

## **“EUGENICS OR LIFE”: THE FATE OF ONE RESEARCH DIRECTION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FORMATION OF SOVIET SOCIALISM (1920–1930S)**

*The article examines the problem of the development of eugenic ideas in Soviet society in the 1920s and 1930s. The author concludes that the desire of eugenicists to radically improve the human species is related to the ideas of socialist transformations. Eugenics as a science about human nature provided broad opportunities for social construction. This was one of the reasons for the initial support of eugenics, as evidenced by the establishment of the Russian Eugenics Society at the Institute of Experimental Biology in 1920. However, as L. D. Trotsky's ideas about the “permanent revolution,” which included revolutionary views on the possibility of creating a new man, were excluded from the development strategy of the USSR, eugenics ceased to enjoy state support. The conflict between eugenics and Stalin's concept of building socialism was caused, in particular, by different attitudes to the influence of the environment on the ability of humans and animals to acquire hereditary traits. The desire to improve the everyday lives of Soviet citizens did not align with the ideas of eugenicists about everyday asceticism and the difficulties of survival as the most effective factors of natural selection. The author suggests that the reasons for the negative attitude toward eugenics in the USSR in the early 1930s should be seen not only in its “bourgeois” nature, but also in its “mechanistic” view of society as a field for unlimited biological experimentation.*

**Keywords:** *eugenics, soviet society, new man*

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