'independently of economics' [Strelyanyy, Lisichkin 1989: 332–3].

By the time of perestroika the image of the time-server, the slacker, the 'tumbleweed', indifferent not only to his work on the collective farm but even to his own property and home, was becoming more and more prominent in Lisichkin's publicist writings. He defended 'materialism' against proponents of asceticism, and interested workers of all kinds against idlers and loafers. He followed the writer Fyodor Abramov¹ in characterising 'the social opposition' in the village as a stratification 'into hard workers, dodgers, and idlers' and perestroika as the efforts of workers in 'skilled labour' to re-establish social justice, using 'the law of value, the market, socialist commodity-money relations and economic accounting' [Lisichkin 1989: 37, 132–4]. The agrarian market theme was also central to the article 'Advances and Debts', by N. P. Shmelev of the IEMSS, which revolutionised the economic mentality of the reading public.

It may have been Academician Tatyana Ivanovna Zaslavskaya (1927–2013) who to a decisive degree enabled these changes in the economic mentality. She was close to the circle of agrarian 'marketees' that had formed around the economist V. G. Venzher. From the 1960s to the first half of 80s Zaslavskaya became the most authoritative specialist on the socio-economic development of the Soviet village. According to her memoirs, at the beginning of the 1960s, when she was working at the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences, she had already 'come to a final conclusion that the social order that had established itself in our country had nothing to do with socialism.' The future academician defined the Soviet order as state monopoly capitalism, in which the Soviet and party oligarchy was the exploiter class, and the most exploited were the peasants [Zaslavskaya 2007: 461–7]. After making the acquaintance of Gorbachev, who had been appointed Central Committee secretary for agriculture in 1980, Zaslavskaya saw that he shared the ideas of the reforming economists and took her call to 'turn back to the rural sector' seriously.

In 1982 a collective of economists and sociologists in Novosibirsk began work under Zaslavskaya's leadership on 'A social mechanism for developing the economy (the example of the agroindustrial complex)'. Their central idea was that the crisis in the Soviet economy had arisen primarily for social reasons: 'Out-of-date social relations <...> have not stimulated effective economic activity' [Zaslavskaya 2007: 523]. One outcome of the project was the famous

¹ Fyodor Abramov (1920–1983) was a leading figure in the village prose movement of the Brezhnev era [Eds.].

‘Novosibirsk Manifesto’, or, to be precise, the paper ‘On improving the production relations of socialism and tasks of economic sociology’, read by Zaslavskaya at a conference in Novosibirsk in 1983 and widely publicised thereafter in the West. It asserted that ‘the type of worker’ produced by a centralised bureaucratic system did not answer the requirements ‘of raising the level of personal development of the workers’ entailed by modern technology for ‘increasing the role of subjective factors in the development of the economy’ [Zaslavskaya 1983]. Calling for a more active formation of the necessary type of worker by means of economic methods, Zaslavskaya indicated the low quality ‘of many workers, whose personality developed during the last five-year plans’, and specifically their low working discipline, indifferent attitude to the work they were doing, social inertia, low evaluation of work as a means of self-realisation, etc.

In the first half of the 1980s, thanks to study trips and links with local scholars, Zaslavskaya was able to acquaint herself with the experience of the Hungarian economic reforms. In addition, she led an experiment in introducing complete economic accounting in particular collective farms in the Altai region (P. O. Aven and V. M. Shironin from ‘E. Gaydar’s laboratory’ at the Institute for Systems Studies (VNIISI) also took part in this work) [Zaslavskaya 2007: 544]. When Gorbachev came to power Zaslavskaya actively joined in the ‘intellectual and scientific underpinning’ of perestroika, and her audience was greatly enlarged thanks to her regular publication in the central newspapers. An analysis of the social structure of Soviet society and its division into supporters and opponents of perestroika became a leitmotif of her articles. Among the former she included ‘the most active, creative, independent and well-qualified’ of the workers, peasants, office workers and intelligentsia, who would gain by putting the economic reforms into practice. The opponents were corrupt apparatchiki, the mafia, and also the inert, unskilled and unjustifiably privileged section of the workers [Zaslavskaya 1988]. An open discussion of the ‘contradictions’ of socialism and the failure of the interests of various social groups to coincide was a manifestation of Zaslavskaya’s reforming radicalism, in which she encountered resistance from Smirnov. When taking part in the preparation of Gorbachev’s report to the Twenty-Seventh Congress, she tried to promote her ‘maximalist’ point of view on the role of ‘the human factor’ in the socio-economic section of the report. Smirnov removed all innovative ideas, replacing them with the traditional thesis of ‘the establishment of social homogeneity’ in Soviet society. Nevertheless, according to Zaslavskaya’s memoirs, Gorbachev and A. N. Yakovlev were clearly on her side in this confrontation [Zaslavskaya 2007: 552–6].

