

# **'Traditions' in Soviet Theory and Practice**



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## The Concept of the 'Survival' and Soviet Social Science in the 1950s and 1960s<sup>1</sup>

In one of his pieces of journalism, the distinguished socialist realist writer Fyodor Panferov recounted the following story. Speaking on one occasion in front of members of a model Komsomol organisation in a major factory, he 'began to talk about survivals'. The Komsomol members, he writes, 'looked at me ironically, as though saying, "You may well have survivals, but we don't — the eldest of us was born in 1935"'. However, the writer did not despair and caught the presumptuous youths out with 'proof' of the opposite. It came down to the following: they were all in complete agreement that it was proper for a young man to sing a serenade beneath the window of a girl, but they considered identical behaviour on the part of the girl to be improper. "Well that's one of your survivals", I said. "Why it is considered 'proper' for a chap but 'improper' for a girl? [...]. All this 'proper' and 'improper' business has grown from a terrible injustice: from the inequality of women, which is born out of private ownership" [Panferov 1960: 60].

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This story captures, perhaps in a slightly exaggerated form, a situation that Soviet leaders, ideologists, philosophers and social scientists had been continually confronted with for several

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decades. By broadly using the concept of ‘survivals’ to describe and explain the presence in Soviet society of very varied phenomena that were incompatible with socialism, they were compelled at a certain point to attempt to give an account of the true reasons behind the existence of these ‘anti-social’ trends. The key time for this came during the latter half of the 1950s when the generation born after the revolution finally reached adulthood, which coincided with the need for the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) to find new ways of managing the country, based not so much on violence as a focus on the requirements of society and attempting to satisfy them.

Khrushchev’s aspiration to mobilise the Soviet people along the path towards building communism was famously accompanied by promoting activity in all possible forms of social organisations – from the Komsomol and trade unions to women’s councils, tenant association committees, comrade courts and voluntary people’s guards. In the second half of the 1950s came the promotion of the activities of ethnographers, philosophers and (proto-)sociologists in studying contemporary Soviet society. These activities, called ‘concrete social research’ during this period, led to a significant change in the research agenda of ethnography, a revival of sociology in the USSR, the institutionalisation of academic communism and various attempts at philosophical reflection on current social issues. The idea of the ‘survival’, was, as will be demonstrated, an important part not only of official ideology, but also of the conceptual apparatus of Soviet social science and of social knowledge, and the ‘survival’ was a unique instrument that allowed the deficiencies and problems of Soviet society to be more or less openly talked about within the still rather strict censorship of official discourse. Attributing the realities of modern life to ‘survivals’ undoubtedly makes it easier to deal with the reasons for their continued existence forty years after the triumph of the socialist revolution. Insofar as, according to the official version, ‘survivals’ existed mainly in people’s ‘consciousness’ (although sometimes ‘and behaviour’ was added), their existence was explained by the ‘lag of social consciousness behind objective reality’. The lag was so long, however, that it threatened to grow into a situation where this consciousness was idealistically independent from objective reality, and attempts to provide a materialistic, Marxist explanation of the presence of ‘survivals’ in terms of actual factors in socialist reality raised uncomfortable questions about the imperfections of the latter. Soviet social studies similarly could not overcome this vicious circle, and timid efforts to do so, as will be shown, came up against a rather harsh reaction. Nevertheless, the story of this little-known quest and discussion – carried out by scholars and ideologists who were absolutely loyal to the regime – allows new light to be shed on the reasons and mechanisms behind

the formation of sociological (in the widest sense of the word) reflection in the Soviet Union.

'Survivals from the past' were defined in the *Communist Education* dictionary as 'the remnants of past social relations, of forms of behaviour and the consciousness of people, which are preserved in new socio-economic conditions but do not result from the essence of these conditions'. Let us also refer to a more comprehensive definition that summarises the essence of the concept in relation to socialist society:

Of special theoretical and practical interest is the task of elucidating the nature of survivals from the past in a socialist society and the reasons for its preservation and ways of eliminating them. Unlike all preceding societies, socialism has no interest in conserving survivals from the past, and their dissolution is an essential condition for the progress of socialist society. However, socialism is not yet free from survivals from the past, and cannot rid itself of them immediately. [...]

Under the conditions of socialism, survivals from the past are primarily manifest in anti-social behaviour, by infringing socialist norms of rights and morality. Conduct that has been attributed to them includes theft, hooliganism, bribery, striving to reap more from society while giving less, bureaucracy, petty bourgeois traits,<sup>1</sup> and parasitism. All these types of behaviour and of people's consciousness arose in pre-socialist societies. They have no social roots in socialism, and do not result from its essence. Furthermore, the nature of the reasons for their preservation and reproduction within the conditions of socialist society are objective (the insufficient development of the forces of production, the immaturity of a number of social relations groups, such as distributive groups, and the imperfection of several links in the chain of the economic mechanism), as well as subjective (shortcomings in the activity of State and economic organisations and individual leaders, formalism in ideological and educational work). We must also bear in mind that the support of anti-social and anti-socialist countries is the goal of bourgeois propaganda and ideological sabotage by imperialist circles [Kommunisticheskoe vospitanie 1984: 184–5].

This definition in brief dictionary form summarises the rather long debates surrounding the essence of and reasons for the existence of survivals in socialist society, legitimised by classic citations from Marx and Lenin about the lengthy process of switching to communism and the fixity of 'birthmarks' from the past on the body of a new

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<sup>1</sup> *Meshchanstvo*: referring to a wide variety of vulgar, self-serving types of behaviour [Eds.].

society. At the same time, strangely it mentions neither the survival, indubitable from the perspective of Soviet officialdom, of religion, nor of nationalism. Nor did it allude to a multitude of other 'survivals', the list of which changed with each new ideological campaign. The following section offers an attempt at tracing the 'biography' of the concept of the 'survival' in the discourse of official ideology and the philosophy of historical materialism, and its subsequent development and application in the 'concrete social research' of ethnographers and sociologists.

### **S. M. Kovalyov and the philosophical discourse about survivals and the communist education of workers**

The concept of survivals entered firmly into the conceptual apparatus of the classics of Marxism and of Soviet leaders. From Lenin onwards this idea was part of the discourse on the 'communist education' that all levels of Soviet society were supposed to undergo as part of the process of creating the 'new man'. As the author of a 1940 publication in *Bolshevik* emphasized, Lenin 'on literally the second day after the revolution, put forward the communist education of the working masses as the most important task of the party'. This education was supposed to consist of re-making the country's morals that had been 'ruined by the cursed private ownership of the means of production' and its consequences, the atmosphere of 'squabbling and mistrust', and the elimination of the 'cursed rule of "every man for himself, God for us all"'. At the same time, Lenin spoke out against the idealism that suggested that the main way of fighting against old habits and morals should be not through agitation but through the masses participating in the 'everyday battle for constructing a new system' [Konstantinov 1940: 72–74]. Soviet ideology's classic interpretation of the 'survivals from capitalism' was provided by Joseph Stalin at the XVII Congress of the Communist Party in 1934. Having famously declared the complete triumph of the 'socialist way of life', he pointed out that you could not talk about overcoming survivals from capitalism in the economy in the same way as in people's consciousness: 'You cannot say this not only because people's consciousness is lagging in its development behind the economic situation, but also because its capitalist surrounding still exists, which tries to revive and support survivals from capitalism in the USSR's economy and the consciousness of its people, and against which we, the Bolsheviks, should continually keep our powder dry' [Stalin 1951: 349].

