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'Humans Are Omnipotent and Beyond Their Destiny!' Late Soviet Perspective on Girls' Upbringing and the Female Self

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ABSTRACT

The article examines post-Stalinist Soviet expertise on girls' education and upbringing, analysing texts for and about female adolescents created by specialists in pedagogical sciences, psychology, sociology, medicine as well as children's writers and journalists from different parts of the Union, including national republics. The text focuses on the feminine ideal developed in the expertise through specialised concepts and role models suggested for Soviet girls and young women. I contend that the ideology of girlhood, created in the expert texts, appeared to be internally inconsistent. It was highly affected by the Cold War confrontational narrative and exclusionary for many Soviet females, forming a set of rigid norms for girls and young women. However, the texts also present emancipatory ideas for female political participation and economic independence. Most importantly, they promote a powerful vision of female excellence and even a socially accepted version of female defiance, which was unusual for the girlhood cultures of that time.

1 | Introduction

Full access to education and professional training for girls and women was one of the first reforms implemented by the Bolshevik government after it gained power. As many other Soviet reforms in education, this one was imbued with utopianism. Bolshevik leaders aimed to create new Soviet people, focusing particularly on the new generations. The Soviet state developed ideological tools for it, reforming pedagogical systems and educational institutions, establishing children's and youth organisations like Young Pioneers and Komsomol and developing new children's culture. Within this system, a specific discussion about girlhood emerged. After the heated debates of the 1920s, a consensus was reached in the early 1930s about the special role of women in Soviet society: they were expected to work professionally and engage politically and socially while participating in reproductive labour.[1] Soviet state and its different agents aimed to prepare girls for this role from a young age. The new idea of an emancipated Soviet woman, celebrated by the official culture, was imposed on different ethnic groups of the new state: the officials actively promoted education among young women and girls from the Muslim population and ethnic minorities, along with socialist values and westernised customs which were supposed to replace local traditions like veiling.[2]

In this article, I analyse the post-Stalin girlhood ideologies, which reflected the evolution of the Soviet regime and its values. I work with late Soviet expert discussion on female upbringing, focusing first and foremost on the feminine ideal created by the experts in social and medical sciences. I show that the new wave of expertise on this topic appeared in the post-Stalin Soviet Union (USSR); it was partially shaped by late Stalinism and impacted by the introduction of separate education in Soviet secondary schools in 1943. At first, expert discussion unfolded only among a very limited circle of specialists; eventually, it led to a boom of specialised literature, which started after the death of Stalin and can be compared in intensity with the 1920s. The discussion unfolded in different parts of the Soviet Union and various disciplines and research clusters, uniting authors who were writing about sex education, sex differences in pedagogy, moral

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upbringing and other topics. Interest in girls' adolescence united social scientists, medical specialists, pedagogues and psychologists scattered across the USSR; they published texts for specialists and popularising materials for teachers, parents and girls. In my research, I follow the call for decolonising gender research on Central-Eastern Europe and Eurasia. I address Soviet expertise in its geographical and cultural diversity, working with all Soviet and local research institutions and individual authors from national republics, including Byelorussian, Ukrainian, Estonian, Latvian, Kazakh, Uzbek and Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, as well as several autonomous units within the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.[3]

Late Soviet experts considered the process of female adolescence a special time when girls prepare for their future roles in society. They constructed a specific late Soviet female ideal described through a set of concepts and role models. The ideal slightly differs from text to text, which still have many common tropes reproduced in expertise for several decades. Experts envision Soviet girls and young women as active subjects, capable of excellence and exceptional achievements both in professional life, politics and social activities. Soviet girls were supposed to combine these achievements and active stances with intensive future motherhood and caring for others. Comparing the late socialist version of girlhood with a few examples of other girlhood ideologies from the time, I highlight the specificities of female selfhood it suggested. At the same time, I show that this ideal was, in fact, exclusionary for many girls. It was also very demanding since it assumed perfection in every sphere, whether in academics, political and social activism, home chores or motherhood, and even called on the heroic deeds girls were supposed to undertake for the sake of the socialist utopia. The unique combination of political and professional empowerment, imbued with socialist utopianism, and extreme pressure and exclusion make the Soviet model stand out from some other mainstream girl cultures of the time. The Soviet perspective on girls upbringing and female self thus adds to our understanding of the diversity of girlhoods which developed in the second half of the twentieth century and enriches the discussions in the field of the global history of girls.

2 | Soviet Expert Discussion on Female Adolescence

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of advice literature for the construction and regulation of girlhood in the modern epoch. Catherine Driscoll has shown that different types of manuals for girls and their parents, as well as publications in the press, bit by bit supplanted other forms of female socialisation in the twentieth century.[4] Describing this process, she used the expression 'flood of guidance for girls', mainly addressing the situation in English-speaking countries. To an extent, her argument is relevant to the late Soviet Union, as it was also distinguished by the appearance of a vast amount of new literature discussing and framing female adolescence, especially after the 1917 Revolution.

Right after gaining power, Bolshevik leaders started the radical reformation of society, which happened with the support of social sciences. Already in the early 1920s, they were set on Marxist foundations, and scholars started actively participating in utopian socialist projects. Soviet psychologists and pedagogues were developing methods for reshaping people's consciousness to create new Soviet subjects dedicated to communal values and building a new society together.[5] Experts also discussed what a truly socialist upbringing of girls could look like, sometimes proposing whimsical ideas, such as eliminating dolls from female education, which as some pedagogues believed, made girls too focused on domesticity.[6] The debates and experimentations of the 1920s, however, were interrupted by Stalin's terror, with many scholars being repressed and killed, and a number of influential schools in Soviet social sciences totally wiped out. As Lynne Attwood shows, the discussion about sex differences in education, which constituted the basis for the expertise on female adolescence, disappeared from social science and the press for some time.[7]

Attwood claims that the silence on sex differences lasted until the early 1960s; other sources prove that the new wave of expertise on this topic had already appeared in the Soviet Union amid the Second World War, with the introduction of separate education in secondary schools in 1943, and intensified in the early 1950s. Before the 1943 reform, the Communist Party leadership and educational administrators held an internal debate about the need for separate schooling.[8] This idea was probably invoked by problems with discipline in secondary schools: in the 1930s, the number of students was growing rapidly, and the authorities were seeking new ways to control the overcrowded classes. At the same time, education in the Soviet Union went through militarisation caused by the mounting threat of war. According to some officials (for example, from the Moscow City Educational Department), separate schooling was necessary to improve military training among boys as well as the situation with discipline.[9]

The first policy proposal on separate schooling was released in 1941; in the same year, experimental separate classes appeared in several schools of Moscow and nearby cities.[10] The experiment was interrupted by the German invasion of the USSR in 1941, but in two years, the authorities nevertheless established separate education in big cities throughout the Union. It was done despite the massive disruptions brought by the war and the fact that coeducation had been propagated as one of the achievements of the 1917 Revolution. Thus, Soviet teachers were shocked by the return to separate schooling.[11]

Separate education did not produce the expected effect: in the 1940s, the authorities were still concerned about severe problems with discipline in schools, especially in the boys' ones.[12] Besides, the Soviet educational system was not ready for the massive restructuring needed to organise separate schooling: it provoked organisational chaos causing overcrowded schools and a lack of school principals (who were supposed to be of the same sex as their students).[13] Already in the late 1940s, it became evident that the reform was unsuccessful, poorly designed and thus needed reconsideration. However, the policy was eliminated only in 1954, after the death of Stalin.