As noted earlier, with the arrival of Gorbachev the reformers' opportunities for propagating their ideas increased dramatically. The philosopher I. T. Frolov, a supporter of 'humane socialism' and an enthusiast for the interdisciplinary study of 'man', and afterwards the director of the Institute of Humanity, was appointed editor in chief of *Kommunist* instead of Kosolapov. Frolov's priorities were reflected in a special decision of the Central Committee concerning the journal *Kommunist* on 16 August 1986. Amongst the most important problems that the journal was to consider were listed 'the increasing role of the human factor in the progressive evolution of society', and the importance of 'sociological research <...> into questions regarding the harmonisation of social, collective and personal interests, needs and stimuli to human activity' [*KPSS o perestrojke* 1988: 151–2]. Frolov soon invited Otto Latsis from IEMSS to be head of his economic section, and he in turn invited Egor Gaydar, later the architect of 'shock therapy' under Boris Yeltsin, to join the journal's staff. Even before this Frolov had published Zaslavskaya's article 'The human factor in economic development and social justice', which, as Latsis said, 'demonstrated to the reader that this was a different *Kommunist*' [Latsis 2001: 185]. In this manifesto article the economist put forward a whole complex of reforms directed towards 'the sensible use of the interests of the workers' and 'the stimulation of their social activity'. The essence of these reforms lay in the need for a 'radical restructuring' of the wage system towards a fairer distribution according to labour in favour of 'the innovative and enterprising'. It was suggested that the means for such stimulation could be found in price reform (in particular, raising the prices of meat and milk to their actual cost) and doing away with the privileges of the elite in the distribution of goods. It was further proposed to transfer the provision of 'such goods as housing, educational and medical services' to a paid basis while guaranteeing everyone 'the socially essential minimum' [Zaslavskaya 1986]. Zaslavskaya thus called openly for cuts in the 'social funds' (the social funds by means of which an expansion of consumption was linked to the expectation of communism), bundling them with unearned privileges and unfair distribution. On the contrary, she saw 'the rouble' as the only adequate mechanism for a fair 'distribution according to labour'.

The idea of seeking 'new spheres for the application of money' by monetarising services and introducing wage differentials had existed among reforming economists even before perestroika [Popov 1980]. The question of the social funds and their role in the economic stimulation of the population had evidently been actively discussed in the circle of S. S. Shatalin's pupils at VNIISI. As early as 1982 Shatalin had criticised the theory that saw the social funds of consumption as 'a prefiguring of communist distribution' and spoken of

the need to strengthen ‘the purposeful character of distribution’ from these funds and a more active involvement of housing and public health in the economic sphere beyond the threshold of ‘a socially guaranteed minimum’ [Shatalin 1982: 324–38]. By the end of 1990 criticism of ‘the weight of the chain-mail’ of social protection, which was supposed to take away people’s stimuli towards progress [Ulyukaev 1990: 11], and calls not to confuse ‘socialism with social security’ [Vishnevskiy 1990: 24] were predominant in the discussion of social problems among the young experts of *Kommunist*.

Zaslavskaya’s article brought her ‘real fame in Russia as well as the West’, and also provoked a flood of letters to the editor of *Kommunist*, an analysis of which allows us to see that society’s reaction to her ideas was complex. Many writers, from doctors of science to ordinary citizens, agreed with Zaslavskaya in her criticisms (inequality in the distribution of goods and services, the existence of various ‘milch cows’, nepotism, the moral decay of a part of society, etc.), but parted company with her in their evaluation of the reasons for the decline in activity of the ‘human factor’ and the means to ‘reactivate’ it. Some economists disputed the economist’s factual data, indicating that ‘a lack of any connection between pay and productivity has been consistently observed’ [RGASPI, f. 599, op. 1, d. 1019, f. 58]. A political economist from Novosibirsk was doubtful of data according to which ‘barely a third of all workers are working at full strength’, citing the vagueness of the term ‘full strength’ [Ibid., d. 1017, ff. 144–5]. The sternest criticism was that which accused the academician of forgetting the ideals of socialism: ‘It turns out that in our socialist society the level of medical services should be supernormal for some and just normal for the rest. This is nothing other than a division into rich and poor. In that case what are we criticising the capitalist system in all the mass media for?’ [Ibid., d. 1020, f. 46v].