The most complete list of 'survivals from the past' was compiled in 1950 by a party functionary, the philosopher and ideologist S. M. Kovalyov, who subsequently played an important role in the interpretation of this concept. Among the main survivals were 'a negligent

attitude towards labour', the remnants of private ownership psychology and bourgeois morality, nationalism, cosmopolitanism, bureaucracy, idealist views, religious superstitions and prejudices [Kovalyov 1950: 19–20]. The main emphasis (and this was seemingly characteristic of interpreting the concept of survivals during Stalin's era) was placed on the attitude towards labour. A non-communist attitude towards labour was a problem for the working environment, and manifested in the form of negligence, failing to adhere to norms, high rates of sub-standard production, lack of desire to introduce new technology and 'productivity-limiting' (aligning with the average or lower levels). Furthermore, in a peasant environment (generally more inclined towards preserving survivals) they manifested in the form of 'squandering' common lands, 'exaggerating' homestead lands and not fulfilling State grain deliveries and so on [Kovalyov 1950: 20–26].

In the post-Stalin period, S. M. Kovalyov became the chief philosopher specializing in survivals from the past, the reasons behind their preservation and ways of fighting against them. He was born in Belarus into a peasant family in 1913. In 1935, when he had finished seven years at a railway technical school and working at a steam train depot, he entered the history faculty of the Moscow Institute of Philosophy, Literature and History, and a Higher Party School in 1939. From 1943 to 1948 he worked on the Agitprop staff at the Central Committee (including holding the position of manager of the Propaganda Department). Kovalyov was secretary of the Kursk regional committee of the Communist Party from 1948–1951, and from 1951–1954 he was director of the State Publishing House of Political Literature (Gospolitizdat). After a short period working in academic institutes, from 1957 he again became involved on the propagandistic front, in the Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting, editing the journal *Problems of the World and Socialism* in Prague. In 1965, Sergei Mitrofanovich became an editor of *Pravda* in the propaganda department. In 1942, he had defended his dissertation for the Candidate of Historical Sciences, and he took his doctoral dissertation in philosophy at the Higher Party School in 1954 [ARAS. F. 411. Op. 58. D. 1208. L. 4]. It was this dissertation, entitled "On the Communist Education of the Workers", that turned out unexpectedly to be the object of lengthy and partly scandalous discussion, which led to a review of the Higher Attestation Commission's decision to confer his degree (the degree of Doctorate of Philosophical Sciences was finally conferred on Kovalyov for the second time only in 1963) and to discussions in the academic and Party press. At the centre of these discussions was the concept of 'survivals'.

Kovalyov's work represented a unique interpretation of Russian history and the Soviet present, as a process by which the Bolsheviks

gradually, 'progressively' and with unfailing wisdom, educated the population of the country. However, the ideologically irreproachable text contained an innovation which contributed to the complex fate of the dissertation. Kovalyov asserted that the existence of survivals from capitalism was impossible to explain simply through consciousness lagging behind socialist reality: 'In the economy of socialism, the first phase of communism, there are still certain phenomena that hinder the defeat of survivals from capitalism in the consciousness of the people.' Among these phenomena, Kovalyov included the methods for the production of goods, the differences between town and the country, and the distinction between mental and physical labour, all of which led to his adventurous theory of the 'disparity in satisfying the needs of the people living under socialism' [Kovalyov 1954: 542]. In a more open way, Kovalyov expressed his views during a discussion which took place a month after his defence at the Academy of Social Sciences, about a report by Tsolak Stepanyan entitled 'On the Contradictions in the Development of Soviet Society'. The main contradiction of socialism which philosophers had begun to talk about was considered by Sergei Mitrofanovich to be the impossibility of satisfying every person's vital needs and the inequality that arose therefrom on socialist soil. Springing from this impossibility, Kovalyov believed that the principle of distributing labour was imperfect, and this imperfection gave rise to 'anti-social views', as well as persistent 'survivals from capitalism' even among young people who had never lived under capitalism. Socio-economic inequality turned out to be a universal key. When explaining his position, the philosopher had recourse to elementary analogies:

Somehow I see that my son is given an apple to take to school by his mother. But he says to her, 'Please don't give me an apple, can I have a pasty instead? When I eat a pasty, the children think I'm eating bread, and they don't ask for any, but if I eat an apple, they all fly at me and ask me to give them some.' We have few apples, not enough, but there is no shortage of bread. Surely in this case antisocial views could arise, such as jealousy that someone has an apple; on the other hand, this lad might develop an arrogant attitude towards others. Such things happen in life, and from this source antisocial views emerge.

If many needs are not satisfied and there is inequality in their satisfaction (one has more while others have less) this cannot fail to give rise to antisocial views [RGASPI. F. 606. Op. 1. D. 315. L. 172].

It soon became clear that these kinds of views were too radical for a Soviet philosopher. After corresponding 'signals', the Higher Attestation Commission appointed a second review of the dissertation



and received a negative response from another eminent figure on the propagandistic front, who had become Director of the Institute of Philosophy in 1955, Pyotr Fedoseev. By citing the passages from Kovalyov's work that I have quoted above, the reviewer indicated that the conclusions drawn from them show the socialist economy as being the 'source' of survivals from capitalism. 'His reasoning on the one hand essentially justifies survivals from bourgeois ideology and morality through so-called objective conditions, while on the other it can sow the idea of the futility of battling to overcome survivals from capitalism in the consciousness of the people in the conditions of socialism' [GARF. F. R-9506. Op. 72. D. 97. L. 134]. The expert commission acknowledged that Kovalyov's ideas were anti-Marxist, as well as theoretically and politically harmful, and the decision in 1955 to confer his degree was revoked [GARF. F. R-9506. Op. 72. D. 97. L. 24].

Kovalyov, however, did not reject his beloved idea. In 1957 he sent an article to the journal *Kommunist* entitled 'The Survivals of Capitalism in the Consciousness of the People under Socialism and Ways of Overcoming Them'. At the beginning of 1957, this article was discussed three times by the editorial board. At the first meeting, the author optimistically concluded that the fundamental idea of the article (that 'antisocial views not only appear as a result of consciousness lagging behind reality, but are also fed by specific factors of our real world') had met with no resistance [RGASPI. F. 599. Op. 1. D. 90. L. 8]. However, the resistance of the editors, as the protocols of the discussions about this article show, was in fact very significant. The objection of a most strictly philosophical kind came down to the fact that Kovalyov's position rendered the concept of survivals meaningless, since labour distribution, in which Kovalyov saw the 'birthmarks' of capitalism, comprised the very essence of socialism [RGASPI. F. 599. Op. 1. D. 90. L. 29–30]. The then head of the Department for Propaganda and Agitation at the Central Committee, Fyodor Konstantinov, objected for more tactical reasons:

My point of view is this: if we were not now battling against various sickly phenomena among the youth, I would be all for accommodating this article. This article, it seems to me, could revive and give grounds for various captious phenomena, various attacks on our regime and could support these moods. Certain writers could find self-justification in this article. The article is of course beneficial, it explicates why in the fortieth year of the existence of our socialist system there exists such a thing as survivals. But we know that hooliganism is more prevalent than in 1940, we must go to the courts, perhaps to the police, to analyze the misdemeanours, crimes and so on. Right now we are plodding without thinking. In 1940 there was no such phenomena

as ‘Not by bread alone’ or Zorin’s articles. Right now there is an outbreak, an intensification of the ideological struggle [RGASPI. F. 599. Op. 1. D. 90. Ll. 78–9].

