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Review article / Обзорная статья

Phenomenon of Sovietness in Russian Historiographical Tradition

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Abstract: The author proposes a new historiographic approach which is based on the identification of the essential lines of the historiographic split without dividing the works according to the disciplinary principle. The author connects another historiographic turn in the study of the phenomenon of Sovietness with the expansion of the source base and, above all, with the appeal to mass personal sources, in particular, letters to the authorities, which, due to the representation of different social groups, make it possible to clarify the process of establishing new Soviet values and, accordingly, existing historiographic conclusions, as well as to verify the theoretical and methodological foundations of modern research. The analysis showed that with all the variety of theoretical and methodological approaches, the idea of the dual nature of the phenomenon of Sovietness and the appeal to “greater meanings” seems to be the most promising one, and mass sources contribute to the transition from the study of the abstract Soviet man to the study of “homo soveticus” in all the diversity of his life at different stages of history.

Keywords: Soviet everyday life, nostalgia, letters to power, supra-ethnicity, historiographical splits

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Феномен советскости в отечественной историографической традиции

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Аннотация: Автор предлагает новый историографический подход, в основе которого лежит выделение существенных линий историографического раскола без деления работ по дисциплинарному принципу. Очередной историографический поворот в изучении феномена советскости автор связывает с расширением источниковой базы и прежде всего с обращением к массовым источникам личного происхождения, в частности, письмам во власть, которые в силу представительства разных социальных групп позволяют уточнить процесс утверждения новых советских ценностей и, соответственно, существующие историографические выводы, а также верифицировать теоретические и методологические основания современных исследований. Анализ показал, что при всем многообразии теоретических и методологических подходов наиболее перспективной представляется идея двойственной природы феномена советского и обращение к «большим



смыслам». А массовые источники способствуют переходу от изучения абстрактного советского человека к исследованию «homo soveticus» во всем многообразии его жизнедеятельности на разных этапах истории.

Ключевые слова: советская повседневность, ностальгия, письма во власть, надэтничность, историографические расколы

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Introduction

Since the late 1990s, there has been obvious the involvement of various strata of Russian society in the “process of large-scale reflection on the Soviet past.”¹ Persistent nostalgia for the Soviet period has been recorded by numerous sociological surveys. The Soviet theme filled the value vacuum of the early post-Soviet era, which gave rise to neither positive symbols nor generally recognized achievements.²

From these positions, modernity can be considered, firstly, as a period of constructive discussion of scientists in various fields; secondly, as the reflection of nostalgia for Sovietness in the projects that actively use the Soviet symbols or attempt to reconstruct Soviet history. Today, the Soviet semiosphere extends not only to memorial and architectural complexes, but also to toponymic signs. M.Yu. Timofeev systematized unique information about the “Soviet atmosphere” of drinking establishments (Leningrad bar, Tbilisi khinkali cafe, Odessa bodega, Moscow pub, etc.).³ Thirdly, as experience of emotional discussion of the problems of Soviet history in the Russian blogosphere, which (including “folk museums”⁴) became one of the platforms for reflecting images of the Soviet past.

Today we are witnessing the actualization of the social order for Sovietness on the part of the authorities, business, population and scientific and expert community. According to A. Yurchak, a feature of the nostalgic sentiments of recent years has been a decrease in the level of etatism with an increase in “longing for discourse.”⁵ Perhaps it is the “longing for discourse” that stimulates the interest in the phenomenon of Sovietness persisting to this day. Whereas for the mid-2000s N.N. Kozlova's statement that we “know too little about Soviet society”⁶ on the whole adequately reflected the state of historiography, over the past years there has been accumulated an extensive source base, experience in describing and interpreting Soviet reality. But today, due to the pluralism of ideological views, political preferences and scientific approaches, there are no well-established assessments of it. The purpose of this brief excursus into the extensive post-Soviet historiography (1991–2021) is not only to record the results of research. The problem of the study can be formulated as the identification of points of split and juxtaposition

¹ N.S. Smolina, “Tema ‘sovetskogo’ v sotsial’no-filosofskom diskurse 2000-kh: problematizatsiia kolektivnoi identichnosti na postsovetskom prostranstve,” *Izvestiia RGPU im. A.I. Gertsena*, no. 97 (2009): 155.

² V.A. Somov, “Fenomen sovetskosti: istoriko-kul’turnyi aspekt,” *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia*, no. 2 (2015): 13.

