

Modes of Leadership in Soviet School: Exploring the Soviet Painting of the Mid-20th Century

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Abstract Soviet painting of the mid-twentieth century relating to the genre of socialist realism allows for the possibility of scientific interpretation in the context of cultural research and visual anthropology. The purpose of such research is to determine the visual (visual) means used to solve the artistic tasks of socialist realism in relation to a plot depicting Soviet life. In the middle of the twentieth century, among the plot's characteristic of socialist realism, image of the Soviet school began to appear. The purpose of this study is to identify what qualities of Soviet schoolchildren were most significant when portrayed in the paintings of socialist realism. The Soviet educational system was ideological in nature, since one of its tasks was to create a new type of person, that is, builder of communism. The painting of socialist realism accompanied-provided the solution to this problem. A student of the Soviet school was an early stage in the formation of such a person. Ideally, he is an example to others, which requires developed leadership qualities that are characteristic of fighters for a communist future. The history of the first decades of the Soviet country made it possible for children to show their qualities as the builder of a new society. Soviet hagiography suggests that a student can act both as a fighter for Soviet power (Pavlik Morozov) or and as a Defender of the fatherland (pioneer heroes). These images were rarely used in Soviet painting of the 1940s-1950s. The victory in the Great Patriotic War was the end of the revolutionary-heroic period of Soviet history, which required new characters in the painting, recognizable to Soviet children and their close ones. Now the student is no longer a fighter with the enemies of the revolution or with the invaders, he is fighting for the speedy building of communism. An exemplary student should be a leader in this process, trying to lead fewer active comrades. The analysed paintings show that young leaders seek to set an example of behaviour in critical situations characteristic of the school. Such situations arise in the struggle for the effectiveness of studies as the main duty of Soviet schoolchildren, in the struggle against violators of the norms of socialist life, even if it is an adult. Thus, image of a leader student introduces the ideological character of socialist realism into the image of the Soviet school.

Keywords: leadership, art, painting, socialist realism, culture

1 Introduction

The Soviet art repeatedly became a subject of interest of both the western, and domestic researchers. However, in the West, since the first survey works of the 1920th years (Umanskiy 1920), attention was paid to generally Russian and Soviet vanguard. In this context the turn of the Soviet painting to realism which was outlined in the late twenties long time remained unknown in foreign scientific literature whereas in the Soviet Art Studies there was a tight theoretical discourse, so peculiar, as well as the realistic direction in art which became known as

"socialist realism". When the appeal to the Soviet art nevertheless took place, it had critical character as, for example, in article Greenberg (2005) considering the Russian and Soviet realistic painting in the light of the category of a kitsch developed by it. Thus, the socialist realism was considered as the marginal phenomenon opposed to the general trends of development of art of the 20th century. Interest in the Soviet art in the West partly increases during times Khruschev's "thaw". However, and during this period the Soviet underground whereas the socialist realism draws attention first of all in connection with a concept of totalitarian culture (Paperny 1985; Groys 1993; Golomstock 1994) which is opposed as the phenomenon, to Russian (and, later, Soviet) to the vanguard which appeared in 1910 – the 1920th.

In the 1970s–1980s the authority of so-called cultural researches (cultural studies) increases in the western humanity. Cultural researches gained distribution in the Russian science in the late nineties – the beginnings of the 2000th. In that case when visual arts act as empirical material, the channelized scientific is not limited to a set of the works of art having recognized aesthetic value. In these conditions' visual sources, including painting, are considered as the data carriers representing the specified groups of social phenomena. At the same time the art value of the considered works is not crucial that allowed expanding a set of sources at the expense of works by rather little-known authors.

