

# IDEOLOGY AND PRIVACY OF THE SOVIET FAMILY

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## ABSTRACT

*Description: The article presents the analysis of the specific co-existence of a personality in the family life of a Soviet individual with a State. The issues of the life of the Ukrainian family are analyzed. The authors distinguish the works of Soviet and domestic historians by showing socio-political conditions characteristic of the historical science of this period. The main achievements in the study of the problem and the issues that require further scientific research are described. A specific component of the article is the consideration of the particularities of studying private life as an element of the history of everyday life.*

**Keywords:** Everyday Life, the Soviet System, Totalitarianism, Life, Propaganda, Family and Everyday Traditions, Social and Everyday Sphere.

## INTRODUCTION

The institution of the family (like any institution of the State), has undergone great changes along with the transformations that have taken place with the State itself. The renewal of the economic and social structure of Soviet society, that is, industrialization, urbanization, secularization of consciousness, and the emancipation of women and children, were the factors that had led to these changes. Besides, wars and social cataclysms have effectively deformed an already complex and not always consistent family modernization process with many contradictions.

On the one hand, the institution of the family, like society as a whole, has undergone a revolutionary renewal. This helped to overcome the crisis of the patriarchal family and the patriarchal family relations, which were clearly felt at the beginning of the century. On the other hand, due to the inconsistency and incompleteness of the changes that have taken place with the family, it has faced new problems, significantly lost the ability to perform some vital functions for an individual and society. In some places there has been a prolonged disorder of the family as an institution with other social institutions, and it was, in fact, on the verge of a new crisis.

As one knows, the family mostly reflects the problems inherent in society as a whole. But if certain material problems are eliminated with the successful solution of economic issues at the State level, then there are a number of shortcomings that are not solved only by economic or social development.

Certain family problems, which dictate the family policy of the State as a component of social policy, arise due to changes in the historical type of the family and its interaction with

society. After all, decisions made in various spheres of social life affect the family, although not directly aimed at it.

Since the family policy of the State affects the family through social institutions, there is always a danger of encroachment on its sovereignty, its privacy. There are many examples of how the State has influenced the family ideology, giving priority to certain types of family, its forms. This justified State intervention in the affairs of the family for the sake of society.

It is difficult to find and implement a thin line of permissible interference and tolerant attitudes of the family as a private property. The experience of many generations of different countries has shown that the so-called “*neutrality*” of State ideology is not entirely simple. After all, it is impossible to take into account all the criteria, as what is neutral on one criterion is not neutral after another. Moreover, collective interests objectively limit the family’s sovereignty by interfering with its privacy.

Each historical epoch creates its own configuration of interaction in society. The institution of the family belongs to the category of those social phenomena whose significance is unique both for the individual and for society as a whole, because no other system is the link between man and society.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Modern researchers have done a lot to study this topic in the context of everyday life and separately.

English researcher Fitzpatrik (2000) described the social history of Soviet Russia in the 1930s as everyday Stalinism, which, naturally, left its mark on the entire history of the development and transformation of the private life of the Soviet people.

Udod (2005) stated that at the beginning of the 21st century Ukrainian historians, as well as foreign ones, failed to complete the institutionalization of the direction of everyday history in methodology. Having analyzed the modern humanistic definitions of the categories of everyday life, the author points to the blurring of the boundaries of everyday life as the subject matter.

The work of the famous modern Russian researcher Pushkarova (2005) deserves attention. Private life, as one of the aspects of everyday life, according to her observation, is subjectively significant for people, creates the integrity of the living world and the interpretation of reality.

Koliastruk (2007) dedicates his research to the formation of the subject of everyday history in domestic and foreign historical science. After all, there is no clearly definition of this concept and therefore it is often identified with the usual way of life, with privacy.

A number of authors of the Soviet era describe the history of everyday and private due to the annual improvement of social and living conditions (Vitruk (1986), Oleynichenko (1988)); through the transformation of the role of women in the family and Soviet society (Polenina, (1985).

Lysak (2013) describes the everyday life of the Ukrainian peasantry in the Soviet reality of 1950-60, and Vasylchuk (2007) analyzes the problems of Russian researchers studying the Soviet everyday life of 1920-30 through the prism of contemporary ideology.

The articles by Valdenfels (1991) and Hohokhii (2007) reveal a number of qualitative methods of studying Soviet everyday life and private life of the people.

Hurevich (1993) distinguishes the sphere of private life, a person in the circle of his (her) family, while conducting a historical synthesis of events, their development and impact on personal and deeply private.

The vast majority of authors study in their works the generally accepted norms, and sometimes the anomalies of this period through the daily existence of the Soviet man. At the same time, Soviet family history is not presented in all the works on the study of the peculiarities of Soviet everyday life.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The emergence of new approaches and directions of historiography has become the methodological basis for the scientific development related to the problems of private life (Repina, 1998). Despite many differences, all these directions and approaches served as the unifying principle of the formation of historical anthropology. Historical anthropology as a general global concept of history with all its latest achievements has united the study of mentality, material life and everyday life. This approach is represented by the French historical school “Annals”, British historical anthropology and the new cultural history that emerged in the United States. Among Soviet researchers, Hurevich (1993) has studied this issue.