However, the article was soon published. In it, Kovalyov gave a more detailed reasoning for his position. The Soviet regime provides equal reward for equal labour, but this does not cancel the inequality of people’s abilities and opportunities. Furthermore, even with an equal quantity and quality of labour and reward, ‘because of dissimilar family situations, dissimilar numbers of family members, because of different individual interests, inclinations and aspirations, people satisfy their needs to different extents’ [Kovalyov 1957: 32]. Clinging to his beloved theory, Kovalyov also pointed out problems that had rapidly become a central focus for sociologists: the insufficient mechanisation of labour and the ‘cultural and professional level’ of the workers, the impossibility for many to choose a profession ‘according to their inclination’ and so on [Kovalyov 1957: 33–34]. Soon after the article appeared in print in April 1957, Kovalyov wrote a letter to Nikita Khrushchev. He asserted that it proved the accuracy of his position and the groundlessness and ‘subjective nature’ of Fedoseev’s negative review, and he requested assistance in having his doctoral degree returned to him [GARF. F. R-9506. Op. 72. D. 97. L. 28]. For his part, Fedoseev more than once expressed his opinion in print against the specific academic workers who had ‘lost touch with life’, and were inaccurately interpreting the reasons for the existence of survivals [Fedoseev 1962: 231–232, 244]. As a result, Kovalyov’s monumental monograph *The Communist Education of the Workers* (M., 1960), a re-working of the text of his doctoral dissertation, was devoid of any controversial points with regard to interpreting the concepts of ‘survivals’.

The cavilling to which Kovalyov was subjected in the 1950s did not, however, prevent him from further reflection on this issue. In 1970, when the acuteness of these discussions had long since passed, he produced his last book — *On Man, and His Enslavement and Emancipation*. This work, containing a programme for the deliverance of humanity from virtually every vice and shortcoming, is an interesting example of late Soviet utopian thought. Though barely employing the concept of the ‘survival’, Kovalyov continued to examine the essence of socialist society and ways of overcoming its imperfections. Under socialism, he wrote, many characteristics of bourgeois society are preserved. Just as before the advent of socialism, the division of labour and its various guises still exist, and ‘people are united by common ownership of the means of production and are to some extent disconnected by the division of labour and the unequal conditions of production activity’ [Kovalyov 1970: 150]. Left intact is the inequality of opportunity for city and village inhabitants, men and women, and workers of mental and physical labour. Left intact

are elements of the alienation of man from his fellow man and from society, and his 'capture' by commodities. The 'remnants' of alienation in everyday life are the source of the alienation of consciousness: 'Insofar as under socialism man is, along with other members of society, the collective owner of the means of production and toils alongside others for the good of society, he is a collectivist. Insofar as in consequence of the division of labour he is somewhat isolated from other members of society in production activity, in distribution and consumption, he is, according to his own objective position, still somewhat of an individualist' [Kovalyov 1970: 154]. In this way, the 'remnants of constraint' in Soviet society are due to idiosyncrasies in the division of labour and to inequality in production, distribution and consumption.

In a chapter entitled 'Overcoming Vices and Achieving Moral Cleanliness of the People', Kovalyov undertook a bold attempt not only to provide a sociological explanation of the existence of almost all vices, but also to sketch out a way of overcoming them. In a section called 'Ways of Eliminating Greed, Lust for Power, Envy, and Lying', he proved that all these faults were caused by inequality and would be eliminated when this inequality disappeared. The 'Conditions for Overcoming Drunkenness and Hooliganism' also consisted of eliminating social oppression, forced labour, and the quest for 'illusory happiness'. Kovalyov even considered sexual debauchery to be a 'safety-valve' in conditions where there were predominantly 'transaction marriages', which could be completely eliminated by changing social conditions: 'Young people are not burdened by inactivity, idleness or unbearable boredom, their consciousness is not tormented by the pointlessness of existence. Yet it is primarily this that gives rise among the people of bourgeois society to their striving for "acute" sensations, particularly for "pleasure stimuli" such as drunkenness and debauchery. All this explains why the issue of sex in the lives of our young people does not occupy the same place as it does in the lives of young people in capitalist countries' [Kovalyov 1970: 229–230].

Kovalyov, the first in the post-Stalin period to raise the question of the 'survivals' and the reasons for their preservation, resolved the issue in the abstract manner characteristic of philosophers. While meditating on the 'law of consciousness lagging behind reality', philosophers and ideologists were, in the words of Konstantinov, 'plodding along without thinking', not having the factual material that only those social scientists working most closely to social reality — ethnographers and sociologists — could have provided. However, for all the naivety of his explanations, Kovalyov succeeded within the parameters of the ruling ideology in asking rather uncomfortable questions and introducing into the realm of social and philosophical analysis the 'shadier' sides of socialist reality.

### Ethnographers in search of the roots of survivals

‘After the XX Congress of the Communist Party, current issues became a central focus for the majority of the country’s ethnographical institutions’, declared an editorial article in *Soviet Ethnography* in 1961 [Sovetskaya etnografiya 1961: 4]. The main aim of studying modernity was, of course, ‘to reveal everything new and progressive’, although specialists in the area of folk culture did not ignore ‘harmful survival phenomena’ in the everyday life and consciousness of the Soviet people: ‘Ethnographers can best comprehend the reasons for the preservation of these survivals, expose their roots, demonstrate their damage and at the same time contribute towards their rapid elimination’ [Sovetskaya etnografiya 1961: 5].

The pioneer of this trend was a specialist in the area of the spiritual culture of the peoples of Central Asia, Gleb Pavlovich Snesarev. Gleb Snesarev was born in Leningrad into the family of psychiatrist and professor of the Institute of Psychiatry and Institute of the Human Brain, Pavel Evgenyevich Snesarev. He studied at Moscow State University at the department of ethnography, and upon completing his studies in 1930, he was sent to work at the Central State Museum of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic in Samarkand. When he returned to Moscow in 1936, he continued to work on the religious beliefs of the peoples of Central Asia at the Central Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism. He was involved in the Second World War. After unexpectedly declining several times to participate in scholarly museum activity (from 1945 to 1952 Snesarev worked at the Ministry for State Security for the Moscow Oblast), he arrived at the Institute of Ethnography and became one of the leading ethnographers specializing in religion. The academic’s most celebrated work, which he defended as his dissertation, was *Relics of Pre-Islamic Beliefs and Rituals among the Uzbeks of Khorezm* (M., 1969) [AIEA. ‘Lichnoe delo G. P. Snesareva’ [Personal record of G. P. Snesarev]. Ll. 8–10].