Art of socialist realism long time remained little-known in the countries of Europe and America as well as many aspects of the Soviet culture in general, remained not studied from positions of the modern theory of culture and cultural researches. The situation began to change in the 1990s that as a result led to the explosive growth of number of scientific works. These works were devoted to various aspects of the Soviet culture of the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s. The "cultural" turn in researches of the Soviet art connected with the appeal to wider sociocultural context in many respects happened thanks to philologists-Slavists (for example, Gunther (2000), Clark (1981), Dobrenko (1997)) that caused "literaturocentrichnost" of a number of significant monographs and collections. The fine arts did not remain unaddressed, however the greatest interest of researchers is attracted different types "technically reproduced" media – cinema, the photo, the poster. For example, it should be noted works of Dashkova (2013), Sartori (2006), Bonnell (2009), Sal'nikova (2010) where the Soviet culture in the most various forms and images is presented, in the movement – from the beginning to bright prosperity. Studying of similar sources assumes application of methods, the so-called visual examinations described in the monograph Rose (2001) and several collective monographs, such as Heywood and Sandywell (1999) or Leeuwen and Lewitt (1993). The special importance for us submit the semiotics analysis of images of painting of socialist realism which were worked out and Holtz (1993), Bonnell (2009) were applied by several authors, for example. The semiotics analysis of works of the fine arts does not mean application traditional for sciences about art of methods of the analysis. It is directed not to detection of formal characteristics of the work (composition, colour, style and so forth), and to establishment cultural or ideological (if it is about socialist realism) meanings of the most often found images. The method of the analysis applied in our research assumes classification of the most widespread plots within the set subject, allocation of key images to which certain functions according to the allocated plot are appropriated. And, at last, to this story the cultural meant places which are defined in the general concept of an ideological system of socialist realism are established.

By the present moment, the most part of the publications devoted to painting of socialist realism belongs to the field of art criticism or has popular publicist character. Cultural researches of painting of socialist realism are presented by not numerous publications, for example, works of Yankovskaya (2008). A variety of the thematic directions of the Soviet art which were shown in the late forties – the beginning of the 1950th years demands further researches, including with application of the semiotics method which confirmed the efficiency in the analysis of visual sources.

The Russian blogosphere also pays considerable attention to the history of the Soviet painting; however, it would be illegal to carry texts of blogs to a scientific genre though the same blogs are an excellent source of empirical material, showing little-known works of the Soviet artists.

2. “School subject” in the Soviet painting as a research task

Painting of socialist realism is ignored experts in the field of cultural and visual examinations unfairly as it represents a set of the aspects important for the understanding of the Soviet culture and processes happening in the Soviet society. The socialist realism represents first visual representation of the political project which the Soviet Union was. Studying of the Soviet painting in terms of the cultural theory allows to reveal interrelation of art and cultural and political phenomena and strategy. One of the forms embodying this communication are images of socialist construction and images of work, – a subject very widespread in the Soviet art. It is necessary to distinguish several pictures which represent children at school from the numerous plots devoted to creation of new society especially as this specific space of education and socialization and was created in the USSR. The pictures representing processes of socialization and education, as well as many other works of socialist realism show the Soviet person during creation of socialism. At the same time one of important factors of socialization

in the USSR school students of leadership skills had a formation that was promoted by not only activity of teachers, but also activity of junior and children's public organizations. The All-Union Leninist Young Communist League – the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League and the Pioneer organization existing under the direction of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League acted as these organizations.

The novelty of this research consists that in it for the first time in methodological borders of cultural researches the group of thematically close works allowing to speak about a plot, become initial for the Soviet art of the 1950s is analysed.

It should be noted the fact that any of plots in art tradition of socialist realism is not accidental, and each of them, thus, carries out a certain role in the ideological system of this art direction. This role came down to broadcast of the cultural meanings important for the solution of specific ideological objectives.

The objective of this research consists in revealing as various modes of leadership were represented in the Soviet painting of the 1950th devoted to school. The main objectives are the following positions:

- to characterize specifics of the Soviet school as socio-political project and its interrelation with the Soviet ideology including with art;
- to reveal and characterize the plots which are adequately representing a leadership situation in social space of the Soviet educational model;
- to create identification contextual interrelation of these stories with the Soviet pedagogical model;
- to reveal qualities of the Soviet school students which were most significant at the image in works of painting of socialist realism;
- to allocate and characterize the leadership types represented in "school painting".