Many saw Zaslavskaya’s ideas as a badly camouflaged ideology of the intelligentsia and qualified specialists: ‘Solving the problem of the activation of the human factor by means of ensuring the social justice described in T. Zaslavskaya’s article will not lead to a convergence of wage levels nor to the establishment of a single socialist way of life. The petty-bourgeois line of defending the interests of the category of the highly-paid section of socialist society, nostalgia for the official privileges of the bourgeois specialists of the first five-year plans, and a desire to entrench the division of socialist society into rich and poor’ [RGASPI, f. 599, op. 1, d. 1018, f. 4]. The means for achieving social justice according to Zaslavskaya were met with bewilderment: the letter writers disagreed with her ideas of the values and motivations of Soviet man. The ‘material stimulus’ that seemed to be her main prescription was seen by some as more like a problem. For example, the party and war veteran M. P. Bundin

wrote: 'When you finish the article you literally want to shout, "Can't you see that personal material interest, when raised to the status of primary necessity and means of stimulating work, has mercilessly devoured the fairness, principles, and conscientiousness of many employees and corrupted individuals and entire collectives?"' [RGASPI, f. 599, op. 1, d. 1017, f. 85]. The letter writers pointed to the many dangers of 'strengthening an interest in gain' — 'a growth in suspicion, dissatisfaction and even the embitterment of a certain section of employees and as a result a worsening of the moral and psychological climate of the collective and its "stratification" and a weakening of collectivist ties' [Ibid., f. 58]. E. I. Mukhin thought that 'theft, parasitism, dependency, bureaucracy, narrowmindedness <...> and above all passivity in people' are produced precisely by a wide difference in the income of different groups of the population, which would only be increased by Zaslavskaya's proposals [RGASPI, f. 599, op. 1, d. 1019, f. 16]. Finally, a number of writers appealed to principle, responsibility, concern for the common cause and the other moral and ideal stimuli which, in their opinion, primarily determined — or ought to determine — the behaviour of Soviet man.

Those who wrote letters in support of Zaslavskaya, by contrast, accepted monetisation as a realisation of the principle of 'to each according to his labour', and put forward their own suggestions for applying economic rationality to the social sphere. For example, the lecturers at a medical institute proposed 'introducing a corrective to free medical attention depending on a person's attitude to their health and their behaviour'. They indicated that it was unfair to treat alcoholics on the same free basis as people who led a healthy lifestyle and looked on their health 'from the position of its economic value to the state, as a form of wealth' [RGASPI, f. 599, op. 1, d. 1017, f. 13]. Zaslavskaya's conclusions were also supported by S. S. Shatalin [Shatalin 1986]. Later, together with Gaydar, he wrote about 'the necessity for a critical analysis of the whole existing system of social guarantees', and pointed to the usefulness of raising retail prices and to the phenomenon of 'redistribution of incomes in favour of the wealthiest categories of the population' as a result of low retail prices and the provision by the state of housing and other benefits out of social funds [Shatalin, Gaydar 1989: 95–102].

Shatalin's collaboration with Yu. A. Levada¹ evidently began at the beginning of the 1970s, when he helped the sociologist, then in disfavour, to obtain a post at the Central Economics and Mathematics Institute of the Academy of Sciences [Batygin 1999: 88]. The study *Social Resources and Social Policy*, edited by Shatalin, Levada et al.

¹ Yuri Levada (1930–2006) worked at the Russian Public Opinion Research Centre (VTsIOM, see below) from 1988 and, after his departure in 2003, founded the Yuri Levada Centre, currently the most internationally respected polling centre in Russia [Eds.].

and carried out by the USSR Academy of Sciences' academic council for the complex problem of social and cultural development, was published in 1990. It examined the problem of 'the motivational mechanism of labour activity' and 'the inclusion of the mechanisms of the socialist market' in the example of the housing complex and social and cultural services [Shatalin, Grebennikov 1990: 4–5]. Its authors criticised the whole tradition of opposing 'romantic' and economic motives for labour and the ideology of the Soviet man's 'motivation of co-ownership' (understood as the labour motivation of the individual who was a 'co-owner' of the social property of the means of production, whose interests, according to the official ideology, coincided with the interests of society). They regarded 'distribution according to labour' and the social guarantees of the social funds as ineffective economic stimuli. In order to develop this motivation, satisfy growing demand and 'develop the capacities of the individual' the authors proposed 'including strict targeting in the mechanism of realising social guarantees and creating an alternative market variant of the distribution of the same goods and services' [Ibid.: 15–6, 27].

