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Dialectical Identity and Destiny: A General Introduction to Alexander Zinoviev's Theory of the Soviet Man

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Alexander Alexandrovich Zinoviev, formerly head of the Logic Department at Moscow University and now exiled and stripped of his Soviet citizenship for "behavior damaging Soviet prestige," has authored numerous books, lectured at international conferences, and is considered to be one of the most provocative thinkers of our time. Ranging from a satire that depicts the practices of Communist ideology in the Soviet Union to the sociological descriptions of a new type of man (substituting *Homo Sovieticus* for *Homo Sapiens*), his publications appear to be unorthodox analyses of contemporary Soviet life. In spite of his controversial conclusions, Zinoviev refuses to call himself a Soviet dissident and emphasizes that he is, first and foremost, the Soviet Man *par excellence*. He says: "Soviet people cannot shed their identity. They may be dissidents, they may live abroad, they may be anti-Soviet from head-to-toe: their Soviet character will stand out in everything they write and do" (*A Dissenter* 35). Yet, when speaking of the Soviet Man, he says: "I respect him and I despise him. I am delighted with him and I am appalled by him. I myself am a Homosos. Therefore I am merciless and cruel when I describe him" (*Homo* 5).

This paper is directed to those who wish to be acquainted with the intricate undercurrents found in contemporary Soviet life. It attempts to introduce the literary world of a highly educated Soviet thinker while, at the same time, identifying the major traits of his remarkable protagonist — the Soviet man.

Method and Theory

Zinoviev views Soviet society from the point of view of a dialectic materialist who stresses certain generally neglected logistic points.

First, he furnishes himself with dialectical methodology as a "totality of logistic approaches toward understanding complex actuality" (*Kommunizm* 41). He stresses that the Soviet Man behaves differently when in isolation from a collective than when within a collective. In the former, the Soviet Man may denounce decisions made by the Central Committee of the Communist Party or by its General Secretary, whereas in the latter he may applaud them. In the first example, the Soviet Man's judgment is abstract, in the latter it is concrete. Zinoviev claims that Marxist apologists and critics have equally failed to accept dialectics as a totality of logistic approaches. As a matter of fact, he

says, the dialectical method inevitably produces results which contradict the image of Communism (41).

Second, Zinoviev endorses wholeheartedly the materialist theory. He believes that an accurate cognitive method must necessarily imply recognition of the objective social laws and historical tendencies. However, power and determinism of these objective laws are irreversible. For example, a person who has mastered the objective laws of a Communist society must conclude with absolute certainty that Communism with democratic freedoms cannot exist as a normal state of affairs. Such knowledge, Zinoviev claims, is important: people who conform to objective laws will not waste their energy on some "third way" and will "seek realistic fighting ways in order to meliorate their lot" (*Ni svobody* 25).

Third, in order to understand a Communist ideological society, one must examine the social relations within the actual "accumulation of a large number of people for joint life and activity" (*Kommunizm* 46). This means that in the practical application of dialectical and historical materialism one must begin by drawing from the actual everyday human relations existing in the widely spread collectives.

Fourth, there is only one power which can weaken the fetters of ideology, even if only for a small number of people. It is literature as a form of comprehension which presents a merciless analysis of the significant events that have occurred. Zinoviev believes that true literature should ultimately remove the illusion that human beings can be saved by history and the hope that someone will be coming to their rescue. Such a literature places the responsibility for each event upon its participants and mobilizes their moral and spiritual powers. Zinoviev feels that literature must reveal to human beings the foundations and mechanisms for their existence and at the same time point out that "if you want to get rid of your enemy, then here is your weapon — fight it out yourself" (*Ni svobody* 54).

Fifth, Zinoviev accepts Marxist works as valid phenomena, rather than as a science. Marxism is nothing but an ideology, he claims. He stresses that such a Marxist work as Stalin's *About Dialectical and Historical Materialism* is not "banal nonsense," but rather a work that has played an important role, "which may be compared with that of the New Testament," and for the first time it has created "an irreligious and purely ideological society" (*Našej* 100).

Sixth, Zinoviev affirms that an ideological society does not allow one to be the Genuine Man, one who does not seek his own everyday happiness, but prefers to serve, to keep his word, to defend the weak, and to lead a good life. "I have come to understand," he says, "that in our society one must learn to cleverly grab all that one can, to be evasive and shrewd in order not to get hurt" (*Našej* 75). To preserve his own personal ideals, Zinoviev claims to have developed his own personal philosophy of "reasonable adaption to existential conditions" (75). Like others around him, he has gradually developed the habit of playing the expected social role naturally and easily, changing his position,

even to an opposite viewpoint. The theory and practice of dialectical materialism in a new ideological society have molded him into a resourceful, elastic, and adroit operator.