The research has cross-disciplinary character, sending, on the one hand, to the subject field of visual examinations of the Soviet culture, on the other hand – to the field of cultural researches Soviet art the practitioner, in this case, to painting of socialist realism.

3. Soviet school as educational, social, and political project

In order to understand the principles of creation and interpretation of the Soviet school painting, it is necessary to characterize schematically the system of the relations by means of which the Soviet school (as well as the childhood in general) were built in the system of the socio-political relations of socialism. It will demand from us to allocate several major cases (or the basic principles) the Soviet pedagogics, the Soviet education and the Soviet school. In modern social anthropology and cultural researches a significant amount of works is devoted to this subject, among them there is a collection of Articles "Anthropology of the Soviet School" (Maslinsky 2010), the work of Dimke (2012) devoted to a childhood problem, the daily occurrence of the Soviet school in post-Stalin time considers Kelly (2012), Kukulin (2015) raises the most difficult questions connected with education of children, production at the school student "leadership skills and will power".

The childhood as special space of social being and the attitude of a socialist system towards him is analyses in the book Dimke (2012). The concept of the status of the childhood offered by MacIntyre (2000) in utopian and heroic communities is the cornerstone of consideration. Understanding of the childhood in the USSR in was much caused by the fact that socialism had lines of both utopian and heroic communities. For adequate understanding of the status of school as special social institute of the USSR it is important to mark out the following lines characterizing the relation to the childhood during the Soviet era:

- (as well as other utopian and heroic communities) it is possible to distinguish from the current purposes of socialism separately the purpose anthropological, that is connected with formation of "the person of new type", the real builder of socialism;
- the child was considered as the partner, the assistant to adults in creation of socialism, the main goal of the child consisted in turning into "the new person", and his current task came down to rendering the feasible help to adults in creation of new society;
- respectively, pedagogical technologies were directed to formation process acceleration of "the new person" that led to creation of a number specific the practitioner and the rituals used in pedagogical space of the Soviet school.

For the specified reasons of the power assigned tasks cultivation of new generations of loyal citizens to school as the specific educational and socializing space.

School (but not family!) becomes space of formation necessary (including leader) qualities at the child. Existence of these qualities, first, relates to need of fight for socialist ideals which can be seen, understood and apprehended at school, but not in family. The school forms those qualities and, including, qualities of the leader which are necessary for the person in construction of new society. These qualities can be used, first, in work, at

protection of the fatherland, etc., and only then – during creation of family. The family is aimed at formation of other human qualities defined, first, with gender roles, and not connected with socialist ideals. For the same reason in school painting of the 50th years the sport which role was not comprehended in leadership yet is rather seldom represented.

The Soviet school carried out objectives successfully. As Kelly (2015) notes, the Soviet schools were upon more effective "Soviet" institutions, than many others. They managed to realize the official ideological norms declared by the Soviet state to a large extent, and the system illegitimate social relations, based on acquaintances and family relations, held rather marginal position here.

4. Soviet school students as future builder and leader

Generations of the young people having several qualities had to be result of performance of the tasks set for the Soviet school. Presence of those allowed hoping for successful formation of the new person at the subsequent stages of socialization. Ideally the pupil of the Soviet school is an example for age-mates and children of younger age. Such task demands from it the developed leadership skills peculiar to fighters for the communistic future. History of the first decades of the Soviet country gave the chance and to children to show the qualities of the builder of new society. The Soviet hagiography assumes that the school student can act and as the fighter for the Soviet power, for example, Pavlik Morozov (the Soviet school student who gained fame as the pioneer - hero) (Kukulin 2015) and as the defender of the fatherland (pioneers - heroes of the Great Patriotic War). However, these images were rather seldom used in the Soviet painting of the 1940th – the 1950th years. The victory in the Great Patriotic War became end of the revolutionary and heroic period of the Soviet history that demanded the new characters of painting recognized by the Soviet children and relatives it. Now the school student struggles not with enemies of revolution or with aggressors anymore, he promotes the fastest creation of communism that also demands efforts and fight.