In 1987 Zaslavskaya became the head of the first centre for the study of public opinion in the USSR (VTsIOM), attached to the State Committee for Labour and the Council of Trades Unions. Feeling that support for perestroika was, in a way, her mission, she took the tasks of studying and forming public opinion to be closely linked: 'The study and formation of public opinion is one of the most important tasks of perestroika and at the same time underpins it. Here I am ready to fight to the last' [Zaslavskaya 2007: 586]. Zaslavskaya's deputy at VTsIOM was the sociologist B. A. Grushin, who invited Yu. A. Levada's 'group' to collaborate with them; it was Levada to whom Zaslavskaya would hand over the directorship of the organisation some years later. The first survey of the 'Soviet man' project, developed by Levada, took place in 1989. As Zaslavskaya remarks, Levada's 1993 book, *The Ordinary Soviet Person*, based on this work, soon attained the status of a classic [Ibid.: 652].¹ The 'problem of man' had occupied Levada long before he came to work at VTsIOM. In 1977 Levada had written a short text entitled '*Homo oeconomicus*, or The Fate of a Phantom', in which he juxtaposed the models of the 'traditional' and rational / economic person, whose main typical activities he called 'rationality, instrumentality and efficiency' [Levada 2016: 299]. Finally, in 1983, he published in a collection of works by VNIISI an article called 'Problems of Economic Anthropology in Karl Marx'. In it he posed the question of studying 'anthropological models' and also gave a detailed discussion of the basic model of economic anthropology — *Homo oeconomicus*.

¹ See: [Levada 1993].

The sociologist listed his main features: rationality ('[t]o be rational means literally to become an investigator of one's own activity'), focus on aims ('the predominance of an instrumental (or technological) attitude to reality'), efficiency ('[a]t the same time there is a tendency to subordinate all spheres of human activity to an optimising calculation, extending the limitless field of monetary evaluations or finding some sort of equivalents for them') and individualism [Levada 1983: 87–8]. Gaydar quoted this work at the beginning of his own first monograph [Gaydar 1990: 7–8].

The sociologist A. G. Zdravomyslov once suggested in an interview that Levada had 'reworked' Smirnov's 'Soviet man' [Zdravomyslov 2008: 16]. Levada and his colleagues did not, of course, make any reference to the ex-director of the IML, as they regarded their research exclusively as an interpretation of their sociological surveys. Nevertheless they also affirmed the real existence of the 'human model' or 'ideal type' of *Homo sovieticus*, whose assumptions and behavioural peculiarities predominated in society as a whole. Like Smirnov, they described the features of this 'type', which had come into being 'by the 1930s or 40s', which may perhaps be regarded as a 'negative' of the image created by Smirnov. Among these features the fundamental ones were: paternalism and infantilism, hierarchy, egalitarianism (which denied any inequality which did not correspond to the state hierarchy, including income from property and 'the fruits of any exceptional labour or talent') and the imperial syndrome. 'Ordinariness', which was, according to Levada, 'the core of the image of Soviet man' meant a striving to be like everybody else, 'an aggressive envy of anyone with talent, power or consumer goods', primitive needs and tractability. This 'type' had been formed as a result of the elimination of the social elite, the dismantling of the peasantry, the transformation of the intelligentsia into 'functionaries' and the creation of 'a new kind of industrial barracks town'. The authors did not go into the characteristics of particular strata or classes, imagining Soviet society as a sufficiently homogeneous mass of 'ordinary people', above whom there was a 'ruling elite'. At the same time 'the collective farm', on which land and work were divided into 'two unequal parts which were different in principle: the "common" (belonging to other people, to the government) and "your own"' was recognised as the model for the relations between 'a person of the Soviet type' and society. Since the collective farm worker lived for the most part on the fruits of his own patch, his relationship with the collective farm, and, more generally, the state was constructed, in their opinion, as 'tribute' or 'games' — such 'games' as work, care (taken by the state), agreement and unanimity were saturated with doublethink [Levada 1993: 10–31].

The 'key' to their characterisation of Soviet man was seen by Levada and his colleagues as his preference for 'guaranteed poverty' over

opportunities 'to work hard and earn a lot, albeit with no particular guarantees for the future' [Levada 1993: 45]. They considered that mass envy of other people's success, the idea that 'individual economic success' was immoral, the result of a policy of 'restraining incomes' at the expense of the best qualified workers, which had led to 'a weakening of labour motivation and social stagnation as a whole' [Ibid.: 57]. Thus it was precisely these 'anti-achievement stereotypes' and an absence of initiative, independence and 'leadership potential' that Levada and his colleagues regarded as the basic features of Soviet man. In 1993 they expressed restrained optimism regarding the development of 'orientation towards achievement' among young people.