³ M.Yu. Timofeev, “Psevdosovetskii obshchepit kak imperiya znakov: sistemno-semioticheskii analiz. Ch. I. Artefakty,” *Labirint. Zhurnal sotsial’no-gumanitarnykh issledovaniy*, no. 5 (2012): 62.

⁴ R.N. Abramov, “Muzeefikatsiia sovetskogo. Istoricheskaia travma ili nostalg’iia?” *Chelovek*, no. 5 (2013): 99–111; A.A. Fokin, “Relikty i simuliakry sovetskogo v sovremennom rossiiskom mediaprostranstve,” *Labirint. Zhurnal sotsialno-gumanitarnykh issledovaniy*, no. 1/2 (2016): 64–73.

⁵ A. Yurchak, *Eto bylo navsegda, poka ne konchilos. Poslednee sovetskoe pokolenie* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie Publ., 2014), 45.

⁶ N.N. Kozlova, *Sovetskie lyudi. Stseny iz istorii* (Moscow: Evropa Publ., 2005), 472.

in the works of representatives of different branches of knowledge and the formulation of their own historiographic scheme on this basis. The existing historiographic reviews⁷ helped to identify the main subject fields and the basic vector of research into the phenomenon of “Sovietness.” Of particular note are those reviews that analyze the works using ego-documents, sources of private origin and information and analytical materials of the regulatory authorities.⁸ In turn, to confirm one or another research paradigm, there were chosen either pioneer works or studies that illuminate the chosen perspective in a concentrated form.

Historiography of the problem: general approaches to reflection

The lack of consensus on the key issues, at first glance, makes all attempts at historiographic summing up unproductive. But this does not reduce the significance of summing up the intermediate results of the study of the topic. For example, along with contextual, methodological and terminological diversity, E.Yu. Zubkova drew attention not only to the duality of Sovietness (an identification marker and a tool for constructing a coordinate system for the life of society), but also to the topical subject fields: the place of the Soviet in everyday life; chronotope of the Soviet; Sovietness as a combination of room for possibilities and a restrictive framework; generational dimension of Sovietness; Soviet symbols, rituals and practices.⁹

Obviously, today the path to understanding Sovietness lies through the historical reconstruction of various aspects of Soviet history, rather than through the “modeling” of an abstract person in a wide range from “Soviet man” to “builder of communism.” Although there is no generally accepted opinion on almost all issues related to the term “Sovietness,” some provisions are shared by a significant part of researchers:

- firstly, the presentation of the category “Sovietness” as a socio-cultural identity (Soviet man)¹⁰ or a supra-ethnic community (Soviet people)¹¹;
- secondly, the recognition of “homo soveticus” as a product of ideological influence and the result of social design through education, inclusion in public life and the introduction of new everyday practices and forms of leisure¹²;

⁷ E.Yu. Zubkova, “Sovetskaia zhizn' kak predmet istoricheskoi rekonstruktsii,” *Vestnik Rossiiskoi akademii nauk* 90, no. 9 (2020): 882–890. <https://doi.org/10.31857/S0869587320090091>; Yu.V. Matveeva, “Vvedenie,” in *Chelovek sovetskii: za i protiv = Homo soveticus: pro et contra* (Yekaterinburg: Izdatelstvo Uralskogo universiteta Publ., 2021), 11–17; O.S. Porshneva, “Formirovanie «cheloveka sovetskogo»: evolyutsiia teoreticheskikh podkhodov bol'shevistskogo rukovodstva (1900–1930-e gody),” in *Chelovek sovetskii: za i protiv = Homo soveticus: pro et contra: monografiya* (Yekaterinburg: Izdatelstvo Uralskogo universiteta Publ., 2021), 32–49.

⁸ O.S. Porshneva, “Soznanie i povedenie cheloveka rannesovetskogo obshchestva: predposylki, etapy, kharakter transformatsii,” in L.N. Mazur, O.V. Gorbacheva, eds. *Sovetskii proekt. 1917–1930-e gg.: etapy i mekhanizmy realizatsii: sbornik statei* (Yekaterinburg: Izdatelstvo Uralskogo universiteta Publ., 2018), 207–237.

⁹ E.Yu. Zubkova, “Sovetskaia zhizn',” 882–886.

¹⁰ A.A. Zinov'ev, *Faktor ponimaniia* (Moscow: Algoritm Publ., 2006), 194, 397.