The very practice of introducing gender segregation at schools made gender differences in education a topic for discussion among pedagogues, scholars and publicists; it also reappeared in the specialised press. Right after introducing the new system in 1943, two Professors of Psychology from Moscow State University, Smirnov and Levitov, published an article about the psychological

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particularities of boys and girls in the *Uchitelskaia gazeta* (Teachers' Newspaper) for the school teachers and administrators. The article's main argument is rather confusing. Smirnov and Leitov argue that variations within groups of females or males are more significant than those between sexes. Still, they admit psychological differences between boys and girls and explain them by biological, social and historical factors. They assert that one should not evaluate and compare 'special, equally positive' qualities of boys and girls and then immediately introduce such comparison by, for example, mentioning that girls prefer easier tasks, and boys need a faster learning tempo.[14] Smirnov and Levitov insist that separate schools would 'best fulfil' the aim of educating Soviet children by allowing teachers to take sex differences into consideration.

A much more straightforward piece, 'Disturbing Question,' appeared in the popular *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (Literary Newspaper) seven years later in 1950. Written in a language typical of Stalinist denunciation campaigns, it harshly criticised the state policies and official bodies and provoked a massive reaction, followed by several hundreds of letters from the readers (some of the letters were published in the newspaper, others preserved in a handwritten form in the newspaper's archive).[15] The article was written by a recognised psychologist, Professor Viktor Kolbanovsky, who starts by testifying that Soviet parents and educators have been actively arguing about separate schooling since 1943. Kolbanovsky harshly criticises the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences and ministries of education of the Soviet republics for not properly researching the effects of separate and co-education. The lack of research, though, does not stop Kolbanovsky from drawing his own conclusions: he openly attacks those authors who promote separate schooling by saying that boys and girls have different academic interests and personal characteristics. According to Kolbanovsky, these divisions limit the perspectives of girls, who in the environment of female schools, lose interest in scientific disciplines and start focusing too much on 'philistine happiness' (*meshchanskoye schastye*), meaning romance and future family life. Kolbanovsky invents a term for those authors who insist on differences between boys and girls – 'bifurcators' (*bifurkatory*) – and calls their views 'bifurcators' perversions' (*bifurkatsionnyye izvrashcheniya*), thus openly attacking them. He claims that separate education interferes with the development of 'youthful friendship' between boys and girls. The idea of such friendship later became central to Soviet sex education: a cultivated sense of camaraderie and positive influence of male and female children on each other were considered crucial for fostering healthy, cultured and well-mannered individuals capable of establishing strong families in the future. Interestingly, the romance was usually discussed very bashfully by the Soviet experts. The way future mothers were supposed to eventually move from friendship to relationship and build a family remains obscure in most of the publications: some of them suggest that this happens naturally over time while others avoid the topic altogether.

Although Kolbanovsky opposed the idea of even just mentioning differences between boys and girls, his article provoked a more vigorous debate on the topic. In the letters to the newspaper, readers from all over the Union shared their opinions on sex differences and the specifics of boys' and girls' demeanour. In one of the unpublished letters, V. Strukov, the head of education in a boy's school, devotes seven pages to fully supporting the ideas of Kolbanovsky. At the same time, unlike Kolbanovsky, Strukov constantly compares boys and girls: 'In a boys' school, there will always be more noise, more children running around, and different accidents', states the author, 'boys are more mobile and active, and it is more difficult to work with them'.[16] Another letter published in the newspaper and written by a Komsomol activist, Lyudmila Chernogubovskaya, complains that boys are more technologically adept than girls. The author explains this difference, providing her own version of social constructivism: 'As soon as a child begins to understand a thing, toys are immediately bought to them: a car and a brick set for a boy, dolls and children's kitchen utensils for a girl'.[17] She criticises separate education for the poor level of training in mathematics and physics for girls, who face additional problems at polytechnic schools. In general, the readers' letters reflect a diversity of views on the topic in Soviet society and show that sex differences in education and upbringing interested both professional educators and the general public. Discussion significantly evolved after the end of Stalinism, followed by the abolition of separate schooling in 1954, which, paradoxically, also brought new elements of gender segregation at schools, for example, the revision and expansion of housekeeping classes (*domovodstvo*) for girls in the 1960s.[18]

Apart from separate schooling, discussion on female upbringing also developed in the context of post-Stalinist sex education among the youth. Soviet sex-education has a long and rich history rooted in the pre-Soviet and early-Soviet periods; its development, however, was also interrupted by Stalinism. Only a couple of books on sexual education were published between the early 1930s and 1953; they touched on sexual life in detail and advocated abstinence outside marriage.[19] Still, their authors underlined the importance of sex education among the youth. Khrushchev's political liberalisation radically expanded the range of topics, allowed for public discussion, and changed the character of state control over population. Openly repressive politics, both in the public and private sphere, gave way to a more sophisticated, micro-level disciplining system, similar to what Michel Foucault has described in his scholarship.[20] Control over sexuality also weakened: abortions were decriminalised in 1955, and as Hearne puts it, 'medical intervention and public health campaigns replaced prohibition and force as methods for regulating'.[21] Sexual education in this context operated as one form of campaigning which replaced more repressive policies. A new expertise on sex education started developing in the late 1950s, and the questions of female adolescence played an essential role. Experts from at least four different disciplines in social sciences developed sex education in the late USSR: sociology, pedagogy, psychology and medicine.

Demographic issues of the 1960s became a driver for a new field of Soviet expertise – the sociology of family and relationships. Dan Healey describes the work of these sociologists as no less than the Soviet sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, in creating a whole new language for discussing sexuality.[22] The most well-known representatives of this area were Sergey Golod and Igor Kon; both were influenced by Alfred Kinsey's work, and inquired about the generational changes in the sexual life of Soviet people. This topic was highly censored in the Soviet Union; therefore, Kon and Golod published many of their writings only in the late 1980s and after the regime's fall, when the political context allowed them to speak more freely about their research. For example,

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only in 1981 could Kon release his first book on sexology – it was first published abroad, in Hungary, and only then in the USSR.[23] Therefore, for a long time the influence of Kon's and Golod's ideas was limited and did not go beyond local expert communities and closed circles of intellectuals.

