SOVIET HISTORY 1917–53

Edited by

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Soviet History, 1917–53

Essays in Honour of R. W. Davies

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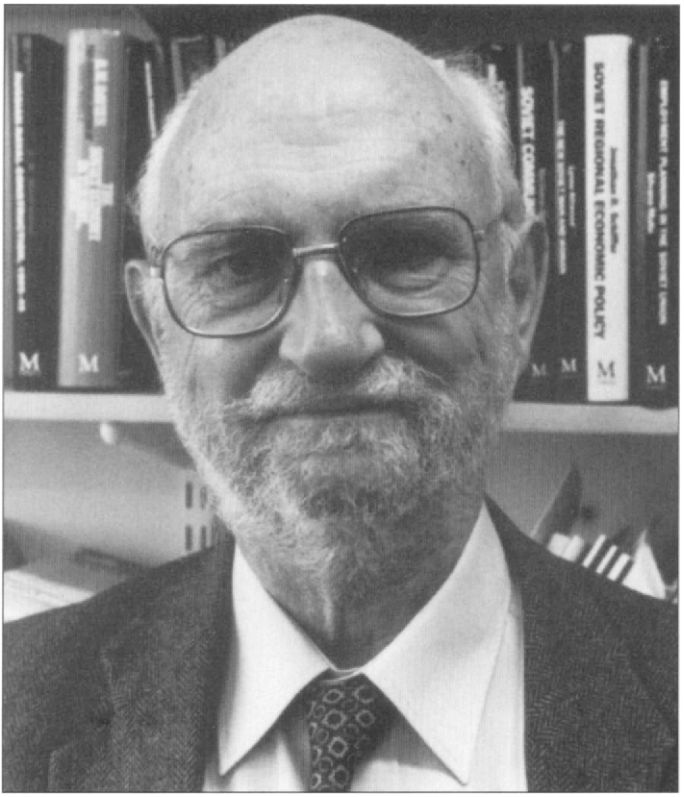

R. W. Davies

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Notes on the Contributors

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Oleg Khlevnyuk was awarded the title of Candidate in Historical Science by the Institute of USSR History of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in 1985, and is now a member of the editorial board of the journal *Svobodnaya mysl'*. His main publications are *1937 god: protivostoyanie* (1991); *1937 – Stalin, NKVD i sovetskoe obshchestvo* (1992); and *Stalin i Ordzhonikidze. Konflikty v Politbyuro v 30-e gody* (1993). He has collaborated with R. W. Davies since 1989 on Soviet economic history; they are the joint authors of SIPS Discussion Paper no. 36, *The Role of Gosplan in Economic Decision-Making in the 1930s* (1993). His current research is on the political and economic history of the 1930s.

Moshe Lewin has been Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA, since 1978. He was Director of Studies at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes, Paris, from 1965 to 1967; and between 1968 and 1978 he was successively Senior Lecturer, Reader and Professor at CREES. His major publications are *Russian Peasants and Soviet Power* (1968); *Lenin's Last Struggle* (1969); *Political Undercurrents in Soviet Economic Debates* (1974); *The Making of the Soviet System* (1985); *The Gorbachev Phenomenon* (1988 and 1991);

Russia-USSR-Russia (1994); and (with Ian Kershaw) *Dictators Unleashed* (forthcoming, 1995). He is currently working on the history of the Soviet bureaucracy and on a broader history of Russian society.

Catherine Merridale has been Lecturer in Modern European History at the University of Bristol since 1993. Between 1987 and 1993 she was successively Junior and Senior Research Fellow in History at King's College, Cambridge. Her PhD thesis (University of Birmingham, 1987) was supervised by R. W. Davies, and she continues to attend the Soviet Industrialisation Project seminars at CREES. She is the author of *Moscow Politics and the Rise of Stalin* (1990) and editor, with Chris Ward, of *Perestroika: the Historical Perspective* (1991). She is currently working on a study of attitudes to death and mourning in twentieth-century Russia, but maintains an interest in the Bolshevik elite of the revolutionary period.

Maureen Perrie has been successively research student, Lecturer and Senior Lecturer in Russian History at CREES since 1967. She is the author of *The Agrarian Policy of the Russian Socialist-Revolutionary Party; from its Origins through the Revolution of 1905–1907* (1976), *The Image of Ivan the Terrible in Russian Folklore* (1987) and *Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia; the False Tsars of the Time of Troubles.*

E. A. Rees has been Lecturer in Soviet History at CREES since 1989, having taught Soviet politics at the University of Keele from 1979 to 1989. His PhD thesis (University of Birmingham, 1982) was supervised by R. W. Davies. His main publications are *State Control in Soviet Russia: the Rise and Fall of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate, 1920–1934* (1987); *The Soviet Communist Party in Disarray* (1992) and *Stalinism and Soviet Rail Transport, 1928–1940* (1995). Since 1989 he has been joint investigator with R. W. Davies on two ESRC-sponsored research projects on the economic and political history of the USSR; and joint editor with R. W. Davies of the CREES/Macmillan series, 'Studies in Soviet History and Society'.

Richard Sakwa is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Politics at the University of Kent at Canterbury. His publications include *Soviet Politics* (1989); *Gorbachev and his Reforms* (1990); and *Russian Politics and Society* (1993). His doctoral dissertation, completed at the University of Birmingham under the supervision of R. W. Davies in

1983, was later published in the CREES/Macmillan series as *Soviet Communists in Power: a Study of Moscow during the Civil War, 1918–21* (1988).

Yuzuru Taniuchi is Professor Emeritus at the University of Tokyo, where he was previously Professor of Comparative Politics in the Faculty of Law. His main publications (in Japanese) are: *A Political History of Soviet Russia; the Power and the Peasants* (1962, 1989); *The Formation of the Stalinist Political Regime* (4 vols, 1970–86); and *Reflections on Contemporary Socialism* (1978). In 1966 he spent some time in Birmingham as a visiting scholar, and his short monograph, *The Village Gathering in Russia in the Mid-1920s*, was published by CREES in 1968. His current research interest is in the development of relations between the political authorities and the peasants in Soviet Russia in 1930–34.

Introduction: a Tribute to R. W. Davies

This *festschrift* is dedicated to Professor Robert William Davies, and it honours a man who has achieved the rare distinction of combining together at the very highest level two careers simultaneously, both as a distinguished historian of the Soviet Union, and as the founder of one of the premier research centres on Soviet and Russian affairs not only in the United Kingdom but in the west, namely the Centre for Russian and East European Studies at the University of Birmingham.

R. W. Davies was born on 23 April 1925 in London, the son of William and Gladys Hilda Davies. Even in adolescence he showed a precocious talent, and was widely read not only in history, economics and political theory but also in contemporary political affairs whilst still at Westcliff High School. His academic career after school was interrupted by the war. He served for four years in the field of radio communications with the RAF, which included a period in Egypt.

From 1946 until 1950 he studied at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, where he gained his BA in Russian (Regional Studies) class 1. Unable to find a supervisor for his chosen topic of research at SSEES, he went on to do postgraduate work at the University of Birmingham, where he was supported by a special grant as Treasury and Senior Treasury Scholar. He received his PhD (Commerce) in 1954 and was also awarded the university's prestigious Ashley Prize. He was appointed from 1954 to 1956 as Assistant Lecturer at the University of Glasgow. In 1956 he returned to Birmingham and was appointed successively as Research Fellow, Lecturer and Senior Lecturer in the Department of Economics and Institutions of the USSR.

A Department for the Study of Soviet Institutions had been created within the Department of Economics at the University of Birmingham in the early 1940s by Professor Alexander Baykov. A Russian émigré, Baykov, worked for many years in Prague where he had set up a centre for studying the developing economy of the new Soviet Union, but then fled the German invasion for England. Baykov supervised Davies' PhD and became his mentor in his subsequent career at Birmingham.

Soviet and Russian studies underwent a major development from 1963 onwards following the recommendations of the Hayter Sub-Committee on Area Studies of the University Grants Committee. This recognised the need to create centres of excellence specialising in Soviet affairs. The Department of Economics and Institutions of the USSR at the University of Birmingham was transformed into the Centre for Russian and East European Studies (CREES). Baykov who had worked tirelessly for this cause sadly died in March 1963. The Centre was established in October 1963 with R.W. Davies serving as its first director from 1963 to 1979. The title of Professor of Soviet Economic Studies was conferred on him by the University of Birmingham in 1965.

From his adolescent years in the 1930s R.W. Davies had become a Marxist and a vigorously active member of the Communist Party of Great Britain. The struggle against fascism and the role of the USSR in the Second World War hardened those convictions. In these years he became a regular contributor to the party's theoretical journal.

Davies welcomed the 'liberalisation' in the USSR following Stalin's death. In 1956, soon after Khrushchev's 'Secret Speech' to the XX party congress, he made his first visit to Moscow. His break with the Communist Party, as with so many other leading British intellectuals, came with the Soviet invasion of Hungary in the autumn of 1956 and the suppression of the anti-communist rising. From that moment onwards there was to be no reconciliation.

Politically Davies has remained firmly a man of the 'left', but never again an activist. He has supported the British Labour Party from the 1960s onwards, participated in the activities of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), and has been a champion in unobtrusive ways of new radical currents, including feminism. From the 1980s onwards he became an occasional contributor to *New Left Review*. The reforms of the Gorbachev era provided a source of inspiration, not only for the new opportunities offered for research into the Soviet Union's past but also for the prospect for developing an alternative socialist course, that was more democratic and humane. The collapse of the Gorbachev experiment may have dimmed these hopes but Davies has retained his belief in the ultimate necessity of socialism as humanity's destiny and salvation.

R.W. Davies and CREES

As director of CREES Davies showed himself to be a university administrator of a very high calibre. Under his guidance the fledgling

Centre for Russian and East European Studies was transformed into a vigorous and dynamic institution, whose reputation in the field of Soviet studies, not only in Britain, but in the west generally, was second to none. CREES from the outset became renowned for its excellent research record. It became a major centre for the training of postgraduates and has provided a stream of recruits not only for academia but also for government and business.

The achievement is the more impressive considering the relatively small permanent academic staff of CREES, never more than about ten members. This was always supplemented by a changing team of impressively productive Research Fellows and Research Associates. Davies succeeded in imbuing the new Centre with a commitment to producing research of the highest quality, of fostering within it a research culture and encouraging the view of academic work as a vocation. In this he led by example, displaying prodigious energy in combining his administrative duties with his own academic research.

Under his directorship certain strategic areas of research were cultivated. These traditions have been built on by successive directors of CREES, Professor Mario Nuti, Professor Ron Amann, and the current director Professor Julian Cooper, with Professor Philip Hanson also filling in as acting director.

Baykov had already established a reputation for work in the study of the economic and social history of the USSR at Birmingham, which was to be further enhanced by Davies himself. In the 1970s Davies was joined at CREES by Professor Moshe Lewin who made his own inimitable contribution to the field. The Centre's expertise in pre-revolutionary Russian history has been developed by Maureen Perrie.

CREES's reputation for research into contemporary Soviet and Russian economics and trade was enhanced by the contributions of Nuti and Hanson. An enterprising new development came in the 1960s with an OECD financed project into Soviet science policy. At the time this was one of Davies' major interests; his inaugural lecture in January 1967 was on the theme of 'Science and the Soviet Economy'. In the 1970s and 1980s this developed into a major study of the technological level of Soviet industry, by Davies, Amann and Cooper. This field of study was pioneered at CREES.

During *perestroika* the research orientation of CREES also underwent a profound shift; the development within CREES, led by Professor Cooper, of a wealth of expertise in the study of the problems associated with the transformation of the former Soviet economy and the conversion of its defence industries for civil purposes.

The study of Russian military policy, and of the post-communist East European states and of the non-Russian components of the former USSR have also been extended.

Under Davies the Centre had already made a major commitment to the study of social developments in the USSR. Much of the early work in this field was initiated by the late Geoffrey Barker, a specialist on Soviet labour and statistics who was also one of the very first pioneers of gender studies in relation to the Soviet Union. This has developed over time with the development of a well established seminar programme devoted to the study of gender issues. The study of the Soviet educational system and of social policy was also cultivated.

From the outset the necessity was recognised for the new Centre to be properly resourced. Attached to it was established the Baykov Library, a fitting tribute to the Centre's original inspiration. Under successive librarians the Baykov Library has become one of the major libraries in the west for Soviet and Russian affairs in the twentieth century. From the start the Centre was committed to research through the medium of Russian and the teaching of Russian language to its students.

Davies was also vigorously involved in promoting the development of Soviet studies as a discipline, most notably through his membership from 1963 to 1977 of the committee of the National Association for Soviet and East European Studies (NASEES), alongside distinguished colleagues such as Alec Nove and Michael Kaser.

CREES has always cultivated links with scholars in the former Soviet Union and in the west in general. The Centre has now well established connections across the globe, and is regularly visited by foreign scholars, some for extended research visits, aimed at making use of the centre's expertise and resources.

Davies's achievement in establishing CREES now appears the more impressive with hindsight. He succeeded in creating a Centre held together by a high *ésprit de corps*, and one which was able to adapt to changing circumstances. A guiding inspiration has been his commitment not only to rigorous scholarship, but also to the development of interdisciplinary research and a willingness to open up new fields of investigation.

In spite of his achievements as an administrator Davies' first commitment has always been to scholarship. The concern expressed by E. H. Carr to his young collaborator in 1963, on his appointment as director of CREES, that he might be turned into an academic entrepreneur at the expense of his research, proved groundless. His research

output was always high, and following his early retirement from university duties in September 1988 it has increased still further.

The achievements of R. W. Davies are those of a man distinguished by a genuine modesty of demeanour and seriousness of outlook but also possessed of a lively sense of humour. His style is genuinely informal, and to all his friends and colleagues he is simply 'Bob'. He has always shown a genuine concern and interest in the work of his colleagues, and has given generously of his time and knowledge to assist and advance his colleagues.

Outside of academia Professor Davies' interests have been those of a quiet, contemplative kind – reading, gardening, hiking, theatre, cinema, music and travel. His interests and political convictions are keenly shared by Frances, who is both wife and companion. They were married in December 1953 and their two children, Maurice and Catherine, were born in 1960 and 1965. In 1994 Bob and Frances were blessed with their first grandchild. Their home in Oakfield Road has always been a meeting place for lively conversation for colleagues, visitors and friends.

R. W. Davies as Historian

For a historian who has made his name as a specialist on the economic history of the Soviet Union it is noteworthy that initially R. W. Davies had contemplated devoting himself to the study of medieval Rus. It was under the influence of the legendary Baykov that he turned to the study of Soviet history where his heart truly lay.

Davies' first major published work *The Development of the Soviet Budgetary System* in 1958 firmly established his reputation. It was distinguished by a formidable grasp of the complexities of Soviet budgetary policy combined with great assurance and maturity of judgement. It was based on his PhD thesis, written surprisingly when the author had not yet set foot in the USSR. It was, as he himself has written, akin to the labours of a medieval historian, examining a society both remote and inaccessible through limited sources. For many years he contemplated writing a companion volume which would deal with the history of the Soviet industrial supply system, 1917–1960, but this work was never to see the light of day.

A central place in Davies' intellectual biography is his collaboration with E.H.Carr on the latter's series *A History of Soviet Russia*, with Davies and Carr the joint authors of *Foundations of A Planned Economy, 1928–29*, vol. 1. This collaboration, which began in 1958

following an invitation from Carr, was vividly recalled by Davies in his article 'Drop the Glass Industry'. The collaboration continued during Davies' tenure as director of CREES and only came to an end with Carr's death in 1982. Davies in this collaboration was by no means a mere shadow of Carr, but held his own firm views on the development of the Soviet economy and society, that are perhaps less deterministic than Carr's and informed, but not in any intrusive sense, by his own socialist commitment. His academic work was always characterised by a strict adherence to empirical method, which he always insisted had to be distinguished from 'empiricism'. At the same time Davies shared with Carr a common belief in the importance and significance of the Soviet experience of socialist planning and economic modernisation. His admiration for Carr's monumental achievement made him impatient of those, whose claims to intellectual eminence were so much less, who were so quick to try and denigrate his reputation.

Since the 1970s Davies has continued the work initiated by Carr through his own work in the series *The Industrialisation of Soviet Russia*; of which several volumes have already appeared: *The Socialist Offensive*; *The Soviet Collective Farm, 1929–30*;*The Soviet Economy in Turmoil, 1929–30*. The series aims to follow the history of the USSR up to 1936. Alongside this work have appeared detailed specialist articles, edited surveys of the overall development of the Soviet economy and pioneering studies which have explored the changing structure of economy and society between the late tsarist and early Soviet period. The opening up of the Soviet archives whilst adding to the enormous burden of the research undertaken has not deterred him, but reinvigorated his efforts.

R. W. Davies has been at the forefront of historical research and writing on the USSR for the past forty years. His collaboration with fellow historians has always been close, marked by courtesy and mutual respect, whilst pursuing a clearly distinctive vision of the significance and relevance of the Soviet experience as well as of its inherent interest. Collaboration and contact have been maintained with leading historians working in the field from all corners of the globe: including amongst many V. P. Danilov, Eugene Zaleski, Yuzuru Taniuchi, Holland Hunter, Alec Nove, James Millar and Moshe Lewin. From the outset he was anxious to develop close contacts with fellow historians in the USSR.

Davies has shown a particular sensitivity to younger generations of historians, and has developed close contacts and working relations with many. In the 1970s an extremely fruitful period of collaboration

developed with Steve Wheatcroft, now director of CREES, Melbourne, Australia. One of the major fruits of that collaboration was the jointly edited statistical balance of the Soviet economy: *Materials for a balance of the Soviet national economy 1928–30.* This collaboration was continued with other young historians at Birmingham – John Barber, Jonathan Haslam, Nick Lampert and Chris Ward. All the contributors to the present *festschrift* can in their own way speak of their indebtedness to Davies. A high proportion of those occupying academic positions as specialists in Soviet history in British universities are former graduates of CREES.

Davies' commitment to his field of research is nowhere more clearly evident than in his encouragement to young researchers. He has successfully supervised over twenty PhD theses as well as numerous Masters dissertations. Those who have had the experience will testify to the great concern, encouragement, patience and good humour he has shown to younger colleagues. Drafts of chapters, articles and manuscripts for publication are unfailingly and generously given the benefit of his scrutiny. For many this has been a real apprenticeship in the skills required for aspiring historians. Attention to detail has always been of paramount concern, but he never imposes himself and he allows younger researchers to express themselves freely.

The dissemination of new research in the field of Soviet history has been one of Davies' particular concerns. The CREES/Macmillan series, Studies in Soviet History and Society, was set up by him and now boasts over thirty titles; the authors all having some close association with CREES. The flow of Discussion and Occasional Papers from CREES, often of highly original research, and the organisation of the long and well established Soviet Industrialisation Project Seminars have been his achievement.

Davies' commitment to history as a worthwhile activity and to the study of Soviet history in particular is reflected in other fields. The major reevaluation of the Soviet past initiated by Gorbachev's *glasnost' produced his Soviet History in the Gorbachev Revolution,* which is a testimony to his view of history as a vitally important and relevant discipline. This concern with the nature of the discipline and with historiography is reflected in his revised introduction to E. H. Carr's *What is History?* based on Carr's own notes. Davies' work ranges from the highly specialised monographs, and articles to works aimed at a broader audience, textbooks for undergraduates and for A-level students in the belief that an understanding of the past is vital to an understanding of the present.

Without exaggeration it can be said that Davies now commands an international reputation as the outstanding historian in his field. He has attended international conferences and symposia, and lectured in Australia, India, China, Japan, the USA and Canada, in some of which countries, it might be noted, he is perhaps better appreciated than in his native Britain. Japanese colleagues speak of a 'Birmingham school' of Soviet history. Davies has always taken a keen interest in the development of a critical understanding of the Soviet experience and particularly its relevance for the developing world.

In so far as some general observations might be offered of Davies' view of the Soviet experience of industrialisation, it derives from a conviction of the historic importance of the process of economic modernisation, as well as an acute awareness of its social and political costs. If we were to look for the heroes in Davies's work they tend to be the unsung heroes, those distinguished by technical competence, and professional commitment – the planners, statisticians, engineers and managers – who were often placed in an impossible position and suffered in the process. Davies has at the same time avoided the easy temptation to demonise the Soviet political leadership and regime, seeking to understand the motives which underlay their actions whilst in no way diminishing their responsibility.

Davies' prolific output in the past decades has been facilitated by research grants from the ESRC, Leverhulme, Volkswagen and the Nuffield Foundation. The willingness of such bodies to provide support is testi-mony not only to his ability to identify crucial areas of investigation and to develop a research strategy but also to his ability to fulfil promises undertaken.

The collapse of communism and the disintegration of the USSR has opened up new horizons. Davies' articles are now regularly published in Russian historical journals, whilst collaboration particularly with younger Russian historians has been extended. Through his work on the British Academic Committee for Cooperation with Russian Archives (BACCRA formerly BALSA) he has been extremely active in promoting closer contacts with Russian libraries and archives and for fruitful exchanges between Russian and British colleagues and their institutions.

Essays in Honour of R. W. Davies

The essays which form this *festschrift* have been written by fellow historians who have had close association with R. W. Davies. The

collection spans the years 1917–1953. Each essay provides a 'snap-shot' of a particular period, issue or personality. As such it provides an overview, and sheds light on some of the main controversies concerning this era of Russian and Soviet history. Almost all the essays have utilised newly available archive materials.

Each essay reflects the view of its author, and there is no necessary consensus of opinion amongst the contributors. In so far as there is a common theme running through the work it concerns the processes of decision-making in the early Soviet period. What perhaps also marks out the collection as a whole, itself a tribute to the tradition represented by R. W. Davies, is an openness to understanding the development of the Soviet period in all its complexity; a willingness to examine alternative possibilities and tendencies, to examine alternative options which at the time appeared viable but which in many cases were quickly sidelined by the main thrust of events.

Peter Gatrell provides a case-study of the relationship between big business and government from 1915 to 1918, based on an examination of the engineering lobby. Caught between an increasingly militant labour force and a succession of increasingly unsympathetic governments, employers were thrown onto their own resources. The attempts to create a coherent lobby to safeguard their interests fractured under the mounting pressures. Relations between big business and the tsarist state, he shows, were far from cordial. After the October revolution some desperate attempts were made to achieve an accommodation between employers and the Bolshevik government before these were swept aside in 1918.

Catherine Merridale studies the early political biography of L. B. Kamenev, one of the leading moderates within the Bolshevik leadership, and raises a number of important questions concerning the nature of the Bolshevik Party. The Bolshevik Party emerges as a complex, heterogenous entity, which embraced a variety of political positions. Much has been written on the left wing of the Bolshevik party. This essay raises the intriguing question of what that much more shadowy entity, the right wing of the Bolshevik Party, represented, what influence it wielded, and whether it might have worked towards a different outcome to the October revolution of 1917.

Richard Sakwa examines the early period of NEP and the Bolshevik government's attempt to establish a new relationship with society, as

the basis for creating a new order. Sakwa demonstrates, on the basis of the experience of Moscow politics in 1921–24, that this was from the outset a remarkably fragile experiment. The Bolsheviks sought a new order, based on some measure of consensus; but a revitalised civil society and a reinvigorated political life within the party itself, even in conditions of a one party state, quickly came to threaten the unity of the party and its claim to the legitimate exercise of power. Confronted by this dilemma, the party, Sakwa argues, opted for preserving its monopoly of power through a strategy of stabilisation achieved through a new cycle of revolutionary transformation from 1928 onwards.

Yuzuru Taniuchi provides a study of decision-making associated with the adoption of the Ural-Siberian method of grain procurement, which served as the prelude to all out collectivisation and de-kulakisation. Using new archival sources he is able to trace the way in which the policy evolved through the interaction between the central party authorities in Moscow and the provincial leaders in Siberia and the Urals. The essay also sheds new light on the attempts by the leadership to mobilise social pressure from the poor and middle peasants against the kulaks.

E. A. Rees examines the way in which decision-making was organised within the central party organs between 1928 and 1940. He shows that a major turning point in the concentration of power in Stalin's hands, associated with the decline in the role of collective decision-making bodies including the Politburo, Secretariat and *Orgburo*, occurred in 1932–33. The way in which Stalin managed the decision-making process is further highlighted by an examination of decision-making in the field of transport policy. Although Stalin was able to shape and direct policy in this field there appears to have been a fundamental dispute within the ruling oligarchy regarding the unleashing of the terror, with even L. M. Kaganovich having to be pressured into accepting the new line.

Francesco Benvenuti, through a biographical study of Ordzhonikidze, also raises the question of divisions within the ruling oligarchy in the 1930s particularly with regard to the Great Terror. Benvenuti also explores an important aspect of the debate in the 1930s regarding the possibility of developing a more decentralised, more market orientated system of economic management in industry aimed at eliminating the

worst irrationalities which had manifested themselves within the command administrative economy from its inception.