In 1957 Gleb Snesarev published an article called ‘On Several Reasons for the Preservation of Religious and Everyday Survivals among Uzbeks in Khorezm’. While orthodox Muslims, Snesarev wrote, were losing their influence, in Central Asia ‘whole complexes of survivals’ still existed, fundamentally rooted in family life. Most of them (magic, belief in spirits, the cult of holy graves and shamanism) were linked to the birth and upbringing of children, with the main ‘keepers’ of these survivals being women. The main reason for this was the preserving ‘isolation’ of female life and the patriarchal, feudal attitude towards women. Snesarev, however, did not stop at noting this fact, but went on to point out the social institution in which these traditions were upheld. This was the *elat* — a community made up of 20–40 families, linked by a common ancestor, communal living and

self-consciousness. It was in the existence of this relic of rural communities that the ethnographer saw the reason for the preservation of 'family / household and religious survivals':

The *elat* with its insularity, with its special internal way of life constructed on old traditions, and with the influence of a group of elders is a cell in which survivals from the past are preserved, whether they be from the realm of religion or familial relations; it is a fence that hinders the penetration of new views on life and new behavioural norms into individual families connected to the 'public opinion' of the *elat*. *Elats* have auspicious conditions for the preservation of animistic survivals, magic, the cult of ancestors and saints, and they uphold traditional wedding and funeral rituals [Snesarev 1957a: 70].

The material for this article was collected by Snesarev in 1954–1956 as part of a Khorezm expedition led by the director of the Institute of Ethnography, Sergei Tolstov [Snesarev 1957b]. Tolstov seemingly supported this research direction. It is worth noting that in 1956 the Institute of Ethnography, alongside several other academic institutions, was observed to have originated certain 'unripe commentaries' during the period of when Khrushchev's speech to the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party, 'On the Cult of Personality and its Consequences', was being discussed — a point that bears witness to the significant degree of free-thinking permitted within its walls [Reabilitatsiya 2003: 49]. At the same time, Tolstov was actively striving to incorporate the work of the institute within the actualized problems of constructing communism and educating the 'new man'. In 1959, the Integrated Expedition studying the processes of change for the social life and cultural modes of the peoples of the USSR during the shift from socialism to communism was created, which gathered material for the overview reports, 'The Modern Life of Rural Populations and Prospects for its Subsequent Transformation on the Path towards Communism', and 'The Problem of the Development of the Materialist World View and Ways of Eliminating Religious and Everyday Survivals', and others [Sovetskaya etnografiya 1961: 4]. As is evident from the protocol of an expanded meeting of the management of the institute dedicated to the 'theoretical problems of constructing communism', Tolstov was planning to make the Institute of Ethnography a leader among the humanities institutes at the Academy of Sciences through studying this particular set of problems. He intended to create an interdisciplinary Academic Council, whose activities should rely on the material gathered by the Integrated Expedition. Historians, lawyers, economists and representatives of other humanities subjects were also invited to participate in this expedition [ARAN. F. 142. Op. 1. D. 1050. L. 14, l. 18, ll. 19–21, l. 24, l. 34]. Notably, when reflecting on the issues of studying survivals from feudal and pre-

feudal institutes in the Caucasus and Central Asia, at this meeting Tolstov quoted Snesev's ideas:

I will allow myself to express one idea that has not yet, perhaps, been subjected to wider discussion, and which we have approached as a result of our work. It is in the most everyday of survivals from patriarchal relations and feudalism where the roots of the spontaneity of religious survivals lie. [...] This is one extraordinarily important point that is essential for the accurate direction of our main fire; religious survivals should have the same fire directed at them as currently strikes feudal and patriarchal survivals in the lives of our peoples, within the smallest cell of the people – in families, in each individual family [ARAN. F. 142. Op. 1. D. 1050. Ll. 10–11].

In October 1960 at a meeting of the institute's Academic Council, a manuscript was presented of a collection of 'Religious and Everyday Survivals in Kolkhoz Villages and Overcoming Them'. Its articles were written by celebrated scholars such as I. S. Gurvich, A. V. Smolyak, G. P. Snesev, L. N. Terentieva and others. The editor was a religious studies teacher, I. A. Kryvelev. He also summarized the main conclusion reached by this collective of authors. Primarily, he noted the 'irregularity of the process of overcoming religion in certain ethnic, social, age and educational groups', as well as in 'elements of the religious system': 'It turns out that the most enduring of these are rituals and festivals linked to their cults, ways of commemorating important events in an individual person's life, ways of commemorating various events in their social, family and individual calendars' [ARAN. F. 142. Op. 1. D. 1202. Ll. 7–8]. Furthermore, an article by L. A. Pushkareva and M. N. Shmelova entitled 'Religious and Everyday Survivals in Russian Kolkhoz Peasantry' raised the issue of 'narrow-minded public opinion' and its psychological pressure on the consciousness and life of the people.

This collection on the subject of religious and everyday survivals never saw the light of day. The reason was seemingly a matter of the censors and self-censorship. The reviewer M. N. Sheinman pointed out the need to place a special emphasis on the harmfulness of religious survivals and on 'how the new will triumph'. Oddly enough, Snesev was subjected to special criticism about his article on the 'Sunet-toi' ritual of circumcision among Uzbeks in Khorezm. In the reviewer's opinion, Snesev's assertions about the 'communal' nature of the festival could be used incorrectly to justify it: 'In Central Asia some people think that this relates to the realm of national traditions. Our task consist of demonstrating that it is not a national ritual, but a religious one, and very harmful' [ARAN. F. 142. Op. 1. D. 1202. L. 18]. Some ethnographers who entered into the discussion

about this collection, however, expressed doubts in relation to Kryvelev's assertions that the majority of the rural population already shared an atheist world view. Several 'snippets' of the works contained in the collection were nevertheless published. In their article entitled 'Religious and Everyday Survivals and Ways of Overcoming Them', Pushkareva, Snesarev and Shmeleva shed light on two aspects of the problem of a 'differentiated approach to various groups of believers' and highlighted three distinct age groups. The largest group of believers was, naturally, to be found among elderly collective farm workers. Among middle-aged people, 'religious superstitions' are mainly preserved among women. The reasons for this are seen by the authors as owing to the 'insufficient level of their culture' and the 'closed way of life' of women burdened with housework and having no opportunity to participate in social and cultural events [Pushkareva et al. 1960: 89–90]. On the other hand, the authors confirmed: 'The most persistent religious survivals are those that are linked to everyday life and folk customs through historical tradition, and that have accompanied the most important events in people's lives from olden times' [Ibid.: 91]. To fight against these survivals, it recommended that new rituals, capable of replacing religious ones, be more actively introduced. Kryvelev added to these observations another pattern: weak kolkhozes have more believers, since people are more occupied with homestead farming, which 'holds them captive within the narrow, closed circle of interests of their own family' and causes 'their isolation from our ideological life' [Kryvelev 1961: 34].