Zinoviev deals with the Soviet Man in every one of his works and analyzes him from all possible angles, i.e., geographical, historical, social, political, psychological, ethical, and spiritual. In his major literary works we may identify three basic prototypes of the Soviet Man — the Ibanskian Man, the Educated Moscovite, and the Exiled Agent.

The Ibanskian Man

Zinoviev's plotless satirico-sociological work entitled *The Yawning Heights* depicts the Soviet Man in a quaint manner. The book evokes comparisons with Rabelais, Hobbes, Swift, and Voltaire (Pritchett, *Books*). In it the Soviet Union is known as Ibansk (a double pun derived in part from the name Ivan and in part from an obscenity). Its inhabitants bearing the same name, Ibanov, are distinguished by nicknames (Schizophrenic, Slandered, Shouter, Chatterer, Dauber, etc.), names given to them by the hostile system when they are in opposition, or by venerable epithets (Thinker, Sociologist, Scholar, etc.), when they are loyal to the system at great profit to themselves. Readers tend to picture these characters as historical stereotypes: the ''Master of the House'' is a caricature of Stalin; the ''Seeker after the Truth'' represents Solzhenitsyn; the ''Dauber,'' Neizvestny; and the ''Pharisee,'' Sinyavsky (Ssachno, *News* 84). They reflect both specific and general personality traits, constantly emerging and disappearing, uttering meaningful and ridiculous ideas about the fate of the country and human existence. Two languages are used, the official one, hypocritical and literary, and the everyday one, colloquial and commonsensical. They intermingle as fiction and reality. The whole society, in which the ideology ''Ism'' has replaced science, and fiction has become more important than reality, endures periods of disorientation, perplexity, and prosperity. This lengthy work, saturated with discussions and dialogues, parodies and ironies, and written without paragraphs and quotation marks, gives the author a powerful instrument that enables him to concentrate on the essence of society and human beings.

The Ibanskian society has its own imperatives indeed. First, mediocrity is allowed to dominate, and every Ibanskian person who stands outside or above it is considered dangerous; consequently, moral integrity is automatically subjected to persecution. Second, employment must be maintained at all costs, even though a job, in reality, might require a limited number of hands; therefore, the Ibanskian only pretends to work. Third, Ibanskian leaders are decorated for being leaders and then decorated again for being decorated; consequently, whatever they achieve is accomplished in spite of themselves.

Considering the role played by Marxism in the political arena, the author distinguishes its impact upon religion, science, and ideology.

While religion is based on belief and science on truth, the existence of an ideology depends upon its acceptance. Hence, it is not necessary for the Ibanskians to believe in an ideology — it is only necessary that they accept it. Marxist ideology is, on the whole, ideally suited for the Ibanskian society, since it is easy to adapt to it. In time, even the most honest Ibanskian citizens can learn to manipulate Marxist phraseology skillfully, so that eventually it is difficult to differentiate between them and a classic Marxist. Subjected to the general laws of the communal life, the Ibanskians appear to be permanently "trampled and crushed, an ideal defiled and stained with blood" (Lert 91). They do not live nor do they work in the real sense of these words, but they carry out "epoch-making experiments." Their society is stable, everything is within the norm, because sickness has become the norm. All Ibanskians are sick and, consequently, they are all healthy. When they shout at the top of their voices that they are only thinking of the welfare of others, they are only thinking about what is good for them; when they insist on sacrificing, they are, in fact, trying to get their hands into everything they can.

The book ends in an atmosphere of gloom overpowering the morally castrated and spiritually dead Ibanskian Man. Religion has been wiped out and a vacuum exists in its place. The desperate consensus is that ideology presents a complete and impenetrable whole. The overwhelming desire for physical death — according to the Ibanskian Law of Death permitting citizens to commit suicide when they reach pensionable age — is no surprise. Every eligible Ibanskian Man, without exception, expresses his desire for cremation and endures lengthy bureaucratic red tape when requesting it. The entrance to the crematorium bears the inscription: "Remember! No one and nothing is forcing you to take this step." Another inscription reads: "As you leave, take the urn containing your ashes with you!" (828).