Oleg Khlevnyuk, one of the very few historians who has been allowed to examine the secret files (*osobye papki*) of the Politburo, examines the way in which the Great Terror was organised and the motives of the initiators of the mass repression. In contrast to recent trends in some western writing on this subject he firmly rejects the view that the terror was the culmination of forces from 'below', arguing that it was initiated and directed from above, with the prime purpose of eliminating a potential 'fifth column' in anticipation of war.

Moshe Lewin's study of the kolkhozy in 1940 represents a development of his seminal work on the social history of the Stalin era. He examines a number of problem areas: the recruitment and training of cadres, the organisation of the kolkhozy, the role of the MTS, the lasting impact of collectivisation and the destruction of livestock in 1929–32, and the fate of the kulaks. Through the careful sifting and utilisation of dry archival sources he succeeds in bringing alive the experience of a large proportion of the Soviet population in this period. What emerges from this essay is that although the state had the power to impose its policies, social reality proved remarkably recalcitrant.

John Barber through his examination of the panic in Moscow in October 1941, which was spurred by the fear of imminent German occupation of the capital and the authorities' moves to evacuate the city, provides new insights into the social history of the Soviet period, examining the nature of the relationship between the regime and the wider society. This, he argues, was based not simply on coercion and indoctrination, but involved a more complex set of reactions which were shaped in part by the populace's expectations and their sense of the obligations of government and its agents.

Mark Harrison has pioneered the study of the Soviet economy during the Second World War. In this essay he presents new material unearthed from the Gosplan archives which sheds important new light on Soviet national accounting during the war. On this basis he attempts to calculate the actual burden of the defence effort on the Soviet economy as a whole, and its impact on different sectors. At the same time the defence burden on the Soviet economy is compared with that of the USA, the UK and Germany. The essay illuminates the process of

decision-making within the Soviet government apparatus, and highlights the often remarkably sophisticated methods which were evolved by Soviet planners for measuring economic performance.

Holland Hunter in the final essay provides an overview of the achievements of the Stalinist command economy, identifying fundamental weaknesses that were already apparent from 1929 onwards. He re-engages in the debate with R. W. Davies and others as to whether the rapid development of industry, which was so vital in the defence of the USSR during the Second World War, could have been achieved by more humane methods and by a more rational economic strategy, which might also have obviated the need to collectivise agriculture.

As Lewin and other contributors note, the availability of the new archival materials has as yet not brought about any fundamental revision of interpretations of the early Soviet period. This itself might be seen as a tribute to the achievement of earlier generations of historians, who, working under the most unfavourable conditions, succeeded remarkably in reconstructing the main issues and trends in Soviet development. At the same time the new archival sources will inevitably involve a major shift in the orientation of research into new topics and areas which previously were closed.

It is too early to make a final judgement on the archives, many of which still remain closed, and surprises cannot be ruled out. In some areas the archives have already had an impact. Interpretations of the Stalin period that sought to minimise Stalin's own contribution to the shaping and directing of events now simply cannot be sustained. In the main, as these essays illustrate, the archives allow a fuller, richer picture of events to be drawn, allowing us to pinpoint with greater accuracy the main issues and turning points.

E. A. Rees

Glossary of Russian Terms and Abbreviations used in the Text

aktiv	Communist party activist
ARCOS	Vserossiskoe Kooperativnoe Aktsionernoe Obschestvo (All-Russian Cooperative Joint Stock Company)
batrak	rural labourer, landless peasant
bednyak	poor peasant
CCC	*see* TsKK
CC	Tsentral'nyi komitet (Central Committee of the Communist Party)
Cheka	Chrezvychainaya Komissiya (Extraordinary Commission, political police), later GPU or OGPU
CPSU(b)	Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)
edinonachalie	one-man management
fond	file
GARF	State Archives of the Russian Federation
GKO	State Committee of Defence
gorkom	city party committee
Gosbank	Gosudarstvennyi Bank (State Bank)
Goskomstat	State Committee for Statistics
Gosplan	Gosudarstvennaya Planovaya Komissiya (State Planning Commission)
GPU	*see* OGPU
guberniya	province
Gulag	Main Administration of Labour Camps
INION	Institute for Scientific Research into the Social Sciences
ispolkom	ispolnitel'nyi komitet (executive committee)

khozraschet	commercial profit-and-loss accounting
KK-RKI	kontrol'naya komissiya-raboche-krest'yanskoi inspektsii (control commission – workers' and peasants inspection [local organs of TsKK-NKRKI])
kolkhoz	kollektivnoe khozyaistvo (collective farm)
kolkhoznik	collective farm worker
Kolkhoztsentr	Vserossiskii Sel'skokhozyaistvennykh Kollektivov (All-Russian Union of Agricultural Collectives)
kombinat	industrial combine
KomIspol	Komissiya Ispolneniya (Executive Commission of Sovnarkom)
Komsomol	Kommunisticheskii Soyuz Molodezhi (Communist League of Youth)
KPK	Komissiya Partinnoi Kontrol (Commission of Party Control)
krai	territory
kraikom	territorial party committee
KSK	Komissiya Sovetskoi Kontrol (Commission of Soviet Control)
kulak	rich peasant
MGK	Moscow city party committee
MKK	Moscow party control commission
MK	Moscow party committee
MPO	Moscow party organisation
MTS	Mashinno-traktornaya stantsiya (machine tractor station)
narkom	narodnyi komissar (people's commissar)
Narkomfin	Narodnyi Komissariat Finansov (People's Commissariat of Finance)
Narkompros	Narodnyi Komissariat Prosveshcheniya (People's Commissariat of Education)
Narkomput	Narodnyi Komissariat Putei Soobshcheniya (People's Commissariat of Ways of Communication, i.e. Transport)
Narkomsnab	Narodnyi Komissariat Snabzheniya (People's Commissariat of Supply)
Narkomtorg	Narodnyi Komissariat Vneshnei i Vnutrennoi Torgovli (People's Commissariat of External and Internal Trade)

Narkomtrud	Narodnyi Komissariat Truda (People's Commissariat of Labour)
Narkomtyazhprom	Narodnyi Komissariat Tyazheloi Promyshlennosti (People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry)
Narkomyust	Narodnyi Komissariat Yustitsii (People's Commissariat of Justice)
Narkomzag	Narodnyi Komissariat Zagatovok (People's Commissariat of Procurements)
Narkomzem	Narodnyi Komissariat Zemledeliya (People's Commissariat of Agriculture)
NEP	Novaya ekonomicheskaya politika (New Economic Policy)
NKInDel	Narodnyi Komissariat po Inostrannym Delam (People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs)
NKRKI	Narodnyi Komissariat Raboche-Krest'yanskoi Inspektsii (People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection – known also as Rabkrin)
NKVMDel	Narodnyi Komissariat Voenno-Morskoi Del (People's Commissariat of Military and Naval Affairs)
NKVD	Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennykh Del (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs)
nomenklatura	appointment list controlled directly or indirectly by the party
ob"edinenie	industrial associations
oblast	province
obkom	province party committee
OGPU (GPU)	Ob"edinennoe Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie (Unified State Political Administration, Political Police)
okrug	administrative unit, between region and district
okrugkom	district party committee
orgotdel'	organisation section
perestroika	reconstruction
politotdel	political department
pud	measure of weight, equalling 36.1 British pounds
Rabkrin	*see* NKRKI
raikom	district party committee
raion	district, administrative unit

raisoviet	district council
raizo	district land organisation
RGAE	Russian State Archives of the Economy
RPO	district party organisation
RSFSR	Rossiiskaya Sovetskaya Federativnaya Sotsialisticheskaya Respublika (Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic)
RTsKhIDNI	Russian Centre for the Preservation and Study of Document of Recent History
ruble	unit of currency
sel'soviet	village soviet
skhod	gathering of the peasant commune
smychka	alliance, i.e. the worker–peasant alliance
sovkhoz	sovetskoe khozyaistvo, Soviet, i.e. state farm
sovnarkhoz	sovet narodnogo-khozyaistva (regional economic council)
Sovnarkom	Sovet Narodnykh Komissarov (Council of People's Commissars)
spetsy	specialists
STO	Sovet Truda i Oborony (Council of Labour and Defence)
TOZ	tovarishchestvo po sovmestnoi (association for the joint cultivation of land [the simplest form of kolkhoz])
troika	committee or group of three persons
trudoden'	labour day, measure of work
TsGANKH	Central State Archives of the National Economy
TsGAOR	Central State Archives of the October Revolution
TsIK	Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet (Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of the USSR)
TsKK	Tsentral'naya kontrol'naya komissiya (Central Control Commission of the party)
TsSU	Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie (Central Statistical Administration)
TSUNKhU	Tsentral'noe upravlenie narodno-khozyaistvennogo ucheta (Central Administration of National Economic Records)
uezd	district

Vesenkha	Vysshii Sovet Narodnogo Khozyaistva (Supreme Council of the National Economy)
Vikzhel	Vserossiiskii Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet Soyuza Zheleznodorozhnikov (All-Russian Executive Committee of the Union of Railwaymen)
vozhd'	leader
VTsIK	Vserossiskii Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet (All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets)
VTsSPS	Vsesoyuznyi Tsentral'nyi Sovet Profsoyuzov (All-Union Central Council of the Trade Unions)
vtuz	vysshee tekhnicheskoi uchebnoe zavedenie (higher technical educational institution)
vuz	vysshee uchebnoe zavedenie (higher educational institution)

1 Big Business and the State in Russia, 1915–1918: the Engineering Lobby

Peter Gatrell

'Definitive answers regarding the composition, outlook and influence of pre-revolutionary Russia's trading-industrial class must await further research in the primary sources', wrote Ruth Roosa in 1973, in a pioneering article on Russia's industrial elite.[1] Following her lead, several scholars have begun to clarify the attitudes, organisation and behaviour of Russian industrialists before the Bolshevik revolution.[2] Our knowledge of the business elite nevertheless remains far inferior to that of the organised industrial working class.[3] Nor can the balance be redressed by focusing exclusively on business leaders' opinions and actions: these must be related to the changing economic, financial and political context within which industrialists operated.

This essay seeks to provide a picture of the strategies pursued by leading industrialists, by examining the machine-building industry during a brief but particularly fluid and turbulent period of war and revolution. Russian entrepreneurs experienced industrial mobilisation, encountered growing financial difficulties and, in 1917, were confronted by widespread labour militancy. Changes in the character of the state, as well as the deteriorating economic and financial situation, imposed new constraints on the engineering industry. In addition, the attention of industrialists, government and organised labour turned to the vexed issue of imminent industrial demobilisation, posing fresh challenges of adjustment. Finally, intense class conflict in the factories altered the rules of the game by which industrialists operated, forcing them to confront not merely manifestations of financial disorganisation, but the very survival of capitalist production. What means did the captains of the engineering industry have at their disposal to address the multiple challenges of mobilisation, financial crisis, demobilisation and revolution?

I

The Russian engineering industry had begun to secure a position of economic strength in the years preceding the outbreak of war in 1914. Between 1908 and 1913 the output of machine-building increased by around 72 per cent, almost twice as fast as the rate of increase of total industrial production.[4] The growth of company formation, output and employment had been accompanied by the emergence of industrial pressure groups. However, none of them exerted much influence on the industrial policy of the tsarist state. Many government officials mistrusted business leaders and looked to state-owned enterprise as a means of neutralising the potential power of organised big business. The old regime preferred to deal with individual firms: as in other spheres of public life, the tsarist state was reluctant to recognise collective organisations in industry. More important, however, the engineering industry was marked by a heterogenous product mix which encouraged the fragmentation of emergent pressure groups. By the same token, and by contrast with the iron and steel industry, industrial syndicates in the engineering industry found it difficult to survive or make any impact.[5]

The first attempt to organize the entire engineering industry on a regional basis took place in 1902, with the launch of the Confederation of Northern and Baltic Engineering Industry. But this organisation maintained a low profile, only emerging briefly into the limelight during 1908, when the government convened a conference on the depressed iron and steel and engineering trades.[6] The regional association also sent representatives to yet another conference on the iron and steel industry in 1913, where they concentrated their fire on the rising price of iron and steel charged by domestic suppliers.[7] But neither this body nor other industrial associations shaped an autonomous government industrial policy.[8]

The outbreak of war in 1914 opened up fresh opportunities for the engineering industry, coupled with new responsibilities. Leading firms – Putilov, Sormovo Engineering, Kolomna Engineering, Briansk Ironworks, Lessner Engineering – hurriedly concluded contracts for munitions with the procurement agencies. Firms that had hitherto concentrated on civilian work also joined the headlong rush to manufacture armaments. By July 1915, the government had identified more than 240 civilian machine-building firms, with a combined output of 140 million rubles (equivalent to 30 per cent of total machine-building production in 1913), which could contribute to munitions production. The main responsibility fell on metalworking and machine-building

firms in Petrograd and the surrounding region, employing a total of 154,000 workers by November 1915 and in receipt of orders worth 1,500 million rubles.[9]

The entire engineering industry employed around 546,000 workers at the peak of the war effort in 1916.[10] Total output increased by 164 per cent in real terms between 1913 and 1916. By 1916 around two-thirds of output was devoted to military production, compared to around one-quarter in the last full year of peace.[11] Almost immediately, the war affected producers of agricultural machinery, depleting their labour force and leaving them with unsold inventories and debt. Those that remained solvent converted to munitions production.[12] The war also stimulated the manufacture of machine-tools and precision instruments, although this remained a critical bottleneck.[13]

Before 1914, the government procurement agencies had expected to rely primarily on state arsenals and ironworks in order to supply munitions. The mobilisation of industry encouraged a shift in government thinking. With the advent of the 'shell shortage', the government sought the assistance of the large engineering firms in Petrograd and the central industrial region. The Ministry of Trade and Industry maintained that 'only large factories can give the best results'.[14] However, the flow of orders during 1915 prompted some government officials to express their concern that many large firms had swallowed huge sums of money, without making sufficient efforts to improve productivity. The government had fired its first warning shot over the bows of business.[15]

Leading engineering firms simultaneously encountered more than these, as yet isolated, expressions of government disquiet about its enforced reliance on the private sector. The shell shortage also prompted merchants, small businessmen and professional people (lawyers, doctors, scientists and technical specialists) to organise new 'civic organisations' (*obshchestvennye organizatsii*), on the grounds that neither the tsarist state sector nor big business had sufficient grasp of the scale or type of industrial mobilisation that the war necessitated. 'War industry committees' quickly established themselves in provincial towns and cities, dedicated not simply to the production of uniforms and munitions but also to the principle of a morally superior form of enterprise. The committees eschewed autocratic principles of management (embodied in government arsenals) and derided the close links that big business enjoyed with tsarist officials and commercial banks.[16]

Little love was lost between the established giant enterprises and the minnows created by the war industry committees. Economic rivalries,

typified by the complaint that large firms poached labour and machine tools from the committees, were accompanied by fundamental differences of strategy.[17] The issue of labour representation proved particularly explosive. A. I. Guchkov, chairman of the Central War Industry Committee (TsVPK), espoused the doctrine of 'social peace' and advocated an English-style rapprochement between labour and business, taking the form of conciliation chambers.[18] A. I. Konovalov, Guchkov's deputy, maintained that the working class 'represented the element on which depends ultimate victory over the enemy'.[19] According to this perspective, capital should collaborate with labour in modern economic life. By contrast, business leaders in Petrograd articulated a more technocratic view of labour as a production input, rather than as one half of a dynamic partnership in industry. Hence their support for the doctrine of labour militarisation.[20]

II

In the late summer of 1915 the government established a Special Council for State Defence (*Osoboe soveshchanie po oborone gosudarstva*).[21] The significance of this institutional change was not lost on industrialists, since they had been closely involved in an earlier commission, which had organised two major groupings of domestic industry to manufacture artillery (under the overall control of Sormovo Engineering) and ammunition (under Putilov). Now, however, these very firms found themselves deprived of any formal right to participate in the deliberations of its successor. The pill was made more difficult to swallow by virtue of the fact that the war industry committees succeeded in obtaining seats on the new body. Business leaders not only forfeited institutional access to procurement agencies, but found themselves at the mercy of a body which combined bureaucracy and 'educated opinion' (*obshchestvennoe mnenie*) in an unholy alliance.[22] 'Looking through the lists of members [i.e. of the special council] we see that they include many worthy figures, but very few of them are actually industrialists, still less do they represent the largest enterprises that are working for defence'.[23]

Microeconomic problems added to entrepreneurial woes. By the beginning of 1916, engineering enterprises laboured under grave financial difficulties. Partly, these reflected the inflation in the cost of labour, fuel and raw materials, particularly iron and steel. The delivery of coal from the Donbass caused grave concern. Suppliers reneged on

old contracts, paid a financial penalty and renegotiated terms with their customers.[24] Operating costs also rose because many of the leading firms offered workers subsidised housing, food and medical care, in order to retain skilled labour. Kolomna Engineering, for instance, maintained a factory hospital and compensated workers for increases in the cost of living.[25] Other firms told a similar story. In Moscow, Bromley reported an increase in recurrent outlays, because of the need to pay higher wages, to maintain the new canteen, bakery and factory shop and to subsidise workers' purchases of galoshes and calico.[26] Cash flow problems were compounded by the fact that firms still had to meet charges on debts incurred as a result of the feverish investment that took place between 1910 and 1914. By March 1915, Putilov owed nearly 14 million rubles to the Russo-Asiatic Bank. The Nikolaev Shipbuilding Company was heavily in debt to the International Bank, having failed to raise capital by means of a share issue in 1913; its debt reached 27 million rubles by July 1916.[27]

In these circumstances, particular importance attached to short-term credit, either in the form of advances received on government contracts or short-term bank credit. In practice the War Ministry used its discretion to award up to 65 per cent of the value of the contract.[28] The large engineering firms normally sought assistance from the commercial banks to underwrite the activities of their clients, by providing letters of guarantee. Sormovo Engineering complained that 'not only are the limits placed by the banks on these operations very quickly reached, but the commissions charged by the banks on this assistance constitutes a fresh burden on the costs of production.' In response, the government allowed firms to lodge other forms of security with the procurement agencies, thereby reducing the influence of the banks.[29]

Notwithstanding these favours, which went some way towards meeting the anxieties of the major firms, the tsarist bureaucracy lost none of its appetite for monitoring the affairs of big business, on the grounds that the results of government largesse needed to be monitored carefully. Kolomna Engineering, employing more than 15,000 workers, endured a government inspection in the autumn of 1915, headed by the right-wing Peter Durnovo and two technical specialists, V.I. Grinevetskii and N.F. Charnovskii. The inspectors made a scathing indictment of delays in delivery and appalling labour productivity, the result in part of poor management practices: 'whenever workers succeed in raising their productivity, the factory administration immediately reduces their piece rates'. Other evidence supports the view that the firm suffered low rates of labour productivity compared

with other engineering factories in the Moscow region. The Special Council recommended that the managing director A. P. Meshcherskii be dismissed, although it later reversed the decision.[30] Other high-profile investigations, notably of leading shipyards (Nevsky, Russo-Baltic and Becker) also highlighted financial irregularities and delays in the completion of military contracts.[31]

The final impulse to entrepreneurial action came with the imminent sequestration of Putilov, the nearest Russian equivalent to Krupp or Schneider. Sequestration had been on the agenda as early as spring 1915, but the government retreated for the time being, offering instead a multi-million ruble loan at 6.5 per cent, in return for participation in board meetings. The company was accused of using these funds to discharge obligations to the commercial banks. Although a sizable minority of Special Council members was opposed to sequestration (including Konovalov and some officials in the Ministry of War and the Ministry of Trade and Industry), a majority – including Guchkov and General A. A. Manikovskii, chief of the Main Artillery Administration – secured the takeover of Putilov.[32]

It would be unwise in retrospect to regard this measure as part of a systematic shift in the balance of power from big business to the state; rather, it reflected a sense of official frustration over the fortunes of a poorly-managed company. The shareholders (including the Russo-Asiatic Bank) were offered compensation and the firm's creditors were relieved of an unprofitable albatross, until such time as it could be returned to the private sector. In addition, responsibility for handling Putilov's militant workforce now rested with the government. However, such considerations did not prevent some members of the engineering elite from advocating a counterattack.

III

In February 1916, more than 100 representatives from 44 leading engineering firms assembled in Petrograd, in order to establish a 'permanent organisation' to represent their interests before 'government departments and civic organisations', including the Special Council for State Defence as well as the Ministry of Trade and Industry, which now occupied a very inferior position in the hierarchy of control. The employers stressed that their contribution to the war effort had been made possible by massive new investment; according to one estimate, the value of capital stock in the engineering industry had

doubled between 1914 and 1916. However, the procurement policy of the government typically left a lot to be desired, in so far as orders for munitions were placed haphazardly.[33]

A. P. Meshcherskii, still smarting from the blows he had received a few weeks earlier from the Special Council, was the moving force behind the new Association of the Engineering Industry. His keynote address attacked shortcomings in government industrial policy, criticised the role of the state sector and bemoaned the hostile attitude of the Duma towards private enterprise. More important, in view of later developments, he emphasised that industrial mobilisation, now and in any future conflict, would only succeed 'in the presence of an organisation that united the entire industry, capable of distributing various orders amongst individual factories in accordance with their capacity and facilities'. The organisation would help coordinate the acquisition of raw materials and industrial equipment, and disseminate new technology. The conference delegates agreed to set up a commission to explore the proposal further; apart from Meshcherskii himself, its members included A. A. Bachmanov, managing director of Lessner and chairman of the Petrograd Society of Factory and Millowners (PSFMO) and A. F. Brink, representing Putilov.[34]

Archival evidence demonstrates that these leading entrepreneurs were not crying wolf. The projected extension of state-owned plant represented a serious stumbling block to their ambitions. In July 1916, reports reached the Association of government plans to spend 170 million rubles on a steel mill, shell workshops and a machine tool factory. The Association protested that the private sector currently contributed between 65 and 90 per cent of military production and that, in peacetime, the state plant would simply become 'dead capital'.[35] The Main Artillery Administration drew up further plans to venture into civilian engineering. Manikovskii argued that they posed no threat to the private sector, which lacked the capacity to manufacture precision machine tools. Notwithstanding these assurances, business leaders were incensed at this challenge to their ambitions to develop new products for the postwar market.[36]

The Association also led the campaign against the excess profits tax during 1916. Engineering employers argued that firms liable to pay the proposed tax would be obliged to seek alternative financial assistance from the Treasury and that the state stood to gain more by moderating its proposals. Otherwise, the Association warned, 'the defence departments will hardly find new entrepreneurs willing to invest capital in defence production'.[37] Business leaders countered that profits

were ploughed back into the enterprise, in order to finance the acquisition of new capital. Industrialists also campaigned in support of increased depreciation allowances to set against tax liabilities. As with the excess profits tax, they had only limited success. The Ministry of Finances conceded a 25 per cent depreciation allowance on equipment and 10 per cent on structures, subject to their being used for defence contracts and allowable only on assets that had been acquired or installed during 1915 and 1916. Industrialists had campaigned for 100 per cent, arguing that much of the investment would be redundant in peacetime.[38]

None the less, the engineering lobby did have some results to show for its activity. By the middle of 1916, its representatives were regularly being invited to take part in the meetings of the Special Council for State Defence, the Steel Committee, the Special Council for Fuel Supply and the Supreme Financial-Economic Commission, whose remit included preparations for demobilisation. Furthermore, part of Meshcherskii's programme had been realised by the autumn, in that the Association now organised the purchase of machine tools, at home and abroad, on behalf of its members. Although it had suffered defeat over the proposed profits tax, and had failed to convert the government to its view on the supremacy of private enterprise, the engineering lobby had begun to make an impact in the dying days of the old regime.[39]

IV

The dramatic collapse of the tsarist state in February 1917 unleashed a powerful working-class movement in favour of better treatment, improved pay and conditions of work and the right to monitor the managerial decision-making process. Organised labour became a force to be reckoned with; in Petrograd alone, the number of workers in privately-owned machine-building factories had increased from 30,500 to 85,250 between January 1914 and 1917. These men and women now had representative workplace institutions at their disposal, in order to bargain with employers.[40]

The February revolution in Petrograd also 'undermined the strength and confidence of the metal-processing magnates and their bankers'.[41] The anxieties and reservations expressed by engineering employers during 1915–16 were as nothing compared to the intensity of class conflict in the summer and autumn of 1917. Could employers count

upon those institutions of state, such as the Special Council for State Defence, that survived the revolution? The general picture looked bleak. Whilst leaders of the voluntary organisations took up posts in government ministries, the engineering elite was politically marginalized. Nor did the existence of industrial associations give much cause for comfort: 'factory owners are poorly organised [lamented one distraught employer] compared to the superbly well organised workers.'[42]

Initially, employers in Petrograd made important concessions over wages and hours, inspired by the new leadership of the PSFMO.[43] But the engineering employers pressed the government to provide financial support as a precondition of settling fresh wage demands. In April 1917, against a background of increased wages and reduction in credit extended by commercial banks, the Association of the Engineering Industry requested 75 and even 90 per cent advances on government contracts – without guarantees – in order to relieve the critical shortage of working capital. Employers also called on the government to penalise suppliers of raw materials and fuel who continued to make unilateral changes to agreed contracts. The support offered by the government, however, failed to offer financial relief, and firms insisted on their inability to fund increased wage bills.[44]

Tensions between government and the engineering industry ran high for other reasons. The Provisional Government displayed as much enthusiasm as its predecessor for the enlargement of the state sector. Manikovskii established a commission on the 'expediency of continuing to construct government arsenals and shipyards', and invited the Central War Industry Committee to participate. The Association of the Engineering Industry poured its usual scorn on the idea of further state projects that entailed the expenditure of 'public money' (*narodnye den'gi*). Why – it asked – did the commission not examine constraints on the construction of new private factories or use funds to assist firms in the current financial climate?[45]

The Association of the Engineering Industry did its best to maintain a degree of solidarity amongst its members, although the besetting problems of financial insolvency, falling productivity, supply breakdown and labour militancy tended to induce a mentality of *sauve qui peut*. The executive sought to encourage the 'rationalisation' of production; given that raw materials and fuel were in short supply, work should be allocated to ensure that a smaller number of workers would be kept fully occupied. The government was urged to allocate Petrograd workers to other regions and to close factories that had been established during the war and whose productivity had fallen.