Apart from sociologists, sexual education was discussed by Soviet pedagogues and psychologists, who were also actively engaged in theorising sex differentiation in personality. Many of them worked in connection to pedagogical institutes and the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, where a Department of the Ethical and Aesthetical Problems of Sexual Education was created in the 1970s.[24] They organised collaborations and expert networks, as revealed through the lists of supervisors and opponents of the doctoral thesis defended in different parts of the USSR.[25] It seems that the community of sociologists I discussed earlier was in conflict with pedagogues – they disagreed on the methods of sex education. In his book *Klubnichka na berezke* (Strawberry on a Birch), already published in post-Soviet Russia, Kon criticises the educators from the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences as 'mainly engaged in moralising' rather than sex education.[26] Soviet pedagogues indeed discussed the topic from a much broader perspective, which included moral education, communist morals and physical education. They avoided talking about sex and even romance openly, which apparently let them avoid censorship and publish much more extensively – the most popular pedagogical book in my selection was published in two runs of 400,000 and 800,000 copies, and the articles mentioned were printed in state magazines and newspapers released in millions of copies.

What unites most of the pedagogues in my sample is that their argumentation is generally not evidence-based; it relies on the experts' professional practice, opinion and common sense. Most Soviet pedagogues did no empirical research and mainly shared their personal experiences mixed with state ideology. Smirnov and Levitov, in their 1943 article, refer to several anecdotal cases from their professional life to prove their ideas and spread sexist stereotypes. Twenty-five years later, in a 1968 article *Vospityvayte rytsarey* (Raise the Knights) a well-recognised Soviet pedagogue named Vasyl Sukhomlynsky similarly argued that the approach to boys and girls in education should be differentiated.[27] I could find only a few examples of evidence-based research on this topic in Soviet pedagogical doctoral theses and academic articles. Their research design, however, is not clearly articulated and is described rather generally, like 'interviews with pupils' or 'discussions in class'.

Experts who identified themselves first of all with psychology tended to be more transparent and specific about their methodologies and interested in research design; this, however, does not make their research less ideological.[28] For example, for his doctoral thesis titled 'Psychology of the moral orientation of a Soviet teenage girl', defended in Moscow in 1950, N.L. Klein engaged in participant observations in girls' schools and even organised a literary group for female students to be able to collect the data; he also worked with girls' diaries, personal correspondence and essays and asked girls to write descriptions of each other for his research.[29] However, like many pedagogical writings, this thesis was focused on the 'moral orientation' of girls and the upbringing of teenagers 'in the spirit of communist morality', for which Klein, just like Kolbanovsky in the exact same year, recommended coeducation of boys and girls.[30]

The sociological, pedagogical and psychological literature on sex education was accompanied by one written by medical professionals. Despite the development (however, pretty limited) of sexology in the post-Stalin USSR, this literature was written mainly by general practitioners, gynaecologists and employees of medical schools, as well as research institutes and public organisations related to hygiene and sanitation.[31] Research papers published by medics show that they were hugely engaged in outreach, organising popularising lectures for parents, teachers, and the youth at schools, including special programmes for girls. The programmes for females were often organised by the specialists of the so-called 'girls' hygiene and physical development cabinets', established in children's hospitals and clinics in the early Thaw, in line with the development of paediatric gynaecology in the Soviet Union; both reflect the increasing interest of authorities and experts in the specifics of female adolescence. The first cabinet of this type was organised in Kyiv in 1954, and later, this initiative was replicated in other cities and towns of the USSR: only in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic their number grew from seventeen in 1959 to 95 in 1965.[32] Generally, medical literature seems much more focused on practical topics like how to properly teach children the basics of anatomy, physiology and hygiene and prevent sexually transmitted diseases and 'sexual perversions' among the youth. However, just like the writings by pedagogues and psychologists, this literature also insists on talking with children about 'respect for a woman, girl's honour, chastity, friendship, love' and other moral topics as a part of sex education.[33]

In parallel with expertise on girlhood, written for adults, a whole wave of publications explicitly aimed at adolescent girls appeared in the 1960s; they were often also written by experts in social and medical sciences. For a long time, no mass-circulation magazine for girls and young women existed in the late USSR; there were only women's magazines, like *Rabotnitsa* (Female Worker) or *Krestianka* (Female Peasant) and press for the youth of both sexes, like *Rovesnik* (Peer). However, during the Thaw, subsections and supplements for teenage girls appeared in more general press. For example, *Rabotnitsa* women's magazine has a subsection called *Podruzhka* (Girlfriend), designed for girls aged sixteen to eighteen. It consisted of several pages, filled mostly with advice articles and letters from the readers.

In addition to supplements, in the 1960s–1980s Soviet publishing houses released a whole range of advice books designed for female teenagers, which can be considered the Soviet analogues of girls' magazines. Some of these books were translations from other languages like German and Polish; most of them, though, were authored by Soviet specialists – the already mentioned medical doctors and pedagogues, as well as children's writers.[34] Books for girls differed in purpose. Some were dedicated to certain topics, like hygiene or sports (these were often written by medical specialists).[35] Others, much like Australian and American girls' magazines of the 1980s, provided information about relationships, although, as I said, they covered romance in a very limited way.[36] There were also inter-subject books and albums released by the Komsomol publishing house.[37] These books contain advice articles, inspirational, and didactic fictional and documentary

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stories for girls, providing potential role models, both female and male, like Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman to travel into space, or writer Mikhail Sholokhov.[38]

The most famous Soviet book for girls, *Devochki, kniga dlya vas!* (A Book for You, Girls!), was written by the children's writer Sofya Mogilevskaya. It was published in 1962 and then reprinted almost every year during the Soviet era and even after.[39] The book was translated from Russian into other languages of the Union, for example, Ukrainian and Moldavian, and spread across the country. It contains advice articles about cleaning, cooking, sewing, gardening, camping, etiquette, hygiene and sports, accompanied by educational stories and random facts, like how much salt an average human eats in a lifetime.[40] The book also includes a whole section about public activities, in which Soviet girls from the Young Pioneer organisation were involved, like looking after the groups of younger children (*oktyabryata*) and organising events and celebrations. Interestingly, the book says nothing about fashion – a topic common in girls' magazines and manuals in other countries. Generally, fashion and clothes are rarely featured in the materials I analyse and primarily appear in the sections about hygiene or needlework. This feature can be explained by the commodity shortage in the USSR, which turned getting the basic elements of clothing into a real challenge, as well as an ideological attitude that criticised excessive enthusiasm for the 'philistine' life with its focus on things rather than values and ideals. The latter also imbued the discussions about beauty: Soviet books for girls called on their readers to be healthy and sporty and look tidy, but warned against the use of makeup and, in general, excessive fixation on appearance.