In 1949 the "Family and school" magazine published a number of the editorial articles which had similar names: "Education of endurance", "Education of courage", "Education of commitment", "Education of call of duty", "Education of the communistic relation to work and to public property". A row from these qualities offered to development at all Soviet school students are necessary for education of future leader (or the young leader).

In the context of formation of leadership skills, it is necessary to consider also the requirements connected with self-discipline of the Soviet school students. It is undoubted that leadership as one of conditions assumes presence of self-discipline at the pupil of the Soviet school. This quality is required for understanding of that as it is necessary to do and how to set this example to others. It is clear, that not only the behaviour, but also study gets to the sphere of self-discipline. Excellent study, one of qualities of the leading school student is result of self-discipline too. And the lack of self-discipline, but not any other reasons, external or internal, becomes the reason of bad progress. Thus, post-war period in the Soviet educational model begins to be formed the following position: leadership skills of the school student are formed not in fight against enemies, against weight of life or against hostile society, and in fight with themselves. Leadership skills including self-discipline, created in the childhood, must help the individual with further, more difficult, fight against more serious opponents.

One more important point peculiar to the Soviet school which needs to be considered for understanding of ways of its representation in art is the aspiration to collective education. The school class is considered not only as educational, but also as social unit with the structure directed to formation of collective impact on individuals and collective responsibility for results of this influence. As Maslinsky (2016) notes, by the beginning of the 1950s various forms of social pressure from children upon the schoolmates become the developed rule. Similar pressure was directed, first, to maintenance of a subject matter. The high symbolical status of future builder of new society became one of the conditions which provided legitimacies of children's collective as the agent of maintenance of school discipline (Maslinsky 2016) and the major role in it was played by the pioneer organization. As Kelly notes (2015), pupils, at least, in the mediated way, copied authoritative structures which were widespread at school.

5. Painting and school

After the termination of the Great Patriotic War the socialist realism underwent significant changes. More attention began to be paid to images of peaceful life and socialist life that introduced subjects and images of genre painting to this direction which is earlier absolutely polities and heroines. Despite change of subject, stylistic features of the Soviet painting remained the same. The greatest interest is attracted here by transformation of ideological installations of socialist realism.

In post-war years in the Soviet art in painting, idea that creation of socialism should not be reduced only to subjects of revolution, war and party construction was created. Life of most of ordinary Soviet people is

beyond these spheres. And before artists there was a task to show how socialism and its construction are shown in everyday life or, on the contrary, where and what moments of everyday life contain socialist ideals as it (or its changes) testifies to a celebration of socialism and progress of socialist construction.

The totality of the Soviet culture had the investigation the fact that pedagogical innovations were followed by changes in innovations art and creative. In it there is nothing surprising as works of art are designed to make not only ideological, but also didactic function, accompanying the educational practices developed in educational space of the Soviet school. As the school and the childhood in general began to be represented in the Soviet art and in painting. In 1950, the task "to represent" school as a decisive factor in education of children in the spirit of communism was set for the Soviet art according to Fadeyev (2007).

In the Soviet painting of the 1950s, the school subject takes the important place. Not only the school subject, but and household related to everyday life in painting (for example, family and labour). Images of life and school in particular "reduced" "big style", having changed optics of a creative look, scale of the represented events decreased. It was talked not of global events, and of life of the certain person or group of people. However, the family subject received in the 1950th smaller distribution, its blossoming fell on the 1960th years. And in the 1950th years from painting the image of more socialized space, but not space of privacy to which the family also was presented was required.

The Soviet "school paints", unlike other art forms, still was not object of studying in modern humanitarian knowledge. The modern researches devoted to representation school in art are connected, generally with studying of literature and theatrical and cinema subject. In the monograph by Fadeyev (2007) the problem of creation of artistic images in children's literature of the USSR in the 1930th – is analysed the 1950th years in an ideological context. The author in detail considers the educational and ideological tasks facing literature and the standard methods of their decision used by the Soviet writers.