This would relieve pressure on urban food supply. The Association thus placed responsibility for factory closure squarely on the shoulders of government, in the hope that war industry committees' enterprises and non-engineering plants would be the first in the firing line. None the less, its own member firms were bound to be vulnerable to any emergency restructuring.[46]

Workers understandably viewed these plans with grave suspicion, arguing that firms could draw upon their reserves in order to retain workers. They regarded the evacuation of Petrograd as a deliberate device to weaken the solidarity of the working class. Though there is some truth in the charge, the Association of the Engineering Industry also used the threat of evacuation as a tactic to squeeze extra financial support from the government.[47]

The militancy of labour prompted engineering employers to demand 'moral support', as well as financial support from the government, by reminding workers that they should not make excessive demands of employers and should desist from physical attacks on factory managers which disorganised production. The industrialists now charged organised labour with threatening the basis of private enterprise, by making intolerable demands which 'contradict the interests of the state'.[48]

The Association heard trenchant complaints from individual members about the behaviour of workers. At the end of May, the management of the Baranovskii plant revealed that workers had elected a 'supervision-economic commission' (*kontrol'no- khozyaistvennaya komissiya*) which sought to obtain all material facts relating to the firm's operations. The executive resolved 'that the demands of the workers are not grounded in law and if they were would lead to the complete destruction of factory life . . . This is not just a question of individual enterprises, but of the principle of private ownership of capital.' The Association promptly formed an executive body charged with the 'defence of the principle of private property and the capitalist form of industrial enterprise'.[49]

The Special Council lent its support, sending a tough message to the Provisional Government, demanding 'exceptional measures' against troublemakers in defence industry and calling for special powers for factory commissioners to 'regulate industrial relations' and fire anyone whose presence is 'not conducive' to defence production.[50] The government refused to accede to this pressure, arguing that the Council already possessed sufficient powers; the newly-established Chief Economic Committee also maintained that the proposal was superfluous and the consequences likely to be 'undesirable'.[51]

At the same time, however, the Special Council refused to offer any more specific relief to the beleaguered engineering employers. On 26 September its chairman sent a forthright letter to the Association, pointing out that firms which encountered militant labour and demonstrated declining labour productivity could expect no sympathy from itself or from the government. Instead, the Council threatened to transfer orders to firms which 'worked with more rational use of materials, labour and working capital'. The Special Council rejected any increase in contract prices, unless justified by the decisions of arbitration courts. At the beginning of October, the industrialists informed the Special Council that they would be unable to complete existing contracts 'in view of the exceptional circumstances which the country is experiencing'; the Council's own agents could vouch for the seriousness of the situation in individual enterprises.[52]

Inter-firm rivalries complicated the picture further, emerging as soon as engineering enterprises began to address the question of conversion from military to civilian production. Some firms in the shipbuilding industry found themselves in a reasonable position, whereas others faced grave difficulties. In July, the Nikolaev Shipbuilding Company reported orders for floating docks, whereas orders to the Russo-Baltic Shipbuilding Company for submarines and docks had been cancelled. The Admiralty urged firms to repair passenger steamships and railway rolling-stock, but firms complained that the government refused to couple advice with material assistance. Enterprise plans were dependent upon the supply of inputs of steel and fuel, but some shipyards received less than ten per cent of their steel requirements and only one-third of their fuel needs.[53]

The Provisional Government stood accused of having insufficient sense of the need for 'planning' (*planomernost'*) in the annulment of military contracts and the allocation of new work. This was a familiar charge. Some firms had invested heavily not just in equipment but also in personnel. Novikov, speaking on behalf of Putilov Wharves, acidly observed that 'it is easy to cancel orders, but how do we deal with the consequences? Every one of us [he continued] knows just how difficult it was to create turbine-manufacturing facilities in Russia. It is easy enough to transfer a simple lathe operator to other work, but to require skilled workers – in whom we have invested money – to build barges is irrational'.[54]

Faced with an intransigent government and an uncompromising labour force, the Association changed its tack. In late September, its original aims and complexion underwent a noticeable change. The

original formulation, with its emphasis upon the 'clarification and consideration of questions relating to the engineering industry', gave way to a more vigorous emphasis upon 'unification and agreement amongst member firms'. Rhetorical flourishes about the 'development of the engineering industry' yielded to more urgent talk of 'the defence of industrial interests'. The Association, re-christened the 'All-Russian Union of Engineering Enterprises', agreed to admit small and medium businesses, whose survival was also at stake. The most fundamental change concerned industrial relations. The Association undertook to campaign on a united front over labour questions and the relationship between firms and the Provisional Government. No initiative was to be contemplated unless it had been agreed by the general assembly of the Association or the executive council.[55]

Adopting a more conciliatory note towards labour, the Association's revised statutes aimed to 'encourage by all possible means the creation of good relations between employers, workers and white collar staff' and to take steps 'to eliminate all kinds of misunderstandings which arise concerning the agreements made between employers and workers'. Other well-intentioned measures might have inspired confidence six months earlier, but in September seemed pitifully lacklustre: participation in arbitration courts, the creation of funds to aid workers who suffered poor health, the establishment of labour exchanges in the engineering industry.[56] Not for the first time, the Association found itself lagging well behind the times. To resurrect ideas in the autumn of 1917 that had been commonplace amongst liberal employers since the turn of the century, and to expect them to strike a positive chord amongst engineering workers, merely revealed how deep employers' heads had hitherto been buried in the sand.

Individual members, meanwhile, drafted draconian measures to deal with the financial and political crisis. The directors of the Nikolaev Shipbuilding Company, employing around 14,000 workers, instructed the management to draw up a plan for the dismissal of between one-third and one-half of the workforce, in view of the urgent need to cut operating costs. One month later, the yard closed, blaming the failure of the Navy Ministry to settle outstanding invoices. This action generated a bitter response. In November, workers arrested the managers of the shipyards, 'evidently on account of their decision to close the factory'.[57] Several managers suffered physical assaults, such as those at the Khar'kov plant of the Russian Locomotive and

Machine-Building Company.[58] The Provisional Government came to an end amidst a breakdown of law and order in individual enterprises, and against a background of faltering attempts at unity in the engineering industry.

V

Whether entrepreneurs could salvage anything from the wreckage depended in part upon the creation of some kind of *modus vivendi* with the new Soviet state. But the engineering elite was divided over the issue of collaboration. The Association resolved 'to refuse to take part in the work of government institutions'. Nevertheless, some spokesmen felt that the new regime, though not kindly disposed towards capitalist proprietors, might nevertheless establish order in the factories, enabling something to be salvaged from the wreckage of collapsing output and plant closures. Accordingly, it was agreed that 'the council of the Association and individual firms may conduct business with government departments, in accordance with individual circumstances, in the interests of defending and preserving industry in the future.'[59] In key sectors, such as electrical engineering, there was a risk of losing not only valuable equipment, but also skilled technical personnel. Some members accordingly favoured a pragmatic approach, and agreed to work with the newly-created Supreme Council for the National Economy (Vesenkha). Others were unconvinced by the argument that participation would allow industrialists to criticise policy proposals and to continue 'to defend and preserve the interests of industry'.[60]

Advisers to the engineering industry outlined the circumstances in which workers' control might be acceptable. Professor N. K. Kul'man reported in January 1918 that the idea of workers' control is entirely acceptable, but only of course on condition that control does not amount to interference in the organisation of production, because such interference from that quarter will simply scare off capital and will in addition lead to disruption in the allocative function of the board and the factory administration. Collaboration between the workforce and the administration is highly desirable; and in reality, as subsequent experience revealed, the workers' representatives gradually began to understand the disproportion (*nesorazmernost'*) between the exaggerated demands of workers and the financial position of the company.[61]

There is no more famous example of entrepreneurial intention to collaborate with the new state than the negotiations conducted between Meshcherskii and Vesenkha. The background to the negotiations has become familiar to specialists: the new People's Commissar for Labour, A. G. Shlyapnikov invited Meshcherskii to discuss the future of the engineering industry. It was no coincidence that Shlyapnikov's invitation followed an ultimatum issued by Meshcherskii in November 1917, threatening to close the plant unless workers ceased the 'political struggle' in the factories and unless higher contract prices and supply difficulties could be resolved. Developing a familiar theme, Meshcherskii warned that the revolution was likely to promote a flight of capital. Larin, on behalf of Vesenkha, sought to reassure the entrepreneurs, supporting calls for guaranteed long- term government orders. More controversially, and in line with Kul man's view, Larin indicated that 'workers' control' should merely 'inform': 'the organisation of entrepreneurs and the organisation of workers are two sides of the same coin and both are under the overall control of the state.'[62] Here, perhaps, was the basis of a solution to the entrepreneurial dilemma: a strong central authority could provide financial stability, security of input supply, labour discipline, security of property – in other words, the conditions that employers had hoped to extract from the Provisional Government.

Meshcherskii went on to propose a 'National Association of Engineering Enterprises', under the leadership of Kolomna Engineering, which would combine more than a dozen engineering firms in the central industrial region. From the goverment's point of view, the project offered the opportunity to re-establish the production of rolling-stock, since the members of the new trust already contributed around one-half of all goods wagons and three-quarters of locomotives. Initially, Meshcherskii intended to offer the government a one-third stake in the trust. Opposition gathered momentum once it was realised that many of the shares in the existing companies were held by German banks. Beyond the corridors of Vesenkha, the powerful Metalworkers' Union objected to the scheme, on the grounds that Meshcherskii had never bothered to consult organised labour on any issue of mutual concern. Finally, a vocal lobby within the Bolshevik Party objected to this form of 'state capitalism'. Vesenkha eventually broke off negotiations in April 1918, citing Mescherskii's refusal to compromise: his final position was to offer the state complete control of the shares, on condition that one-fifth would be offered to the former owners if the state decided to dispose of them.[63]

Significantly, however, Meshcherskii's ideas alienated some of his erstwhile colleagues. According to one account, the Association of the Engineering Industry sent Vesenkha a list of objections to the proposed trust, perhaps because the Petrograd contingent felt that their Moscow counterparts were seeking to undermine the competitive position of industry in the north-west.[64] In any case, Meshcherskii ended his negotiations on an uncompromising note, objecting to the increasing encroachment of 'workers' control' on industrial managers.

Whatever the fate of these talks, the Bolshevik triumph hardly resolved issues of supply, demobilisation and financial solvency in the engineering industry. Workers found themselves without work, notwithstanding the best efforts of factory committees. Sovnarkom expressed disappointment with the slow pace of conversion to civilian work in the engineering industry. A conference of Petrograd factory committees (22–7 January 1918) urged the regional sovnarkhoz to establish a demobilisation commission, coupling this with a call for the nationalisation and restructuring of industry.[65]

In practice, demobilisation took on a 'spontaneous' character. The Bolshevik government entrusted the Special Council for State Defence with the thankless task of liquidating government contracts at the munitions factories under its control, whilst Vesenkha concerned itself with the formulation of proposals for civilian production. But the deepening economic crisis prevented the formulation and implementation of a coherent plan. The Special Council and Vesenkha welcomed specific initiatives, such as the repair of wagons and locomotives for the Petrograd railway network. But firms complained as before that they were starved of funds to make the transition or to pay off workers who were 'surplus to requirements'.[66]

The engineering lobby continued to petition the new government, as its members had done hitherto. Firms sought assurances about the status of cash advances made on orders that were subsequently cancelled. Fresh government orders would go some way towards meeting current operating requirements. Expensive new capacity had been created in wartime and firms continued to encounter difficulties funding the amortization of these assets. The Association hoped that the government would take over some assets, as a means of releasing firms from their obligations, as the Provisional Government appears to have agreed in principle in June 1917.[67]

Individual firms had more prosaic stories to tell, of deepening financial crisis. Lessner, for instance, informed the Special Council for State Defence that it had a current monthly deficit of 3.7 million rubles;

the firm requested an immediate increase in contract prices and a subsidy of five million rubles. The commission to re-examine contracts refused to grant this request and insisted that the firm must repay advances it had already received. The consequence was that Lessner could not pay its suppliers.[68]

The new regime struggled to address countless financial difficulties of this magnitude. In practice, firms were financed from a special fund created by Vesenkha, which released advances sufficient for operations up to two months ahead. Subsequently, Vesenkha established a system of 'estimate financing' (*smetno-byudzhetnoe finansirovanie*), which required the enterprise to submit quarterly estimates of income and expenditure. In addition to this labyrinthine procedure, suppliers of goods and services to industrial enterprises continued to present bills of exchange to the Narodnyi bank (formerly Gosbank), until this gave way to a system of wholesale (inter-enterprise) transfers without money as a medium of exchange.[69]

The engineering industry passed into the hands of the state during the first half of 1918. Stories of grass roots nationalisation reached the headquarters of the Association of the Engineering Industry in January 1918. Thus, for instance, the Hartmann locomotive works was 'in effect seized by the workers, without any kind of decree on the part of the highest authorities'.[70] Six months later, a Vesenkha decree (29 June 1918) created a state trust of machine-building industry ('*Gosudarstvennoe ob"edinenie mashinostroitel'nykh zavodov*', GOMZA), comprising major producers of rolling-stock, including Kolomna, Sormovo and Briansk, and under the direction of V. Chubar' a similar trust of major engineering firms, including shipyards, was established in the north-west in July 1919. GOMZA came under the direct authority of Vesenkha, indicating the importance that the new administration attached to the engineering industry.[71] In this manner, but without the involvement of the entrepreneurial lobby, the vision of trustification was eventually realised in the engineering industry.[72]

CONCLUSIONS

Russian merchants and industrialists, in war as in peacetime, displayed deeply divided opinions and strategies, reflecting entrenched cultural and geographic variations, as well as sectoral differences. By 1917, industrialists began to overcome differences of opinion or outlook in

the face of a powerful working class, which had forged an impressive degree of class unity. But there were limits to this process; labour militancy and financial chaos prompted some firms to seek salvation in individual arrangements and the several schemes for trustification generated division rather than solidarity.

But the state was also divided. Under the tsarist regime, some elements of the bureaucracy were bitterly opposed to organised big business, and used the resources at their disposal to minimise its role. To suggest, therefore, that the Petrograd industrialist elite had a fundamental identity of interests with the bureaucracy is wide of the mark, because the bureaucratic stratum was itself divided. Similarly, after the February revolution the engineering lobby encountered a fractured bureaucracy. Now, however, industrial politics was rendered much more complex by the presence of new social and political forces, as well as by economic collapse. The result was to promote significant divisions within the engineering elite for the first time. By October 1917, these divisions had become more overt. Nor did the new Bolshevik state display clear unanimity over industrial policy. This allowed some elements of the old engineering elite to seek to establish a niche in the post-revolutionary economy. Their ultimate failure testified to entrepreneurial division as well as to the irreconcilable opponents of organised 'state capitalism' within the Bolshevik state.

The situation in Germany affords an instructive contrast. Here, organised business and organised labour had been at the heart of the war effort and demobilisation debates.[73] In Russia, however, industrialists allowed organised labour little scope before October 1917. At the same time, organised industry struggled to achieve an identity or make an impact, in the midst of economic chaos and social strife. In revolutionary Russia, the debate was sharply polarised, between forces that wanted to maintain the economic power of capital and achieve ideological hegemony, and those that wished to expropriate privately-owned assets. No compromise was reached and, in due course, neither residual entrepreneurial power nor workers' control survived the turmoil of civil war.

Notes

1. R. A. Roosa, '"United" Russian Industry', *Soviet Studies*, XXIV (1972–3), 425.
2. J. H. Hartl, *Die Interessenvertretungen der Industriellen in Russland, 1905–1914* (Vienna, 1978); T. C. Owen, *Capitalism and Politics in Russia: A Social History of the Moscow Merchants, 1855–1905* (Cambridge, 1981);

A. J. Rieber, *Merchants and Entrepreneurs in Imperial Russia* (Chapel Hill, 1982); R. A. Roosa, 'Russian Industrialists during World War I: The Interaction of Economics and Politics', in G. Guroff and F. Carstensen (eds) *Entrepreneurship in Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union* (Princeton, 1983), pp. 159–87. The most recent contribution to the literature is Ziva Galili, 'Commercial-Industrial Circles in Revolution: The Failure of "Industrial Progressivism"', E. R. Frankel *et al.* (eds) *Revolution in Russia: Reassessments of 1917* (Cambridge, 1992) pp. 188–216.

3. E. D. J. Acton, *Rethinking the Russian Revolution* (London, 1990).
4. P. W. Gatrell, *Government, Industry and Rearmament in Russia, 1900–1914: The Last Argument of Tsarism* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 172, 186.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 186–96.
6. *Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv* (RGIA) 268/3/1049, 133–301.
7. RGIA, 23/27/120, 1–20ob.
8. RGIA, 23/15/493, 37–44, Memorandum of Minister of Trade and Industry to State Duma, 22 February 1916.
9. *Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi voenno-istoricheskii arkhiv* (RGVIA) 369/1/96, 38–41ob. (This list included chiefly the names of engineering firms that had not hitherto been government contractors.) See also RGVIA, 369/1/156, 48–54ob.
10. *Gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv Sankt-Peterburga* (GIASP) 2145/1/361, 99. For data on Petrograd, see also RGVIA, 369/1/156, 48.
11. *Trudy TsSU*, vol. XXVI, part 1, p. 41.
12. RGIA, 23/15/341, 3–17. See also A. L. Sidorov, *Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie Rossii v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny* (Moscow, 1973), pp. 454–8.
13. RGVIA, 369/1/98, 339–42, 30 July 1915 (Krestovnikov); *ibid.*, 369/1/78, 170–2, 'Ob uporyadochenii proizvodstva v Rossii stankov', 18 January 1916. See also 'Russkoe mashinostroenie i voina', *Promyshlennost' i torgovlya* (1917), no. 16–17, pp. 309–12.
14. Timashev, in RGVIA, 369/1/98, 14–16; also RGIA, 1276/11/814, 1–3.
15. See comments by State Auditor's official P. P. Levitskii to the interdepartmental commission on financial support for the engineering industry, 11 March – 13 April 1915, in RGIA, 1276/11/248, 1–19.
16. L. H. Siegelbaum, *The Politics of Industrial Mobilisation in Russia, 1914–1917: A Study of the War-Industries Committees* (London, 1983).
17. RGVIA, 369/1/96, 95–95ob.
18. RGVIA, 369/1/96, 448–448ob., deputy Minister of War A. A. Polivanov to Minister of Trade and Industry V. N. Shakhovskoi, 14 December 1915.
19. RGVIA, 369/1/124, 8–9, dated 4 January 1916.
20. A. P. Korelin, 'Politika krupnogo kapitala v oblasti fabrichno-zavodskogo zakonodatel'stva v Rossii v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny', *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta (istoriya)*, (1964), no. 6, pp. 66–79.
21. RGVIA, 369/1/98, 24, 33.
22. The draft rules and composition of the Special Council are located in RGIA, 1276/11/888, 22–7ob.
23. GIASP, 2145/1/361, 237–42ob.
24. A. Venediktov, *Voina i starye kontrakty* (Petrograd, 1917), p. 6.
25. RGIA, 23/14/98, 178–81ob., Report to shareholders' AGM, 8 May 1917.

26. RGVIA, 369/16/542, 9–10, Bromley to OSO, 17 May 1917. In Germany, Krupp's welfare payments represented around 19 per cent of net profits by 1916–17, according to Lothar Burchardt, 'Between War Profits and War Costs: Krupp in the First World War', H. Pohl (ed.), *German Yearbook on Business History 1988* (Cologne, 1990), pp. 1–46.
27. RGIA, 1276/11/248, 6, 13ob.; *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Voenno-Morskogo Flota* (RGAVMF) 512/1/783, 3–4, Nikolaev submission to the Navy Ministry, 18 July 1916.
28. Note that the war industry committees normally obtained only 30 per cent. RGVIA, 369/1/28, 30.
29. GIASP, 1446/1/20, 1–1ob., 29 July 1916; see also *Zhurnaly Osobogo soveshchaniya po usileniyu snabzheniya deistvuyushchei armii glavneishimi vidami dovol'stviya* (Moscow, 1975), 6 June 1915.
30. RGVIA, 369/16/59, 2–3, 8–10; 369/1/568, 1–212; *Zhurnaly Osobogo soveshchaniya dlya obsuzhdeniya i ob"edineniya meropriyatii po oborone gosudarstva*, 9 December 1915; *ibid.*, 3 February 1916. For Meshcherskii's own riposte, see *Trudy Pervogo S"ezda predstavitelei metalloobrabaty-vayushchei promyshlennosti* (Petrograd, 1916), p. 26. Grinevetskii is the author of a well-known work, *Poslevoennye perspektivy russkoi promyshlennosti* (Khar'kov, 1919); Charnovskii, a leading specialist in the Soviet metalworking industry, found himself a defendant in the 'Industrial Party' trial. See E. H. Carr and R. W. Davies, *Foundations of a Planned Economy, 1926–1929*, vol. I (London, 1969), p.918fn.
31. GIASP, 2145/1/163, 58–63.
32. RGIA, 1276/11/248, 14–17.
33. *Trudy Pervogo S"ezda*, pp. 58, 66.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 105–8. For their other directorships, see *Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie Rossii nakanune Velikoi Oktiabr'skoi sotsialisticheskoi revo-lyutsii: dokumenty i materialy* (henceforth *EPR*), 3 vols (Moscow-Leningrad, 1957–1964), vol. I, pp. 610–11, 625.
35. GIASP, 2145/1/361, 191–194ob. The Association estimated that the government planned to commit 800 million rubles to various construction projects.
36. RGIA, 1276/12/547, 1–31ob.
37. GIASP, 1446/1/19, 1.4.
38. GIASP, 1446/1/19, 2–10.
39. GIASP, 2145/1/361, 182–3, 212–213ob. Unlike the TsVPK, however, the Association did not have a formal seat on these bodies.
40. *EPR*, vol. I, pp. 42–4. For an unsurpassed account in English, S. A. Smith, *Red Petrograd: Revolution in the Factories, 1917–1918* (Cambridge, 1983).
41. Galili, 'Commercial-Industrial Circles', p. 196.
42. Unnamed speaker from Vasilii ostrov region at conference of factory owners, 15 May 1917, quoted in P. V. Volobuev, *Proletariat i burzhuaziya v 1917 godu* (Moscow, 1964), p. 69. This view had already been expressed in February 1916 by G. A. Blokh, in *Trudy Pervogo S"ezda*, pp. 30–2.
43. Galili, 'Commercial-Industrial Circles', pp. 210, 211.
44. GIASP, 2145/1/361, 163–5 (submission of Franco-Russian Company). The contents of file RGVIA, 369/11/17, 1–187 are filled with similar

complaints about contract prices. See also P. V. Volobuev, *Ekonomicheskaya politika Vremennogo pravitel'stva* (Moscow, 1962) pp. 269–72.