To elaborate on all the listed topics, *Devochki, kniga dlya vas!* introduces two female characters – Kapa and Tanya. Tanya is portrayed as an exemplary Soviet teenager who knows how to handle most of the tasks she comes across and learns any missing skills fast and diligently. She is polite, disciplined, meticulous and a good leader for juniors. On the opposite, Kapa is sloppy and disorganised; she handles personal belongings carelessly and abandons tasks halfway. Girls are openly contrasted in the book, but interestingly, Kapa is not portrayed as a negative character: she is kind, ready for hard work and, most importantly, wants to achieve the same level of perfection as Tanya. The whole book is written as a manual, which helps her (meaning readers) reach that goal. As I show in the next part of the article, this type of perfection in all spheres, from home chores to social activities and study, was one of the central requirements of late Soviet girlhood ideology.

The development of sexual education and the described literature in the 1940–1970s eventually led to the establishment of a secondary school course, 'Ethics and Psychology of Family Life', in 1986 (with the first experimental implementation in some schools from 1982). All the Soviet students had to take the course in the ninth and tenth grades, aged fifteen to seventeen. Compared to other mandatory courses, it took up little space in the curriculum: it lasted for thirty-four academic hours meaning that students had maximum one such class a week.[41] The pedagogical guides suggest teaching this course in a highly theoretical manner; they include lengthy contemplations on the essence of personality, friendship and family, and numerous references to Russian classical literature and Marxist ideologists. They do not touch on anything directly related to sex, contraception or bodily experience and primarily celebrate the approach of the Soviet pedagogues.[42] Unfortunately for them, at the same time when the course was fully introduced, their expertise generally started losing momentum. The Soviet leadership launched *perestroika* – a set of large-scale political and societal reforms, weakening censorship and state control and reintroducing the relationships between the USSR and the West. During *perestroika*, Soviet social researchers started developing gender and sexuality studies, transferring ideas and texts from Western academia, and in 1990, opened the first laboratory with the word 'gender' in its title (in one of the institutes of the Academy of Sciences).[43] Publishing houses released literature which was banned earlier, including erotic fiction; new debates on sexuality flooded the Soviet press. Expert and public discourses diversified drastically, and earlier expertise, developed in line with the state ideology, lost its dominance. However, the introduction of the 'Ethics and Psychology of Family Life' course was still crucial as it meant the institutionalisation of the late Soviet expertise on gender and sexuality in the schooling system. It also reinforced the late Soviet female ideal, which I will focus on further.

3 | Girlhood in Post-Stalinist Expertise

In 1966, *O polovom vospitanii shkolnikov* (On the Sexual Education of Schoolchildren) by Professor of Pedagogy Seranush Dashtayants was published in Grozny – the capital of Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.[44] It was one of dozens of Soviet publications on sex education released in the post-Stalin period, and appears to be a typical example of its kind. The book sets the goals for sexual education of the youth and advises parents and teachers about the specificities of girls' and boys' upbringing.

In the chapter devoted specifically to girls, Dashtayants mentions research she conducted in Grozny's school Number 20. She asked female secondary school students to write essays about their future. The author cites one of the most exemplary essays in full: 'I want to live so that the people around me feel good about the fact that I live and so that they can call me a Human', – writes the unnamed girl, who also explains what it means for her.[45] First, she wants to become a distinguished medical doctor and make 'great scientific discoveries'.[46] She also wants to marry her boyfriend and have children, as being a mother 'is a great happiness and a duty of any healthy woman'.[47] The author states that her boyfriend, serving in the Red Army, will undoubtedly become a general officer someday. She will be a 'capricious and elegant old woman' by then, and they will be in love 'just like in the days of youth'.[48] At the end of the essay, the author emphasises that the life she describes is absolutely achievable because 'humans are omnipotent and beyond their destiny'.[49]

Although it is impossible to verify if the essay was written by a real Soviet girl, it remains significant for my research as it encapsulates the key aspects of the ideal found in late Soviet expert writings. Despite the extensive geography of this expertise, the variety of disciplines and fields as well as the small connection between some specialists, many of their ideas appear to be very similar across the USSR, including national republics. This is only natural, considering that even in the most liberal

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periods, the Soviet social sciences were controlled by highly centralised state institutions and imbued with unifying ideology. Most specialists resist viewing girls and women as inferior to men or limit femininity to motherhood and domesticity, instead insisting on gender equality as one of the core socialist values. They believe in a diversity of women's talents and promote political initiative, professional self-realisation and economic independence in females. Further, I elaborate on the vision, created by the expertise of the post-Stalin period, putting it in the context of the late Soviet children's political education and Cold War narratives, and discussing the role models which were supposed to embody the socialist girlhood formula.

The concept of 'girl's honour' (*devichia chest*), which widely appears in expert writings on girls, perfectly embeds the Soviet feminine ideal and captures its main peculiarities. Brendan McElmeel claims that this concept (which he translates as 'maiden's pride') can be found already in early Soviet texts. For example, it is widely used in *Kniga dlya roditeley* (Book for Parents) by Anton Makarenko, one of the classics of early Soviet pedagogy, who hugely impacted the development of the field. McElmeel characterises the concept as a 'complicated mix of radical and traditional' meaning that even if 'it sounds pre-revolutionary' the concept still implies revolutionary ideas of solidarity and gender egalitarianism in line with the more traditional demands for female modesty and virginity before marriage.[50] The latter is characteristic especially for Stalinism, when public debates in the 1920s about new forms of partnership came to an end, replaced by much stricter control over the Soviet citizens' private lives. High Stalinism introduced rigid sexual norms praising monogamous heterosexual marriage and punishing sexuality outside of it, especially non-heterosexual one: male homosexuality was recriminalised in the mid-1930s, while female's was considered a pathology. In the context of my research, it means that in late Soviet expertise, homosexual girls as well as sexually active female teenagers are mentioned first and foremost in specialised medical and criminological research on the so-called 'pedagogically neglected children' like the female inmates of the Soviet juvenile penal colonies; their sexuality is seen as one of numerous features of their overall 'abnormal' and antisocial behaviour, described as alien to the Soviet system in all possible ways.[51]

I support McElmeel's idea that the concept of girls' honour is indeed not limited to the norms of sexual purity; however, in late Soviet expertise, it also imposes much more than a mix of old and new values. The concept marks a whole moral system based on socialist ideology, translated and adapted for the audience of teenage girls.[52] As the Soviet pedagogue Lidia Verb puts it in her 1963 article, girl's honour concerns a girl's whole personality and her development in general. To maintain girl's honour, according to Verb, means to be modest, avoid casual sexual relationships and save yourself for 'true love', but also to be a hardworking, polite, caring, sincere, humble person who respects the results of other's labour and is ready for sacrifice for the interests of the people and the state.[53] Valentina Gogolina, a researcher in pedagogical sciences who defended a thesis focused on cultivating honour and dignity in older adolescents in Moscow in 1970, writes about the differences between girls' or women's and men's honour and talks about these concepts with the slightest nuances.[54] Men's honour in her work is connected with participation in cultural, social and industrial labour as well as family life. It also presupposes recognition of the equality of the sexes by men, combined with an understanding of the differences between men and women, respect towards women and the desire to protect them. Gogolina underlines that even though girls' or women's and men's honour differ, they primarily must be based on common humanity (*chelovechnost*).[55] Other authors also divide female and male honour but underline their common ground and the importance of 'human honour' in general.[56] Most of those writing about honour also use the concept of 'dignity' (*dostoinstvo*) and do not draw a clear borderline between dignity and honour.

