Jędrzej Piekara

Sources of the Ideas of the "New Man" and "New Society" in Russia and the Soviet Union Until 1929 – Summary

In my doctoral dissertation, I address two key questions: first, the origins of the Bolshevik conception of the "new man" and the "new socjety", and second, how these ideological and theoretical ideas influenced the social, cultural, and political life of Soviet Russia and the Soviet Union in the 1920s. I argue that Marxism, communism, and Bolshevism were inherently utopian ideologies, political theories, and social movements, even though they officially distanced themselves from utopianism. I trace this utopian aspect to the heritage inherited by Marxism – a blend of traditional utopian thought (rooted in Plato, Thomas More, and Tommaso Campanella) and the political and social ideals of the French Revolution. I identify a clear shift within Marxism, marking a departure from utopianism as an abstract social ideal to utopianism associated with science and the direct political action of the masses. In my work, I present Marxism as the progenitor of Bolshevism and as a continuation of centuries-old utopian and communist thought.

Political and Ideological Precursors of Communism

The second key thesis in my dissertation examines the political and ideological precursors of communism. I categorize "socialist ideologies" as encompassing various concepts of social reform, from Plato and Christianity to ideas that have, over the last two centuries, been framed as socialist, communist, or communalist. This thesis arises primarily from the fact that Marxists and Bolsheviks themselves considered research into their (often imagined) "intellectual predecessors" of great importance. However, I strive to avoid presentism, maintaining that social movements prior to the 19th century cannot be labeled as communist—if "communism" is understood as a post-Marxist ideology.

Analyzing "New Man" and "New Society" in Marxist, Socialist, and Bolshevik Theory

My study of the "new man" and "new socjety" within Marxist, socialist, and Bolshevik theory is grounded in an analysis of theoretical works, cultural achievements, and political practices. I argue that the vision of the "new man" and "new socjety" was not an invention of Marxism but a derivative of the deeply embedded European cultural tradition of utopianism and social reform, which I associate with socialist ideologies. I examine European history, identifying patterns later utilized by the Bolsheviks in crafting their (highly derivative) vision