45. GIASP, 2145/1/361, 165–7.
46. *EPR*, vol. I, p. 165.
47. RGVIA, 369/6/35, 149–151ob.
48. GIASP, 2145/1/361, 154–6, 163–5; *EPR*, vol I, pp. 163–5. See also R. Sh. Ganelin and L. E. Shepelev, 'Predprinimatel'skie organizatsii v Petrograde v 1917g.', *Oktyabr'skoe vooruzhennoe vosstanie v Petrograde: sbornik statei* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1957), pp. 297–8.
49. GIASP, 2145/1/361, 126ob. 150–1; also *EPR*, vol. I, pp. 184–5.
50. RGVIA, 369/1/299, 162–4, General Babikov to cabinet, 21 July 1917.
51. RGVIA, 369/1/299, 182, 4 September 1917.
52. GIASP, 2145/1/361, 51–2, 73–73ob.
53. RGAVMF, 512/1/1267, 279–281ob.
54. RGAVMF, 512/1/1267, 302–303ob.
55. GIASP, 2145/1/361, 66–72ob.
56. GIASP, 2145/1/361, 66–72ob.
57. RGAVMF, 512/1/783, 11–14.
58. GIASP, 2145/1/361, 62–3.
59. GIASP, 2145/1/361, 8–11, 19 January 1918.
60. GIASP, 2145/1/361, 2–2ob., 23 January 1918.
61. GIASP, 2145/1/361, 13. Kul'man sat briefly on the Special Council for State Defence in 1917.
62. D. A. Kovalenko, *Oboronnaya promyshlennost' sovetskoi Rossii v 1918–1920gg.* (Moscow, 1970), pp. 100–1, 103.
63. V. Z. Drobizhev and P. V. Volobuev, 'Iz istorii goskapitalizma v nachal'nyi period sotsialisticheskogo stroitel'stva v SSSR', *Voprosy istorii* (1957), no. 9, pp. 107–22; H. Ray Buchanan, 'Lenin and Bukharin on the Transition from Capitalism to Socialism: the Meshchersky Controversy', *Soviet Studies*, XXVIII (1976), pp. 66–82.
64. Drobizhev and Volobuev, 'Iz istorii goskapitalizma', p. 116.
65. A. V. Venediktov (ed.) *Natsionalizatsiya promyshlennosti i organizatsiya sotsialisticheskogo proizvodstva v Petrograde, 1917–1920*, vol. I (Leningrad, 1958) p. 173; Kovalenko, *Oboronnaya promyshlennost'*, pp. 104–7.
66. RGVIA, 369/1/11, 125; Kovalenko, *Oboronnaya promyshlennost'*, p. 102; GIASP, 2145/1/361, 25, 19 February 1918 n.s.
67. GIASP, 2145/1/361, 8–11.
68. RGVIA, 369/3/210, 9, 23 October 1917 and 28 December 1917.
69. Iu. K. Avdakov and V. V. Borodin, *Proizvodstvennye ob"edineniya i ikh rol' v organizatsii upravleniya sovetskoi promyshlennost'yu* (Moscow, 1973), pp. 30–1.
70. GIASP, 2145/1/361, 12–13.
71. Avdakov and Borodin, *Proizdvovdstvennye ob"edineniya*, pp. 18–19, 23–4.
72. The last reference to the Association comes in a submission to the Petrograd Soviet executive from the United Cable Works' factory committee on 13 September 1918, where the workers demanded its abolition, along with the PSFMO and the Association of Trade and Industry, all of them deemed undesirable examples of 'advanced and ideologically combative organisations of the bourgeoisie' which had no

place in the 'era of red terror'. See *Nationalizatsiya promyshlennosti*, p. 213.

73. G. D. Feldman, 'Economic and Social Problems of the German Demobilisation, 1918–1919', *Journal of Modern History*, XLVII (1975) pp. 1–22

2 The Making of a Moderate Bolshevik: an Introduction to L. B. Kamenev's Political Biography[1]

Catherine Merridale

Political biography has not always been regarded as an entirely respectable topic for serious historians. The broader reinterpretation of issues such as class, gender and social conflict which preoccupied the historical profession in the 1960s and 1970s allowed little space for the study of individual political actors, and high politics, let alone the individual politician, was seldom the focus for innovative research. Biography more often than not appeared to be a pastime for the amateur. To some extent, recent interest in psycho-analysis and post-modernism has reversed this trend, provoking some historians to rediscover the individual in a new context, but so far this sort of work has had little impact on historians of Soviet Russia. The latter have been obliged, whether or not they subscribe to a Marxist theory of history, to address the explicitly Marxist political and historical debate embedded in Soviet Communism. Some, therefore, have chosen to explore economic and political developments in the broadest analytical terms. Ironically, however, at the same time historians of the USSR have had to face the inescapable fact that two key individuals – Lenin and Stalin – exerted an influence over the political process which is almost without parallel in the history of the modern state.

Lenin and Stalin have both been the subjects of numerous political biographies, as have the more glamorous of their comrades, especially Trotsky and Bukharin. The early versions were based on the reminiscences of the major actors themselves, and many were written by Bolsheviks or other revolutionaries in exile. After 1988, new material from the archives in Moscow fuelled a revival of interest in leading revolutionary figures. Curiosity about individuals, especially

among historians in the former Soviet Union, is inevitable now that, at least on the face of it, the 'facts' can be discovered at last. Several new biographies and biographical collections appeared in the first flowering of *glasnost'*, partly as an attempt to rehabilitate the alternative, perhaps more humane, aspects of Bolshevism which they were deemed to represent.[2] Predictably in view of the thinking behind them, these confirmed that the motivation of members of the elite was frequently an important key to explaining crucial aspects of decision-making. But does political biography offer much more than a chance to fill in a few of the more interesting blank pages of a familiar script? What is the potential of the new archival material?

L. B. Kamenev's political biography offers an exceptionally promising chance to explore some of these questions. He was a well-connected and active member of the elite, and his life provides a window into the Bolshevik leadership's mental world, the quality of their lives, the impact of turbulent events on their imagination and horizons. His thinking also opens questions about the scope of debate within the Bolshevik party, and especially about the viability of a number of its key ideas. One of the central conundrums of his career has always been what he was doing in the Bolshevik Party at all. After all, as well as publicly opposing the seizure of power in October 1917, he had a reputation as a conciliator, and frequently urged tolerance towards other Marxist groups. Historians have regarded this strand of thought with more sympathy since the collapse of the Communist regime. But Kamenev's role in promoting it has received little attention. Can biography open a discussion about alternatives, and what can it reveal about the success or failure of a set of ideas?

In this paper, I shall discuss these issues by focussing on Kamenev's early political career. I shall examine three main areas: the problem of Kamenev's alleged 'moderation' and his reasons for becoming a Bolshevik; his experience of political life up to the outbreak of the Civil War; and the potential of the materials in former Soviet archives for developing this sort of research. At the outset I should emphasise that I do not wish to establish Kamenev as a hero in the manner of Stephen Cohen's Bukharin or Isaac Deutscher's Trotsky.[3] He would indeed be unpromising material for such treatment. His thoughts and actions were not necessarily consistent, original or admirable. And he was not physically glorious; Trotsky called him the 'least military' member of the Bolshevik elite.[4] He was an intellectual, 'a little man with a reddish pointed beard and gallic gestures.'[5] A police agent who reported on him in 1911 imagined him twelve years older than he actually was.[6]

Photographs from the revolutionary period show a dapper but schoolmasterly figure: serious, a little stiff, reflective. His political associates recalled 'a distinguished propagandist, orator, journalist, not brilliant but thoughtful.'[7] Even his enemies found him 'so gentle that it seemed that he himself was ashamed of his position.'[8] With such references, Kamenev can hardly be regarded as one of the revolution's underrated heroes. However, he was typical of a certain kind of Bolshevik undergrounder, and remained for twenty years one of the most hard-working and, at least in terms of literary output, prolific members of the elite.

Kamenev was born in Moscow in July 1883. For the first eleven years of his life, his family lived in Vilno province, but in 1894 they moved to Tiflis, and Kamenev completed his schooling in Georgia.[9] In many ways, his background was auspicious for his future choice of career. In common with many of his future comrades, he was relatively well-educated and had been exposed to revolutionary ideas since childhood. He was also, like Zinoviev, Trotsky, Martov and many other undergrounders, ethnically Jewish, but he had a secular upbringing, his parents having renounced their religion for political and career reasons before he was born. Their ambition for their eldest son[10] was clear from the outset. They named him after Tolstoy, and reared him in the radical tradition which they had espoused since the 1870s. Unusually, both had completed a higher education. Kamenev's father, Boris Ivanovich Rozenfel'd,[11] was an engineer, and in his youth he had been a fellow-student of Grinevitskii's at the Petersburg Technological Institute.[12] His mother, Mariya Fedorovna, who supplemented the family income by working as a private tutor during Kamenev's childhood,[13] had attended a Bestuzhev Course.[14] As Lydia Dan recalled, this meant joining 'a very well educated group of young people', amongst whom there were already some Marxists by the 1880s. Although the Rozenfel'ds had become more concerned with earning a living and educating their children by the time Kamenev was at school, they encouraged his enthusiasm for railways, a passion which brought him into contact with engineers and railway workers – the most radical, and later solidly Bolshevik, section of the Tiflis Marxist movement. With slightly less enthusiasm, they also subsidised Kamenev's revolutionary activities, at least until 1907. Police reports noted that the young man was receiving regular funds from his father, although Kamenev himself was to remark ruefully that the price of this support was a regular enquiry about the state of his legal studies.[15]

The Caucasus was a relatively easy place for a young revolutionary to procure reading matter and meet like-minded comrades. According to Trotsky, the tsarist police were comparatively lax about repressing the first Marxist circles there, firmly believing that the new organisations would fracture and fail in the best tradition of Caucasian feuding and rivalry.[16] Kamenev began to read Marxist and other revolutionary literature before he was fifteen. According to his later memoir, the first texts he studied in his Marxist circle were Pisarev and Dobrolyubov, followed by Marx, Engels and Lassalle, who made a particularly sharp impression on him.[17] Half a generation younger than the founders of Caucasian Marxism, he was never part of the Menshevik circle for which Tiflis was to become notorious. Indeed, he left the 'Gironde of the Russian Revolution'[18] before the party split. From 1901 to 1902, he attended Moscow University's law faculty, where he was noted for his ambitious plans to unite and organise student revolutionary circles. This impatience with amateurism naturally drew him to Lenin when the two met three years later.

By the time of his first arrest at a student demonstration in 1902, Kamenev was every inch the professional revolutionary. Like many others, he was attracted by the idea of complete personal dedication to the cause. Chernyshevskii, with his ideal of commitment and what Kamenev referred to as his 'coldly logical' programme of thought, was to remain a particular hero of Kamenev's.[19] As he wrote to his younger brother, Aleksandr Borisovich, in 1902, the 'danger' was 'apathy'. 'The struggle goes on everywhere and all the time. In every small detail you can see evidence of the struggle for the formation of a better human type. We must be spiritual revolutionaries.'[20] The flesh made demands as well, however, and shortly after writing those lines Lev Borisovich accepted material help from his family to speed him on his way to Geneva.[21] He was launched, like so many of his colleagues, on a life of almost unremitting vagrancy.

In view of his background – the continued link with railway workers in Tiflis and elsewhere, his passion for theory, appreciation of organisation and ardent personal dedication to the revolution – it is not surprising that Kamenev found Lenin especially compelling. His personal choice was probably reinforced before he even met the older man by the quarrel he had with Martov.[22] The two were never friends. Kamenev's first major speech at Geneva in 1902 was an attack on Martov, and by 1905, at the III party congress, Vladimirov would describe Kamenev's attitude towards the Mensheviks as 'very bitter'.[23] Although his loyalty to the Bolsheviks was not merely – or even mainly

– an accident of his association with Lenin, personal sympathies undoubtedly influenced the political choices he would make throughout his life.[24]

Kamenev met Lenin in Paris, where the older man was giving some lectures on the agrarian question, in 1902. Kamenev himself had arrived in Paris from Geneva, and was working with the *Iskra* group. As an *Iskra*-activist, he would have known all about Lenin's stand at the II party congress, and would have been familiar with the older man's latest political writings. The contrasts between the two émigrés were clear. Kamenev enjoyed the cafe life, and spent his spare time leafing through literary journals or, later, attending German cinema. The Menshevik, George Denike, noted his fondness for wearing slippers all day, and he was seldom seen relaxing out of doors. Lenin was far more disciplined when at work and was an enthusiastic leisure skater and hiker. But like many other younger revolutionaries, Kamenev may have found the leader's austerity attractive, as if he embodied an ideal which he himself consistently failed to attain. Many new recruits to the emigration recorded with some surprise that Lenin was not as aloof as they had expected.[25] The future leader's authority was 'colossal, even when people recognised his shortcomings and did not agree with him over particulars'.[26] Kamenev certainly fell under his spell at once. 'His acquaintance with Lenin', ran his official biography, 'and the impression made on him by the series of lectures and papers the latter gave during that visit had a decisive influence on his future career.'[27] What the printed source does not mention is that Trotsky was also present. The three men left the lecture together, first for a restaurant, and then for Lenin's flat. The inauspicious beginning of the close relationship between them was Lenin's insistence that Kamenev lend the impecunious Trotsky a pair of boots.[28]

What sort of man was the young Kamenev, and what were his beliefs? Apart from Marxism and railways, his interests were primarily literary. He had exhibited a special interest in literature and prose-writing at school. His first publication was a theatrical review.[29] As a student he wrote poetry in his spare time, reading it to his literary friends at evening sessions in the poet Akhontov's apartment. When arrested in 1902, he had a number of theatre tickets as well as a notebook in his pockets, and he chose to remark in his memoir that at the time he often went without food in order to buy books.[30] As his later editorships would show, his heroes were Chernyshevskii and Herzen, and he also read the work of his future friend and protector, Maksim Gor'kii.

Despite his good fortune in finding almost instant acceptance into Lenin's circle, Kamenev's working life between 1904 and 1913 was far from easy. Some memoirs of the period suggest that undergrounders in Europe whiled away leisurely days squabbling over the newspapers in their favourite cafes and their nights in nostalgic introspection. But in fact the tally of Kamenev's activities, publications, travels and arrests is impressive. He was seldom out of Russia for more than a few months at a time, carrying papers, visiting the comrades, organising committee and propaganda work. He was arrested in 1906 and again in 1908 in St Petersburg in the course of organising a demonstration for May Day.[31] It was in this period that he forged many of the links which were to prove so durable in 1917, especially the alliance with the Moscow Bolsheviks, notably Nogin and Rykov.[32] Kamenev was always more sensitive to these representatives of the 'Russian' underground than Lenin or Zinoviev. At the same time, his output of articles and political speeches in Europe remained high. And as anyone who has driven on the motorway from Paris to Longjumeau will have seen, his daily cycle ride to visit Lenin there in 1911 was anything but leisurely.

As a revolutionary, Kamenev's strengths were his literary fluency and personal charm. But he was not as mild as some have suggested, or even, in Lunacharskii's unkind opinion, 'flabby'.[33] At the III party congress in 1905, Postolovskii punningly described him as '*tverdokamennyi*'.[34] 'Unmilitary' he may have been, but he was not a coward. The campaign to persuade the Caucasus comrades to support the convocation of the III party congress, which eventually met in 1905, involved strenuous persuasion, and an outright confrontation with Tskhakaya, then the most senior of the Bolshevik Party activists in the Caucasus committee. Kamenev is often accorded with much of the credit for setting the Bolshevik faction in the Caucasus on the Leninist path. Trotsky, with typical irony, even suggests that it was Kamenev who brought the young Koba-Stalin, freshly returned from exile, into the Bolshevik camp.[35]

Not surprisingly, the aspect of Kamenev's pre-revolutionary career which has received the most attention is his written and spoken participation in the debates of the émigré elite. Here, as Trotsky observed, he could at times appear to be a slavish follower of Lenin, although the accusation that he even mimicked the leader's handwriting does not seem to be fair.[36] It was clear that Lenin supervised, or at least commented on, a good deal of his polemical output during these years. Early drafts would be referred to the leader, and his major political work, *Dve Partii*, which was completed while Lenin was at

Longjumeau in 1911, was discussed at every stage with the older man, who added a preface to it. 'I remember them', wrote Krupskaya, 'lying in the grass in a ravine outside the village, while Il'ich expounded his views to Kamenev.'[37] Not surprisingly, the result was a tortured and arid work which bears little evidence of Kamenev's thinking or of the enthusiasm which must have inspired him to become a revolutionary in the first place.

Even without Lenin's intimidating presence, however, Kamenev was anxious throughout the pre-revolutionary decade about committing himself to paper on political issues, at least until overwork after 1917 made such scruples impossible. His letters to contributors to the Vienna *Pravda*, for example, were often drafted several times before being written out in his cramped and careful hand, and this at a time when his life was as busy as it had ever been before 1917.[38] His speeches also tended to be ponderous and overprepared, set pieces of theory which bore little resemblance to the quick and occasionally witty style of surviving notes to his friends. Lenin's influence on his immediate followers appears to have been to raise everyone's level of anxiety while simultaneously prescribing a deadening language for political debate and restricting the range of issues which could be discussed.

A good deal of Kamenev's originality, and much that was best in his pre-revolutionary work, however, cannot be deduced from the printed sources alone. While in formal settings he echoed Lenin's style of precise, relentless and somewhat repetitious criticism, his major talent was as a facilitator. He was the ideal choice to chair difficult meetings, and an excellent editor, most notably of *Pravda* between 1913 and the outbreak of war. Even the police recorded that *Pravda* was unusually successful under his editorship, enjoying a widening readership (the police estimated that an average print run was 40,000 by 1914) and even making a running profit.[39] Lenin, writing from Cracow, heaped praise on him, 'we have not heard a single word of criticism,' he wrote in 1913.[40]

Both as a chairman and as an editor, Kamenev took advantage of his conciliatory, encouraging approach to the people with whom he had to work. The '*Tverdokamennyi*' of 1905 had seen a good deal of political life by 1908, and his views had moderated considerably. It is possible that the death of his brother from typhus in 1907 contributed to his rethinking. Aleksandr had become a Menshevik, and had begun a serious political career in Tiflis. The two corresponded about politics, and Kamenev would later describe his brother as a 'social-democrat',

including him in the revolutionary movement regardless of their differences. In 1904, moreover, Kamenev had met and married Trotsky's favourite sister, Ol'ga Davydovna. The bridges between Bolshevism and Menshevism were not closed in these years, and Kamenev must have crossed them many times in his family life. His exposure to the 'Russian' movement, too, many of whose members were impatient with the remorseless factionalism of the Leninist group, may have influenced his choice of emphasis. Whatever the reasons, his private communications, as opposed to his somewhat stilted public speeches, suggest that he preferred to find common ground with potential allies rather than singling out their differences. Loyalty to Lenin – or perhaps the 'colossal' authority of the Bolshevik leader – prevented him from splitting the émigré leadership on several occasions, but his behaviour was not that of a slavish follower.

Doubts about the faction's strategy are conveyed repeatedly in Kamenev's correspondence. A private letter to Bogdanov of November 1908, for example, suggests considerable sympathy with the latter's point of view. Kamenev wrote that he regretted the 'oafishness' (*khamstvo*) of some of his comrades, that he was not intending to be 'assimilated' by them, and that his own strategy was to identify himself with the 'middle way'.[41] But Kamenev was loath to split from Lenin, and wary of siding with Bogdanov against the leader. Within months, he would be denouncing many of Bogdanov's ideas in public as 'alien' to the Bolshevik fraction.[42] Another correspondent, David Ryazanov, wrote to Kamenev in 1913 that he was withdrawing his writings from the party's journal, *Prosveshchenie*, in protest at the bitter feuding of its émigré members. 'You may think this way, but why did you have to *act*?', Kamenev asked.[43] In another letter, he told his friend to try to see the cause in the broadest terms, 'You don't have to see it as a matter of Trotsky's version or Potresov's; but of Marxism.'[44]

This acceptance of the fractional, or rather, Leninist whip, may appear to be a weakness, but it would be a mistake to blame Kamenev for his failure to resist a tendency in Bolshevism whose final outcome could not have been foreseen in 1909. Moreover, the cut and thrust of theory was never Kamenev's strong point. His most striking talent, good chairmanship, does not come at the top of the list of exciting qualities for the aspiring revolutionary, and has tended to be overlooked in assessments of his career. But there is no reason for the historian either to downgrade his talents or to fall into the trap of assuming that he was incapable of developing and defending a point of view. His admiration for, and loyalty to Lenin did not prevent him

from opposing the leader on several notable occasions, both before and after the Bolsheviks came to power. What set him apart from many of his colleagues, indeed, was his willingness to say to Lenin's face the things that others had been saying behind his back. On the issue of the boycott of the Third Duma in 1907, for example, he was the only member of Lenin's faction to set out his opposition to the leader on paper, despite the fact that at the time Lenin – who favoured participation in the elections – was in a minority of one among his own supporters.[45] In April 1917, it was not his opposition to the April Theses which distinguished him from Stalin and others, but his willingness to defend his point of view in public.[46] His persistence was rewarded, on this and other occasions, when the Bolshevik leader moderated his programme to take account of the criticisms.[47] Even in October, the most famous instance of his alleged treachery to Leninism, he was far from alone.[48] His clashes with the leader should not be characterised as 'wavering'. What they showed in fact was the contingency of nearly all decisions of this period, and the genuine, if massively unequal, give and take within the party. Few indeed were the Bolshevik leaders who had not quarrelled with Lenin at some point by 1917. Kamenev was special, perhaps, in that his personal friendship with the leader, and natural skill at healing animosities, enabled him to survive the experience without suffering the customary prolonged anathema.[49]

Kamenev's opposition to Lenin raises the question of whether he had a set of policies of his own. To ask for consistency here would be to set a standard which no undergrounder, including Lenin, came close to meeting. Members of the pre-revolutionary party were all engaged in an experiment, groping around for solutions to unexpected problems, falling out, realigning themselves, dashing off uncompromising denunciations of points of view from which they hardly differed. There is no consistent 'Kamenevism', but Leninism itself was hardly a systematic ideology before 1917, or even by 1921. Where Kamenev principally differed from the mainstream of the Bolshevik Party, at least from the émigré elite, was in his pursuit, wherever possible, of broadly humanitarian, and especially democratic, solutions. The other, related, strand of his thinking was his tendency to heed the pleas of the 'Russian' branch of the pre-revolutionary party, the people still based in Moscow, St. Petersburg and the provinces, and to attempt to find ways of bridging the gaps between their demands and the exacting programme of the émigré leadership.

The challenge for Kamenev, as for anyone who differed from Lenin on details, was always at what point he should break with the master

and make a stand for his own beliefs. The unity of the movement behind Lenin may well have seemed more important than, for example, one's personal neo-Kantian quest for a spiritual purpose. And Lenin was an intimidating opponent. Kamenev's opposition to him was often short-lived; he might express a view, but he could also be persuaded to revise it. On the boycott issue, for example, he not only retreated after the debate with Lenin in 1907, but went on to become a defender of the Duma fraction against the meddling of the émigré leadership, eventually to be ridiculed for 'parliamentary cretinism' in 1909.[50] By 1913, he was the Duma fraction's most reliable ally within the elite, and retained close links with its members until 1915.[51] He was consistent, however, and almost certainly correct, in advocating the superior agitational merits of a popular press.[52] In the face of criticism from many quarters, including Lenin and Zinoviev, he organised the rapprochement with Trotsky's Vienna *Pravda*, and between them the two turned it into the popular organ for which the Russian comrades had been calling since 1909.

The editorship of the reformed *Pravda* took him to St Petersburg for at least part of the time from 1913,[53] and it was there that he committed the first of the series of 'errors' which subsequently became his albatross. His response to the outbreak of war failed to anticipate Lenin's later statements. He was not a Russian nationalist or social-patriot in the manner of the Duma Bolsheviks, who joined the Mensheviks in calling for a defence of Russian culture.[54] Indeed, he not only retained close links with several German Social-Democrats, but publicly admired many features of their society. And he was not exactly 'moderate' on the war issue. He continued to stress, as he had since the Balkan war of 1912, that instability in the Balkans and Poland offered ideal opportunities for destroying the tsarist autocracy.[55] However, at no point before 1917 did he call for the defeatism which Lenin was known from September 1914 to espouse. Instead, he emphasised the need to use the war to push for democratic concessions within the Russian empire. He failed to appreciate the supposed inter-connectedness of European imperialism. Defeat or victory for Russia, even in the short term, were not matters of indifference to him. In taking this line, he was closer to the mass of his comrades in Moscow, Saratov and elsewhere than was Lenin. It was unfortunate for him that subsequent events enabled his views to be conflated with the social-patriotism of the Duma fraction.

It was not merely his response to the war which angered Lenin, however. In November 1914, he and five others – all Bolshevik Duma

deputies – were arrested for treason. Kamenev elected, in common with others, to undergo a public trial.[56] He conducted his own defence. The line he took, to the consternation of his friends in Geneva and Cracow, was to distance himself from the policies of the Bolshevik emigration. His statement reflected his own known views on the war and the agreed stance of the Duma deputies. As the tsarist police had feared (they had considered a closed trial, but decided that a military court would create even worse publicity),[57] the Petrograd workers demonstrated their support for the defendants by organising a strike to coincide with the opening of the trial.[58] But Lenin was furious, and later demanded a public apology for 'conduct unworthy of a revolutionary social-democrat'.[59] Kamenev, in his eyes, had betrayed their friendship and their cause, had aligned himself with the Menshevik defensists, and had also missed an unprecedented opportunity to propagate Bolshevik ideas on a public stage.[60] The miscreant was sentenced to exile none the less, as he must have known he would be. To add to the humiliation, when he reached his destination, Monastyrskoe in the Turukhansk district of Siberia, he faced a second round of criticism from some of his fellow-exiles.[61]

Whatever the reasons for his action in 1915, it is clear that his long separation from Lenin gave him room to develop his tendency to seek for a 'middle way'. In exile he remained one of the most important Bolshevik leaders, a politician to whom even Stalin looked for advice and through whose offices people continued to seek access to Lenin.[62] But there was speculation that he was becoming too friendly with the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries in the colony. 'Sodden with sentimentality' was Trotsky's assessment.[63] The case appeared abundantly to be proven when he agreed to sign a telegram of congratulation to the tsar's brother after the latter's refusal to accept the crown in March 1917.