Compared to early Soviet writings, late Soviet writings on the girls' honour show the considerable influence of the Cold War narratives and imagined geographies on framing female adolescence. Verb explains the Soviet understanding of girls' honour by comparing the social environment in the USSR with the situation in the Russian past and the current Western capitalist countries. She states that before the October Revolution, the understanding of girls' honour had been reduced to reproduction, as women were the property of men who wanted to control them. Girls had to stay virgins and then remain faithful to their husbands under the threat of punishment by society; thus, it was not their free choice at all. Under capitalism, continues Verb, the idea of girls' honour is irrelevant as women still 'have neither political, economic nor civil rights'; they face the harshest capitalist exploitation, and for example, have to sell their bodies for money.[57] In the Soviet Union, women obtained full rights, financial independence and endless professional and political possibilities and could independently make their life choices. Legal and economic autonomy, therefore, is described as necessary for the development of the proper understanding of girls' honour and its practical embodiment: 'Only a woman liberated as a result of the social revolution can cultivate in herself such qualities as honour and dignity'.[58]

An example of such a woman can be found in *Devochki, kniga dlya vas!* (A Book for You, Girls!) by Mogilevskaya: along with receipts, home-keeping advice and physical exercises, it includes numerous stories about different countries and peoples. One such story focuses on women in socialist Ghana, highlighting the centuries of discrimination endured by Ghanaians, which according to the book, ended with the country's decolonisation and shift to socialism. Although many Ghanaian women are still poor and illiterate, their situation is steadily improving, argues Mogilevskaya. She describes a challenging day of an ordinary Ghanaian mother who gets up early in the morning, cooks and does laundry for her large family all day; despite the fact that her routine is very demanding, there is room for joy and happiness in her life, especially after her people won back their freedom.[59] Generally, the stories in the book sought to demonstrate the advantages of the Soviet model of modernity and, at least on the surface, support decolonisation; they teach readers about the link between Western imperialism and the capitalist system.

As the examples above demonstrate, in late Soviet ideology an idea of economic independence always went hand in hand with the socialist version of female political participation, which was actively promoted among Soviet girls. The upbringing of both girls and boys in the USSR included mandatory political education and social activities, organised at the state level

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through schools, universities, children's and youth organisations, and praised in press, films and literature for the youth. These activities were used to teach the basics of socialist ideology to the new generations and engage both male and female youth in the officially-approved forms of political participation, like demonstrations on public holidays. Robert Hornsby shows that in the post-Stalin period, girls and women constituted over half of all Komsomol members, and they were targeted as a specific group in its policies.[60] Those girls and young women who, for some reason, refused to participate in official bodies and activities were seen as requiring pedagogical intervention. Soviet pedagogue Dinara Radzhabova dedicated her whole doctoral thesis, defended in Tashkent in 1978, to teenage girls from traditional Uzbek families who avoided social activities organised by state institutions. According to Radzhabova, these girls are inactive because in their culture young unmarried women cannot appear in public, and school teachers, together with political organisers, need to develop special pedagogical tools which would allow them to overcome the influence of tradition and of relatives, and in turn to encourage girls for social and political work.[61] This dissertation shows how, as in the 1920s and 1930s, the late Soviet idea of women's emancipation was in fact centred around an quite exclusionary female ideal imposed on different social groups, including girls from ethnic minorities. Radzabova's text is also a rare example of the regional specificities and topics related to local context in pedagogical research, which apart from this and a couple of other examples, appears very unified.

The ideal femininity described in this section found its embodiment in the set of role models that Soviet experts offered to the girls themselves and those adults who were involved in their upbringing. Role models or 'ideal forms' of behaviour already occupied a prominent place in the earlier Soviet psychological studies, for example in the work of Lev Vygotsky, who believed that they shaped children's values and behaviour and constituted a *schema* of their relation to reality.[62] These models seem extremely important for later Soviet authors as well. Noteworthy negative attitudes towards the Russian past and the generalised West did not stop them from constantly deploying examples from classical Western and Russian literature to illustrate their ideas. Pedagogues, for example, saw potential role models in characters like Shakespeare's Juliet, Natasha Rostova from Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and Assol from *Scarlet Sails* by Alexander Grin.[63] The 1983 advice book for parents suggests teaching girls about the 'examples of female fidelity', like the 'Nekrasov's women' (female peasants from nineteenth-century political poetry) and Yaroslavna, the princess from the medieval *The Tale of Igor's Campaign*.[64] Some books on sexual education were illustrated with classical paintings, like *The Birth of Venus* by Sandro Botticelli or one of the figures from the Sistine Chapel frescoes by Michelangelo.[65] Apparently, experts saw no contradictions in bringing fictional characters from literature preceding the Bolshevik revolution while constantly glorifying the benefits of Soviet modernity. While Soviet authors wrote that only socialism could provide women fundamental human rights and create the environment for their moral and personal development, as well as their economic and political independence, it was heroines like Tatyana Larina from *Eugene Onegin*, who are described as representing ideal femininity. Experts put these heroines on the same pedestal as the characters of Soviet literature and films.

Class, ethnicity and other differences and localities almost entirely disappear from expert writings as soon as their authors start talking about role models. Only one book in my sample proposes a character from local culture as an example for girls. Published in Yakutsk, the capital of Yakut Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, and intended for local audiences, *Rastut malchik i devochka* (A Boy and a Girl Growing Up) by Yelizaveta Tomskaya suggests school teachers using Yakutian literature to discuss moral questions with children. Among already familiar heroines from Russian and Soviet classics, the book mentions Irina Olesova, a character in the poem by Platon Oyunsky.[66] Olesova had a prototype – a milkmaid and the first Sakha woman who received the Badge of Honor and later became a deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. The fact that there is only one example of a woman from a non-white ethnic minority in the sample of more than 100 export texts shows how unified and Russianised the Soviet official girlhood ideology actually was.