¹¹ M.E. Popov, “Metamorfozy nadetnicheskoi identichnosti: sovetskost', etnichnost' i rossiiskaya grazhdanskaya natsiia,” in *Natsional'naia identichnost' Rossii i demograficheskii krizis* (Moscow: Nauchnyi ekspert Publ., 2007), 607–617.

¹² L.N. Mazur, “«Chelovek sovetskii» kak rezul'tat sotsial'nogo inzhiniringa,” in L.N. Mazur, ed. *Sovetskoe obshchestvo: kul'tura, soznanie, povedenie*, part 2 of *Rannesovetskoe obshchestvo kak sotsial'nyi proekt, 1917–1930-e gg.* (Yekaterinburg: Izdatelstvo Uralskogo universiteta Publ., 2019), 182; O.S. Porshneva, “‘Novyi chelovek' kak fenomen sovetskogo proekta industrial'nogo razvitiia (1920 – nachalo 30-kh gg.),” in *Industrial'noe razvitiie regiona i mira: istoriia i sovremennost': Materialy Vserossiiskoi nauchnoi konferentsii*

– thirdly, the consideration of Sovietness in the context of Soviet everyday life, among other things in the form of symbols (including the world of fashion and things)¹³ and various practices – ritual,¹⁴ consumer,¹⁵ leisure¹⁶ and others;

– fourthly, a statement of the presence of a very thin line between Soviet and post-Soviet reality, which is demonstrated, in particular, by the analysis of Soviet and post-Soviet institutions¹⁷;

– fifthly, the creation of a wide and varied set of “markers” of the Soviet way of life: material (string bag, faceted drinking glass, “Narodny” coffee drink, kvass tank, pioneer tie, etc.), socio-economic (deficit, loans, temporary resident workers, communal apartment, etc.), communication (rumors, queues, camping trips, etc.), cultural and ideological (“the most reading country,” the first flight into space, victory over fascism, etc.).¹⁸ The content analysis of the issues of the magazine “Murzilka” for 1927–28 and 1930–32 allowed O.V. Ryzhkova to single out 960 “integral” (textual and visual) symbols and 165 visual markers of Sovietness; she considers the opposition of the Soviet canon to everything “foreign” or “alien” (both pre-Soviet and Western) to be a sign of Sovietness¹⁹;

– sixthly, the identification of the Soviet with the time of existence and with the territory of the USSR, with an adjustment that for the pre-war and post-war periods this phenomenon has significant differences and, above all, generational ones.²⁰ The fact of the direct influence on the process of educating “real” Soviet citizens of state structures revealed in the sources also allows us to speak about the dependence of the phenomenon of Sovietness on the transformation of the communist regime.²¹

It is widely believed that Sovietness had become a stable standard by the mid-1950s,²² and the initial stage of the formation of a Soviet person occurred at the end of

(Yekaterinburg: LLC Izdatel'stvo UMTS UPI Publ., 2019), 235, 236; Yu.V. Chernyavskaya, “Na rendez-vous s epokhoi: sovetskii intelligent v poiskakh identichnosti,” *Chelovek*, no. 5 (2007): 29.

¹³ O.Yu. Gurova, *Sovetskoe nizhnee bel'yo: mezhdru ideologii i povsednevnost'iu* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie Publ., 2008); S.V. Zhuravlyov, and Yu. Gronov, *Moda po planu: istoriia mody i modelirovaniia odezhdy v SSSR, 1917–1991 gg.* (Moscow: IRI RAN Publ., 2013).

¹⁴ V.V. Glebkin, *Ritual v sovetskoi kul'ture* (Moscow: Yanus-K Publ., 1998); E.A. Lisina, “Ritual v post-traditsii: na primere sovetskoi kontseptsii obryadnosti,” *Kontekst i refleksii: filosofiiia o mire i cheloveke* 6, no. 1A (2017): 215–220.

¹⁵ A.S. Ivanova, *Magaziny 'Beryozka.' Paradoksy potrebleniia v pozdnem SSSR.* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie Publ., 2017).

¹⁶ S. Lovell, “Dosug v Rossii: 'svobodnoe' vremia i ego ispol'zovanie,” *Antropologicheskii forum*, no. 2 (2005): 136–173.

¹⁷ Yu.S. Pivovarov, “‘... I v razvalinakh vek’,” *Polis*, no. 6 (2011): 52–77.