All this behaviour had marked Kamenev as a 'right' Bolshevik by March 1917. For the rest of that year, his views would be closer to those of Nogin, Rykov and other members of the Moscow Party than to the more militant sections of the Petrograd faction and the émigré elite. On his return to Petrograd, indeed, there was considerable resistance to his resumption of the editorship of *Pravda*.[64] Shlyapnikov recalled in 1925 that the first 'moderate and sensible' articles to appear after Kamenev's return caused 'confusion and indignation' among the more radical sections of the Petrograd working class.[65] Comrades resented his muscling in on the paper, and within days there was

hopeful speculation that Lenin would have him removed.[66] Such opponents were correct to predict Lenin's anger. When his train pulled in to Petrograd in April, the Bolshevik leader was so pre-occupied with attacking his friend's conciliationist 'errors' as editor, and above all, with the evidence of Kamenev's creeping 'social patriotism',[67] that he ignored the reception committee which had travelled out to meet him and closeted himself in a carriage with Kamenev, leaving his own party and the Petrograd reception committee to entertain and congratulate each other on the platform.[68]

Kamenev's opposition to Lenin in 1917 is probably the best- known chapter of his life. It is usually portrayed as a series of misapprehensions and betrayals by the younger man, who, in the teleological world of Bolshevik official history, was 'always behind the times, or rather, behind the tasks, of the revolution'.[69] But such an assessment misses several important aspects of Kamenev's role. In the first place, the goal of single-party rule was not on many people's agendas in April, or even as late as September. Kamenev's position, first on limited collaboration with the Provisional Government (did he remember the boycott debate as he listened to Lenin calling for the Bolsheviks to hold aloof from the revolutionary regime?) and later on a united – 'homogeneous' – socialist assembly in September and October, reflected the views of a large section of the Bolshevik Party, to say nothing of the hundreds of rank and filers in 'united' cells in the provinces. Secondly, Lenin did not always merely overrule his former protégé. In April, while threatening to consign his friend to 'the archive of Bolshevik pre-revolutionary antiques', he none the less conceded that their differences might not be irreconcilable.[70] Further, he modified his own position in response to Kamenev's criticisms in April, and he would continue to do so during the civil war. Even where he could not find common ground on an issue, the Bolshevik leader needed Kamenev's skills, connections and friendship, and if he found him infuriatingly slow and occasionally treacherous, he was always, even in October, quick to accept him back into the restricted circle of his confidants.

Kamenev's position in April was consistent with everything he had argued earlier. He continued to insist that the Bolsheviks remain separate from the other revolutionary parties – there was no question of agreeing to a joint declaration with Tsereteli in March, for example[71] – but he none the less believed that the party's task was to push the democratic revolution ahead as fast as possible, rather than immediately preparing for socialism. In pursuit of this goal, he was prepared

to work closely with like-minded members of the other parties, and throughout the summer and autumn was given frequent opportunities to do so.

His behaviour in September and October must have sprung from similar motives, although no simple explanation for it can be adequate. His stand against the coup, including the famous leak to Gor'kii's journal, was consistent with his reservations about Lenin's plans for socialist revolution in a peasant society. It was in character that Kamenev should have continued to defend his views when all his co-signatories to the protest document, including Zinoviev, had caved in before Lenin's wrath and the threat of expulsion from the party.[72] During the coalition debate, too, he argued persuasively that unity was the only hope for the workers' revolution. He believed that Britain and Germany might sink their differences and attack revolutionary Russia, in which case the support of all sections of the democratic workers' movement, and not only the social-democrats, would be crucial. Earlier, in September, he had called for a coalition of all groups present at the Democratic Conference, including representatives of the *zemstva* and some Kadets.[73] But how far he really believed that the coalition negotiations after October had a future is unclear. He must have realised that Trotsky at least had little intention of accepting a broad coalition. The latter's provocation of Dan at the coalition talks can bear no other interpretation.[74] It is possible that Kamenev's task was to explore the idea of co-operation, even if everyone on the Bolshevik side, including he, was aware from the outset that the talks were doomed to fail. The coalition discussion could simply have been a hare started by Vikzhel and left to run while more serious issues were settled behind the scenes.[75]

Perhaps the best explanation, for so far the archives have yielded no convenient memoir with all the 'facts', is that the major actors in October were impelled by a mixture of blurred and possibly contradictory motives. It is possible that Lenin encouraged Kamenev in private with a view to stilling the accusation that he had made no gesture towards establishing a homogenous Soviet power. Kamenev's willingness to try out the suggestion that Lenin and Trotsky should be excluded from any coalition government may have been motivated in part by desperation, or he may have realised at that point that the talks would fail. But his search for a basis for co-operation was in keeping with his earlier conciliationism and interest in consensual, democratic methods. His overriding impulse was almost certainly to ensure that the coalition idea did not fail by default. Moreover, Vikzhel, the

railway and communications union, represented a group of workers whose case he was personally disposed to hear, with whom he felt a special affinity. Most of his supporters melted slowly away in the crucial hours of 2 and 3 November. But Kamenev was prepared to keep the talks going, and even briefly to countenance seemingly unmeetable demands, until his negotiating partners themselves left the hall.

Kamenev's resistance to seizure of power had almost certainly left a question mark in the minds of Lenin and Trotsky, but he was entrusted with several major tasks almost immediately. The new government could not afford to exclude potentially able and experienced Bolsheviks from its ranks. From 1917 his duties included negotiating the first round of talks at Brest-Litovsk, heading the Moscow Soviet, and travelling to Europe in search of funds for the beleaguered Soviet government. All of these, on paper, were tasks for which he was fitted by previous experience and personal inclination. The problem for him, as for anyone in the new government, was that the day to day pressures of clinging to power as the state and society finally fell apart were almost beyond endurance. Any tendencies Kamenev may have had in the direction of slipper-wearing and literary chit-chat were squeezed out, during the civil war, by the demands of bringing food to the capital, preventing the murder of his officials, and negotiating aid for the starving of European Russia. Even he was inclined to despair of the middle way at times. 'Russia is an armed camp', he told a meeting of the Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) in December 1919, and 'the revolution is in danger of collapse.'[76]

Despite these fears, however, his role as a softener of the hard edges of Lenin's policies continued throughout the civil war. Initially he even retained a hope that something approaching constitutional methods could be established in Russia. When he was given the task, with Dzerzhinskii, of drawing up a code for the operations of the Cheka in January 1918, for example, he attempted to keep its activities within ordered bounds. 'My comments have been just a touch radical', he confided in a note to Lenin.[77] In fact, what he had demanded was a Soviet version of *habeas corpus*, in which no individual should be held for more than three days without charge. In the first draft, the word 'days' has been crossed out in another hand, probably Dzerzhinskii's, and the word 'months' substituted.[78] With over a thousand arrests a week in Moscow at the height of the terror, the issue might have seemed largely academic, but Kamenev did not give up.[79] Later in 1918, he would protest about specific excesses, prompting Lenin himself to investigate and curb them.[80]

The civil war cannot have failed to change any Bolshevik. One of the most vivid impressions conveyed by the archives is the extent to which they were all under pressure. Kamenev was on innumerable sub-committees of the Politburo, for example, each one dealing with an intractable problem of government. While Moscow's food and fuel supplies disappeared, while the problem of rubbish and foul water worsened – 'it will take 100 milliard rubles to make Moscow like Berlin', groaned Kamenev to Lenin[81] – this 'flabby' Bolshevik was chairing committees on the formation of the RSFSR,[82] the problem of anti-semitism,[83] and the food shortage in European Russia,[84] to say nothing of attending bi-weekly meetings of the Politburo and regular sessions of the Moscow Soviet and Party Committee. Across his desk each week came harrowing reports of mass arrests, executions and imprisonments. Admittedly, by this stage leading Bolsheviks were living in comparative luxury in the Kremlin, but there was little time to enjoy the fruits of power before 1920. Kamenev's speeches in the years 1923 and 1924 continually refer to the tense struggle for survival in which he played so prominent a part. The civil war was the formative experience no Bolshevik would forget, the collective baptism in fire and blood which united them all in a desperate struggle to cling to power at almost any cost. Kamenev's precise role after 1918 requires another paper. At this point it is enough to say that he was scarred for the rest of his life by the compromises and hardships of the war years. Between 1918 and 1924 he would take a number of decisions, and acquiesce in even more, which he would later regret. If he had remained in power, it is difficult to say whether or not he would ever have come to realise that his alliance with Stalin had been a mistake, or that the deal they struck over Georgia was a betrayal of everything for which he had worked.

The opening of the party and state archives, especially those of the Central Committee, Politburo and Council of People's Commissars, has undoubtedly made possible the writing of a more adequate and nuanced history of Soviet politics. We can reconstruct, albeit imperfectly, the meetings of key committees, and trace the course of each member's contribution to them. But as this paper has shown, the archives have also permitted a more detailed enquiry into the lives and wider thinking of individual Bolsheviks. There are obvious limitations. Without private diaries (and there is no evidence that Kamenev kept one) or personal interviews, it is impossible to establish the exact details of any individual's thinking, what he read, how he made decisions, the motives for any political act. In Kamenev's case, the archives are largely silent about his relationships with women, and notably about

the two women who exerted the most powerful influence on him: his mother, who died in 1920, and Ol'ga Davydovna, who was, by all accounts, as strong-minded and tenacious as her brother. After 1917, too, the amount of personal material decreases as overwork and material hardship forced even the privileged elite to keep their written communication to a minimum. From about 1928, the type of information changes again, with even manuscript material acquiring a vigilant, terse quality.

But the archives do not merely add a few new lines and strokes to the established picture of the revolution's makers. They allow the first glimpses of a new kind of picture altogether, a collective portrait of the Bolshevik elite in the living context in which they worked. It is now possible to fit the details of their personal lives, the impact of circumstances, their political interactions and ideological whims against the somewhat wooden images of official reports. The elite which emerges from the new documents is a much more varied group of people than had previously been imagined, with more complex relationships and genuinely competing views. Research in the archives confirms that the material which reached the press bore little relation to the day to day business of politics. Both before and after the revolution, Bolshevik leaders lived in a less tidy, more compromising world than they would have wished. Censorship and discretion enabled them to present a more monolithic front to their citizens than they ever achieved behind the scenes. Biography is not merely a matter of satisfying our curiosity about individuals. It also offers a glimpse of the collective mentality of one of the most remarkable groups of people in twentieth-century politics.

Notes

1. I would like to thank the British Academy and the Provost and Fellows of King's College, Cambridge, for their support in funding the research visits to Moscow in 1991 and 1993 where much of the work for this paper was done. I should also like to acknowledge the support and encouragement of historians and archivists in Moscow, especially at the Russian Centre for Research and Preservation of Documents of Recent History. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Soviet Industrialisation Project Seminar at CREES, University of Birmingham, in March 1994, and I would like to thank the participants, and especially Dr John Biggart of the University of East Anglia, for their comments.
2. For example, D. Volkogonov's biography of Stalin, *Triumf i tragediya* (Moscow, 1989), or the collections *Vozvrashchenie k pravde* (Moscow, 1988) and *Vozvrashchennye imena* (Moscow, 1989).

3. Stephen F. Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Political Biography, 1888–1938* (London, 1980); Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed, Trotsky, 1871–1921* (London, 1954); Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Unarmed, Trotsky, 1921–1929* (London, 1959); *The Prophet Outcast, Trotsky, 1929–1940* (London, 1963). In practice, despite this disclaimer, it remains difficult to write a biography which does not, to some extent, apologise for its subject.
4. L. Trotsky, *Stalin* (London, 1947), p. 283.
5. John Reed, *Ten Days that Shook the World* (New York, 1934 and 1982), p. 36.
6. *Bol'sheviki: Dokumenty po istorii bol'shevizma s 1903 po 1916 god byvshego Moskovskogo Okhrannogo Otdeleniya: Tret'e izdanie* (Moscow, 1990), p. 133.
7. L. Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution* (London, 1934), p. 303.
8. Stankevich, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 303.
9. The outline of Kamenev's biography in *Deyateli soyuza sovetskikh sotsialisticheskikh respublik i oktyabr'skoi revolyutsii, Entsiklopediya Granat*, vol. 43, contains many useful details, but far fuller is the unpublished first draft, or rather, drafts and notes, which are preserved in the archive of RTsKhIDNI, fond 323 (Kamenev's personal fond), opis' 1, delo 7. This is a part-manuscript, part-typed account by Kamenev himself, written in 1924, and contains a good deal of whimsical detail. The editors of *Deyateli* clearly regarded some of it as politically undesirable and some as verbose. Most of the details in this paragraph are drawn from the archival account.
10. Kamenev had three younger brothers, Aleksandr, Nikolai and Ivan.
11. Born in 1861. RTsKhIDNI, 323/1/4,19.
12. Grinevitskii was one of the assassins of Alexander II.
13. Mariya Fedorovna was born in 1864. She died in 1920. RTsKhIDNI, 323/1/4,19.
14. This marked her out as an exception among women of her social background, and especially among Jewish women in Russia at the time. Bestuzhev courses were aimed at young women intending to pursue careers in secondary teaching. They were founded in 1878 by a progressive group of academics headed by Professor A.N. Beketov. For another account, see Lydia Dan's recollection in L. Haimson *et al.* (eds) *The Making of Three Russian Revolutionaries* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 73.
15. In 1904, for example, while Kamenev was in Paris and Geneva, he was receiving 35 rubles a month from his father. See RTsKhIDNI 323/1/1,121; 323/1/6,33. Kamenev's father was killed in 1908.
16. Trotsky, *Stalin*, pp. 24–38.
17. RTsKhIDNI, 323/1/6,12–15.
18. The phrase is Trotsky's: *History of the Russian Revolution*, p. 245.
19. Kamenev edited Chernyshevskii's writings both before and after the revolution.
20. RTsKhIDNI, 323/1/6,18.
21. RTsKhIDNI, 323/1/1/34,43 and *passim*.
22. He refers to this specifically in the account in *Deyateli*, and it was remarked at the time by other observers.

23. *III S"ezd RKP(b), Protokoly* (Moscow, 1959), p. 339. Kamenev would later be criticised for his friendly attitude towards Dan and Potresov, but never for 'conciliating' Martov.
24. His association with Zinoviev is the other stark example.
25. The point was made by F. Samoilov, reminiscing about Lenin in Cracow in January 1914: *Proletarskaya revolyutsiya* (hereafter PR), 1924, no. 3 (26), p. 175.
26. George Denike, interviewed in Haimson, *The Making*, p. 339.
27. *Deyateli*, loc. cit.
28. RTsKhIDNI, 323/1/7,35.
29. RTsKhIDNI, 323/1/7,34.
30. *Ibid.*
31. RTsKhIDNI, 323/1/7,25.
32. He notes the frequency of his visits to Moscow in particular in his memoir.
33. Lunacharskii to his wife, 23 May (5 June), 1917, *Voprosy Istorii KPSS*, 1990, no. 11, p. 35.
34. *III S"ezd*, p. 353.
35. On the campaign, see PR, 1925, no. 5 (40), p. 32; 1929, no. 10 (93), p. 93 and 1930, no. 1 (96), pp. 48–58. For Tskhakaya's view of the Congress, see *III S"ezd*, p. 132. Kamenev's primacy within the Caucasus movement was noted by Viktor Taratuta. For the rumour about Stalin, see Trotsky, *Stalin*, p. 46.
36. Trotsky, *Stalin*, p. 158. Although Kamenev's handwriting changed between 1901 and 1917, mainly becoming larger and less disciplined, neither his nor Zinoviev's was much like Lenin's. Trotsky's, of course, was entirely distinctive, but that does not mean that everyone else's was somehow the same.
37. N. K. Krupskaya, *Reminiscences of Lenin* (Moscow, 1959), p. 223.
38. RTsKhIDNI, fond 28, opis' 1 contains many such drafts, as well as much of the correspondence about the Vienna *Pravda*.
39. PR, 1923, no. 2 (24), 'Zhandarmy o Pravde', pp. 454–67.
40. Cited by Trotsky, *Stalin*, p. 160.
41. Kamenev to Bogdanov, 28 November 1908, reprinted in *Pod Znamenem Marksizma*, 1932, nos. 9–10, pp. 202–3.
42. *Protokoly soveshchaniya rasshirennoi redaktsii 'Proletariya': iyun' 1909*, edited with an introduction by Geoff Swain (hereafter *Protokoly*) (Publications of the Study Group on the Russian Revolution, no. 5, London and Liechtenstein, 1989), p. 24.
43. RTsKhIDNI, 28/1/674,1. Emphasis in the original.
44. RTsKhIDNI, 28/1/664,1.
45. PR, 1929, nos. 8–9 (91–2), p. 36, and see L. Kamenev, *Mezhdu dvumya revolyutsiyami* (Moscow, 1923), p. 234.
46. He was not alone in opposing the April Theses. Classically, apart from Stalin (who mysteriously fell silent around the time of Lenin's return) the other figures who spoke against Lenin's line at the All-Russian Conference of Bolsheviks on 24 April included Rykov, Nogin and Dzerzhinskii. Kamenev's outstanding contribution was to insist on writing and signing a minority report at the close of the debate.

47. *Sed'maya (aprel'skaya) vserossiiskaya konferentsiya RSDRP (bol'shevikov), aprel' 1917 goda* (Moscow, 1958), pp. 173–4. Another example would be the investigation into the Terror in 1919.
48. Once again, his supporters included Nogin and Rykov.
49. The point can be made for the pre-revolutionary period with reference to Bogdanov or Krasin, for example, to say nothing of Trotsky.
50. See Geoff Swain's introduction to *Protokoly*, p. xxxiii.
51. *Bol'shevistskaya fraktsiya IV Gosudarstvennoi Dumy: Sbornik materialov i dokumentov*. Sostavil M. L. Lur'e (Leningrad, 1938). Hereafter referred to as Lur'e.
52. *Protokoly*, p. 111 and RTsKhIDNI, 28/1/162.
53. He commuted to Cracow, Paris and Geneva as well in this period, leaving Ol'ga Davydovna in St Petersburg. The 'lazy' image is clearly misconceived.
54. Lur'e, p. 628 ff.
55. The Tsarist police noted his views on the matter with pardonable interest. See RTsKhIDNI 323/1/1,196.
56. He was always more trusting of public legal processes than Lenin, who evaded arrest in July 1917, leaving Lev Borisovich, along with Trotsky, to stand trial for his part in the July Days.
57. Popov's letter to Patko (respectively heads of the St Petersburg Okhrana and the police), 17 November 1914, cited in Lur'e, pp. 516–18.
58. Lur'e, p. 629.
59. Kamenev, in his turn, was distressed by Lenin's lack of support for him. See Elizarova's note of 23 April/6 May 1915, PR, 1930, nos. 7–8 (102–3), pp. 183–4. On Lenin, see 'Chto dokazal sud nad RSDRP fraktsiei', March 1915. The public apology was not forthcoming.
60. Trotsky, *Stalin*, p. 177.
61. Lur'e, p. 629. One of his main critics was Spandaryan.
62. Stalin, for example, sought his advice about the nationalities issue in 1915, and asked him to convey the draft of his paper on the subject to Lenin: RTsKhIDNI,323/1/1,217.
63. Trotsky, *Stalin*, p. 181.
64. Initially, an attempt was made to limit him to unsigned contributions. R. C. Elwood (ed.), *Resolutions and Decisions of the CPSU, vol. 1: The Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, 1898 – October 1917* (Toronto, 1974), pp. 202–3.
65. Trotsky, *Stalin*, p. 187.
66. Avrma 'Gertik' Gert was among those who criticised Kamenev in this way: Haimson, *The Making*, pp. 396–7.
67. Haimson, *The Making*, p. 308.
68. See, for example, Raskol'nikov's memoir of Lenin's return, PR, 1923, no. 1 (13), pp. 220–26.
69. Trotsky, *History of The Russian Revolution*, p. 304.
70. Kamenev and Lenin settled the matter at the seventh plenum by delivering two reports.
71. Trotsky claimed that Stalin was willing to consider Tsereteli's proposal of a merger: *Stalin*, p. 193.

72. See *The Bolsheviks and the October Revolution. Central Committee Minutes of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (bolsheviks), August 1917–February 1918.* Translated from the Russian by Ann Bone (London, 1974).
73. The Democratic Conference proceedings are recorded in GARF, 1798/1/3–13.
74. The account of the developing conflict is in GARF, 1235/1/6 (Second Congress of Soviets, 25 October 1917) and 1235/17/2 (VTsIK, 29 October 1917).
75. The Vikzhel negotiations between 29 October and 3 November, see GARF, 5498/1/13, 14, 24, 53 and 78.
76. RTsKhIDNI, 323/1/28,6–7.
77. RTsKhIDNI,5/1/2558,2.
78. *Ibid.*, ll. 2 and 55.
79. RTsKhIDNI, 323/1/30 contains weekly reports to Kamenev about the activities of the Moscow Cheka, 1918–23.
80. Trotsky, *Stalin*, p. 344, plays this down, emphasising Lenin's impatience with Kamenev on the issue. But see J. Keep, 'Lenin's Letters as an Historical Source', in B. W. Eissenstat (ed.), *Lenin and Leninism: State, Law and Society* (Lexington, MA, 1971), p. 260, citing an example from the Ukraine.
81. RTsKhIDNI, 5/1/1040,7 (Kamenev to Lenin, 25 July 1921).
82. RTsKhIDNI, 5/1/1913,17 (Kamenev's draft for the formation of the RSFSR).
83. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/11 (Combined Politburo and Orgburo meeting, 2 June 1919).
84. Kamenev dealt with the food shortages in Moscow on a daily basis, and also later headed the Committee on the Famine of 1921 (Pomgol).

3 The Soviet State, Civil Society and Moscow Politics: Stability and Order in Early NEP, 1921–1924

Richard Sakwa

Mikhail Pokrovskii's view that history was the most political of all the sciences was demonstrated once again with a vengeance as the historiography of the New Economic Policy (NEP) followed the trajectory of rising hopes then dashed expectations of Gorbachev's *perestroika*, in its way reminiscent of NEP's concessions by the state to the market and society.[1] Social scientists are often called upon to predict the future, but the Soviet historian's lot is a much more difficult one: to predict the past.[2] In the last years of Soviet power the political agenda changed with startling rapidity, and today the newly-opened archives are likely to modify our understanding of the political processes shaping Soviet development.

Nowhere is this more true than in the debate over NEP politics. In his analysis of 'state' and 'society' between 1918–29 Lewis Siegelbaum suggests that the relationship between the two need not necessarily be antagonistic, and he discusses the possibility of the development of a 'Soviet civil society', which he defines as 'arenas of affective association nurturing local and particularistic freedoms guaranteed by law'.[3] While one can note the rich associational life of 'high NEP', the exuberant creation of all sorts of leagues and unions in the middle years of the decade, as well as the evolution of more traditional bodies like trade unions, these developments were always contingent on political shifts and were far from being 'guaranteed by law'. The two central sets of relations of Bolshevism in power, between the leadership and its own movement and between the regime and society, were marked by a pervasive arbitrariness deriving from the restricted definition of the concept of 'hegemony'.[4]

In other words, hints at the development of a 'Soviet civil society' are misleading since the legalisation and separation of civil society from regime dynamics would have entailed, as the Bolsheviks themselves explicitly recognised, the self-liquidation of the regime itself.[5] As Gorbachev discovered later, there was an ontological contradiction between the development of spontaneous and legally-recognised autonomous political and social activity and the maintenance of 'Bolshevism in power'. The relationship between the regime, its agencies and the movement remained instrumental and only tenuously reciprocal. At the same time, the introduction of order, if not transparency and accountability, in intra-systemic relations would have crystallised the autonomy of the state and created a public sphere for bureaucratic groups and social interests to pursue their political agendas within the regime of power itself.[6] The logic of party rule – or its functional equivalent through leadership politics of the Stalinist type – would have been rendered superfluous.

The distinction between *stability* and *order* is crucial here, applied both to relations within the regime and between the regime and society. Throughout their rule the Bolsheviks were concerned with maintaining *stability* (and NEP was perhaps their most successful attempt), but *order* (*Ordnung*), the hegemonic relationship between state and society reflecting the socio-economic and political realities of the time and the effective ordering of the state itself, always eluded them. Thus coercion and systematic brutality became typical of the regime.[7] According to Trotsky, Stalinism was a permanent regime of crisis,[8] but the Bolshevik *Ordnungpolitik* as a whole can be so characterised.

Bolshevism in power confronted an unstable relationship not only with society but also with its own structures of power and its movement. Not only spontaneous processes in society but also elements of the state and its own movement were in danger of escaping leadership control, leading to vicious internecine warfare. In the absence of order, the Bolshevik regime waged an unceasing struggle to maintain stability in its relations with society and its own movement.