Like the poem by Oyunsky, discussions on role models often put together fictional characters and historical figures from the pre-Soviet and Soviet periods. Aristocrats, like the wives of the Decembrists, are mentioned in the writings along with women revolutionaries who fought for the abolition of the class system of the Russian Empire, for example, Sophia Perovskaya, a revolutionary who orchestrated the assassination of the emperor Alexander II, or socialist feminist Alexandra Kollontai.[67] They also mentioned Soviet heroines like Valentina Tereshkova. The most prominent role in this list is assigned to women fighters and partisans of the Great Patriotic War, which is logical, considering the role of this war in the overall Soviet ideology of the second half of the twentieth century.[68] As Maria Tumarkin and Anja Tippner already showed, the pantheon of Soviet female war heroines emphasised figures of Soviet teenage girls who fought the Nazis and were executed by them – with Zoya Kosmodemianskaya as the most recognised one.[69]

Kosmodemianskaya's figure highlights another specificity of the late Soviet girlhood culture: despite many rigid norms, it simultaneously and thus paradoxically promoted an idea of girls' defiance as an encouraged behaviour. Kosmodemianskaya was an eighteen-year-old female partisan who escaped to the front in eagerness to fight against the Nazis. Since 1942, when the first article about her was published in *Pravda*, her story was repeatedly reproduced in Soviet press and school textbooks. In wartime, it was turned into a film and immortalised in numerous memorials. This figure became an example of devotion and sacrifice for the Soviet fatherland, as well as a socially accepted protest for several generations of Soviet girls. Together with the figures of women revolutionaries, Kosmodemianskaya was mentioned in educational materials to illustrate an essential idea for the official Soviet girlhood ideology: women can oppose an unfair order and bring revolutionary change to society. Journalists, experts and children writers share a powerful message that even the youngest girls can fight for their truth against a much stronger enemy, and this fight would eventually be rewarded and recognised by others. This idea is empowered in writings by another Soviet ideological motif – the call on heroic deeds, which in the socialist society were described as achievable by everyone.

Praise for female defiance in late Soviet materials combines with numerous strict rules in the sexual life of everyday behaviour.

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A call for independence and even disobedience in this ideology goes in hand with the requirement to unquestioningly respect a particular set of values and authoritative figures like Soviet leaders, just like the request for humbleness coexists with an encouragement to be visible and proactive. The role models suggested by Soviet experts perfectly illustrate the internal inconsistency of the girlhood ideology they created, as well as its exclusionary nature, which I will focus on more in the next section.

4 | Soviet Idea of Female Perfection: Empowerment and Exclusion

Contradictory requirements are not a unique feature of late Soviet girlhood and can be found in many other girls' cultures. As Mirra Komarovsky shows, in the late 1940s young American women also faced mutually exclusive expectations coming from their families, friends and teachers: American society imposed several incompatible roles upon the college woman, for instance, the role of a 'career girl' and a 'homemaker'.[70] Girls had to adapt to these opposing scenarios and smooth the passage from one role to another, and many of them faced frustration in the process. Interestingly, some girls could more easily adjust to the conflicting rules: according to Komarovsky, these women had a 'middle-of-the-road personality'. Komarovsky describes such young women:[71]

> A girl who is intelligent enough to do well in school but not so brilliant as to 'get all A's;' informed and alert but not consumed by an intellectual passion; capable but not talented in areas relatively new to women; able to stand on her own feet and to earn a living but not so good a living as to compete with men; capable of doing some job well… but not so identified with a profession as to need it for her happiness,

The 'middle-of-the-road personality' in Komarovsky's work suggests passivity and willingness to adapt to the demands of society at the cost of personal goals and interests. Similar passivity was one of the central conventions of the British girlhood culture of the 1960s–1970s, captured on the pages of *Jackie*, a popular British magazine for teenage girls. As Angela McRobbie demonstrates in her pioneering study of girls' popular culture, *Jackie* addressed adolescent girls as a homogenous group and, just like the Soviet role models, obscured class, race or any other differences between women.[72] It provided a sense of false unity among teenage girls, who were supposed to share everyday experiences and interests (mainly connected with romance, fashion and beauty) and constructed an ideology of feminine adolescence with a set of rigid rules, including a rule of passivity in romantic relationships and other spheres of life.[73]

What makes the case of late Soviet girlhood unique compared to these and other examples of Western mainstream girlhood cultures of the second half of the twentieth century, is that Soviet authors mostly demand proactivity from girls, and the whole girlhood ideology they created praises female excellence.[74] Mediocrity, the lack of initiative and idleness, is described as no less than a 'defect' in the Soviet expertise on female adolescence. Experts require Soviet girls to be somehow unique, heroic, superb and exceptionally helpful to society by achieving outstanding results in every sphere, whether it was schooling, professional education, career, cultural development, social activities or home chores. This approach towards women's excellence – a gendered embodiment of a more general idea of everyday heroism in Soviet official culture – is one of the core features of discourses surrounding post-Stalin girls and young women. Soviet authors encouraged girls to be active in both public and private spheres; the lack of girls' initiative and engagement was seen as a severe problem requiring pedagogical intervention. The standards were very high, and the Soviet authors taught girls to be exceedingly demanding of themselves and not to accept satisfactory results. Girls were persuaded to stay constantly busy; even their free time was supposed to be devoted to 'useful' activities, like sports and self-education.

Some of these standards were in fact similar to those in Soviet books for boys, which also appeared in the post-war USSR, although in far fewer numbers or gender-neutral discussions on how to raise children and teenagers. In these texts, authors also demand exceptional and even heroic deeds from males. However, boys in this literature are described as future professionals and the defenders of their country and families – in militarised terms.[75] In contrast to boyhood or Soviet femininity in the 1930s, the post-Stalin female ideal was much less militarised.[76] It incorporated not only professional and personal development but also activities related to family and, more generally, to maintaining the moral and physical order of everyday life and caring for others. Female subjectivity, as created in the expert writings, was much more multidimensional than male, as if the specialists tried to develop a specific socialist version of a Renaissance (wo)man and push Soviet girls into embodying it.

Future motherhood, generally portrayed as obligatory for females, is also described as a socially important activity requiring excellence. 'Communist society… needs an intelligent, comprehensively developed, and pedagogically competent mother who, together with preschool and school institutions, will be able to raise a real citizen', is a typical quote from a dissertation on secondary school girls' upbringing, defended in 1976.[77] This Soviet version of intensive mothering women had to combine with paid labour, public activities and constant self-improvement. Some authors of the post-Stalinist period admit the inevitable difficulties that appeared on the way to this ideal. In the 1983 pedagogical manual *Vospitaniye starsheklassnits* (High School Girls' Upbringing), Lyudmila Timoshchenko notes that 'the role of women in family and society has become very complex'.[78] She claims that one of the main goals in the upbringing of female teenagers is to 'resolve the existing contradictions' modern women face.[79] This line represents a standard answer by Soviet experts to the dilemma of the double burden and other collisions of the Soviet gender system: for the most part, they do not propose any systemic transformation and appeal to changes in individual practices only.