Historical anthropology has contributed to the certain expansion of the “*territory of historians*”, as it was the result of close interdisciplinary interaction of ethnologists, psychologists and linguists. Unlike Marxist Soviet historiography, there was no methodological unity between various branches of historical anthropology. Research covered both different social practices and behaviors and perceptions of life and death; age periods and diseases; holidays and weekdays; ceremonies and rituals; food and recreation systems; various social fears, etc. Different topics that previously did not attract the attention of professional historians began to be studied as social processes from the standpoint of their direct participants. Therefore, the issues of interpersonal and intergroup interactions have been covered in the course of historical research.

The issues of rethinking and periodic changes in all elements of the interconnected system of behavioral stereotypes are arisen, as historians have been able to show that at different times such manifestations of this system as love, hate, friendship, and family relations have been interpreted differently in different times (Bessmertnyi, 1996).

Some researchers do not distinguish between private life and everyday history because they are too closely linked; and therefore, everyday life is understood mainly as a sphere of private life on epy issues of family, home life, raising children, recreation, friendships and social circles (Fitzpatrik, 2000).

Most researchers, however, believe that the history of everyday life should not be narrowed down to private and family life, work and social ceremonies. It covers a wide range of issues, and a person’s private life has always been the part of his (her) daily life and largely depended on it.

It is known that the spheres of everyday and private life intersect many times, but do not completely coincide. Therefore, historians of private life study only one of the spheres of everyday life, which depends only on private, individual decisions. Everyday life cannot be reduced only to the sphere of the private, since some of its aspects belong to public life (Pushkarova, 2005).

Along with the history of private life, there is a scientific direction, which is quite close, - microhistory. It allows to examine certain processes in detail, paying attention not only to prominent historical figures, but to the fate of ordinary people or small social groups. By studying such life stories within certain historical time, microhistory allows to comprehend the space of possibilities, level of freedom or non-freedom of the individual in given political, socio-economic and ethno cultural circumstances (Medyk, 1994). When describing the motives of the actions of specific people, the history of private life reaches the level of microhistory as the method of studying the history of everyday life and the main way of understanding the past, giving new qualities to the discussion of general historical problems.

Under the influence of feminism a peculiar “*history of women*” was formed, which was once deleted from the so-called “*male*” historiography and was designed to “*return history to women*” (Bock, 1994). Gender has become a key category in the analysis of research within the history of women (especially in the 1980s). The subject matter of gender research is the relationship between men and women and the search for new content in this relationship; the inner world of an individual; specific statuses and roles in relationships. This direction of gender history (as the independent research methodology) also serves as a direction for the history of private life.

In the mid-1970s, the works of European authors raised a wide range of issues concerning the structure of families, the rights and responsibilities of their members and intra-family relations and the collapse of the foundations of the old society (Repina, 1998). One of such foundation was the family. It is well known that Soviet party functionaries espousing the Marxist doctrine advocated disappearance of a family in which woman and children were the property of a man. In 1917, all restrictions on marriage were abolished; it means that religious, national, social, and racial monogamy was established and the equality of property and personal rights of men and women was proclaimed. The church was completely pushed out of this sphere. Although religious marriage was not prohibited, only civil marriage registered in the registry office had legal force.

Freedom of divorce was also introduced by mutual consent of the spouses. If there were contradictions, their solution was considered by the court, as well as the problems related to upbringing of children, ensuring monetary payments, etc. Children born in and out of wedlock were equal in rights. It was possible to establish paternity in court.

In 1918, special code of laws on civil status, marriage, family and guardianship was adopted as the document that established the norms of the first decrees of the Soviet government. This Code fully equalized the rights of spouses in the matters of family life and choice of residence, changing the family name; the marriage age was fixed (for 18 for men and 16 for women); the principle of community of family property was abolished; the separation of property of parents and children was established.

The results of the implementation of the new Code were not at all as expected, as it enshrined the restriction of the interests of women and children (at that time the vast majority of Soviet women, especially with children, did not work and did not have their own property). Consequently, even in the case of divorce, they and their children were deprived of the right to own property of their husbands and fathers, without having their own income. The Code prohibited adoption; raising children was proclaimed a public duty of parents, not a private affair. On the basis of the mother's declaration of children born out of wedlock, a procedure for the recognition of paternity was introduced. Able-bodied relatives had alimony obligations towards their disabled grandchildren, brothers, sisters, grandparents, etc.

Special ordinance of the People's Commissariats and the Judiciary, adopted in 1920, which allowed artificial abortion in medical institutions, also corresponded to liberal tendencies. It was the world's first official decision to legalize abortion; and it became a kind of good for most Soviet women who lived in need and domestic suffering.