THE POLITICS OF STABILITY

The relative liberalisation of early NEP, when the dynamics of the state were particularly fluid, exposed the fragile basis of regime stability. We shall examine these tensions on the basis of Moscow politics, focusing

on the Left Opposition debate from late 1923 but also establishing the context of NEP from 1921.

The Soviet regime was composed of a number of different 'states', often contesting with each other.[9] These include the security state, the Cheka and, from 1922, the GPU; the soviet state, represented locally by the Moscow Soviet and the local soviets; the economic state and its bureaucracy; the workers' state, with its trade unions and other 'transmission belt' organisations; and finally the political state, the Moscow Party Organisation (MPO) and its superior bodies focused on the Central Committee (CC) apparatus. These 'states' were represented by institutions but at the same time reflected different sets of behaviourial responses and ideological contexts which coexisted in an unstable equilibrium in a system which Daniel Orlovsky has described as a type of socialist corporatism.[10] In a paper of this size we can do no more than suggest some of the main themes, and the following sections are intended as no more than signposts in the argument.

The Soviet State and Bureaucracy

Yulii Martov stressed the point made by many other non-Bolshevik revolutionary socialists, namely that when Marx and Engels used the term 'dictatorship of the proletariat' they used it 'not to characterise a form of government but to denote the social character of state power'.[11] In practice, however, the Bolsheviks arrogated to themselves the right to speak on behalf of the proletariat and quickly established an administrative state in which the only major growth industry was the bureaucracy itself. This naturally aroused fears that the regime's bureaucratic Frankenstein monster would devour the party itself. In October 1921 Kamenev noted that Moscow had 240,000 bureaucrats and only 150,000 workers, yet regretted the financial pressures forcing the retreat of administrative supervision over everyday life: 'We have temporarily to retreat from this utopia and shake off this mechanism from our shoulders'.[12] The census of October 1922 revealed the scale of the bloated administrative apparatus in central and local state institutions, with the Moscow Soviet alone employing 42,000 and the 6 raion soviets another 14,577,[13] contributing to the total number of employees in the city by that time (following a campaign to reduce the number) of 204,085.[14]

Lenin in his political report to the XI Party Congress in March 1922 saw the problem in terms of a battle between two cultures, what he

called the socialist and the bureaucratic petty bourgeois, represented respectively by the party activists and the state bureaucracy:

> If we take Moscow with its 4700 communists in responsible positions, and if we take that huge bureaucratic machine, we must ask: who is directing whom? I doubt very much whether it can truthfully be said that the communists are directing that heap. To tell the truth, they are not directing, they are being directed.[15]

The question of the inflated Soviet apparatus remained urgent in early 1924. It was in January 1924 that the Moscow Control Commission (MKK) was reorganised 'in order to combat the faults of the state apparatus'. The MKK of 40 people, mainly workers and peasants who could not simultaneously be members of the Moscow Committee (MK), was elected by the XI Moscow *guberniya* party conference, with one section checking on infringements of party ethics and the rest working closely with the Rabkrin.[16] Following the decisions of the XII party congress on the question, the MK, as usual, 'established a commission to combat bureaucratism'.[17]

Bureaucracy was not an excrescence on the Bolshevik regime of power but an intrinsic part of it, and the various reorganisations of workers', peasant and party inspection did no more than disguise the birth of a new social order. This was the profound new 'order' against which the stability regime fought. The struggle against the party-state bureaucracy was an attempt of the *pays politique* to maintain itself against the invasive tendencies of the *pays reel.* The dominance of the latter in the country as a whole can be seen in the fact that out of 9,925 deputies elected to village soviets in Moscow *guberniya* in late 1923 only 571 (5.7 per cent) were communists.[18] The isolation of the party was stark.

Bureaucratism in the Soviet context is a hydra-headed beast, and can mean very different things. In addition to the sheer expansion in numbers and functions, the central aspect is the bureaucratisation of political processes in the 'internal state', the Bolshevik regime of power. This is illustrated most vividly in the development of the soviets. The new Moscow Soviet confirmed in September 1921 consisted of the grotesquely inflated number of 2,145 deputies, with the final vestiges of Menshevik influence well-nigh extirpated by the mandate commission.[19] The election campaign to the Moscow Soviet in late 1923 was marked by extreme passivity, not surprising given the arrest of the Mensheviks and other oppositionists and the fact that a convincing

communist victory was known beforehand.[20] The MK had decided that over 50 per cent of deputies should be replaced by workers from the shopfloor and that some 30 per cent should be non-party.[21] In the event these targets were not met and 86.4 per cent were communists, 1.7 per cent Komsomol and 11.9 per cent non-party, and of the total only 20.9 per cent were employed as workers.[22]

On 10 January 1924 the communist fraction in the Moscow Soviet once again complained that during the elections and in its daily work the soviet's deputies were little involved in either the sections or plenary meetings and that the links between deputies and electors were tenuous.[23] Lev Kamenev remained chairman until removed in April 1926 as a result of the defeat of the anti-Stalinist New Opposition, when he was replaced by K. V. Ukhanov. In these early days the internal constitution of Bolshevism had not yet clarified whether the local party or soviet boss was the most prestigious or powerful position, but his removal, by order of the Bureau of the Moscow Committee (MK), settled the question.[24]

Having achieved organisational predominance over the soviets, the MK could allow itself the luxury of pursuing other aims. One of these was the advancement of non-party people. As I. A. Zelenskii, the secretary of the MK until replaced by the future Rightist, Nikolai Uglanov, put it at the XI *guberniya* conference in January 1924, 'we must make the raion soviets educative organs, advancing new people for practical work', and he condemned the idea current at the time of abolishing the raion soviets in their entirety.[25] In other words, with the loss of their political representative functions the party sought to endow the soviets with a symbolic and cultural role.

The Security State

The security apparatus from the first played a crucial role in maintaining the Bolshevik stability regime. The USSR might well have been a 'police state' (*Polizeistaat*) in the absolutist tradition, but it was also a twentieth-century police state in the modern mould.

One of the particular targets of security police activity was the remnants of Menshevik and other socialist organisations; the slogan of 1917 'no enemies to the left' had now, understandably, been converted into the principle that 'the greatest danger comes from the left' – and, as we shall see, not just from outside the Communist Party. The plenary debate on 30 June 1921 in the Moscow Soviet, following the

beating of socialists in the Butyrskii prison on the night of 25–6 April 1921 by the Cheka, revealed the stark form Leninist politics took. Some 100 Cheka agents had turned up at the gaol and beaten up some of the 300 incarcerated socialists, and before any investigation could be made they were exiled to the provinces. I. Unshlikht, the deputy chairman of the Cheka, came up with the usual excuse about a 'plot'; conspiracies very conveniently being discovered on these occasions. Nikolai Bukharin as usual sought to generalise from the incident, arguing that 'in a revolution the winner would be the one who could smash the other's skull.'[26]

On 29 July 1921 about 54 Social Democrats were to be found in Moscow's gaols out of a total of some 72 recorded political prisoners.[27] On the eve of an amnesty to celebrate the fourth anniversary of the revolution in November 1921 a new wave of arrests hit the Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries.[28] In the spring of 1921 the Panyushkin opposition had tried to create an independent 'workers' party. The Cheka had confiscated its programme at the print works, but the leaders were at first treated gently. Most were communists, some with membership reaching back to before the 1905 revolution, and even the veteran Workers' Oppositionist Alexander Shlyapnikov himself had at first been sympathetic to them. According to the Menshevik Berlin-based emigre paper *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, the group were extremely popular and attracted large crowds to their meetings at which official communists were jeered. Finally, on 7 June about 33 of the Panyushkin movement's leaders were arrested, at least 11 of whom were jailed.[29]

The process continued throughout the period, with yet another wave of arrests and searches in late 1923 in Moscow[30] and another in early January 1924 by the Cheka's successor, the GPU.[31] In the spring of 1923 the communist syndicalist Workers' Group of G.I. Myasnikov and N. Kuznetsov maintained an underground presence in Moscow and some other industrial centres, and were alleged to have helped foment worker discontent with their manifesto denouncing the New Exploitation of the Proletariat.[32] The Workers' Truth group at this time also focused on the bureaucratisation of inner party life. Myasnikov was arrested in May 1923, expelled from the party and exiled to Germany. The object of the searches in late 1923 had been an illegal communist printing press, which was found in late November 1923. At the same time, Myasnikov was arrested on the border even though the Central Committee had given him permission to return.[33]

The Economic State

The transition to NEP was accompanied by an unprecedented economic catastrophe marked by unemployment and instability in the relationship between industrial and agricultural prices. State enterprises were divided up into trusts, and by April 1923 31 had been formed in Moscow covering 419 enterprises employing 184,432 workers, with Moscow industry comprising 18 per cent of the country's total.[34] The trusts were in a position to push up prices, and this was one important factor that gave rise to the 'scissors crisis' of 1923. The sharp shift in the terms of trade against the peasants led to a fall in demand for industrial goods provoking yet another rise in unemployment in late 1923 and early 1924. The basic problem was the lack of investment resources, but in an attempt to cut industrial prices the ruling troika of G. E. Zinoviev, L. B. Kamenev and I. V. Stalin cut back on industrial credit to force industrial prices down. The Left Opposition, however, sought the implementation of measures to encourage production through planning. The Mensheviks, on the other hand, saw the root of the crisis in the nature of Bolshevik rule itself and insisted that even the most radical economic concessions would be mere palliatives without 'the simultaneous rejection of dictatorship and the return to a free democratic regime'.[35] Debates over economic policy were thus crucial to the development not only of NEP itself but also in the shaping of politics within the regime and its relationship with society.

The Workers' State

The political consequences of the decline in the number of workers during the civil war is still debated. Lenin had eagerly seized on the idea of the declassing of the proletariat to explain what from his perspective was their maverick behaviour, and thus justified the compensatory need for party discipline.[36] Western scholars have taken a more cautious approach in considering the effect of the civil war years on the working class.[37] Worker consciousness no doubt had evolved, but the withdrawal of support for the Bolsheviks did not necessarily denote the absence of class consciousness in its entirety. The Menshevik argument that 'Social Democracy won over the working class, and that was the reason for the launching of repression against it in 1920',[38] on the other hand, is probably equally exaggerated.

The role of the trade unions in the new conditions was to protect the workers from the recrudescent shoots of capitalism and, of course, to boost production. They definitely were not to interfere in the administration of enterprises. The few remaining bastions of independent trade unionism to have survived War Communism, however, reveal a high degree of worker solidarity. While the case of the print workers is well known, that of the postal and chemical workers is less familiar. The slogan here was no longer 'soviets without Bolsheviks' but 'unions without Bolsheviks'.

The Moscow Union of Chemical Workers, representing some 30,000 workers, was the last of Moscow's 23 union organisations to hold out against the regime. At the union's congress in spring 1921 only 50 out of 315 delegates had been Bolsheviks. The union held fortnightly conferences, and it was clear that its leadership retained the full confidence of the workers. At its meeting on 30 May 1921 the MK decided that the time had come to overcome this bastion of Menshevik trade unionism. The authorities began a whole series of actions to undermine the union, including withholding rations, in order to provoke discontent.[39] This then turned into the arrest of the union's leaders and assaults in individual factories, like the Bogatyr' factory, which in 1921 had elected three Mensheviks to the Moscow Soviet. The campaign for the union's congress on 3 October was particularly bitter, with the authorities threatening to withhold supplies for factories that supported the Mensheviks. In the event, some 125 independents and 85–90 communists were elected.[40] Further administrative measures, including the usual Bolshevik splitting tactics, finally reduced the union to submission.

Between July and September 1923 a wave of strikes suggested that the War Communist struggle for existence was liable now to give way to a new pattern of worker militancy, this time spontaneous and 'deorganised', the Bolshevik regime having colonised the traditional instruments of worker representation. Workers in Sormovo and other towns protested, above all, against delays in the payment of wages.[41] E. H. Carr cites no evidence of strikes in Moscow, but Zelenskii at the XI *guberniya* conference in January 1924 admitted that there had been strikes in the city at that time, but insisted that they did not amount to a full-scale strike wave. The major strikes were in two textile mills, the Krasno-Presnenskii Manufactury and the former Tsindel' factory in Zamoskvorech'e.[42] During the summer months the already low wages of textile workers (of whom there were some 160,000 in Moscow and its *guberniya*) fell sharply behind those in other industries, and by late

August workers returning from the countryside (textile workers still being closely linked to the villages) found a deterioration in their conditions. Wages of the capital's workers in 1923 were only 79 per cent of the level of 1913, and there were 130,000 unemployed people in Moscow and *guberniya*.[43] The 'scissors' crisis was in full swing, with low prices for agricultural produce and high prices for industrial goods leading to falling demand.

The emergence of a new workers' movement, this time within the communist system, posed a potentially fatal threat to the regime, and it was against this backdrop that the debate over party democracy unrolled from late 1923. At the meeting of Moscow party activists on 11 December 1923 Zelenskii noted that declassing had come to an end, and that now a reverse process, of consolidation and the revival of the inner life of the working class, had begun. In response, the challenge facing the party was 'not to be late in restructuring its own internal life'.[44] The paradoxical situation now arose in which the revival of the Bolshevik party's own social base threatened the regime's precarious political stability.

The Party Regime

If in October 1917 the workers' movement and the Bolshevik party had for a brief interval coincided, thereafter the regime was forced to come to terms with the social realities of the new Russia. The new social order following the destruction of the bourgeoisie during the civil war would undoubtedly have been dominated by the bureaucracy and peasantry, and Bolshevik fears about being overwhelmed by these were by no means misplaced. A Menshevik report in August 1921 noted the disintegration of the lower ranks of the party and argued that many middle-level communists would leave the party if they had enough courage against the background of 'a wild struggle of tendencies, groups and cliques'.[45] At the same time, D. Dalin insisted that the 'new bourgeoisie' was growing faster in Russia than anywhere else, and a pretty corrupt one at that.[46] The *Smena Vekh* (*Change of Landmarks*) volume of 1921 was described as the 'ideology of the Soviet bourgeoisie' wanting an end to the terror and a quiet life.[47] Above all, Martov could comfort his readers with the view that 'In contrast to France, the liquidation of the utopian regime is being undertaken by the dictatorship itself',[48] the view that the Bolshevik regime itself would undertake its own Thermidor and 18th Brumaire.

The party purge of 1921, ordered by the X party conference in May, had been designed to redress the social balance of the party, and the relative weight of workers did increase, though all figures must be treated with caution since following the revolution occupation was defined as the original rather than actual profession.[49] Allegedly, the accumulated anger against the *verkhi* (as the Bolshevik bigwigs were commonly known), had become so dangerous that Lenin decided to deflect this anger and ordered the expulsion of most former Mensheviks. The purge revealed the party to be much smaller than anticipated, with some 158,000 members in the 31 *gubernii* of European Russia, of whom 59,000 were to be found in Moscow and Petrograd.[50]

Of the 182,000 production workers in Moscow city in April 1923, only 4,911 were in the party (3.3 per cent), and in the *guberniya* out of 172,000 workers only 2,200 were communists (1.3 per cent).[51] Total membership on 1 January 1923 in the city was 30,904, with 3,544 candidates, and in the *guberniya* 6,424 and 994 candidates. In the city 46.8 per cent of members were workers, 14.3 peasants, 28.9 employees and intelligentsia, and 10 per cent others.[52] Recruitment was minimal in this period, with 2,413 becoming candidates in 1922, a number almost balanced by a high number of resignations and expulsions (2,080).[53] Once again in 1923 there was only a small growth in membership, with some 734 workers joining but with some 5,000 more as candidates and some 9,000 sympathisers.[54] On the eve of the Left Opposition debate on 1 November out of the 1,373 cells in the city 367 were in soviet institutions, 123 military, 116 higher educational, 85 transport and 532 worker.[55] By 1 January 1924 membership in the city had reached 35,244 with 9,319 candidates.[56]

The Communist Party was indeed small and isolated, and never more so than following the failure of the communist uprising in Germany in October 1923. The Bolshevik attempt not only to retain power in these conditions, in what was in effect an occupied country, and their refusal to adapt to these conditions determined their relations with society and the structure of the regime itself. As Zelenskii put it at the XII *guberniya* conference in May 1924, the party was caught between two traps: Nepist degeneration or anarcho-syndicalist degeneration. Both could be summed up in a single formula: 'The main danger is to prevent something else, some other formation, emerging out of the shell (*obolochka*) of our party.'[57] Strategies of power and stability maintenance were the inevitably corollary of the absence of a hegemonic order.

Following the defeat of the various oppositions accompanying War Communism and the introduction of NEP, the MPO had been thoroughly overhauled in what Kamenev in March 1922 called the 'perestroika' of the party.[58] The elected secretaries of party cells and *raion* organisations had been largely replaced by appointed officials, though formally the 'recommendation' from the relevant higher instance was subject to confirmation from below. The assignment of 'responsible officials' had become a mass phenomenon and by October 1923 the *nomenklatura* system, whereby appointments to some 5,000 state posts required the approval of the relevant Central Committee department, had taken shape.[59]

The MK itself continued to grow in size. Current work was therefore concentrated in a Bureau, to which the heads of its various departments usually belonged and reported. The MK's Orgotdel, for example, was one of the most important parts of the apparatus, dealing with current organisational matters as well as running instructors and monitoring specific spheres of life like higher education, the railways and the military.[60] The *apparat* of the MK in October 1922 numbered 243 people, and the raion committees were similarly generously staffed with a total of 487 in the 6 raions.[61]

The Krasnaya Presnya raion party organisation (RPO) had been one of the most thoroughly Leninised.[62] At the XI *guberniya* conference on 11 January 1924 G. Belen'kii, the leader of the local RPO and the scourge of the opposition, stressed that out of the 46 members of the raion party committee (raikom) 'we brought the overwhelming majority (38) from the bench.'[63] Here workerisation had been vigorously pursued, as the opposition had demanded, and in the 'New Course' debate the opposition was soundly defeated.

Following Kamenev's report at the X *guberniya* conference in April 1923 the resolution noted that 'the conditions of NEP create the basis for deviations, whose danger should be foreseen by the party and to which the party from the very outset must give a decisive ideological rebuff.'[64] According to Zelenskii, these conditions had if anything been aggravated by the time of the XI *guberniya* conference in January 1924. Zelenskii noted that the social composition of the MPO had 'worsened'. There had been insignificant growth in the number of workers, while the percentage of employees and intelligentsia had increased by 10 per cent in the city, many of whom had come to Moscow to work in various institutions. Zelenskii drew the conclusion that the party had thus become more susceptible to 'the destructive influence of NEP and the bourgeois environment'.[65] In the party as a

whole 38 per cent of communists were employed in Soviet institutions.[66] Zelenskii defended the need for the constant cleansing of the party, and to a round of applause insisted: 'Yes, we will purge the party of those who have wormed their way in (*primazavshchikhsya*), of those affected above all by petty bourgeois degeneration, of those who hinder the party pursuing its line . . .', the latter clearly being an implicit threat to the opposition.[67]

For the last time the debate of late 1923 raised fundamental issues about the nature of the party regime and the quality of its internal relationships. Numerous oppositional publications warned of 'stagnation', the depersonalisation of the 'party masses' and, in the oppositionist Evgenii Preobrazhenskii's words, 'the conspiracy of silence in the party'.[68] The Manifesto of the Workers' Group had talked in terms of 'the transformation of proletarian power into the power of a cabal of . . . people united only by the desire to keep both political and economic power in their hands, naturally in the name of the proletariat and the world revolution'.[69] Zinoviev's article 'The New Tasks of the Party' on the sixth anniversary of the revolution was indirectly a response to the outburst of dissatisfaction with developments in the party, but his prescriptions were only rehashed appeals for 'workers' democracy', wheeled out as usual in moments of crisis in the early 1920s, and failed to address any of the substantive problems facing the party.[70]

The central point was the 'death of politics' in favour of extended administration in the sphere of both the state and the party.[71] In all spheres the Bolshevik Party sought to consolidate its rule by a range of stabilising measures. Of all approaches, democracy would have been the most destabilising, as the opposition implicitly acknowledged. Democracy in the party and in the recrudescent movement would have curtailed the appointments system and entailed free elections from top to bottom, freedom of speech, publication and the right to establish horizontal contacts: but all that, of course, would have meant the end of Bolshevism as we know it.

THE STABILITY OF POLITICS

The NEP years were marked by a series of political crises in which issues dealing with matters of high politics (what we can call category A debates) were interwoven with no less important, though less spect-

acular, debates over the internal organisation of the system itself (category B debates). Category A debates in our period came in three great waves: over the trade unions and party democracy from late 1920, merging into discussion over the transition to NEP in 1921; the debate between November 1923 and January 1924 provoked by the Declaration of the Forty Six, Trotsky's New Course proposals and the rise of the Left Opposition (on which we will focus below); and the discovery of Trotskyism in 1924, questions over the nature of Leninism, and the creation of the New Opposition of Kamenev and Zinoviev against Stalin and Bukharin. Category B debates focused on the need and character of purges within the party, the development of a 'broad' or a 'narrow' party in which quality of membership would take precedence over numbers, and the role of party committees and their apparatus. Organisational politics within the framework of category B debates were ultimately to determine the resolution of matters of high politics.

The Left Opposition Debate

In the transition to NEP the Workers' Opposition turned its attention to the alleged betrayal of the proletarian revolution by the concessions to the market and the peasantry. In February 1922 the Declaration of the Twenty Two, mostly supporters of the Workers' Opposition, was sent to the Communist International. They were severely censured at the XI party congress in March 1922, and it was of this period that Leonard Schapiro notes that no members of the Central Committee (other than the Workers' Oppositionists A. Shlyapnikov and I. Kutuzov) tried to halt or modify the policy of 'building unanimity by force'.[72]

The new round in party debate was heralded by Trotsky's letter to the Central Committee of 8 October 1923 in which he attacked their management of the economy. He condemned also the unhealthy regime in the party, but he stopped short of calling for a broadening of worker's democracy, noting 'the incompatibility of a fully developed workers' democracy with a regime of dictatorship'.[73] He denounced the exhortation by Felix Dzerzhinskii's Central Committee sub-committee on the economic crisis, alarmed by the underground activities of groups like Workers' Truth, that 'party members knowing of oppositionist groupings within the party should not only inform the CC and the CCC [Central Control Commission] but also the GPU'.[74] The intervention of the secret police in internal party affairs seemed to

augur the criminalisation of intra-party dissent, something that had already happened in inter-party relations. Rosa Luxemburg had noted soon after the Bolsheviks had come to power that freedom only for the supporters of the regime meant no freedom at all,[75] a view shared by Karl Kautsky when he condemned the universalisation of the exception (the imposition of Bolshevik stability politics on the international socialist movement),[76] but the irony now was that the only freedom left to communists was to subordinate themselves to the party line.[77] The defeat of the Left Opposition itself marked an important stage in this process.

A week later, on 15 October 1923, as part of a separate initiative 46 second-rank party members, who came to be known as the Left Opposition, submitted a statement to the Politburo insisting that 'the party is to a considerable extent ceasing to be that living independent collectivity which sensitively seizes living reality with a thousand threads . . . free discussion within the party has practically vanished, the public opinion of the party is stifled'.[78] The demands of the Left Opposition (proposed with varying degrees of enthusiasm by the signatories) can be summarised as greater freedom of discussion within the party, limits to the administrative system of appointments from above, more collective rather than bureaucratic decision-making, and the recruitment of more workers to the party.

These complaints and demands, using almost the same words, had been voiced by dissident communists since at least mid-1918 with the rise of the Left Communists, and again from 1919 by the Democratic Centralist oppositional bloc, and thereafter by the Ignatov party opposition in Moscow in 1920 and the Workers' Opposition in 1920–1 and the Appeal of the Twenty Two. While the demands of the various oppositions reflected the ideological inheritance of Bolshevism as a movement within the framework of revolutionary socialism, they were incompatible with Bolshevism as a regime in power bound by the structural constraints of 'stability' politics. In this context Lenin was right to 'put a lid' on the opposition at the X party congress with the ban on factions, but his solution to the tension between the movement and the regime was one that gave birth to the Stalinist stage of Bolshevik rule.

It was not Trotsky's initiative but that of the Forty-Six that provoked a general party discussion in November 1923–January 1924. Once again, as in 1920–1 when the debate over party democracy was torpedoed by Trotsky's plans to 'shake up' (*perestryakhivanie*) the trade unions, so too in 1923 the New Course initiative allowed the

Leninists to seize the high ground of party unity and to discredit the normative arguments of the opposition. Trotsky remained aloof from the opposition but his intervention allowed the debate to become highly personalised, focusing on the attempts by the troika (above all Zinoviev) to neutralise rather than (at this stage) to demonise Trotsky.[79] While the opposition raised issues of vital concern for the development of the party and the regime as a whole, the course of the debate revealed the structural inability of the Bolshevik constitution to regulate discursive interaction between its own elements, let alone between itself and society. The absence of a public sphere within the framework of the movement meant that periods of debate inevitably took on crisis features that threatened the stability of the regime itself.