In 2001 Levada acknowledged that many of his hopes for the transformation of 'Soviet man' in the right direction had been disappointed, but he still believed that 'newly formed' people would be 'more pragmatic, more individualistic, orientated towards wellbeing of a "Western" type, freer from the social mythology of egalitarianism' [Levada 2011: 333–8]. In this way the problem of a lack of motivation among the workers of Soviet businesses about which Zaslavskaya had written was turned in Levada's writings into a socio-cultural theory where lack of motivation was the feature that determined the outline of the 'ordinary' Soviet man as a whole. 'Achievement' motivations were moved completely outside the 'Soviet' framework as incompatible with it, and assigned to the sphere of 'Western values'.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the social thought of late socialism offered certain opportunities for expressing various points of view about the development of Soviet society and Soviet man. Kosolapov, as an adherent of orthodox Marxism, preferred the industrial-collectivist paradigm, insisting on the 'leading role' of the working class and its characteristic features in the image of Soviet people. He also saw the essence of man in labour as creativity, and criticised his opponents' tendency to 'justify' the urge for consumption. The reformers often had 'pro-peasant' sympathies, but in their thinking the image of the peasant was associated with a whole complex of 'market' ideas which had been repressed by the Soviet regime along with the 'real' peasantry. One of the most important components of this complex was the idea that *Homo oeconomicus* was 'natural' and even biologically predetermined. The return of society to normality was envisaged through the overcoming of the command-administrative system, which impeded people's natural economic activity. These ideas agree perfectly with neoliberal ideas. Foucault suggests that the key element in the Chicago School's approach is their consistent

expansion of the economic form to apply to the social sphere, thus eliding any difference between the economy and the social' [Lemke 2001: 187]. In the Soviet context this 'expansion' took the form of the reformers' call to wind up distribution via social funds, while the orthodox defended their extension as an essential part of the programme of building communism.

The slowdown in growth and the crisis of the Soviet economy evidently lent weight to the reformers' conclusions. Zaslavskaya put forward the most finished programme for 'activating the human factor' by means of the mechanisms of the market economy. She also proposed an explanation for the crisis via a 'social mechanism' that Gorbachev's team found convincing, i.e. a lack of motivation among the workers and the resistance of the bureaucracy. The idea of the 'social group of entrepreneurs' plays an important part in Zaslavskaya's post-Soviet publications, which bears witness to the hopes the reformers invested in this 'ideal type' [Kachanov 1998]. The negative image of *Homo sovieticus* found its ultimate expression in the works of Levada, who added to Zaslavskaya's characterisation by constructing a socio-cultural theory on this basis that remains popular to this day. Further on, Gaydar referred to Zaslavskaya's criticism of the bureaucracy, but found it insufficient and extended it to the 'hierarchical structures' of the Soviet planned economy as a whole. At the same time (and in view of many marketeers' pro-peasant sympathies there is a sad irony in this) it was agriculture, which was inefficient and swallowed up vast amounts of investment, that became for him the symbol of 'social security' socialism, 'in which the weak stimulus to labour is the result of an excess of social guarantees' [Gaydar 1990: 4–5, 93].

The tendency of the development of late Soviet social thought may be seen as two parallel processes. On the one hand, the paradoxical association of 'creativity' with Kosolapov's line of ultra-planned industrialism evidently appeared less and less adequate, which ensured its defeat. On the other, the redefinition of human nature from 'creativity' to earning and consuming, and also the autochthonous peasant costuming of these ideas allowed 'humanism' to be inserted into a completely different semantic array, providing it with 'market' overtones. These processes make it easier to understand how the humanistic efforts of late-Soviet ideologists ended up in the 'shock therapy' of the 1990s, and equally why neoliberal reforms were accepted by a large part of the intelligentsia as having no alternative.

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Abbreviations

RGASPI — Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History

Archival materials

RGASPI, f. 599, op. 1, d. 1017. Readers' responses to T. I. Zaslavskaya's article in the journal *Kommunist* (A–G). 1986.

RGASPI, f. 599, op. 1, d. 1018. Readers' responses to T. I. Zaslavskaya's article in the journal *Kommunist* (D–K). 1986.

RGASPI, f. 599, op. 1, d. 1019. Readers' responses to T. I. Zaslavskaya's article in the journal *Kommunist* (L–P). 1986.

RGASPI, f. 599, op. 1, d. 1020. Readers' responses to T. I. Zaslavskaya's article in the journal *Kommunist* (R–Yu). 1986.

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