

Title: Between Play and Negation: Lunacharsky's Subversion of God and Religion of Labour
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Abstract:

Considered heretical and premature, Lunacharsky's early writings were excised from the canon of Russian Marxism, and are often ignored and remain unfamiliar to many. Revisiting his thought today calls for its contextualization within the heterodox Marxism which refutes all postulates attributed to the Engelsian-Plekhanovite dogmatic. At the heart of Lunacharsky's theory lies a conceptualization of collective experience, which is based on creative work (*tvorchestvo*) as a means of social bonding and a material transformation of the world. For Lunacharsky, labor is the psycho-physical truth of belief, which exhibits both the adaptive and transformative character of human activity with regard to its milieu. Labor, in its turn, is driven by two tendencies: compensating for a lack of energy and discharging its surplus. While the former tendency is production as a form of negation, the latter is a non-productive activity that manifests itself as play. This dialectics of labor grounds Lunacharsky's understanding of socialism as an atheist program bound to subvert the very idea of God in the course of history.