With their focus on modernity, ethnographers were forced to confront a tendency that seemed to them to be paradoxical. As early as 1956, P. I. Kushner, head of the study of Russian kolkhoz peasantry, made the following comment on the material from an expedition to Kalininskaya (Tverskaya) *oblast*: 'Very quickly, especially over the last two years, the material existence of peasants has been improving. It would seem that in this context the cultural level should have equally improved, or perhaps even more quickly. But this is not happening everywhere'. Thus, workers on a flax-growing kolkhoz began to earn good money, which they spent on feasting and drunkenness: 'With regard to this enrichment and the lack or insufficiency of suitable staff in the village, clubs are not effective and drunkenness develops terribly. Rich people spend huge sums of money on feasting' [ARAN. F. 142. Op. 1. D. 792. L. 13]. This observation was reflected in a monograph by L. A. Anokhina and M. N. Shmeleva called *The Culture and Everyday Life of Collective Farm Workers in the Kalininskaya Oblast* [Anokhina, Shmeleva 1964], in which the concept of 'survivals' was allotted a very insignificant place. Nevertheless, the author mentions: 'The reason for the robustness of antisocial phenomena is often concealed in the

rupture that still exists between rapidly increasing material possibilities for collective farm workers and a certain lagging behind of their cultural growth' [Anokhina, Smeleva 1964: 313]. Archive materials provide much more candid perspectives of ethnographers on this issue. Thus, an eminent Caucasus researcher V. K. Gardanov was, in his words, struck by the 'revival' of survivals such as bride-money, kidnapping brides, polygamy and so forth:

As it turns out, a whole series of customs, which I thought had been eliminated when I left Ossetia in 1925, are now, according to data in the press and from information received through personal conversations, not only not eliminated, but to a certain degree have been revived, to my great surprise. I reflected on this seriously: what were the reasons for the unconcealed renaissance of these customs? I have arrived at the idea that it comes not from the economic basis that is discussed here. On the contrary, economic prosperity has been found to a certain extent to be a contributing factor for the re-establishment of a whole series of customs. For example, a large number of people today come to Moscow on business trips or for other reasons, in order to purchase a dowry, which is to all intents and purposes bride-money for organising a marriage for their son, and these are extremely responsible and respectable people [ARAN. F. 142. Op. 1. D. 1050. Ll. 60–1].

Gardanov proposed creating a special group which would deal with survivals, although evidently this was not realised. Ethnographers were quicker to ask questions about the reasons behind the existence of 'survivals' than to answer them, although questions of a more empirical kind did get put. Ethnographers did not attempt to find a universal explanation in the spirit of Kovalyov, and they also divided the subject of his study — the 'carriers' of survivals — into age, gender and social groups, striving to find an approach to each of them. These attempts were continued by representatives of the regenerated discipline of sociology in the USSR.

### **'Concrete social research'**

The latter half of the 1950s was a time of regeneration for Soviet sociology. In 1958 in Moscow, an international conference of sociologists took place, and the Soviet Sociological Association was founded. In 1960 within the Institute of Philosophy, the Branch for Researching New Forms of Labour and Everyday Life and the first sociological laboratories simultaneously emerged in Leningrad and Sverdlovsk. Among the most relevant issues in the Institute of Philosophy's report were questions such as 'ways of transforming socialist labour into communist labour, a combination of material and moral stimuli for labour, the conditions for overcoming essential



differences between urban and rural life, and between mental and physical labour, the nature of survivals from the past in people's consciousness and the battle against them' [ARAN. F. 1922. Op. 1. D. 996. L. 65]. The gradual institutionalisation of sociology was the fruit of the actions of two main groups. On the one hand, the process was announced and controlled by philosophers / party ideologists who particularly represented Soviet sociology from abroad (F. V. Konstantinov, P. N. Fedoseev, G. P. Frantsov and others), and on the other, the first generation of professional sociologists was formed, who came to the new discipline from philosophy and other humanities disciplines (B. A. Grushin, T. I. Zaslavskaya, I. S. Kon, Yu. A. Levada, G. V. Osipov, V. A. Yadov and others). Being representatives of the 'sixties generation', they sought to distance themselves from the ideologised philosophy of historical materialism, and to consolidate the independence of sociology as a science, whilst at the same time preserving the pathos of serving society and aiding the construction of communism [Batygin 1999; Firsov 2001; Bikbov, Gavrilenko 2002–2003].

The slogan of the day, repeated at every meeting and report of the Institute of Philosophy in the latter half of the 1950s, was 'drawing closer to life', overcoming 'isolation from life' and the practice of constructing communism, and the battle against 'Talmudism and dogmatism'. The main organiser and inspiration for sociological research in Moscow was the deputy director of the institute, G. V. Osipov, who ordered philosophers to follow the example of Marx and Engels, who carried out serious sociological research (such as Engels' *The Condition of the Working Class in England*), and to study 'concrete material' in factories, mills and kolkhozes: 'We must boldly invade people's lives, go out into the districts and take part in the work of individual factories and mills, and carry out investigative work there [...] It is time to connect more directly to life' [ARAN. F. 1922. Op. 1. D. 1014. L. 9]. One of the first experiments in establishing a 'connection to life' was the organisation of a 'scientific research team' that gathered material in collaboration with Party and social activists. By 1958, as was noted by a report on the work of the Institute of Philosophy, a new way of holding Academic Councils had taken shape, which had begun to attract 'the wider community of Moscow, as well as workers and kolkhoz farmers from Moscow and the Moscow oblast' [ARAN. F. 1922. Op. 1. F. 930. L. 19]. In October 1958 a meeting of the Academic Council of the Institute of Philosophy took place with a group of workers who were engineers and technicians at the 'Dynamo' factory named after S. M. Kirov. The meeting was devoted to discussing the issue of 'The growth of socialist consciousness and overcoming survivals from capitalism in the minds of the workers'. This meeting was the culmination of work undertaken by a research group from

the institute, led by B. S. Mankovsky (a Doctor of Law), which had been studying the ‘reasons for the robustness of survivals’ among factory workers [ARAN. F. 1922. Op. 1. D. 930. L. 2].

The institute director P. N. Fedoseev, who spoke at this meeting of the Academic Council talked about the ‘irregularity in the development of various aspects of the social consciousness’. Fedoseev expressed this idea more than once in his speeches, and in 1959 he presented it at the fourth International Sociological Congress in Italy as virtually the only concrete conclusion made by Soviet sociologists. Fedoseev called for the precise definition of the ‘general sociological fact’ of consciousness lagging behind reality. The consciousness is non-uniform and consists of ‘aspects’ that ‘come into line with social reality’ irregularly. This happens most rapidly with those aspects that are the closest to having an economic basis — namely, the political consciousness (in which, in his opinion, socialist ideology had completely triumphed), whereas those aspects more distant from this basis, such as the everyday or religious, preserve survivals from the past to a much great extent [Fedoseev 1962: 233, 389]. Fedoseev’s theory, based on research material from the ‘Dynamo’ factory, opposed Kovalyov’s purportedly incorrect explanation of the reasons for the existence of survivals.