The book's final words are "And he ceased to exist. And that was the end of everything" (829).

The Educated Muscovite

The second prototype of Zinoviev's Soviet Man is presented in the book *The Radiant Future* which seems to be a gloss on Julien Benda's *La trahison des clercs*. J. O. Tate sees it also as a dystopia like *1984* or, more appropriately, like Zamyatin's *We*, with the difference being that Zinoviev describes a "glorious present" (299). In dialectical colloquies which would seem idiomatic to Lucian, Rabelais, Swift, and Lewis Carroll, this non-novel novel, with a thinly allegorical fiction, lacking individuated characters and with scarcely a plot, built more or less absurdly out of miscellaneous small sections, mercilessly ridicules Soviet practices. While *The Yawning Heights* draws on Russian satirical tradition that goes back at least as far as Saltykov-Shchedrin's *The History of a Town*, the earthly paradise of *The Radiant Future* is called neither Glupov (Dumbtown), nor Ibansk (Fucktown), but Moscow. Its

symbol is an immense concrete structure that supports stainless-steel letters spelling out the slogan LONG LIVE COMMUNISM — THE RADIANT FUTURE OF MANKIND. This slogan erected in Cosmonaut Square is meant to inspire the proletariat while, at the same time, concealing from foreign visitors the ugly vacant lots behind it. The letters are always breaking away and irritating everyone but the drunkards, lovers, addicts, and whores who find refuge among the steel. Within this single succinct image, Zinoviev captures the Soviet society's obsession with high flown words and its failure to cope with the social needs of its citizens.

At the end of the book, the narrator, a typical representative of the liberal Soviet intelligentsia — a doctor of philosophy, professor, member of the editorial board of the leading philosophical journal, member of countless committees, commissions, societies, author of six monographs and hundreds of articles, Department Head of the Theoretical Problems Section on the Methodology of Scientific Communism — wanders off along the avenue that leads from the Institute to the steel structure. He thinks out aloud about his former director: ''God, when will someone decide to get rid of all these idiots and replace them with worthwhile people?'' And continues: ''Yet we will build it. We will build Communism'' (287). He is afraid that passers-by will laugh at him. But no one pays the slightest attention.

At first glance, as Clive James notes, the narrator is ideally equipped to thrive in the Soviet academic system: he has no interest in the subject he researches beyond the fact that it offers advancement (usually by suppressing any sign of originality in others). It is no doubt intentional, as Gordon Clough points out, that in Zinoviev's rendition this Department Head of an important Moscow institute has no name, no face, no spine, and no existence, since — and this is one of the repeated theses in the book — incumbency in such a post is, in itself, an evidence of nonentity (38). While he entertains dreams of becoming a Corresponding Member of the Academy, the narrator enjoys what perks come his way. He takes pleasure in promoting the careers of his children and friends, he can afford a privately rented room for sessions with his mistress, and he envies the greater luxuries of those careerists who are more adroit than he. Although he feels his dignity somewhat compromised when others see him queuing up for rotten potatoes, he has no qualms about rushing out with his entire family to a store that has received a new shipment of generally unavailable toilet paper. He is the unacknowledged author of most of his superior's articles and speeches, and believes nothing that he or any official says or does. He is a Soviet Man.

The narrator exists as a stereotype of the educated Moscovite, a Soviet Man, who is destined never to rise to any social or political height. He is a *triplex man* — he thinks one way, speaks another, and acts in a third way. In his thoughts he laments: ''In the past the Russian man was known for his kindness. But now no trace of any kindness exists. The dominant attitude of the Russian man towards his

fellow men is now made up of malice, intolerance, envy, *Schadenfreude,* hatred and so on'' (116). When previewing the book of the institute collective he heads, he thinks:

> Yet our book is to devote a special chapter to the character of the Soviet Man. What shall we write in it? The usual waffle about the elevated moral and other qualities of Soviet Man and his superiority over the denizens of bourgeois society? If we were to attempt even the discreetest hint at phenomena which do not even derive specifically from socialism, but from the mere fact of a surplus of people and a shortage of goods, we would be putting our heads on the block. (116)

The fate of the Educated Moscovite in *The Radiant Future* is boredom, hypocrisy, cynicism, mediocrity, and plain filth, and it accumulates so many contradictions that transformation of their quantity into new quality necessarily must take place. When the narrator is denied the nomination as Corresponding Member of the Academy and, herewith, access to the privileged class in the Soviet Union, his family as a unity of opposites falls apart. His outspoken second wife, Tamurka, a materialist and opportunist, begins divorce proceedings and with the aid of her mother — a typical Soviet pensioner and thus an unqualified supporter of the Soviet system — demands division of their apartment. His sensitive daughter who has called the Academy a black sheep and has constantly derided the hypocrisy of all the Soviet society, including the Komsomol, commits suicide. His mistress, Svetka, disappears. His department at the institute is completely reorganized, its name changed, and its staff members dispersed. He eventually finds a research position at a little back-street institute.