¹⁸ M.N. Guboglo, “Kontsept «sovetskosti» v etnologo-antropologicheskom kontekste,” *Vestnik antropologii*, no. 3 (2017): 8, 10, 12, 17, 20; V. Ozkan, ed. *Sdelano v SSSR: simvol'ny sovetskoy epokhi* (Moscow: Mir entsiklopedii Avanta +AST Publ., 2013), etc.

¹⁹ O.V. Ryzhkova, “Vizual'nye obrazy «sovetskosti» v detskom zhurnale «Murzilka» 1920–1930-x godov,” *Sovetskii proekt. 1917–1930-e gg.: etapy i mekhanizmy realizatsii. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov* (Yekaterinburg: Izdatel'stvo Uralskogo universiteta Publ., 2018), 99–100.

²⁰ T. Shanin, “Istoriia pokolenii i pokolencheskaia istoriia.” In *A generational analysis of contemporary Russia* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie Publ., 2005), 21.

²¹ A.P. Kilin, “«Homo economicus» & «homo soveticus»: praktiki ekonomicheskogo povedeniia sovetskogo cheloveka,” in L.N. Mazur, ed. *Sovetskoe obshchestvo: kul'tura, soznanie, povedenie*, part 2 of *Ran-nesovetskoe obshchestvo kak sotsial'nyi proekt, 1917–1930-e gg.* (Yekaterinburg: Izdatel'stvo Uralskogo universiteta Publ., 2019), 268; O.S. Porshneva, “Soznanie i povedenie cheloveka v postrevoliutsionnoi epokhu: etapy, kharakter, rezul'taty transformatsii,” in L.N. Mazur, ed. *Sovetskoe obshchestvo*, 374, 380.

²² Yu.S. Pivovarov, “‘... I v razvalinakh vek’,” 61; E.Yu. Zubkova, “Sovetskaia zhizn',” 887.

the 1920–30s, which is associated with socialization and the change of the first Soviet generations.²³ The analysis of the process of the formation of Sovietness with the help of school primers of 1927–32 revealed an increase in their page-by-page “dosage” of Sovietness.²⁴ An increase in the integral (by 3.7 times) and visual (by 2 times) indices of “Sovietness” is also demonstrated by the results of the content analysis of the materials of the magazine “Murzilka” of these years.²⁵ An important role in the formation of Soviet values among the younger generation was played by toys (for example, a tumbler symbolizing the ability of a Soviet person to rise after any failure), as well as pioneer camps.²⁶

During the period of Stalinist industrialization, one of the channels for constructing the “new Soviet person” was factory newspapers, on the pages of which biographies of “truly socialist workers” were published with their photographs and brief descriptions of their achievements.²⁷ L.N. Mazur’s analysis of Soviet filmography confirms the general trend of the Sovietization of Russian society. In the films of the first half of the 1930s, there dominate plots of the class struggle and the gradual transformation of peasants into a new class of collective farmers under the leadership of the bearers of class consciousness committed to Marxism and involved in socialist construction. In the films of the second half of the decade, the Soviet myth is reflected, in which the Soviet society is presented as that of freedom, equality and fraternity, vertical mobility to the category of the “best” representatives of the Soviet people.²⁸

The official documents to a greater extent demonstrate the way the authorities at various levels imagined or would like to see the image of a “real Soviet person” (good examples are the reports of party state bodies, the “Moral Code of the Builder of Communism” or “Basic Rules of Conduct for Soviet Citizens traveling to capitalist and developing countries”). At the same time, the documents of private origin (especially mass-produced documents) make it possible to understand the way the citizens perceived the content of Sovietness, since they not only were subjected to targeted influence, but also participated in the implementation of the Soviet project. In particular, the content analysis of the letters to the authorities²⁹ shows that in 1928–35 the adjective “Soviet” in these letters was most often used with the nouns “power,” “state” and “institutions,” that is, it was associated with the institutions of the new statehood. Much less frequently the correspondents identified themselves with these institutions. But from the mid-1930s the use of the category “Soviet” expanded significantly, covering not only institutions (science, justice, intelligence, etc.), but also various social groups (intelligentsia and

²³ V.A. Somov, “Fenomen sovetskosti,” 18, 19; L.N. Mazur, “«Chelovek sovetskii»,” 187.