Mankovsky also spoke out harshly against Kovalyov’s theory: ‘A theory that reduces the roots of survivals from capitalism to socialist production relations is a mistaken and harmful theory, it is simply a slander against our society’ [ARAN. F. 1922. Op. 1. D. 946. L. 175]. He upheld the traditional reasons for the existence of survivals (consciousness lagging behind reality, the influence of the ideology of capitalist countries and deficiencies in educational work), although he concretely defined these theories based on material gathered from studying the factory and by using the idea of the ‘irregularity of the development of the socialist consciousness’. His illustration of the theory took the example of a conscientious and qualified worker who had fought in the Second World War, yet who nevertheless acknowledged that ‘when I need nails for something at home I fill my pockets and walk right on through’ [ARAN. F. 1922. Op. 1. D. 946. L. 177]. Mankovsky also cited other examples: ‘Surely it is completely shameful that some workshops have a *troika* system? This means three people to a bottle.<sup>1</sup> The *troika* trusts no one and no one is allowed into their company. It acts as a constant organisation. Surely this phenomenon is indicative? They’re very good production workers, creative innovators, but when it comes to pay day past traditions remain valid’ [ARAN. F. 1922. Op. 1. D. 946. L. 178]. Mankovsky also rebutted Kovalyov’s assertion about the ‘limited

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<sup>1</sup> That is, three people would buy and share a bottle of vodka between them on pay day [Eds.].

significance' of the influence of the ideology of capitalist countries. The main argument put forward to demonstrate its corrupting influence was the 'left-wing jazz bands' established in the factory's youth club, which disregarded the lectures and other official events happening at that time. As an extreme example, Mankovsky described an instance where *stilyagi*<sup>1</sup> from one workplace went from wearing stylish clothes to organising armed robberies on shops. Young people kept diaries in which they laid out their philosophy of 'otherism — hatred of ordinary people': 'We hate labour, we worship the gods of foreign records, you have to buy them where you can. I am proud that I'm not wearing a single thread of Russian clothing, everything is foreign' [ARAN. F. 1922. Op. 1. D. 946. Ll. 187–8]. Mankovsky and other philosophers explained the occurrence of such incidents by mass capitalist propaganda and deficiencies in Soviet ideological work: 'The reason for the origin of various survivals is clear to us, but the reason for their preservation, as comrade Fedoseev rightly said, consists [...] primarily of our weak work, because we are not waging the necessary war against survivals, nor are we employing every material, political and other means. This is the reason for the preservation of survivals, not at all because trade exists or because of the 'socialist method of distribution'" [ARAN. F. 1922. Op. 1. D. 946. L. 233]. A book based on the material gained from studying the 'Dynamo' factory, called *Forming the Moral Image of the Soviet Worker*, set out similar conclusions. In addition to the fundamental reasons — the external influences of past traditions (consciousness lagging behind reality) and bourgeois ideology and morality — it also referred to more private factors: deficiencies in educational work, neglecting to safeguard the expenditure of factory estates and so on [Mankovsky et al. 1961: 88–92]. The main formula for fighting against them was acknowledged to be 'advancing the role of the community' and the activation of 'educational work' and public opinion, the indicator of which was various Party, Komsomol and public organisations.

The phenomenon of public opinion, which was 'opened up' in the Soviet Union in the 1960s, had a direct link to the problem of eradicating 'survivals'. The 'correct' public opinion, expressed by Party and public organisations, was an effective tool in fighting against them, while 'narrow-minded' public opinion, on the other hand, was one of their supporting factors. In 1960, attached to the newspaper *Komsomol Pravda*, the Institute of Public Opinion was created, led by B. A. Grushin [Doktorov 2007]. Based on material that the newspaper gathered through a mass survey, Grushin and a journalist V. V. Chikin published a book called *Confession of a Generation*, in which the positive and negative aspects of a collective

<sup>1</sup> Soviet Mods [Eds.].

portrait of the youth of the 1960s was examined. In first place among the negative characteristics identified by young people came enthusiasm for alcoholic drinks, and in second place was imitating Western fashion and dandyism, followed by ‘bad emotional manners’, lack of culture, passivity, disrespect for labour, parasitic attitudes, striving to get rich and disrespect of elders [Grushin, Chikin 1962: 154]. The authors noted that it was characteristic of the respondents to seek not just to indicate certain negative qualities, but also to analyse the ‘reasons’ why they emerge. Sometimes this raised uncomfortable questions. For example, a twenty-eight-year-old lathe operator wrote: ‘Where does social parasitism [*tuneyadstvo*] come from? [...] The easiest way to explain it is of course through capitalist survivals in people’s consciousness. But what the hell do we mean by “survival”, if a person can’t hardly say “mum” clearly but still keeps trying to fix himself up a good position somewhere, through people he knows, when he’d never get there through his own abilities?’ [Grushin, Chikin 1962: 205].

In search of answers to questions such as these, the authors of the book and their respondents sought to go beyond the standard explanations. Thus, drunkenness was undoubtedly a harmful tradition from the past, yet many traditions have already been eliminated, and so consequently this is not a full explanation. In search of answers, respondents and the book authors turned to social conditions. Their conclusions can be summarised in the following way. Worshipping the ‘green serpent’<sup>1</sup> arises from boredom and an indifference to life. In turn, these factors arise firstly from a lack or impossibility of engaging in something you love, and secondly from the formalism and torpid activity of the Komsomol and other organisers of people’s social lives. The first can be partly explained by the imperfection of the ‘first phase of communism’, in which ‘as one of the birthmarks of the old world, heavy, unskilled, unattractive physical labour continues to exist’ and an individual’s interests do not yet entirely coincide with the interests of society [Grushin, Chikin 1962: 174]. The second can also be considered a survival, but from the times of the cult of personality, when the independence of the Komsomol was severely limited, and the ruling force was the ‘excessive surveillance over young people’s views, thoughts and actions’ [Grushin, Chikin 1962: 192]. The nature of dandyism’s ‘roots’, according to *Confession of a Generation*, was also more complicated than the simple influence of bourgeois ideology from outside. The authors suggested differentiating between the natural endeavour to dress well (in this case a preference for foreign clothing was evidence only of the shortcomings of Soviet light industry) and real sponging dandies, black marketeers and ‘apostles of the good

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<sup>1</sup> i.e. the ‘demon drink’ [Eds.].

life'. The latter, who confess a contempt for labour, a parasitic attitude and a cult for material goods, are the product of a 'serious slackness in labour education that took place in the recent past':

Many parents, having forgotten the lessons of their own biographies and lost sight of the fact that the main law of socialism is 'He who does not work, neither shall he eat' is applicable not only to the life of society, but also to the life of each of its smaller cells — families — and they create for their children true hothouse conditions. Boys and girls who are freed from any burdens or cares of labour become accustomed from childhood to receiving more than they need. As they grow, they gradually become accustomed to the thought that they can live almost their whole lives under the wing of caring Mum and Dad, and in any case that they can take more from life than they give [Grushin, Chikin 1962: 208].