The Exiled Agent

The third prototype of Zinoviev's Soviet Man appears in *Homo Sovieticus,* where the narrator is an unknown Russian exiled in Western Europe. He introduces the nature of the Soviet Man in these words:

> Those who chucked me over here wanted their action to mean this: Look at this man. He is intelligent and educated. Nobody was bamboozling or intimidating him, nobody was corrupting him. Quite the contrary, he did it himself to other people who do not, however, regard themselves as bamboozled, intimidated or corrupted. . . . It is their nature; and therefore they enjoy doing it both to themselves and to others. They represent a new and more advanced type of thinking being and offer this model to others. Beware! (31-32)

The narrator presents himself as a healthy Soviet Man. When three million people in Cambodia are killed, he exclaims: "Fine! That'll show them what Communism brings you. . . . Why is this? Well because a healthy Homosos is a genuine internationalist and regards all men as brothers. And there's no need to stand on ceremony with one's brothers, is there?" (38).

The narrator tells his readers that it is absurd to require sincerity from a Soviet Man. "He would be glad to be [sincere], but he can't, because he considers that he is always sincere in one respect or another. So if he is ready to change one sincerity into another from one minute to the next, this isn't a sign of insincerity" (53).

Morally, the Soviet Man does not see himself as a KGB collaborator. He only participates in power. The narrator travels abroad frequently and upon his return he always presents, as expected, a detailed report to the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. He knows beforehand that his report will go to the KGB. But he does not care. For him there is no difference between the Presidium of the AS USSR and the KGB anyway. He only does his duty as a Soviet Man. He does not see anything immoral in it. Morality is good for people who can afford it.

> But if a man finds himself below the bread-line, beneath the minimum that is indispensable if moral norms are to be considered applicable in real life, then it is senseless to apply moral criteria to his behavior. A man in such a position is not only free *ipso facto* from moral norms, he is freed from them by these moral concepts themselves. It is immoral to expect a man to be moral if he lacks the minimum living conditions that permit society to demand morality of him. (54)

The Soviet Man is no less moral than a Western man: in fact, he is more sensitive to the fate of his fellowmen. He shows more sympathy not because of his moral principles, but because of his higher level of collectivism. "Which is better," asks the narrator, "to be indifferent to your neighbor's fate in a moral society or to be concerned about it in an amoral society?" (56).

Psychologically, the Soviet Man is plastic, flexible, adaptable. A bad deed as such is not experienced by the Soviet Man as bad, and since it is not experienced by him as an isolated phenomenon, it is only an element of a more complex whole (a block) which is not bad as a whole. "A drop of poison in a complicated life-saving medicine doesn't act as a poison" (55). Moreover, the exiled Soviet Man puzzles the Western world, including authorities and intelligence officers, when he sequentially takes diametrically opposed viewpoints on various issues and in dialectic word manipulations proves his point. Ultimately, he addresses the reader in these words:

> . . . what I am saying here does not express my convictions. . . . I haven't got any convictions. . . . If a man has convictions it is a sign that he is not intellectually mature. . . . more often convictions have no effect on people's behavior. They merely beautify vanity, relieve unclear consciences and cover up stupidity. (11)

The narrator as a professional man is proud to know that ". . . indeterminacy, fluidity, mutability, block- and multi-think are peculiarities of Soviet society . . . a society of chameleons" (74).