²⁴ A.Yu. Rozhkov, “Vizual’nye obrazy «sovetskosti» v shkol’nom bukvarе 1927–1932 gg.: kontent, struktura, dinamika,” in *Vestnik PSTGU*, no. 45 (2017): 58, 61.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 99–100.

²⁶ M.N. Guboglo, “Kontsept «sovetskosti»,” 11.

²⁷ N.V. Soloshchenko, “Konstruirovaniye «novogo rabochego» v gody pervykh piatiletok (kontent-analiz materialov fabrichnykh mnogotirazhek),” in *Istoricheskie vyzovy i ekonomicheskoe razvitiye Rossii: materialy Vserossiiskoi nauchnoi konferentsii s mezhdunarodnym uchastiem. Ekaterinburg, 25–26 sentiabria 2019 g.* (Yekaterinburg: Izdatelstvo Uralskogo universiteta Publ., 2019), 95, 97.

²⁸ L.N. Mazur, “‘Chelovek sovetskii’ kak rezul’tat sotsial’nogo inzhiniringa,” in Mazur, L.N., ed. *Sovetskoe obshchestvo: kul’tura, soznanie, povedenie*, part 2 of *Rannesovetskoe obshchestvo kak sotsial’nyi projekt, 1917–1930-e gg.* (Yekaterinburg: Izdatelstvo Uralskogo universiteta Publ., 2019), 372, 374, 377.

²⁹ A.Ya. Livshin, I.B. Orlov, and O.V. Khlevnyuk, eds. *Pis’ma vo vlast’: 1928–1939: Zaiavleniia, zhaloby, donosy, pis’ma v gosudarstvennyye struktury i sovetskim vozhdiam* (Moscow: ROSSPEN Publ., 2002).

workers, youth and children, scientists and pilots, teachers and schoolchildren). The phenomenon of Sovietness got a territorial dimension (country, land, homeland) and was extended to the population living in this territory (people, citizens). The “Soviet order” became the sign of the new statehood, and the “Soviet position” became the sign of a new person.

The way out of the current historiographical situation can be the identification of the main lines of the historiographical split (determining the research mainstream) without dividing a large array of works according to the disciplinary principle, which is unproductive due to the interdisciplinary nature of the category “Sovietness.”

The combination of different meanings in the phenomenon of Sovietness (“Soviet way of life,” “Soviet person,” “Soviet society,” etc.) that has developed in modern historiography has actualized the search for an answer to the question about the ways of “co-existence” of such a rich semantic content. Conventionally, all explanatory models of the essence of Sovietness can be divided into three groups:

- 1) through actual or constructed opposites (non-Sovietness, post-Sovietness, humanity);
- 2) through the method of seeming synonymy (socialism, sovietness, Russianness);
- 3) through “fitting” the main features of the Soviet into certain semantic constructs (civilization, supranational identity, a set of values / anti-values, a special cultural code, a specific model of behavior).

Let's consider these approaches in more detail.

"Unity and Struggle of Opposites"

1. *Sovietness vs non-Sovietness*. All attempts to understand “Sovietness” through its opposite (non-Sovietness) raise questions about the criteria for such a comparison. Whereas Soviet historiography was characterized by the opposition of the socialist and bourgeois way of life, today the reduction of non-Sovietness to bourgeoisness is incorrect. The opposition of Sovietness to anti-Sovietness clarifies little in the phenomenon of “Sovietness.”

2. *Sovietness vs post-Sovietness*. The modern semiosphere of Sovietness has two foundations (nostalgia for the Soviet past and a postmodern game with Soviet symbols) and, accordingly, two levels – relics of the Soviet era and simulacra of Soviet reality.³⁰ Therefore, due to the interpenetration of the Soviet and post-Soviet spaces, it is impossible to accurately distinguish between them.

3. *Sovietness vs humanity*. For the harshest critics of the Soviet past,³¹ negative assessments are largely associated with the consideration of a Soviet person as an ideal-typical construction. It is a different matter if we consider it not as an abstraction cut off from life, but as a product of historical development in all its diversity.

³⁰ M. Timofeev, “Znaki ‘sovetskosti’ v sovremennoi Rossii: semantika, sintaktika i pragmatika,” in *Mikhail Yur'evich Timofeev*, 2022, August 1, <http://timland.narod.ru/nation/sovietica.htm>.