Reflections on the reasons for the emergence of 'antisocial' acts and moods were also expressed at a session on the problems of communist education at the Academy of Social Sciences in 1961. While the majority of philosophers who spoke at this session were continuing to modify an abstract debate on the issue of the correlation between consciousness and existence, the most interesting reports came from the 'practitioners'. Thus the deputy head of the Internal Affairs Department of the Moscow City Executive Committee, P. N. Neverov, presented an analysis of the concrete reasons and circumstances that prompted people to set off on the path towards antisocial behaviour. In ninety cases out of a hundred, the police officer asserted, 'these young people had a bad environment in their family, at home or at work'. This could be a case of excessively attentive parents, or 'certain elderly "fast livers"' who corrupt young people or introduce them to hard drinking. Small and sporadic wages can have a negative impact: working in non-official orchestras, in short films at the cinema, or as male or female models and artist's sitters in art studios, institutions and universities. The increased flow of tourists from the West also has an impact:

A corrupting influence is exerted by bourgeois tourists on certain adolescents, by distributing gramophone records with ugly jazz music, giving children ballpoint pens, postcards and lighters with pornographic images. Frequently tourists from the West entice youths and girls into drinking in restaurants, cafés and hotel rooms, then they sneer at them and take photographs of them [Voprosy teorii 1962: 235].

Police statistics bears witness to the fact that the 'at-risk groups' were found to be young people who were temporarily or permanently not working. The consequences of the war losses were also a factor: seventy percent of girls arrested in Moscow for 'lewd behaviour' and

fifty percent of black marketeers had lost one or both parents in the war and were more prone to bad influences 'since they have not been correctly brought up within their family' [Voprosy teorii 1962: 238].

As the institutionalisation of sociology as an independent discipline progressed, the concept of the 'survival' appeared in sociologists' works more and more rarely. Remaining at the centre of their attention, however, were the work collectives of factories and mills. The authors of the influential monograph *The Working Class and Technical Progress* formulated the task of the 'comprehensive, harmonious and integrated development of man' and attempted to define the working conditions in which this development is possible. At the same time, they criticised earlier works for their inattention to the influence exerted by direct working conditions on people's attitudes towards labour and the process of labour:

We focused mainly on the technical, economic and subjective aspects of the problem being analysed. Up until recently, these aspects of the alienation of labour had virtually not been studied at all. They were merely considered to be survivals that could be eradicated with the aid of education. Entirely ignored was the fact that in socialist society, through the development and interaction of objective factors (the level of technical development, direct labour conditions, the organisation of production, the system of the material and moral stimulus of labour and so on), different demands arise from labour. The lack of reliable knowledge about the mechanism of interaction between these factors and the lack of appropriate regulation often meant that in certain specific conditions these demands (a thirst for creativity, the development of skills and abilities and so on) were not factored in to the practice of everyday work [Osipov et al. 1965: 15].

Soon the cognitive value of the very concept of 'survivals' was under doubt by the philosopher and sociologist D. Zh. Kelle. 'In my time,' he wrote, 'Stalin promoted the position that survivals are a consequence of consciousness lagging behind reality. Every negative phenomenon in people's behaviour is the result of consciousness lagging behind reality. It is believed that this is a general reason that can help explain everything. In addition, indeed, you can also include the influence of bourgeois ideology from abroad' [Kelle 1966: 43]. However, Kelle continues, the term 'survivals' unites wide-ranging phenomena from hooliganism to religiosity that cannot be explained by one single reason. Each concrete phenomenon must be explained by concrete reasons, and therefore 'the idea that all survivals should be explained by lagging consciousness has begun to be criticised from all quarters and quite rightly so' [Kelle 1966: 44]. As a positive

example of 'concrete research', Kelle cites a study of the 'robustness' of the baptism ritual in the Vyborg district of Leningrad. Its author, D. Aptekman, established that the parents of baptised children sought to replicate this act for different purposes: one person was truly expressing his religious convictions, while another was merely yielding to the insistence of a grandmother who looked after the child. The concept of the 'survival', in Kelle's opinion, only complicated real research into the reasons for 'negative phenomena' in the life of society and, consequently, its fight against them. In this way, the concept departed from the lexicon of the academic social sciences, ultimately becoming the property of popular propagandistic brochures.

**The concept of 'survivals from the past':  
opiate of the masses or weapon of the weak?**

The concept of the 'survival' in the context of Soviet history in the 1950s and 1960s can be seen as part of the ideological discourse used by the social sciences during that period. The ruling ideology, as well as its applied branch — propaganda — were both attempting to impose their interpretation of reality and thereby justify the existing state of affairs. At the same time, they could also be used to criticise the situation. By applying the theoretical reflections of James Scott on the way that ruling ideology was used by dependent groups, Sarah Davies drew the following conclusion: 'Soviet propaganda was polysemantic, and ordinary citizens could not contribute content that was completely alien to what the regime put into it. They appropriated it and forced it to serve their own ends, choosing those aspects that best corresponded to their ideas and rejecting the others' [Davies 1997: 184]. Thanks to its polysemy and diffusiveness, the concept of 'survivals from the past' was ideal material for this kind of appropriation. Tracing its use by people who did not have access to the printed word is quite challenging. However, archive material offers the opportunity to do so. During the campaign of 'nationwide discussion' of the third programme of the CPSU, active citizens had the opportunity to voice their opinions in relation to the problems and ways of constructing communism. Based on material from letters sent to the editorial board of the journal *Communist*, we can see that the interpretation of the concept of 'survivals' demonstrated by their authors differs significantly from the official one.

The survival that drew the most attention from these authors was the so-called 'remnants of private-ownership psychology'. An old Bolshevik labour veteran A. O. Vildgrube wrote an angry letter about the different manifestations of this psychology: the preservation of individual horticulture and gardening gave rise to 'speculative shopkeeper's psychology' and various kinds of embezzlement and

misuse of one's official position. The main way of fighting against these kinds of 'remnants', Vildgrube suggested, was to restore 'the maximum wages differential' [*partmaksimum*], the cancellation of which he considered to be a sharp departure from Leninist principles: under Lenin, high-paid workers were paid five times as much as low-paid workers, where now it was ten or fifteen times.

Say an ordinary person in a management-level administrative post or even a valuable academic worker, has wonderful life conditions, a spacious, luxuriously furnished flat, a dacha out of town, his own or a personal automobile, let's say he or members of his family have their every whim satisfied — in this context is he not involuntarily re-born from an energetic, principled and experienced man of the people fighting for communism into a fatty bourgeois who is indifferent to everything progressive, who furthermore suffers hypertension because of his entirely sedentary way of life and exorbitant misuse of automobiles?! — history and life show that THIS REBIRTH IN CASES SUCH AS THESE IS ALWAYS INEVITABLE [capitalisation follows original] [RGASPI. F. 599. Op. 1. D. 63. L. 14].