Intellectually, a contemporary society is more than saturated, claims the narrator. Members of the intelligentsia have often played an outright reactionary role in Soviet society. Stalin's repressions would not have been possible without the intellectual elite which projected, calculated, created, and started the whole process. The narrator says that more than ever before the Soviets are using the Western intelligentsia and gives one of many thousands of examples:

> A book critical of Soviet society has appeared in the West. Simultaneously the translation of a book by Academician 'N' comes out in the same country. An official of our embassy finds out in advance who will review these books. For this sort of thing we have innumerable and unfailing sources of information which don't cost us any money at all. It also happens that we ourselves recommend suitable people, and the publishers willingly meet us half-way. A meeting, on the face of it accidental, occurs between one of our diplomats and the reviewer-to-be. The diplomat hints that they are intending to translate Reviewer's book into Russian. The rest happens automatically. A bad review appears of the book criticizing the Soviet regime and a splendid one of the book by the Soviet academic. What these books are really worth, you know yourself. (185)

The Soviet Man contends that ordinary people, though regarded by intellectuals as ignorant and idiotic, have the intellect to solve the problems existing in Soviet life. Therefore, it is only proper that they take charge of Soviet matters. On the other hand, if the intellectuals would take over the leadership of society, the result would be much worse because they lack the feeling for reality. Not having life subordinated to them is distressful to the intellectuals, but the Soviet Man contends that in the long run what makes intellectuals dangerous is that although they appear wise, in reality, they are only professionally refined fools.

Historically, the Soviet Man is a new type of man and not necessarily a citizen of the USSR. There have been events where the Soviet Man's

inherent traits have surfaced in different epochs and countries throughout history. Conditioned to exist under relatively bad circumstances, constantly expecting situations to worsen, accustomed to subjection to a despotic power, generally such people approve the actions of those in power, denounce the actions of dissidents, disapprove of those who disturb the established behavioral forms, exhibit solidarity with fellow citizens who are sanctioned by those in power, and support their leaders by possessing the standard ideologized consciousness, the feeling of responsibility for their country, and the preparedness to resort to sacrifice. However, for the first time in history, the narrator claims, the Soviet Man has appeared in Russia:

> Up to now the Soviet people who have achieved the qualities of the Homosos of maximum maturity are the ones with a comparatively high level of culture and education and also those in the most socially active part of the population (especially people in management, science, propaganda, culture and education). . . . The virus of Homososery is spreading apace over the entire globe. It is the gravest disease that can afflict mankind because it reaches to the very essence of the human being. (199)

To be sure, a Homosos does not exhibit any debasement in man:

> On the contrary, he is the highest product of civilization. He is superman. He is universal. If need be, he can commit any frightfulness. Where it is possible, he can possess every virtue. There are no secrets which he cannot explain. There are no problems which he cannot solve. He is naive and simple. He is vacuous. He is omniscient and all-pervasive. He is replete with wisdom. . . . He is ready for anything and anyone. He is even ready for the best. He awaits it, although he does not believe in it. He hopes for the worst. He is Nothing, that is to say, Everything. He is God, pretending to be the Devil. He is the Devil, pretending to be God. He is in every man. (199)

Spiritually, the Soviet Man is a secular materialist existing *sub specie vanitatis*. The temporal horizon is the only thing for him, and yet it is senseless. Looking at the world telescopically, a human being, in the final analysis, is nothing but an ephemeral beast. The melancholic author advises his reader on how to live his existence: ''Do not trust anyone. . . . Remember, the more you trust, the more cynically they will deceive you.'' ''Do not worry about posterity. Posterity is indifferent to our fate. Our descendants will interpret even our best intentions as attempted coercion and our finest achievements as absurdities and rubbish.'' ''Spit at friendship.'' ''Don't love'' (202-03).

And yet in *Homo Sovieticus* one finds this passage:

> There is only one bright spot in the dark horizon of my life (I am beginning to express myself really beautifully; this is symptomatic): it's my Edifice. It is especially beautiful early in the morning when the sun comes up. It becomes so radiantly joyful that I want to weep from ecstasy. It will, of course, be the Temple of a new and clean Religion. Within its portals a young triumphant God will dwell. (161)

Politically, the Soviet Man is an ASS (*Agent Sovyetskogo Soyuza* — Agent of the Soviet Union). He does not see anything good or bad in it. "It's simply an objective fact," he notes. "A rather sad fact and rather comical fact, but in no way tragic. It's banal rather than anything else" (47). There are so many agents expelled from the Soviet Union today that even the KGB does not remember who they all are. The narrator himself is an ASS. For the time being, his function is elementary, i.e., he plays the role of an experimental unit cast into an alien environment. His KGB instructor has told him to look at himself as if he were an observing instrument at an unknown planet: "We need to know everything that you see there. . . . Great Things are ahead of us. We are making a Great Attack on the West. You are a particle of these Great Things, of the Great Attack. Do you understand?" (27).