The Central Committee resolution 'On Party Construction' of 5 December 1923[80] conceded much to the opposition and took the wind out of their sails; it certainly left Trotsky, once again, deflated and supine at a crucial moment in the development of the country's political fortunes.[81] Many of these points were reiterated in Trotsky's 'New Course' letter of 8 December 1923,[82] which, coming only a few days after the Central Committee resolution which he had signed, appeared to be gratuitously insulting towards the triumvirs, or at least to be redundant. The New Course letter provided an eloquent but incoherent analysis of the party's ills, with such absurdities as 'Bureaucratism of the apparatus is precisely one of the principal causes of bureaucratism', when the truth lay precisely in the opposite, and he sought to enlist the support of youth as an element in a wholly specious generational struggle for the soul of the party (on which more below). He gave little indication of how to achieve the necessary balance between what he called 'the two faces of party organisation', democracy and centralism, and how this was to differ from the officially defined democratic centralism.[83] How could 'the party subordinate to itself its own apparatus', as Trotsky put it, without losing the modicum of stability that had been achieved by 1923? Zinoviev's programme of 'workers' democracy', reiterated in his anniversary article and in the 5 December resolution, and Trotsky's irresolute appeal for 'party democracy' came down to much the same sort of thing. It is difficult to see how 'workerisation' of bureaucratic apparatuses would do anything other than intensify the hold of the senior 'partocrats'; or how more party democracy would do anything other than destroy the precarious stability of the regime.

From 7 November the pages of *Pravda* were opened for contributions until the discussion was abruptly brought to a end by the XIII

party conference of 16–18 January 1924. For the last time Moscow's rank-and-file communists were able to take part in a discussion relatively unhindered by *apparat* pressure or fear of the secret police. The meeting of cell delegates in Moscow on 11 December marked the high point of debate in the city. As part of the triumvirate's attempts to isolate Trotsky, Kamenev directed his fire against the Forty-Six, arguing that their attacks on the apparatus were attacks on the old guard, which in turn were in effect attacks on the Central Committee and thus on the whole Bolshevik system of power. In his response, however, Timofei Sapronov returned to some of his old oppositional themes in arguing that 'Comrade Kamenev over-values his apparat and under-estimates the self-activity of the party', noting that 'No one is advocating a pure thorough-going inviolate democracy with freedom of speech, press, elections, and so on. We are talking about inner-party workers' democracy.'[84] He condemned the way that the old guard portrayed attacks against the apparatus as attacks on the party and the dictatorship of the proletariat as a whole. Zinoviev came in for particular criticism, and his view that the opposition was no more than a little stir in Moscow while Petrograd and the rest of Russia were quiet was compared with a similar statement that he had made during the trade union debate in March 1921 five days before the Kronstadt uprising.[85]

He cited Trotsky's New Course letter to buttress his arguments against the party bureaucracy, and thus for the first time Trotsky, the militariser of 1920–21, became the popular champion of party democracy.[86] A more unlikely pretender to this role can hardly be imagined and only reinforced the unreal character of the whole debate, especially in the light of the 5 December Central Committee resolution, adopted unanimously and signed by Trotsky, on the need for more inner-party democracy. Preobrazhenskii's distinction at this meeting between 'ideological' groupings in the party, of which he approved, and other groupings 'which represented the embryos of a party of an alien class . . . [and] had to be excised by us as soon as we had established their social nature',[87] appeared scholastic to say the least.

The debate at first stressed technical aspects of party management, such as elections, appointments and transfers, but this was soon broadened out by leading oppositionists in Moscow like Rafail to encompass such vital issues as the degeneration of the 'apparat'. The social nature of the Bolshevik regime remains an important question to this day, but the Menshevik press abroad only reinforced Bolshevik concerns when it suggested that behind all the fuss about party

democracy lay a 'fourth force', the 'Nepist bourgeoisie'.[88] The Mensheviks as much as the Bolsheviks were prone to find pseudo-Marxist social explanations for political phenomena.

The unbidden guest throughout the debate, as intimated above in Sapronov's contribution, was democracy. Already at a meeting of cell secretaries in Krasno-Presnya on 7 December the former oppositionist V. Smirnov asked whether the party could afford the luxury of democracy when there were strikes against the party in the Donbass, NEPist capitalists were on the offensive and peasants were flooding into the towns.[89] At that meeting, however, Belen'kii conceded that conditions were ripe for democratisation, but that at any moment the party should be ready to take on a more militant form, and for this the only guarantee was party unity.[90] A speaker from the floor, a certain Gurov, at the 11 December activists' meeting identified a problem that was to resurface in a later perestroika, namely that 'democratisation does not lead to democracy'.[91] Mikhail Kalinin in his typically *faux naif* style revealed perhaps more than he intended when he noted: 'The impression has somehow been formed that I am a democrat, but I am a very hesitant democrat . . . The essence is not democracy but to safeguard revolutionary achievements.'[92] The survival of the regime was considered paramount, and to this the movement and the ideals that had given birth to it were subordinate.

At a meeting of the party *aktiv* of Krasno-Presnya on 8 December 1923 Bukharin stressed that the choice after 1921 had been between workers' democracy and the 'need for red directors, red cooperatives and red merchants', hence workers' democracy could not be implemented because life demanded other tasks and this allowed the apparatus to take on a life of its own, though it certainly was not yet, Bukharin insisted, a case of 'the apparatus for the apparatus's sake'.[93] It was at this meeting that Bukharin referred to the factional struggles at the time of the Brest-Litovsk peace: 'Now I can say what was not said before, that the Left Socialist Revolutionaries suggested to the Left Communists that they arrest the whole Sovnarkom. And we were ready to form our own cabinet in opposition to that of Vladimir Il'ich.' Bukharin now used the story to illustrate the dangers of factional struggle and urged the opposition to 'wise up', just as he himself had done.[94] At that meeting Rafail condemned Stalin's remarks at the MK a few days earlier in which he had stressed that the whole debate was taking place against the background of the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, implying the need to limit democracy, but, Rafail noted, 'It is very difficult to define the limits to the limits on democracy.'[95]

According to I. Boguslavskii at the XI Moscow *guberniya* conference on 11 January 35 per cent of the proletarian Zamoskvorech'e raion supported the opposition,[96] 47 per cent in Baumanskii raion, 55 per cent in Khamovnicheskii raion (the only one where the opposition was in a majority), 25 per cent in Krasno-Presnenskii raion, and 48 per cent in Rogozhsko-Simonovskii raion.[97] Larin sought to discredit these figures by looking at the social composition of the party organisation in Khamovniki, noting that in this raion workers from the bench comprised only 5 per cent in comparison to 20 per cent in other raions; and whereas elsewhere employees and the intelligentsia made up an average of 30 per cent of membership, in Khamovniki they comprised 61 per cent.[98] Official figures bear this out, with Khamovnicheskii raion having the highest proportion of employees and intelligentsia and the lowest of workers.[99] The official MK report for the period also suggested that the opposition concentrated their efforts in Moscow because of the large proportion of employees and intelligentsia.[100]

D. Ryazanov, a former Workers' Oppositionist who headed what became the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, held views reminiscent of those of the Ignatov opposition in Moscow in 1920–1.[101] He mocked the reductionist Marxist view that Khamovnicheskii raion was oppositionist 'because it is a petty bourgeois raion'. He turned the tables by giving a 'Marxist' analysis of the political balance of forces in Krasno-Presnenskii raion. In 1922 they split evenly between workers on the one hand and employees and intelligentsia on the other, thus the forces ranged behind Belen'kii (supporting the official line) and Rafail (for the opposition) were evenly balanced, but in 1923 the tide had turned by 10 per cent in favour of workers, hence 'smash Rafail's face in, down with the intelligentsia and throw him out of the raikom'. The apparatus line that Belen'kii had pursued 'so delicately' in Krasno-Presnenskii raion had been savagely implemented in Zamoskvorech'e, and Ryazanov again suggested that the social make-up of the raion, with its exceptionally large number of peasants, undermined its ability 'to maintain active resistance' [to the apparatus].[102] Ryazanov condemned both sides in the debate, and insisted that in a situation where the party made up no more than some 2 per cent out of 320,000 workers in Moscow *guberniya*, attention should be shifted from abstract political campaigns and focused on broadening the party's base among the working class.[103] This was the intelligent voice of stability politics.

A study by Darron Hincks has examined the extent of support for the opposition in Moscow and suggests that Trotsky's assertion that the organisation was divided roughly in half, with a certain advantage

to the opposition at the beginning of the discussion, was probably exaggerated.[104] Zelenskii provided information about the behaviour of 630 cells, 80 per cent of the total: 346 worker cells with 9,843 members were for the CC, and 67 with 2,220 members (18 per cent) for the opposition.[105] In higher educational establishments there was a different picture, with 32 cells with 2,790 members for the CC and 40 cells with 6,594 members for the opposition. A total of 181 soviet cells supported the CC and 57 the opposition; and 71 military cells were for the CC and 22 for the opposition.[106] Overall, it appears that some 25–35 per cent of the MPO supported the opposition.[107]

However, rather than placing its faith in the working class, the opposition relied on students and youth in general, and indeed on the Moscow Komsomol organisation. In his New Course letter of 8 December 1923 Trotsky had argued that the party was divided into two storeys, between the older and younger generations,[108] and the logic of this appeared to prefigure Herbert Marcuse's argument of two generations later, that the subject of the revolution could shift from the working class to youth. In late 1923 the Moscow Komsomol organisation had 40,349 members of whom 51 per cent were classified as workers, 14 per cent peasants and 32 per cent employees.[109] Some 70,000 of the 200,000 students in Russia at the time were in Moscow living on a minimal stipend and in very poor conditions, but a surprisingly high number of Moscow students, 10,000, were communists.[110] In December 1923 communists in college (VUZ) cells made up 28.3 per cent of the city organisation with 10.6 per cent of its cells.[111] The Revisional Commission at the XI *guberniya* conference accepted shortfalls in the MK's work in this area,[112] and others noted that there were numerous groups and 'deviations' in student party cells.[113] One of the self-declared 'rank-and-file workers' at the XI Moscow party conference on 12 January 1923, a certain Kondratovich, referred to one of the conference's main themes, namely the abysmally low level of political and general education of workers' cells, but went on to observe that college and soviet cells were more able to respond to intellectual challenges, implying that if the workers had been better educated they too would have been able to think for themselves rather than having the apparatus think for them.[114] The contradiction between the Bolshevik attempt to build a new system on a class that was culturally unable to bear the weight of the new system was never more apparent than during the Left Opposition debate.

Certain aspects of the Left Opposition's critique, moreover, served to alienate workers. Their emphasis on planning was clearly understood

to mean a continued role for specialists and the bureaucracy, and their emphasis on increased productivity and efficiency would, in the short term at least, require even more sacrifices by workers.[115] In this context the Central Committee's populistic promises of improved wages and conditions fell on receptive, although probably sceptical, ears. The relationship with the working class, both party and non-party, was crucial for the party's self-identity, yet the definition of this role shifted between educative, propagandistic and coercive functions. The emergence of necessarily hierarchical elite–mass relations was nevertheless accompanied by attempts to place that relationship on an ordered basis, since the regime drew its legitimacy from its claims to represent the working class, but in the absence of order the regime experimented with new ways to stabilise the relationship.

Kamenev at the second Krasno-Presnya party conference on 3 January 1924 condemned Trotsky's counterposition of youth against the old guard, and insisted that it was the 54,000 shopfloor workers out of the party's total membership of 400,000 that was the key 'barometer' and not youth.[116] He added the telling point that while there was an opposition, it had no clear line: 'They have no single political or economic line which in any matter of principle differs from the CC's.'[117] In innumerable resolutions the opposition condemned 'the reduction in the self-activity of the local organisations' but, other than the re-election of all party officials, it was not quite clear what the opposition suggested should be done to remedy the situation, a point driven home by Ya.E. Rudzutak on 11 January 1923 at the XI Moscow *guberniya* conference.[118] There was no hint, for example, of the need for independent trade unions or soviets; such demands, in conditions of economic crisis and worker militancy, would inexorably have led to the Bolsheviks losing power, and the opposition certainly did not want this.

While there were many legitimate grievances by factory workers, the opposition was afraid of exploiting even relatively straightforward problems such as wage policy or of proposing new patterns of staff involvement in enterprise management for fear of being labelled 'syndicalist' and branded with the same tongs as the Workers' Opposition or the Workers' Group.[119] Preobrazhenskii's own extremism clearly repelled many at this stage. At one meeting he described at great length the need for planning (*planovost'*) and insisted that 'instead of having the dictatorship of the party over soviet work, what we now have is the dictatorship of the Soviet apparatus and our Nepmanist economic organisation over the party', an assertion greeted with outrage in the hall.[120]

The opposition was trapped in the 'classist' politics of its official opponents, and rather than offering a theoretical space in which a viable alternative political or organisational strategy could be sustained their advocacy of 'workerisation' succeeded only in reducing this space. Hence it was no accident that every bout of opposition from 1918 contributed to the consolidation of the rule of the Leninist apparatus. None of the oppositions dared to break out of the *pays politique* and appeal to the *pays reel.* At the same time, it would probably be an exaggeration to see in this debate a prefiguration of the Malenkov-Khrushchev struggle following the death of Stalin, between the state system on the one hand and the party apparatus on the other, although it has been suggested that 'Trotsky's power base was in Sovnarkom's bureaucracies, Stalin's was in the Party apparatus.'[121]

Zelenskii warned that the discussion had allowed embryonic factions to take shape in the party, and regretted that it had taken such a bitter form. The level of mud-slinging and mutual accusations between communists had exceeded anything ever known in the Bolshevik Party, and he warned that these were 'absolutely inadmissable forms of struggle'.[122] Above all, he regretted the fact that while the party had been otherwise occupied the 'non-party mass' had fallen under 'the influence of other elements', though he did not specify quite what elements.[123] It goes without saying that neither the opposition nor the official line tried to broaden the discussion to include the 'non-party mass'.[124] As A. Rykov pointed out, the party had some 400,000 members for a population of 120 million and therefore 'These 400,000 party members can maintain the dictatorship only if it has full and unconditional unity.'[125]

The XI *guberniya* conference summed up the results of the discussion which, as Zelenskii put it in his opening speech on 10 January, 'had during the last two months seized our Moscow organisation like a fever'. He wondered: 'have we not been too generous' in expending energies on the discussion, and insisted that 'We must with full consciousness here say that the disintegration, wavering of minds, which have been so pronounced in the Moscow organisation must be ended.'[126] And the conference proceeded to do just that.[127]

In his main report Kamenev referred to the international repercussions of the debate, and stressed the question of confidence in the party leadership and its policies 'for the first time since comrade Lenin moved from direct leadership'. Kamenev provided a devastating critique of the demagogy of oppositionists like Sapronov when the latter, for example, had accused the Central Committee of betraying

the international revolution, and he concluded by arguing that 'The tragedy is not that it [the opposition] is a faction, but that it is an unprincipled faction', and he condemned 'The political bankruptcy of the opposition.'[128] In this conflict Kamenev was no longer, as Deutscher puts it, the 'edge-blunter and the seeker for common ground between opposed viewpoints'[129] in inner-party controversy but the hammer of the opposition from his exalted position as one of the triumvirs.

In his co-report Preobrazhenskii issued a vigorous rebuttal of Kamenev's accusations, and stressed the need to move over to planning in conditions where class contradictions were sharpening and where 'The working class feels the power of the enemy whom we see in the windows of the shops, the enemy who is in the same city as us.[130] In his speech on 11 January Sapronov insisted that 'It is not a question of destroying the apparatus but of rendering the apparatus more healthy.'[131]

Following the debates Ryazanov proposed a resolution calling for workers' democracy, the election (rather than appointment) of party secretaries, the introduction on party committees of representatives of various party, soviet, union and economic organisations to act as a 'guarantee against harmful specialisation and ensuring in this way the mutual influence of the old and young guard', and the end of transfers (*perebrosku*) of communists from post to post.[132] These proposals, including the concept of deprofessionalising party work, offered something genuinely radical and new and was far from being the 'freak resolution' of Carr's description.[133] Ryazanov's call for transparency in the political relations of Bolshevik rule represented a revolutionary challenge to the power of the apparatus.[134]

This was altogether lacking in Preobrazhenskii's resolution proffered on behalf of the Left Opposition. He focused on economic issues and the inadequacies of official economic policy, calling for a more 'planned approach to economic questions' and for 'organised struggle along the whole line against the accumulation of private capital', against (of all things) luxury, and the growth of the 'new bourgeoisie'. The resolution had precisely nothing to say about detailed political reform of party organisation.[135] Kamenev's resolution received 325 votes, Ryazanov's 9 and Preobrazhenskii's 61.[136] The adopted resolution stressed that 'the conference decisively rejects attempts to use inner-party democracy to give freedom for factionalism, for the destruction of the party apparatus, to undermine the authority of the leading institutions of the party.'[137] The vote, as we have seen, did not

reflect the true correlation of forces in the MPO, but was nevertheless enough for the official line to triumph and for the victors to consolidate their power.

The opposition's resolution on the work of the MK, proposed by Rafail, accused the MK of 'over-estimating the importance of the apparatus and underestimating the value of party organisations', hence they had lost contact with workers and the disturbances of the summer had caught them unawares and had allowed the development of 'anti-party groupings' like Workers' Truth and the Workers' Group, but little was offered in the way of an alternative.[138] The opposition's resolution was soundly beaten (by 308 votes to 48), and the victory of the official line was confirmed by a punitive amendment calling for 'decisive struggle against those leaders of the opposition . . . who continue factional struggle'.[139] It fell to V.A. Kotov, an arch-disciplinarian once attracted by Trotsky's militarisation plans but now firmly back in the fold of the apparatus,[140] to propose a new 75-member MK purged of all remnants of the opposition.[141] As had become usual since 1921, a single official slate was voted on as a block with no discussion of the individual merits of the candidates.

The onslaught continued along the whole front, with oppositionists sacked from their posts in the Moscow Soviet.[142] The main pockets of opposition were the Khamovnicheskii raion committee, led by Maksimovskii, and the Moscow *uezd* committees and two other districts in the *guberniya*.[143] It was at this time that one of the senior leaders of the Workers' Opposition, Yu. Lutovinov, committed suicide, and his death was immediately associated with despair at the purges launched against the opposition.[144]

THE INVENTION OF LENINISM AND TROTSKYISM

Even as Lenin lay on his deathbed the struggle for his legacy was raging. At the XI *guberniya* conference V. Osinskii had accused Kamenev of 'taking out a monopoly on Leninism', referring to Kamenev's responsibility for editing the first edition of Lenin's collected works. Kamenev denied any monopoly, but agreed that 'we consider ourselves correct interpreters of Leninist policies' but nothing prevented the opposition also citing Lenin in their defence.[145] Zelenskii also noted that the local party apparatus had not devoted enough attention to the emergence of 'anti-Marxist and anti-Leninist deviations' in the organisation,[146] and the final speech at the conference exhorted delegates 'to

preserve Leninism and struggle for it'.[147] Belen'kii at the session of the party *aktiv* of Krasno-Presnya on 8 December 1923 stressed that Lenin's absence obliged every party member 'even more to subordinate themselves to party discipline'.[148] Even before Lenin was dead Leninism became a body of dogma, a touchstone for loyalty.[149]

Following Lenin's death on 21 January 1924 Stalin grasped the initiative in monopolising 'Leninism', but his incantations were not especially derived from his seminary days but reflected a mode of discourse that had long seized the party. Stalin only reiterated the views of local party leaders like Zelenskii in stressing the need to make a genuinely 'Leninist organisation'. Thus the attempt to revive the tradition of Bolshevism in which the party rank-and-file (*nizy*) could make their voice heard, a tradition defended by Ignatov earlier and now Ryazanov, was undermined, this time fatally.[150] The Left Opposition, because of its evasions, was an accomplice to the death of Bolshevism as a movement.

The debate over a 'wide' or 'narrow' party had been at the centre of party debates since the consolidation of NEP.[151] Despite numerous calls for expansion at the XI *guberniya* conference in January 1924 (a view that Zinoviev had propounded throughout 1923), Zelenskii repeated the MK's traditional policy of controlled recruitment and insisted that despite the small proportion of workers 'we must preserve our party not as a shapeless non-party body but as the vanguard of the working class, retaining its ideological character and not dissolving in the non-party mass'.[152] The XIII party conference (16–18 January 1924), however, called for the rapid recruitment of 100,000 new members, and with Lenin's death on 21 January the doors were opened wider and between February and May 1924 some 240,000 workers directly engaged in production joined.[153] This was administrative recruitment with a vengeance, with whole workshops joining *en masse*, and marked a radical repudiation of classical processes of party recruitment of the committed and conscious. By 10 May 1924 the 'Lenin levy' had increased total MPO membership to 80,998,[154] and at the same time it dramatically changed its social composition. The influx of 25,000 shopfloor workers increased the percentage of its membership classed as workers from 52 to 70 by May 1924, of whom 47 per cent worked directly in production.[155]

The political consequences of the Lenin levy have been much debated.[156] There is much evidence that in the first instance at least the mass influx of raw recruits did alter the political balance in favour of 'the apparatus'. A general meeting of the cell in the Krasil'no-Belil'noi

factory (formerly Semenova) on 11 April 1924 'put an end to the discussion' in a way noted by the local party instructor: 'It should be stressed that the defeat of the former opposition was achieved by the votes of the Lenin intake, which understood the essence of the sickness affecting the cell and pursued the correct line.'[157]

The MK noted the tendency for workers to create all sorts of social organisations, and urged local party organisations to take the initiative in creating them.[158] Thus even at 'high NEP' the party apparatus was concerned to suffocate, if not at this stage directly to suppress, spontaneous processes of social self-organisation. At the same time, the work of soviet and college cells was considered 'extraordinarily weak and lacking content' and apparatus control over them was strengthened.[159] The final draft of the MK's theses for the XII *guberniya* conference outlined severely practical tasks in educating the new recruits and involving them in state work in which every party member above all had to 'fulfil the correct party line'.[160]

Recent archival work has revealed the extent to which the MK monitored and manipulated the behaviour of cells, and how in the aftermath of the discussion the MK applied a variety of techniques to bring recalcitrant cells to heel. An MK report in April 1924, for example, noted that there had been a breakthrough (*perelom*) in 11 out of the 18 oppositional cells in Krasno-Presnya, but in four the situation remained 'bad'.[161] Baumanskii raion was made of sterner stuff, and out of the 11 cells considered oppositional only 4 had recanted while the rest 'retained their stubborn attachment to the opposition'. The MK noted that the secondment (*prikreplenie*) of Boguslavksii to the traditionally oppositional Manometr' cell had 'stirred things up' and 'the Leninists found themselves in a very difficult situation.' Similarly, opposition in the Oktyabr' plant was strong when Safonov was there, but when he went on holiday 'the RK was able to improve the situation.'[162] The report details dozens of cases of how cells were 'worked over' to overcome the opposition and, incidentally, provides a rich source on the mechanisms of ideological manipulation. For example, A. Kamenskii had headed the Russian delegation to the international congress of livestock breeding in Washington, DC, and on his return reported back to the cell to which he had been seconded (Saveletskii railway station) on the situation in America. The report stressed the marvels of American technology, but almost nothing was said about the workers' question. Such reports, 'which did not fail to mention that some American workers even have their own cars', only sow confusion (*putanitsa*) and should in future be vetted by the local authorities.[163]

The MK report highlights some of the ways that the apparatus restored control over fractious cells. Already during the debate the number of oppositional delegates to the *guberniya* party conference had not matched the level of their support, and the pressure (*nazhim*) of the apparatus through appointments, suppressing oppositional resolutions, calling new meetings from which oppositionists were excluded, were all standard fare in a process that Preobrazhenskii described as 'terrorising the party over the question of groups'.[164] To this arsenal new measures were added. Cells in Soviet institutions had been notoriously unreliable, but 'now a thorough purge is taking place through the verification (*proverochnyi*) commission of the MKK'.[165] The report summed up how it had 'healed' oppositional cells. The Lenin levy had played a large part in helping 'move from words to deeds in the matter of inner-party democracy' and, for example, the influx of 50 'Leninists' to the Manometr' cell undermined the opposition. The RKs had taken numerous organisational steps to strengthen cells and these efforts were buttressed by the impact of Lenin's death. Above all, the MK had decided to end the system of secondment and to remove those leading party figures already sent: 'The majority of the latter had in the discussion been the leaders of the opposition . . . their recall played a large part in the healing of the cells.'[166] The notable feature in all this is the conscious targeting of oppositional cells and the sustained strategy to bring them to heel. By the time of the XII *guberniya* conference in May 1924 the 'healing' of cells and raions, and in particular Khamovnicheskii, 'sick with the party discussion' had indeed become the central motif.[167]

The debate stimulated by Trotsky's article *Lessons of October* in late 1924 lies beyond the scope of this paper but a few points might be noted. The central issue was the nature of the Leninist inheritance and who would have control over its definition. The 'Leninised' MK did not hesitate to condemn Trotsky at the extended plenum of 18 November 1924,[168] and the measures taken to extend the *apparat's* influence over student cells and the Komsomol now bore fruit and they too now supported the official line.[169] The Lenin levy had significantly altered the social composition of previously strongly oppositional raions. In Khamovniki, for example, which had supported the Left Opposition from late 1923, the percentage of workers now reached 40 per cent and the opposition was overthrown, and the same process was at work in Baumanskii raion.[170] The view expressed by the supporters of the official line during the Left Opposition debate that there was a strong correlation between social composition and support

for opposition was confirmed, as indeed is the traditional view that the Lenin levy provided a mass of obedient voting fodder for the apparatus.