In 1926, a new Code of Laws on Marriage, Family and Guardianship was adopted. This document officially equated actual cohabitation with a registered marriage, and illegitimate children – with those born in wedlock. Marriage registration was no longer required. The fact of cohabitation, joint household, raising children, etc. was the proof of marital relations. Marriages concluded before 1917 according to religious rites were equated with those registered. The registration procedure for establishing paternity was provided both by the court and at the request of the mother. Only monogamy was permitted; the age of marriage was fixed at 18 years; early and forced marriages were forbidden. The institution of common property was established and the adoption of children was restored. The divorce procedure has been simplified.

Some researchers attribute the end of the “sexual freedom policy” to the efforts of the country's leadership in the late 1920s to suppress the real rampant violence and sexual immorality. In 1926, abortion was banned for women who became pregnant for the first time or underwent surgery less than six months ago. Shortly afterwards, the payment for abortion was introduced as another step towards restricting it (Rabzhaieva, 2004).

The Resolution *“On the prohibition of abortion, increasing financial assistance to women in labor, establishing State assistance to large families, expanding the network of maternity hospitals, nurseries and kindergartens, increasing criminal penalties for non-payment of alimony and some changes in legislation on the divorces”*, adopted on June 27, 1936 helped to strengthen the institution of family in Soviet law. The amount of State aid for the purchase of necessary items for newborns and for child feeding increased. Mothers with 6 children received State assistance in the amount of 2,000 rubles annually for five years on the birth of each subsequent child. Women who had 10 children received 5,000 rubles for each subsequent child, and from the child's second year of life they got an annual allowance of 3,000 rubles for four years.

The divorce procedure was complicated because the consent and the presence of both spouses were required; a special mark was placed in passports; a duty was levied, which increased exponentially with each new divorce. After the divorce, alimony was levied for the maintenance of children, for evasion of which criminal liability was provided. Provisions prohibiting abortion were legalized, except for medical contraindications certified by the commission of doctors.

The Constitution of 1936 legally enshrined equality between women and men and social guarantees for its implementation. Thus Art. 102 of the Constitution of 1936 enshrined that Women in the Ukrainian SSR are granted equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, State, cultural and socio-political life.

The possibility of exercising women's rights is ensured by granting women the same right to work, remuneration, recreation, social insurance and education as men, State protection of the interests of mother and child, State assistance to mothers with many children and single mothers, leaving with pay during pregnancy, a wide network of maternity hospitals, nurseries and kindergartens. This fit well with the overall strategy of Stalin's modernization of the country.

## CONCLUSION

Since the family is socio-historical category, the study of its development requires the examination of processes in the dialectical relationship and interdependence, in temporal, spatial, quantitative and qualitative ratios.

The Soviet family found itself at the crossroads of radical changes in social development and the modernization of the family institution itself. Such difficulties are all the deeper the deeper the crisis of socio-economic and moral-psychological relations is, under the conditions of which the development and functioning of the family is carried out and is accompanied by problems of material and spiritual-ideological order.

Periodic changes in the legal framework of marital and family relations of the USSR (and therefore-in the USSR) were clearly regulated by the interaction of ideological and party doctrine of the formation of the socialist family and life, as well as the development of family relations. There are peculiar double standards of the Soviet family system. The Soviet system of control over the private life of the population, including family, led to a peculiar feeling of returning to good old grandfather's times with moralizing rules, which were accompanied by a ban on abortion (prior to the period of thaw), restrictions on divorce, non-recognition of unregistered marriages, increase attention to the "*moral face of the Soviet citizen*" when appointing to important public positions, public interference in family affairs, etc., which was part of the general line of ideas on the "decent Soviet family".

It should be noted that there was a transition from command-administrative methods to moral-administrative regulation of marital and family relations during the government of Brezhnev. Thus, unlike the economy, this sphere was no longer the area of tight State control. In times of stagnation, the legislative regulation of family and marital relations became a kind of piece of freedom among the wide field of late Soviet authoritarianism. Because of this, at times of restructuring, this area alone did not need fundamental changes.

If the state bases its policy and ideology on the family on the so-called paternalism, it leads to the incompatibility of family sovereignty with social sovereignty. Because then the family cannot make any decision independently and freely, as it does not bear the overwhelming part of responsibility. The experience of many countries shows that families develop most successfully where they are least dependent on public patronage, benefits and free services. That's when there's no attack on private or personal.

At the same time, the State as an institution is simply obliged to take care of the well-being of families, which for one or another reason are not able to perform their functions fully and independently and take care of their members.

At the same time, the family as an object of State ideology and policy is able to develop fully and harmoniously when the State does not make decisions as a monopolist alone, but collectively with other public institutions.

It is extremely important for the successful development of society to find such a necessary balance between the implemented criteria and ideologies of family policy and the ability to preserve the privacy, personal freedom and cohesion of each family member.

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