The conquest of the West is one of the narrator's favorite themes. At a Western university meeting, the narrator is delighted when an unfriendly audience attempts to denigrate him by calling him a Soviet Man. He quickly retorts:

> I am flattered by the characterization you have given us. In reality, gentlemen, we are much worse. We were clever enough in our time to destroy a mighty state created by representatives of the highest race, *homo sapiens,* and to create our own mighty state from fear of which you here, if you will excuse the expression, have long since dirtied your trousers. We, gentlemen, are altogether more dangerous than you think. And do you know why? We are not such idiots as you would have us be. And the main point is that we are capable of losing things not only at others' expense but at our own expense too. (92)

Curiously enough, in the chapter entitled "A Candid Conversation," the Soviet Man concludes that the expected war between the Soviet Union and the West has already been in process through the peaceful infiltration of numerous Soviet immigrants into the West (152).

Conclusion

In reviewing Zinoviev's literary work, one may conclude that the author presents the Soviet Man basically in three prototypes — the Ibanskian Man, the Educated Moscovite, and the Exiled Agent — which are corroborated in a multitude of variations. Their common denominator — *Homo Sovieticus* — is not by any means an enviable species superior to *Homo Sapiens,* but is rather a grotesque, vain, and absurd walking cadaver.

Thus, Zinoviev's fragmented, atomized, reified, alienated, exploited, and dehumanized Soviet Man refutes Marx's concept of the ennobled selfless human being that allegedly arises in a classless Communist society. Zinoviev realistically illustrates the Soviet Man's capacity for irreversible submission, enslavement, aggression, and destruction. Communal existence has not produced solidarity and equality, but rather a group egoism which is simply a cover-up for an unmitigated private interest rationalized in terms of the public good. Zinoviev seems to feel that there is no way out of the Communist trap where collective ownership, lethargy, fickleness, and inability are the norms.

The ideologized Soviet Man as *homo triplex* along with his sterile economic, social, political, and cultural milieu represents a dangerous social malaise. The total subordination of his ethics to political calculus and the absence of a critical culture constitute a major threat not only to Soviet development, but also to the security of the international community. Sakharov emphasizes the global connection between democratization and detente, Solzhenitsyn stands for moral regeneration in both the Eastern and the Western worlds, and Medvedev outlines a realistic democratization of Soviet society based on existing structures and societal dynamics. Zinoviev's *homo sovieticus* as an allegedly higher species, on the other hand, refrains from recognizing the urgency for cultural changes in his established society. As Radoslav Kostić-Katunac points out, he has neither the moral stamina nor the spiritual depth to challenge the onslaught of a totalitarian regime's materialistic theory and dialectic method that twist the human spirit and suppress truth, justice, compassion, and love. In the contemporary world where Communism expands, the Soviet Man has become a truly international phenomenon. One feels justified in being concerned about so many peoples of the world who once were raw, but proud; uneducated, yet noble; shy, but righteous; and now seem crippled, shackled by fear, adrift without a moral or spiritual anchor.

One has to share Oskar Gruenwald's conclusion, that in the lengthening shadows of an aging twentieth century, people have arrived at a fateful crossroad. Either they will affirm the humanity of the human race and assure the survival and growth of the species commonly known as *homo sapiens* or they will fritter away their evolutionary chances in a tragic struggle against themselves, their fellow human beings, and nature. The essential conflict in Communist countries today is religious, rather than political; in essence, it is the struggle for

the liberation of the human soul and of individuals themselves. Obedient to the *nomenklatura* (delineated by Michael Voslensky as a class of privileged exploiters who acquired wealth from power, not power from wealth), Russian intellectuals like Vassily Aksyonov conclude that the Soviet Man has only one weapon for his liberation — the personal Christian tradition of Tolstoy and Pasternak.

Zinoviev avoids taking a stand on this issue because of his Hegelian dialectic method which in Marx's system abandons the rules of formal logic and thrives on collapsing mutually exclusive categories into a unity of opposites. Thus, he can describe Soviet society both as a normal and an abnormal phenomenon, both as a permanent whole which is destined to conquer the world and a temporary unit which is inevitably doomed to fall. In one of his last interviews, however, he states: "I cannot predict the time-frame, but one thing I *can* say, the Soviet Union will be the initiator of any future World War" (Zinoviev, "Portrait" 24).

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