As Fadeyev (2007) notes – "the Soviet "children's" art is not only art for children, but also and about children about school students". Respectively, a considerable part of such creativity, since 1930th years, was devoted to school students and those relations which were developed in social space of school. And social space of school, was exceedingly difficult owing to heavy material living conditions of a considerable part of the Soviet children. Therefore, the Soviet art representing school gave not only ideologies, but also an idealized image of school. And painting is not an exception. However, we will place emphasis on ideological aspect of school painting.

Proceeding from the assumption that in the Soviet art the school is represented as positive experience (achievement) of socialist construction, and at once in several aspects: it both direct result of care of the Soviet power of children, and school of socialism for younger generation, and space of education of the new person, person with new, "correct", the qualities mentioned above. This space where an opportunity to become, by the real builder of socialism is open for the child, avoiding heartrending experience of work and war. Such idea of school existed in the Soviet art rather not for long. In the 1960th years the school began to be represented as space of formation of the personality, more traditional anthropological type, but not just the builder of socialism.

It is necessary to correlate two thematic directions in art, first of which the second relates to the image of the childhood, – directly so school. They should not be divided because the Soviet childhood is impossible without school experience. Belyaeva and Mikhaylin (2015) prove that the child is brought up at the same time in family and school. The school becomes "the second family", but at the same time the most important as in family the child can get negative social experience, at school it is impossible. The school is considered as the main, in comparison with family, childhood "matrix". Respectively, during the period considered by us in the majority of works of painting about the childhood it was considered as the childhood school.

In this analysis only those pictures from the world of the childhood where the school directly or indirectly is present at workspace were considered. Indirect (indirect) presence of school takes place in the following stories: the image of collecting in school, performance of homework and the image of the children out of school space but dressed, nevertheless, in a school uniform. Presence of school is set by several signs or even only the name of pictures which define a context of her perception and force to look for signs of presence of school in its space.

6. Leadership in school painting as reflection of the political project

Art material. Search revealed that in open access on the Internet there are about two hundred pictorial works on school subject, and it is natural that it is probably only a part of all created massif. From them it is possible to allocate ten one and a half works which not just reflect school realities, but are connected with a leadership phenomenon, that is meet those conditions of emergence, existence and development of leadership about which it was told above. The representativeness of this selection is that the considered works are examples of standard plots and reflect the general trends of development of the Soviet school painting. Let us note that "Golden Age" of school painting fell on the 1950th years when in and school, and in the art devoted to it there took place several changes about which it was told above. Exactly in the fifties there was a significant amount of the

pictures on school which are coming down often to rather standard plots from which we choose necessary to us. We allocate those stories where take place to be the acts, behaviour or situations of heroes giving the chance to show lines of the leader.

Based on the carried-out analysis of visual material it is possible to allocate the following stories describing various models of leadership in the Soviet "school" painting.

Leadership as intrinsic line (ideal) Soviet school student. The name of the pioneer organization, existing at schools, says that each school student had to aspire to becoming the leader. And the pioneer organization created the rituals and rules helping school students to gain leadership skills. That is activists-pioneers, gaining leadership skills, showed them in communication with each other and showed them in different conditions. There are as images of the certain individuals personifying necessary lines of the leader (artist Galaganov, picture "Pioneer" (1944)), and images of pioneer rituals during which leadership skills are formed and fixed (artist Belyaev, picture "Happy" (1949)). It should be noted that some of similar works can quite be correlated to so-called "big style" in the Soviet painting (grand style).