The late Soviet ideal of an independent and active woman thriving for excellence looks very empowering for the time; yet, it is also extremely exclusive and not only for girls from ethnic minorities or homosexual girls mentioned earlier. Young women who could not meet the high and conflicting Soviet standards are presented

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as outcasts in the texts: the experts describe them as no less than alien to the socialist society. 'Aimlessness, senselessness, and irresponsibility characterise many young people in the West. The carrier of these qualities in our society looks foreign, backward and archaic', writes the author of the 1967 article about modern Soviet girls, published in the *Rabotnitsa* (Female Worker) magazine's supplement for teenage girls.[80] Again, negative traits in this piece are associated with either the past or the malign capitalist world; there is no place for them in the space-time of socialist utopia. Soviet ideology suggested a rather limited choice to Soviet girls – to become excellent and achieve the impossible or to be anti-socialist in nature. In this context, the bright and ambitious picture of the future and the possibilities for self-realisation described in the girls' essay from Dashtayant's book, mentioned earlier in this article, reveals its sinister side: a socialist version of female perfection was an obligatory template for post-Stalin girls, and this did not change much over the decades.

5 | Conclusion

Late Soviet expertise on female adolescence developed during late Stalinism and started blooming in the post-Stalin period. It was produced by authors from different research disciplines, places and institutions, including pedagogues, psychologists, sociologists, medical professionals as well as children's writers and journalists. Only some of these experts are interconnected; the ties linking them were weak and chaotic.

The girlhood culture constructed in their writings is internally contradictory; its inconsistency is perfectly represented by the wide range of role models for Soviet girls, which included fictional and real heroines from different epochs and cultures. Late Soviet girlhood ideology suggests strict rules for female sexuality and everyday behaviour and excludes those girls who do not fit into this moral system. Yet, this culture also introduces emancipatory ideas about female political participation, professional self-realisation and economic independence, insisting on girls and women's vital role in Soviet society and utopian future, and even develops a socially accepted version of female defiance. Most importantly, the texts in my sample are united by a powerful vision of female excellence, one of the core requirements for Soviet adolescent girls, which appears to me both empowering – and extremely demanding.

Acknowledgements

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Endnotes

[1] Lynne Attwood, *Creating the New Soviet Woman: Women's Magazines as Engineers of Female Identity, 1922–53* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), p. 13.

[2] See, Adrianne Edgar, 'Bolshevism, Patriarchy, and the Nation: The Soviet 'Emancipation' of Muslim Women in Pan-Islamic Perspective' *Slavic Review* 65 (2006), pp. 252–272.

[3] Janet Johnson, 'How Russia's War in Ukraine Can Change Gender Studies.' *Frontiers in Sociology* 8: 1220438 (2023); For my research, I collected 111 documents from 1943–1991 devoted entirely or partially to female adolescence: twenty-seven research texts (books, papers, PhD theses), sixty-two advice materials for adults (books, brochures for lecturers, articles and opinion pieces in media) and twenty-two texts for girls (books, brochures, articles). These documents originate from twenty-three Soviet cities: Alma-Ata, Baku, Grozny, Izhevsk, Kaliningrad, Kemerovo, Kyiv, Kyzyl, Leningrad, Minsk, Moscow, Nalchik, Perm, Riga, Rostov-on-Don, Ryazan, Saratov, Tallinn, Tambov, Tashkent, Volgograd, Yakutsk and Yaroslavl. Language limitations allow me to work only with sources in Russian and Ukrainian; Russian, however, was widely used as the language of science and expertise in the USSR, so these limitations still allow me to work with regional publications.

[4] Catherine Driscoll, *Girls: Feminine Adolescence in Popular Culture and Cultural Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 39, p. 71.

[5] Lynne Attwood, *The New Soviet Man and Woman* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), p. 33.

[6] Alla Salnikova, *Rossiyskoye detstvo v XX veke: istoriya. teoriya i praktika issledovaniya* (Kazan: Kazanskiy gosudarstvennyy universitet, 2007), p. 191.

[7] Attwood, *The New Soviet Man*, p. 2.

[8] E. Thomas Ewing, *Separate Schools: Gender, Policy, and Practice in Postwar Soviet Education* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010), p. 24.

[9] Ewing, *Separate Schools*, p. 26.

[10] Ewing, *Separate Schools*, p. 24, p. 29.

[11] Ewing, *Separate Schools*, p. 24.

[12] Ewing, *Separate Schools*, p. 130.

[13] Ewing, *Separate Schools*, p. 165.

[14] *Uchitelskaia gazeta,* 22 (1943), p. 4.

[15] *Literaturnaya Gazeta,* 29 (1950), p. 2.

[16] Russian State Archive of Literature and Art, Fund 634, Inventory 4, item 97, p. 5.

[17] *Literaturnaya Gazeta* 36 (1950), p. 2.

[18] Susan E. Reid, "The Khrushchev Kitchen: Domesticating the Scientific-Technological Revolution," *Journal of Contemporary History* 40 (2005), pp. 299–300.

[19] See Alexander Makovelskiy, *Chto roditeli dolzhny znat o polovom vospitanii* (Baku: Izdaniye NKP Azerbaydzhanskoy SSR, 1940), Lev Zalkind, *Zdorovyy brak i zdorovaya semia* (Moscow: Medgiz, 1948).

[20] Deborah A. Field, 'Irreconcilable Differences: Divorce and Conceptions of Private Life in the Khrushchev Era' *The Russian Review* 57 (1998), pp. 599–613, E. D Cohn, 'Sex and the Married Communist: Family Troubles, Marital Infidelity, and Party Discipline in the Postwar USSR, 1945–64' *The Russian Review* 68 (2009), pp. 429–50.

[21] Siobhán Hearne, 'Sanitising Sex in the USSR: State Approaches to Sexual Health in the Brezhnev Era' *Europe-Asia Studies* 74 (2022), p. 1795.

[22] Dan Healey, 'The Sexual Revolution in the USSR: Dynamics Beneath the Ice' in Gert Hekma and Alain Giami (eds), *Sexual Revolutions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 236.

[23] Igor Kon, *Kultura/szexologia* (Budapest: Kossuth, 1981); Igor Kon, *Vvedeniye v seksologiyu* (Moscow: Meditsina, 1988).

[24] Igor Kon, *Klubnichka na berezke: seksualnaya kultura v Rossii* (Moscow: Vremya, 2010), p. 298.

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[25] For example, Kolbanovskiy was the supervisor of the educator Valentina Gogolina's thesis and the opponent of a specialist in sexual education, Yuriy Florovskiy (I use both authors' research in my analysis). Also, scholars of my sample extensively cite and mention each other in their texts. Yuriy Florovskiy, *Psikhologicheskiy analiz* formirovaniya vzglyadov na druzhbu i lyubov u starsheklassnikov (na materiale russkikh i natsionalnykh shkol Adygeyskoy avtonomnoy oblasti unpublished doctoral thesis, Yaroslavl Pedagogical Institute, 1967); Valentina Gogolina, '*Vospitaniye chesti* i dostoinstva u starshikh podrostkov (v plane lichnykh vzaimootnosheniy mezhdu malchikami i devochkami)' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Nauchno-issledovatelskiy institut teorii i istorii pedagogiki Akademii Pedagogicheskikh nauk SSSR, 1970).