³¹ See, for example, M.V. Rats: Interdisciplinary seminar led by L.A. Gordon “The Soviet Union and Soviet Society – What Was It?” (“Ideas and materials for the development of the concept of the Museum of the USSR,”) in *Sakharov Center*, December 2, 2022, <https://old.sakharov-center.ru/projects/ussr-museum/seminar11.htm> (This message (material) was created and (or) distributed by a foreign media outlet that performs the functions of a foreign agent, and (or) a Russian legal entity acting as a foreign agent).

"Alleged Synonyms"

1. *Sovietness as socialism/communism.* Whereas some authors use the Soviet as “a synonym for a socialist society”,³² their opponents differentiate these phenomena, based on the non-identity of the concepts of “Soviet person” and “communist”.³³ In this regard, of interest is an observation: in the Soviet tradition, the Motherland is always Soviet, and the Fatherland is socialist. Most often, Sovietness and the party spirit were fused into a single construct.

2. *Sovietness as Soviet factor.* Since the image of the “Soviet factor” is quite widely represented in the literature, we will not dwell on this. It is much more interesting to consider the arguments of the opponents of reducing Sovietness to the Soviet factor. For them, Sovietness is associated with the best features of the Soviet way of life – income equality, universal free education and free healthcare, focus on children and the elderly, and so on, whereas the Soviet factor is expressed in leveling and hypocrisy, ideological pressure and “telephone law,” cronyism and black and white vision of the world. As one can see, we are talking about different sets of characteristics of Soviet reality in the spirit of Kant's antinomies.

3. *Sovietness as Russianness.* Attempts to identify Russianness and Sovietness are made mainly in the anti-Soviet context often mixed with Russophobia. On the one hand, there are grounds for identification, since in the Soviet Union the signs of a Soviet person were fluency in the Russian language and familiarization with Russian culture.³⁴ Apparently, this explains foreigners' perception of all tourists from the USSR as Russians. On the other hand, Sovietness was finally equated with Russianness only after the Great Patriotic War. During the Great Patriotic War, there occurred the massive return of the characters of Russian history (the establishment of the orders of Suvorov, Kutuzov, Nakhimov) and symbols (epaulettes, the military rank of generalissimo) that had begun just before the war. There was also a certain relationship between times. This ideological turn was made with I.V. Stalin's toast to the health of the Russian people at the Kremlin reception of the Red Army commanders on May 24, 1945³⁵ But today it is hardly worth appealing to the “banquet” tradition. Moreover, the “Russian turn” proved to be short-lived, giving way to the ideological construction “a single Soviet people.”

"Great discourse"

1. *Sovietness as civilization.* In Russian historiography (as well as in the West), the range of assessments varies from the refusal of the Soviet in the status of even a local civilization to the uniqueness of the Soviet civilization³⁶. However, there are more cautious formulations that assess Sovietness as “a project of the civilization formally outlined and isolated from another (Western), but mainly through prohibitions and denials.”³⁷

³² N.A. Skorobogaczskaya, and V.V. Skorobogaczskii, “Sovetskoe: istoriko-kul'turnyi kontekst fenomena,” *Antinomii* 20, no. 2 (2020): 34. <https://doi.org/10.24411/2686-7206-2020-10202>

³³ V.A. Somov, “Fenomen sovetskosti,” 19.

³⁴ M.Yu. Barbashin, “Sovetskaia identichnost' v etnosotsial'nom prostranstve: institutsional'nye osobennosti,” *Teoriia i praktika obshchestvennogo razvitiia*, no. 7 (2012): 45–50.

³⁵ V.A. Nevezhina, ed. *Zastol'nye rechi Stalina. Dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow: AIRO-XX Publ.; St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin Publ., 2003), 470.

³⁶ S.G. Kara-Murza, *Sovetskaia tsivilizatsiia. Ot Velikoi Pobedy do nashikh dnei*. Moscow: Eksmo Publ.; Algoritm Publ., 2004.

³⁷ N.A. Skorobogaczskaya, and V.V. Skorobogaczskii, “Sovetskoe,” 52.

2. *Sovietness as a form of supranational identity.* Some researchers believe that the formation of a supranational identity was hindered by the absence of “common religious past and common religious present” among the peoples of the USSR bound by common ideology.³⁸ But there are arguments in favor of the uniqueness of the Soviet socio-cultural identity (Sovietness) constructed by the authorities as a supra-ethnic identity based on political loyalty.³⁹

3. *Sovietness as a set of values or anti-values.* Most often in the literature there is an attempt to highlight the dominant value component (for example, stability or justification of actions by a great goal) or to build a hierarchy of value attitudes – work is more important than money, the spiritual is more important than the material, etc. But Sovietness was perceived differently by people of different generations and social groups. Even before the legitimization of the term “Soviet patriotism” during the Great Patriotic War, the values of patriotism made their way through the values of internationalism.