Leadership in study. Similar pictures contain images of the best pupils; however, they cannot be considered as the usual anonymous portraits (for example, artist Lyakhov, picture "Pioneer" (1950)) showing a role model. As a rule, the picture plot, anyway, relates to oral statement of the acquired material during the current control of progress (the answer at a board). The answer in a class was considered as it from forms of a socialist competition, but as Kelly (2012) considers, the public answer in a class or at examination is the ritual forming fear. Respectively, the person who is safely passing through this ritual form in himself leadership skills, such as overcoming fear. And if the person does not pass this ritual, the reason seems not in lack of leadership skills, and in not diligence of the pupil, lack at it of self-discipline, on as specifies painting (artist Reshetnikov, picture "Re-examination" (1954)). Also, oral check, that is the answer at a board, is also school of self-criticism, public recognition of own shortcomings, that is the instrument of social control.

In "school painting" two plots representing those who passed this ritual (artist Kvyatkovsky, picture "Handed over" (1950)) and those who cannot cope with this ritual because of lack of self-discipline are widespread (artist Lukonina-Ovchinnikov, picture "Among a board" (1952))

Leader as organizer of social control. As it was noted above, in the Soviet pedagogical model children's collective was considered as one of legitimate (or effective) agents of maintenance of school discipline. And this activity was considered as one of stages of preparation for fight for creation of communistic society (or utopian society of communism). For this reason, such activity also demanded the created leadership skills. An illustration of such model are pictures (Lelikov, picture "Got" (1955); artist Khmelnytsky, picture "Was late" (1951)) where leadership is shown in irreconcilability to violators of discipline (for example, too late, to shirkers and lagging behind in study). That is one of the leader's tasks – to promote strengthening of discipline, and leadership type – the activist of children's collective participating in maintenance of discipline and in fight against its violations. The separate plot is an image of the social pressure upon the school student considered above (artist Grigoriev, picture "Discussion of the two" (1950); artist Reshetnikov, picture "Caught the violator" (1950)).

Leadership skills can be shown not only in space of educational institution, school, but also in the household environment. For example, in out-of-school communication when the school student acts as the leader in the relation to younger children from the yard at the place of residence (from local community). When leadership is provided with the fact of receipt in school (artist Karpushevsky, picture "The story by the first grader" (1957)) or the accession to the pioneer organization (artist Grigoriev, picture "A pioneer tie" (1957)), taking sometimes at the same time the game form (artist Malykhin, picture "The first lesson" (1957)).

7. Conclusions

In the Soviet art the main role in creation of an image of the ideal school student during the 1940s – was played in the 1950s by literature, painting helped the solution of this task too, visualizing the ideas expressed in literature. At the beginning of the 1960s, this process actively joined cinema, but at this time "school" art was faced already by other tasks. Leadership models reflect those concepts which developed in the Soviet pedagogical theory in school painting, such, for example, as education of individual self-discipline and creation of the educational environment controlled at the expense of collective social pressure.

As the main addressee of such painting children for whom the school became space of education of heroism were considered. The self-discipline and leadership skills in collective study became initial skills of heroism in work and at protection of the socialist fatherland. Also, leadership at school is a school of the future of social leadership as at a school pioneer or Komsomol meeting the skills necessary in party life are formed.

Based on the carried-out analysis it is also possible to mark out several essential lines of the leadership formed at the Soviet school (educational space):

- spheres of leadership are study, behaviour and various social relations in the children's environment;

- leadership does not give any privileges and is not destiny of the elite, each pupil is a potential leader, the pioneer group is a group of equal potential leaders;
- each school student is an example for younger and, respectively, the leader for them;
- pupils of both sexes can be leaders, that is in the image of leadership there is no gender inequality.

In addition, let us note also that according to the Soviet pedagogical model leadership is possible only in the social and legitimate (approved) situations. Leadership skills need to be formed and cultivated in activity correct and socially approved, but not in criminal or antisocial activity. This idea was propagandized also in children's literature.

The fact of emergence of the considered pictures says that the school as space of construction of socialism, was considered and as one of instruments of manifestation of leadership skills. It is necessary to learn to be the leader, that is the school also teaches leadership, it is one of the parties, one of aspects of socialization.

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