[26] Kon, *Klubnichka*, p. 298.

[27] Vasil Sukhomlynsky, 'Vospityvayte rytsarey' *Molodoy Kommunist* 9 (1968), pp. 50–54.

[28] Many of them, in fact, obtained degrees in pedagogy or medical sciences.

[29] N.L. Klein, '*Psychology of the moral* orientation of a Soviet teenage girl' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Yaroslavl Pedagogical Institute, 1950), pp. 3–5.

[30] N.L. Klein, '*Psychology of the moral',* p. 10.

[31] Sexologists (including those in the so-called 'sexological cabinets') mainly worked with adults. See, Angelina Shibayeva, *Sotsialno-gigiyenicheskiye aspekty polovogo vospitaniya devochek i devushek* (Moscow: Tsentralnyy nauchno-issledovatelskiy institut sanitarnogo prosveshcheniya Ministerstva zdravookhraneniya SSSR, 1970), p. 53.

[32] Elena Uvarova, 'Istoriya razvitiya spetsializirovannoy ginekologich-eskoy pomoshchi detyam i podrostkam v Rossii' *Reproduktivnoye zdorovye detey i podrostkov* 15 (2019), p. 21; Yuliya Krupko-Bolshova, 'Sostoyaniye zdorovia i metody profilaktiki ginekologich zabolevaniy devochek v USSR' in *Aktualnyye voprosy okhrany zdorovia detey i podrostkov* (Kyiv: Zdorov'ya, 1967), p. 82.

[33] Angelina Shibayeva, Nikolay Korostelev and Aleksandr Preysman, *Gigiyena devochki, devushki i yunoshi* (Moscow: Institut sanitarnogo prosveshcheniya, 1964), p. 6.

[34] Rudolf Peter, Vatslav Shebek and Iosif Gyne, *Devushka prevrashchayet-sya v zhenshchinu*, tr. Czech D. A. Bystroletov (Moscow: Medgiz, 1960); Elzhbeta Yatskevich, *O chem khochet znat kazhdaya devushka*, tr. Polish F. V. Gorodinskiy (Moscow: Meditsina, 1966); Sonya Valter, *Devushkam ot 14 do 18*, tr. German V.V. Koshkin (Minsk: Polymya, 1983).

[35] Irina Vintovkina, *Devochke-podrostku* (Moscow: Meditsina, 1973); Tatiana Kostygova and Raisa Rakitina, *Devochka, devushka, zhen-shchina* (Moscow: Fizkultura i sport, 1980); Lidiya Chashina and Lidiya Gavriliva, *Zdorovye – smolodu: Osnovy gigiyeny devushki* (Kaliningrad: Kaliningradskoye knizhnoye izdatelstvo, 1985).

[36] See, Kirra Minton, "Education about 'safe sex' could in this day and age save lives!": Australian and American teen girl magazines during the time of AIDS' *Women's History Review* 30 (2021), pp. 1182–1200; Valentina Lysenko, '*Sovety vracha devushke i zhenshchine*,' (Minsk: Belarus, 1967); Aleksey Stupko and Svetlana Sokolova, '*Tebe, devochka, devushka*,' (Kyiv: Zdorov'ya, 1981).

[37] V. Zakharchenko, *Nam 19, a vam?* (Moscow: Molodaya gvardiya, 1966); A.L. Budkevich, *Podruga: Rasskazy, ocherki, besedy, sovety, obsuzhdeniya, predosterezheniya* (Moscow: Molodaya gvardiya, 1970).

[38] V. Korobkevich, *Vam, devushki!* (Moscow: Meditsina, 1965), pp. 6–22; Zakharchenko, *Nam 19, a vam*, p. 20.

[39] The latest edition of this book was published in Moscow in 2022: Sofya Mogilevskaya, *Devochki, kniga dlya vas* (Moscow: AST, 2022).

[40] Sofya Mogilevskaya, *Devochki, kniga dlya vas!* (Moscow: Detskaya literatura, 1974), p. 45.

[41] For example, from 1986 to 1990, ninth and tenth graders in the RSFSR had four to six hours of maths a week, three to four hours of history, and fourteen other compulsory subjects, including "basic military training" for boys (two hours a week in the tenth grade). See Order of the Ministry of Education of the RSFSR of 23 December 1985 no. 350 'Ob utverzhdenii uchebnykh planov srednikh obshcheobrazovatelnykh shkol RSFSR na 1986–1990 uchebnyye gody'.

[42] Lyudmila Timoshchenko, *Vospitaniye starsheklassnits* (Moscow: Prosveshcheniye, 1983), pp. 92–143.

[43] Ella Rossman, 'From Socialism to Social Media: Women's and Gender History in Post-Soviet Russia' *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 44 (2021), pp. 415, 421.

[44] Seranush Dashtayants, *O polovom vospitanii shkolnikov* (Grozny: Checheno-ingushskoye knizhnoye izdatelstvo, 1966).

[45] Dashtayants, *O polovom vospitanii shkolnikov*, p. 49.

[46] Dashtayants, *O polovom vospitanii shkolnikov*, pp. 49–50.

[47] Dashtayants, *O polovom vospitanii shkolnikov*, pp. 49–50.

[48] Dashtayants, *O polovom vospitanii shkolnikov*, p. 50.

[49] Dashtayants, *O polovom vospitanii shkolnikov*, p. 51.

[50] Brendan McElmeel, 'From Don Juan to Comrade Ivan Educating the Young Men of the Urals for Love and Marriage, 1953–1964' *Aspasia* 15 (2021), p. 27.

[51] See, N.D. Nikolin, '*Izucheniye i preduprezhdeniye* pravonarusheniy (prestupleniy) i antiobshchestvennykh proyavleniy sredi devochek-podrostkov' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Vsesoyuznyy institut po izucheniyu prichin i razrabotke mer preduprezhdeniya prestupnosti, 1972), Boris Danielbek, *Polovyye izvrashcheniya i ugolovnaya otvetstven-nost* (Volgograd: Vysshaya sledstvennaya shkola MVD SSSR, 1972), p. 106.

[52] For this reason, the 'maiden's honour' is not a particularly precise translation of the Soviet concept, in my opinion, as it meant much more than just being a non-married virgin.

[53] Lidiya Verb, 'O devichyey chesti i zhenskoy gordosti' in M.I. Lifanov (ed.), *Za kommunisticheskiy byt*, (Leningrad: Obshchestvo po rasprostraneniyu politicheskikh i nauchnykh znaniy RSFSR, 1963), pp. 133–138.

[54] Gogolina, '*Vospitaniye chesti i dostoinstva*', p. 11.

[55] Gogolina, '*Vospitaniye chesti i dostoinstva*', p. 11.

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