Many representatives of the post-war generation remained bearers of the “real” (from the point of view of the pre-war generations) Soviet values in many respects formally.⁴⁰ For others, a Soviet person appears as a collection of anti-values – a non-religious attitude to life; conviction of one's superiority combined with the sense of one's own inferiority; the desire to solve problems with violence; dividing the world into “us” and “them.”⁴¹ But most often, the “Soviet factor” appears as a complex interweaving of values and anti-values, where political infantilism, egalitarianism, dependency and ideological intolerance coexist with faith in a “bright future,” love for the Motherland, self-denial and Christian patience.⁴² There is a rational kernel in this approach.

1. *Sovietness as a special cultural code.* The ambiguity of the Soviet cultural code is explained by its emergence at the intersection of rural and urban cultures. Because of this, on the one hand, it represents a utopian image of the desired future, and on the other hand, it carries an attitude towards the annihilation of the previous reality.⁴³ That is, in this approach we see the recognition of the dual nature of Sovietness.

2. *Sovietness as a behavioral complex.* Sovietness is also viewed as a self-reproducing human behavioral complex which was largely determined by the nature of Soviet everyday life – living conditions, a specific consumption structure, a new sexual morality, the politicization of leisure, etc.⁴⁴ In this regard, the category “Soviet life” can be explained as a system of “existence of the Soviet society, its separate groups and individuals under certain conditions,” both regulated and arising spontaneously. It is concluded that Soviet life has stable features fixed in rituals and everyday practices – from work ones to leisure ones and from prescribed ones to deviant ones.⁴⁵

³⁸ G. Pomeranets, *Vykhod iz transa* (Moscow: Yurist Publ., 1995), 235.

³⁹ M.E. Popov, “Antropologiya sovetskosti: Filosofskii analiz,” PhD diss. in Philosophy, Stavropol State University, 2004.

⁴⁰ V.A. Somov, “Fenomen sovetskosti,” 18, 19.

⁴¹ V. Vyzhutovich, “My takie zhe, kak vse.” *Rossiiskaia gazeta*. January 22, 2013.

⁴² A.P. Kilin, “‘Homo economicus’,” 237–268; N. Lebina, *Entsiklopediia banal'nostei: Sovetskaia povsednevnost': Kontury, simvoly, znaki* (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin Publ., 2006), 10; O.S. Porshneva, “Soznanie i povedenie cheloveka,” 237.

⁴³ N.A. Skorobogaczkaia, and V.V. Skorobogaczkaia, “Sovetskoe,” 33–34, 47, 55.

⁴⁴ N. Lebina, *Entsiklopediia banal'nostei*, 10; Polyakov, Yu.A. “Chelovek v povsednevnosti. Istoricheskie aspekty.” *Voprosy istorii*, no. 3 (2000): 127.

⁴⁵ E.Yu. Zubkova, “Sovetskaia zhizn,” 882, 885.

Conclusions

The considered historiographic approaches show that the understanding of the phenomenon of “Sovietness” can be based on the following principles: interdisciplinarity, the search for “great discourse,” the recognition of the dual nature of Sovietness and the “transparency” of the boundaries between the Soviet and post-Soviet chronotopes. We see that the historical (Soviet life), sociological (Soviet society) and anthropological (Soviet person) dimensions of the phenomenon of “Sovietness” form a research space filled with different theoretical and methodological approaches, a variety of signs of “Sovietness” and often diametrically opposed assessments of them; the most promising of them is the idea of the dual nature of Sovietness. To a certain extent, such “discordance” is connected with the nature of the sources involved in the explanatory models. Another historiographical turn in the study of the phenomenon of Sovietness can be associated with the expansion of the source base and, above all, at the expense of mass sources of private origin, such as, for example, letters to the authorities, which make it possible to clarify the process of establishing new Soviet values and, accordingly, to verify theoretical and methodological foundations of modern research. This allows us to treat the phenomenon of Sovietness not only as an ideological construct or a way of manipulating power decisions, but also as a marker of a new identity.

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