Other authors echoed Vildgrube's views. A Muscovite who had been a Party member since 1927 fervently condemned leading employees who had lost 'Lenin's modesty':

Already much national prosperity has flowed to individual persons through legal and illegal channels: sometimes in the form of exorbitantly large and comfortable flats for themselves and for their relatives, as well as a costly dacha built using national funds, and a State car with a chauffeur paid for by the State, or on another occasion a State-funded (legally or illegally) salary for servants, and with the sophistication of a refined office with a separate bathroom and toilet, and a separate lift, and a deluxe health centre where you aren't so much treated as coaxed and tended, and fenced-off plots of land by the sea and 'closed' zones for hunting and fishing, and anything else you can think up. What is all of this for?

What was and is still considered to be a disgrace for communists has for some become a unique fashion, an ideal. Occasionally people simply vie to see who can build and decorate the best dacha, who hires the biggest and most splendid flat, who can get into the most refined health centre [RGASPI. F. 599. Op. 1. D. 63. Ll. 36–7].

The author placed a special emphasis on the negative moral consequences of this situation: these kinds of workers are not just 'reborn' and 'adrift from the people'; when they transfer their privileged position onto their children, they make them, to use the



expression of Vildegrube quoted above, coddled, spoiled, egotistical and wanton. By taking for granted the comfort given to them they begin to lead a parasitic way of life and become '*stilyagi*'. 'What have many communists become?' questions an author from Moscow. 'Proprietors, dacha-owners, "masters". And their wives? Co-proprietors. And their children? Heirs. I have had to meet such people. It is a bad, offensive sight. This kind of "master" and his family live in their own narrow little world of ownership. Their thoughts and affairs are further from communism than the Earth from the Sun' [RGASPI. F. 599. Op. 1. D. 63. L. 37]. The author of another letter, yet another old communist from Pyatigorsk, continued this discussion with some rather risky political conclusions. When, he wrote, 'bourgeois ideology' draws in a privileged section of the older and younger generations, the result is that 'within the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the working class has generated its own unique bourgeoisie, which in turn will be the grave-digger of the proletariat' [RGASPI. F. 599. Op. 1. D. 63. L. 54]. Finally, B. Pisarev from Kudymkar in Permskaya Oblast cast doubt on the 'survivals from capitalism' formula because it does not explain 'how it is that citizens of socialist society have in their consciousness the same negative features that are characteristic of people in a bourgeois regime'. He proposed distinguishing between the 'healthy egotism' that is naturally characteristic of man and the 'unrestrained, unbridled egotism' that had become a defining feature of individuals in an antagonistic society, and that results in conflicting interests for the individual and society. Acknowledging the naturalness of this healthy egotism, in his opinion, would not be a concession to bourgeois sociologists, since the social environment surrounding man could limit and direct the innate egotism along the course required by society [RGASPI. F. 599. Op. 1. D. 63. Ll. 112–22].

The letters cited above mainly belong to quite a specific category of authors who can be defined as 'truly believing' hardened communists. Their perception and criticism of the current state of affairs also came within the bounds of 'survivals', although their concept of 'survivals from capitalism' differed noticeably from the one set out in official propaganda or social science. Unlike the latter, their attention was focused on the Party bureaucratic elite. This elite turned out to be the carrier of the 'survival' of private-ownership psychology, which was perceived to be the most important problem and hindrance for the construction of a communist society.

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Edward Tylor defined survivals as 'processes, customs, opinions and so forth, which have been carried on from force of habit into a new state of society different from the one in which they had their original

home, and they thus remain as proofs and examples of an older condition of culture out of which a newer has been evolved' [Tylor 1920: 16]. Classical evolutionism considered 'survivals' to be a phenomenon of culture whose meaning, it was believed, had been lost for its own carriers and could be deciphered only by researchers. In the Soviet context the concept of survivals acquired a much wider meaning. The 'survival sphere' related to whole strata of economic, social and spiritual life that had not blended with the socialist project. Survivals could result from different socio-economic formations (survivals from tribal systems, feudalism, capitalism), encompass whole areas of culture (religious survivals), exist in the consciousness (survivals from feudal landowner attitudes towards women, individualism, private-ownership psychology etc.). At the same time, the border between harmful 'survivals' and legitimate national traditions was flexible and was a product of a certain amount of 'bargaining'. 'Traditions or survivals?' — this is how the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan, A. Kazakbaev, pinpointed the dilemma of the new socialist society re-evaluating 'old' culture: 'We should thoughtfully seek to understand our national traditions and customs, decisively weeding out everything that has been introduced to us by alien classes and religious world views, persistently affirming our genuinely native customs and morals, and enriching them with new socialist content' [Kazakbaev 1960]. In this way, the importance of the concept of the 'survival', within the context of Soviet ideology and science consists of its location on the border of old and new worlds, simultaneously uniting and dividing them. The process of labelling the phenomena that were undesirable in socialist society concurrently legitimised their existence.

The use of the concept of the 'survival' was also widespread during the thaw period in the context of activating the image of 'new man' within the public consciousness and declaring the approach of communism. At the same time, the authorities somewhat lessened the censorship pressure and induced philosophers, ethnographers and sociologists to participate more actively in the construction of a communism society and to study the current period. In the mid-1950s, an active discourse regarding the reasons for the existence of survivals and ways of fighting them was initiated. These discussions, linked to the ideas expressed by S. M. Kovalyov, G. P. Snesev and other authors, facilitated the revival of this research idea in Soviet social science. We also note an appreciable unity of agenda in ethnography, philosophy and sociology in this period, caused by a wider application of the idea of 'survivals'.

This idea, which emerged in anthropology as far back as the era of classical evolutionism, was, in the context of the post-war Soviet social science, heavily loaded with ideological content. Nevertheless,

it was around this discourse on the reasons for the existence of 'survival phenomena' that attempts to talk about the different, shadier side of socialist reality emerged. Ideologists diligently ensured that criticism under the slogan 'more than socialism' did not shift into criticism of socialism per se. However, the material we have examined illustrates that even despite the strictly censored and idealised Soviet form that Marxism took in the USSR in the 1950s–1960s, it nevertheless maintained some critical potential. Developments in theoretical constructs such as the social 'roots' of survivals and the link between consciousness and reality were a distinct prompt for evolutions in social philosophy and empirical science on the subject society, which began to engage with these mechanisms in greater detail and with the use of increasingly complex conceptual equipment. As a result, as early as the mid-1960s, the concept of 'survivals from the past' began to seem too general, and doubt was cast over its heuristic value. A collaboration between humanities scholars, proposed by S. P. Tolstov, to investigate the problem in contemporary society was in essence not realised; ethnography and sociology's subsequent development was increasingly independent, although they still found points of contact and intersections. For these disciplines, this period in history was a time of asking general questions that have remained without satisfactory answers, although our examination of this experience bears witness to the unity in principle of object and methods of research for the social sciences, and the possibilities and fruitfulness of their collaboration.

### Abbreviations

- AIEA — Archive of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences  
 ARAN — Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences  
 GARF — State Archive of the Russian Federation  
 RGASPI — Russian State Archive of Social and Political History

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