CONCLUSION

The examination of the politics of what might be called the uncivil society of the Soviet system helps place the system's evolution in perspective. Just as the character of individual monarchs might vary within a monarchical system, so the characters of Soviet leaders and their policies evolved in response to circumstances and challenges within the framework of a regime that sought order in the establishment of a system different from the one it found itself condemned to live in. Order was displaced to another time, when communism was achieved and the new Soviet man born, and in the meantime the aim was stability in the present sordid reality. The Bolsheviks were unable to create and sustain a new order, and instead were forced to rely on a fairly crude appropriation of political power to stabilise their rule.

Current interpretations of the Soviet state veer between two extreme models: a revival of the traditional totalitarian approach stressing the rapid emergence of a fairly monolithic system of rule; and a whole raft of 'revisionist' and other scholarship focusing precisely on the chaos and inadequacies of Bolshevik administration.[171] The problem, however, is to find an adequate way of combining the two realities. Our distinction between stability and order can help do this in suggesting that the new system was based not on *Ordnung* but that the regime of Bolshevism was based on stability-politics. The near chaos of the political environment of NEP and the undoubted weaknesses of the political rule of the Communist Party, especially in the countryside and the outlying national republics, and the ambivalent relationship with its own movement, only reflected what was an inherent characteristic of the new regime which continued even when the system had become 'stabilised' by Stalin and his successors.

What hope could there be for NEP when the party saw it as a threat, when not only oppositionists like Preobrazhenskii but the head of the Moscow organisation, Zelenskii, was critical of the 'order' generated by NEP. Acceptance of NEP was conditional: the conditionality included the final liquidation of the residual influence of other parties, workerisation of the party, administrative dominance over the soviets, and so on. The party leadership desperately sought this elusive stab-

ility, which later it quite rightly saw could not be achieved satisfactorily within the framework of NEP, because the danger was too great that the regime would succumb to the inherent order of the society in which it found itself, a society which it later remade only to find that the new 'order' of what had now become a Soviet society was equally threatening to the Bolshevik regime of power.

The NEP itself was a regime of many different moods and phases but marked by a number of underlying principles on which opposition and officialdom agreed, above all limited concessions to the *pays reel.* A 'Soviet' civil society might well have developed, and potentially by the mid-1920s it was knocking ever more vigorously at the door, but sharing power with it would have fundamentally subverted the revolutionary socialist regime: the civil society would no longer have been Soviet. On this the Left Opposition and the *apparat* was agreed. The problem in the political sphere was not backwardness but the modern demands of pluralism, representative government and rational discourse. Not only were the Bolsheviks unable to sustain a new political community, they failed even to establish a new political order. With the door to order closed, the system in the late 1920s sought stability in yet another round of revolutionary transformation.

Notes

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1. This is particularly true of Soviet historians but, as we shall see, Western historians are not immune. In his article 'Analiz V. I. Leninym prichin krizisa 1921 g. i putei vykhoda iz nego' (*Voprosy istorii*, No. 4 (April 1984), pp. 15–29) Evgenii Ambartsumov had argued that NEP was more than a retreat to deal with the crisis of War Communism but represented an optimal strategy for socialist development. This came a little too early for official acceptance, leading to sharp criticisms in *Kommunist* (No. 14, September 1984, pp. 119–26) and elsewhere, but within three years this had in effect become the official ideology of *perestroika* and Ambartsumov came into his own. See his *NEP: A Modern View* (Moscow, 1988).
2. See R. W. Davies, *Soviet History in the Gorbachev Revolution* (London, 1989).
3. Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Soviet State and Society Between Revolutions, 1918–1929* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 4.
4. These issues are discussed in Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *Gramsci and the State* (London, 1980). In his introduction to Boris Nicolaevsky, *Power and the Soviet Elite* (New York, 1965), George Kennan had

already noted the early breakdown of the 'code of comradely loyalties' (p. xvi) and stressed that 'Lenin scarcely appreciated the extent to which he, by his own ruthlessness, intolerance and lack of scruple in the conduct of Party affairs in earlier years, had contributed to the problem with which, on his deathbed, he saw the Party faced' (p. xvii).

5. For the concept of a 'socialist civil society', see I. Szelenyi, 'Socialist Opposition in Eastern Europe: Dilemmas and Prospects' in R. L. Tokes (ed.), *Opposition in Eastern Europe* (London, 1979), pp. 187–208.
6. Something of the like is implied in Philip G. Roeder's *Red Sunset: The Failure of Soviet Politics* (Princeton, NJ, 1993). He uses the critical insights of the so-called 'new institutionalism', focusing on the dynamic inter-relationship between institutions and political behaviour, to suggest a model of Soviet politics that transcends simplistic contrasts between the state and civil society.
7. See John Hoffman, 'The Coercion/Consent Analysis of the State under Socialism' in Neil Harding (ed.), *The State in Socialist Society* (London, 1984).
8. 'Bonapartism as a Regime of Crisis' in Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* (London, 1973), pp. 273–9.
9. Siegelbaum, *Soviet State and Society*, p. 12 uses a similar approach though developed in a very different way.
10. Presentation by Daniel Orlovsky at the 20th annual conference of the Study Group on the Russian Revolution, Oxford, 7 January 1994.
11. L. Martov, 'Razlozhenie gosudarstva ili ego zavoevanie?', *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, no. 14/15, 1 September 1921, p. 3.
12. *Otchet VII Moskovskoi gubpartkonferentsii RKP, 29–31 oktyabrya 1921g.* (Moscow, 1921), p. 8.
13. *Perepis' sluzhashchikh sovetskikh uchrezhdenii g. Moskvy 1922g.* (Moscow, 1923), pp. 80–2, 78–9.
14. *Perepis' sluzhashchikh*, p. 107.
15. V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, fifth edition, vol. 45, p. 95.
16. Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv obshchestvennykh dvizhenii Moskvy (henceforth TsGAODM), formerly the Moscow Party Archives, 3/4/37, 95.
17. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP* (Moscow, 1924), p. 138.
18. Another 250 were Komsomol members, TsGAODM, 85/1/165, 162.
19. *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik* (henceforth *SV*), no. 14–15, 1 September 1921, p. 14.
20. *SV*, no. 1 (71), 10 January 1994, p. 13.
21. TsGAODM, 85/1/165, 163.
22. *Rabota Moskovskogo Komiteta RKP(b): Aprel'–Dekabr' 1923 g.* (Moscow, 1924), p. 15.
23. TsGAODM, 3/4/37, 52.
24. Catherine Merridale, *Moscow Politics and the Rise of Stalin: The Communist Party in the Capital, 1925–32* (London, 1990), p. 35.
25. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP*, p. 134.
26. *SV*, no. 14/15, 1 September 1921, pp. 8–9.
27. *SV*, no. 18, October 1921, p. 14.

28. *SV*, no. 21, 2 December 1921, p. 12.
29. *SV*, no. 14–15, 1 September 1921, p. 14.
30. *SV*, no. 21–2 (67–8), 27 November 1923, p. 19.
31. *SV*, no. 1 (71), 10 January 1924, p. 13.
32. V. Sorin, *Rabochaya Gruppa*, (Moscow, 1924). The manifesto is on pp. 97–112 which, among other things, called on workers to fight for Soviet democracy and thus, like the Kronstadt insurgents earlier, distinguished between Soviet power and that of the Bolsheviks. See also E. H. Carr, *The Interregnum 1923–24* (Harmondsworth, 1969), p. 300; Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Unarmed: Trotsky, 1921–1929* (Oxford, 1959), p. 107.
33. *SV*, no. 23–4 (69–70), 17 December 1923, p. 16. Following a hunger strike, in early 1924 Myasnikov tried to commit suicide and was then sentenced to three years imprisonment and sent to Tomsk (his family, too, was sent in administrative exile there). This took place at the time of the debate over party democracy, but none of the opposition raised a word in his defence, *SV*, no. 5 (75), 8 March 1924, p. 13.
34. *Materialy k 10-oi gubpartkonferentsii*, issue 1 (Moscow 1923), p. 5.
35. A. Yugov, 'Krizis NEPa', *SV*, no. 21–2 (67–8), 27 November 1923, pp. 4–8, at p. 8.
36. See Neil Harding, *Lenin's Political Thought*, Volume 2 *Theory and Practice in the Socialist Revolution* (London, 1986) ch. 13.
37. The politicised and misleading nature of the so-called 'declassing' thesis is discussed by Richard Sakwa, *Soviet Communists in Power: A Study of Moscow During the Civil War, 1918–21* (London, 1988), pp. 261–3. See also William Chase, *Workers, Society and the Soviet State: Labor and Life in Moscow, 1918–1929* (Urbana and Chicago, 1987), pp. 16, 35; Diane Koenker, 'Urbanization and Deurbanization in the Russian Revolution and Civil War', in Diane Koenker, William Rosenberg and Ronald G. Suny (eds), *Party, State and Society in the Russian Civil War* (Bloomington, 1989), pp. 81–8.
38. *SV*, no. 17, 1 October 1921, p. 9.
39. *SV*, no. 14/15, 1 September 1921, pp. 13–14.
40. *SV*, no. 18, October 1921, pp. 12–13.
41. Carr, *The Interregnum*, p. 102 gives details of the strike wave, including the references in *SV*, but it is not clear why 'the anti-Soviet bias, which increased as time went on [of *SV*], has to be discounted', fn 1.
42. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP*, p. 129.
43. *Moskovskie bol'sheviki v bor'be s pravym i 'levym' opportunizmom, 1921–1929gg.* (Moscow, 1969), p. 54.
44. TsGAODM, 3/4/36, 4.
45. *SV*, no. 16, 16 September 1921, p. 14.
46. *SV*, no. 18, October 1921, pp. 4–7.
47. *Smena Vekh* (*Change of Landmarks*), with articles by N. V. Ustryalov and five others was published in Prague in 1921. It was reviewed in *SV*, no. 19, 1 November 1921, pp. 4–7 by S. Sumskii where he proposed this argument. In a later article R. Abramovich developed the idea of 'national-Bolshevism', 'the use of Bolshevism to fulfil specific national tasks', *SV*, no. 21, 2 December 1921, pp. 3–5.

48. *SV*, no. 19, 1 November 1921, p. 7.
49. On the purge in Moscow, see Richard Sakwa, 'The *Perestroika* of the Party in 1921–22: the Case of Moscow', *Revolutionary Russia*, vol. 2, no. 1 (June 1989), pp. 5–30, at pp. 12–14.
50. Total membership of the RKP was estimated to be in the range of 320,000–325,000, of whom only some 14 per cent were workers, *SV*, no. 22, 15 December 1921, p. 7.
51. *Materialy k 10-oi gubpartkonferentsii*, issue 2 (Moscow 1923), p. 7.
52. *RKP(b) MK: Otchet o rabote (iyul' 1922–mart 1923)* (Moscow, 1923), pp. 52–5.
53. *Rezolyutsii 10-oi gubpartkonferentsii*, April 1923 (Moscow, 1923), p. 24.
54. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP*, pp. 127–8.
55. TsGAODM, 85/1/165, 168; *Rabota Moskovskogo komiteta RKP(b): yanvar'-mart 1924 g.* (Moscow, 1924), p. 54.
56. *Rabota MK RKP(b) yanvar'–mart 1924* (Moscow, 1924), p. 88. It is difficult to see where the standard membership figure of 53,000 in early 1924, on the eve of the Lenin levy, comes from.
57. *XII Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP*, p. 34.
58. *8-ya Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya*, 23–5 March 1922 (Moscow, 1922), p. 8.
59. Graeme Gill, *The Origins of the Stalinist Political System* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 164–5; T. H. Rigby, 'The Origins of the *Nomenklatura* System', *Soviet Studies*, vol. 40 (October 1988), pp. 523–37.
60. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP*, pp. 141–2. In early 1924 there were 6 full-time and numerous part-time instructors.
61. *Perepis' sluzhashchikh*, p. 33.
62. For Trotsky's comments on this, see, *Trinadtsatyi s"ezd RKP(b): stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow, 1963), p. 148.
63. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP*, p. 82.
64. *Rezolyutsii 10-oi gubpartkonferentsii*, April 1923 (Moscow 1923), p. 9.
65. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP*, p. 126.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 127. By the time of the XII *guberniya* conference in May 1924 the whole opposition was discounted as no more than a petty-bourgeois deviation, 'a typical product of petty-bourgeois influences' as Zelenskii put it, *XII Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP*, p. 62.
68. *SV*, no. 23–4 (69–70), 17 December 1923, p. 3.
69. 'Manifesto of the Workers' Group of the RKP', in Sorin; and *SV*, no. 23–4 (69–70), 17 December 1923, p. 3.
70. G. Zinoviev, 'Novye zadachi partii', *Pravda*, 7 November 1923. Zinoviev had already, at the XII party congress in April 1923, begun to exalt Lenin as the embodiment of the revolution and condemned any deviation, even from the left, as 'objectively a Menshevik criticism', *XII s"ezd RKP(b)*, pp. 46–7.
71. See A. J. Polan, *Lenin and the End of Politics* (London, 1984); David W. Lovell, *From Marx to Lenin: An Evaluation for Marx's Responsibility for Soviet Authoritarianism* (Cambridge, 1984); Samuel Farber, *Before Stalinism: The Rise and Fall of Soviet Democracy* (London, 1990).

72. Leonard Schapiro, *The Origin of the Communist Autocracy: Political Opposition in the Soviet State, First Phase 1917–1922* (London, 1987), p. 335.
73. Cited in Anthony D'Agostino, *Soviet Succession Struggles* (Boston, 1988) p. 70.
74. Carr, *The Interregnum*, pp. 303–5.
75. Rosa Luxemburg, *The Russian Revolution*, in *Rosa Luxemburg: Selected Writings*, edited and introduced by Robert Looker (London, 1972), pp. 244–5.
76. See Massimo Salvadori, *Karl Kautsky and the Socialist Revolution, 1880–1938* (London, 1990).
77. Discussed by Claude Lefort, 'The Contradiction of Trotsky', in *The Political Forms of Modern Society* (Cambridge, Mass., 1986)
78. The full text is in Carr, *The Interregnum*, pp. 374–80, at pp. 375–6; the analysis of the Declaration of the 46 is at pp. 305–9.
79. The concept of a troika itself became an issue in the debate, with Preobrazhenskii attacking Stalin's use of the term: 'The party has a Central Committee and a Politburo, but no troika', TsGAODM, 3/4/36, 54–7. Kamenev went on to deny the existence of the troika, challenging Preobrazhenskii to produce a single document originating with them, *ibid.*, 95.
80. *Pravda*, 7 December 1923.
81. Admittedly, Trotsky was ill at this time, having contracted a malarial infection in late October following a duck-shooting trip to the Moscow countryside. For this and the reasons for him signing the 5 December 1923 Central Committee resolution, see Deutscher, *The Prophet Unarmed*, pp. 118–19.
82. 'Novyi kurs', *Pravda*, 11 December 1923.
83. *Pravda*, 11 December 1923; also in Leon Trotsky, *The New Course* (London, 1956), pp. 77, 80.
84. *Documents of the 1923 Opposition* (London, 1975), p. 22, retranslated from the Russian in TsGAODM, 3/4/36/26.
85. TsGAODM, 3/4/36, 28, a passage left out of the printed version.
86. *Documents of the 1923 Opposition*, pp. 13–24.
87. *Documents of the 1923 Opposition*, pp. 26–31, at p. 26.
88. *SV*, no. 1 (71), 10 January 1924, p. 4.
89. TsGAODM, 3/4/37, 2.
90. TsGAODM, 3/4/37, 3.
91. TsGAODM, 3/4/36, 84.
92. TsGAODM, 3/4/36, 69.
93. TsGAODM, 69/1/138, 43–4.
94. TsGAODM, 69/1/138, 48.
95. TsGAODM, 69/1/138, 37.
96. The discussion 'seized the party organisation in this raion', with daily meetings at its height going on until well into the night discussing such issues as how to involve cells more in enterprise life and management, how to reanimate the cells, and how to introduce party democracy. At the critical raion party conference 327 voted for the official resolution on party reform, 190 for Sapronov and 15 for Ryazanov; and 293 approved

of the work of the MK and 98 against; but the work of the RK gained 306 votes for and 211 against, TsGAODM, 3/4/37, 22–5.

97. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya*, p. 70. One of the oppositionists from Rogozhskii raion, Yanshin, revealed that at the raion party conference 121 delegates voted for the Central Committee while the opposition received 90 votes, but only 2–3 delegates (out of several dozen) to the XI Moscow *guberniya* conference were from the opposition. The representation of oppositionists on the new RK fell from some five people to one or two, *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya*, p. 84.
98. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
99. On 1 January 1923 total membership of the Khamovnicheskii party organisation was 5,140, of whom 33.2 per cent were workers, 7.4 peasants, 40 per cent employees and intelligentsia and 19.4 'others'. For comparative purposes, out of the 7,823 members in Krasno-Presnenskii raion, 54.2 per cent were workers, 15.4 per cent peasants and 30.4 per cent employees and intelligentsia, with no category of 'others', *MK RKP(b): Otchet o rabote (iyul' 1922–mart 1923)*, pp. 52–5.
100. *Rabota Moskovskogo Komiteta RKP(b) (aprel'-dekabr' 1923 g.)* (Moscow, 1924), p. 74.
101. On E. N. Ignatov, see Sakwa, *Soviet Communists in Power*, pp. 230–2 and *passim*.
102. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya*, p. 159. The Thirteenth RKP(b) Conference a few days later characterised the Left Opposition as a 'clearly expressed petty-bourgeois deviation', which had, according to Molotov in his draft theses on party construction for the Thirteenth RKP(b) Congress, influenced 'the less stable elements of the party, above all in non-proletarian raions and cells', *Materialy k XII-oi Moskovskoi gubpartkonferentsii i k XIII-mu s"ezdu RKP(b)*, issue 5 (Moscow, 1924), pp. 3–4.
103. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya*, pp. 160–1.
104. Darron Hincks, *The Left Opposition in Moscow in the Party Discussion of 1923–24*, MA Dissertation, Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Birmingham, December 1989, pp. 23, 32 and *passim*.
105. This figure is also given in *Pravda*, 12 January 1924.
106. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP*, p. 135.
107. The figure of 25–30 per cent was provided by the oppositionist Yanshin, and it appears to be in the correct order of magnitude, *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP*, p. 85. Preobrazhenskii gave more detailed figures, revealing that in all of Moscow's raion delegate conferences a total of 1708 (65 per cent) voted for the Central Committee's resolution and 878 (35 per cent) for the opposition, and in the party organisation as a whole he asserted that nearly half supported the opposition. However, there was not a single member of the opposition on the MK and the presidium. In Zamoskvorech'e 260 voted for the Central Committee and 230 for the opposition, but only one oppositionist was elected to the *guberniya* conference, *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP*, pp. 91–2.

108. *Pravda*, 11 December 1923.
109. TsGAODM, 85/1/165, 171; *Rabota Moskovskogo Komiteta RKP(b): aprel'–dekabr' 1923 g.*, p. 148.
110. TsGAODM, 85/1/165, 169–70.
111. *Rabota Moskovskogo Komiteta RKP(b): aprel'–dekabr' 1923 g.*, pp. 41–2.
112. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP*, p. 143.
113. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
114. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
115. This is one of the central themes of Hincks' thesis, *The Left Opposition in Moscow*, p. 48 and *passim*.
116. TsGAODM, 69/1/173, 22.
117. TsGAODM, 69/1/173, 35.
118. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya*, p. 74.
119. This self-censorship affected the Marxist historians in the 1920s, thus opening the door to the 'solving' of historical disputes by decree later. On this, see V. Yu. Sokolov, *Istoriya i politika (K voprosu o soderzhanii i kharaktere diskussii sovetskikh istorikov 1920-kh – nachala 1930-kh gg.)* (Tomsk, 1990).
120. Preobrazhenskii's speech at the Second Sokol'cheskii Raion Party Conference on 7 January 1924, TsGAODM, 85/1/165, 32, 42.
121. Roeder, *Red Sunset*, p. 53.
122. This was a view shared by Rykov who at the second Sokol'nicheskii Raion Party Conference on 7 January noted that: 'In the six years since the October revolution we have had discussions and we have had groups but never before has the party been so close to the threat of organised factions and splits', TsGAODM, 85/1/165, 4.
123. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP*, p. 136.
124. This was something that, in desperation, the United Opposition (Kamenev, Zinoviev and Trotsky) tried to do in 1926–7, but ineptly, half-heartedly and counter-productively.
125. TsGAODM, 85/1/165, 7.
126. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP (b)*, p. 1. Attempts to get the oppositionists Preobrazhenskii, Sapronov and Boguslavskii on to the conference presidium were overwhelmingly defeated (p. 3).
127. Deutscher describes the allegations of the Forty Six that 'at the regional conference, which was the tier above the primary cells, they had obtained not less than 36 per cent of the vote; yet at the *guberniya* conference, the next tier, that percentage dwindled to 18'. It is not clear to which regional conference Deutscher, citing Yaroslavskii at the XIII party conference (*XIII Konferentsiya RKP(b)*, pp. 131–3), refers, but the general point remains valid, *The Prophet Unarmed*, p. 125.
128. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya*, pp. 5–7, 32 and *passim*.
129. Deutscher, *The Prophet Unarmed*, p. 80.
130. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya*, pp. 36–57, at p. 53.
131. *Documents of the 1923 Opposition*, p. 15.
132. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP*, pp. 119–21.
133. Carr, *The Interregnum*, p. 337.
134. The secrecy essential to the work of the apparatus is vividly portrayed in N. E. Rosenfeldt's analysis of Stalin's chancellery, *Knowledge and Power:*

The Role of Stalin's Secret Chancellery in the Soviet System of Government (Copenhagen, 1978).

135. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP*, pp. 121–2.
136. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
137. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
138. *Ibid.*, p. 169.
139. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
140. For Kotov's scourging of earlier oppositions, see Sakwa, *Soviet Communists in Power*, pp. 132, 224 and *passim*. Kotov was now the head of the Sokol'nicheskii raion party organisation.
141. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP*, pp. 194–5.
142. For example, Boguslavskii lost his post as Second Deputy Chair of the Moscow Soviet, and Rafail was fired as head the education department, *Rabota MK RKP(b): yanvar'-mart 1924*, p. 10.
143. *XII Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP(b)*, p. 61.
144. *Ibid.*, pp. 135–6.
145. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP*, pp. 105–6.
146. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
147. *Ibid.*, p. 197.
148. TsGAODM, 69/1/138, 11.
149. For the development of the Lenin cult, see Nina Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983).
150. The last hint of resistance, however, was evident at the meeting of Moscow party activists on 11 December 1923 when Emilyan Yaroslavskii sang the praises of the *apparat* amidst evocations of Leninist correctness, but when he went on to make an *ad hominem* attack on Trotsky the whole hall expressed its dissatisfaction, TsGAODM, 3/4/36, 57, 60. As usual, however, Zinoviev took base demagoguery to new depths when he noted how hard it was now to be in the Politburo without Lenin, whereas earlier we knew that 'Vladimir Il'ich's view would be one hundred per cent the view of the party', *ibid.*, 82–3.
151. See Sakwa, 'The *Perestroika* of the Party in 1921–22', pp. 14–15.
152. *XI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP*, p. 167.
153. Molotov's report on the Lenin levy in *XIII s"ezd RKP(b): stenograficheskii otchet*, pp. 516 ff.
154. *XII Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya*, p. 271.
155. *Materialy k XII-oi Moskovskoi gubpartkonferentsii i k XIII- mu s"ezdu RKP(b)*, adopted by the MK plenum of 3 May 1924, 2nd issue (Moscow, 1924), p. 3; *XII Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP(b)*, pp. 127–8.
156. On the effect of the Lenin enrolment on relations between the Bolshevik elite and the rank and file, see Merridale, *Moscow Politics and the Rise of Stalin*, pp. 25–6, 138–40.
157. TsGAODM, 3/4/37, 45.
158. *Materialy k XII-oi Moskovskoi gubpartkonferentsii*, issue 2, p. 7.
159. *Ibid.*, issue 2, p. 7; and issue 5, pp. 33–5.
160. *Ibid.*, issue 5, p. 15.
161. TsGAODM, 3/4/37, 98–9.
162. TsGAODM, 3/4/37, 100–2.

163. TsGAODM, 3/4/37, 106–7.
164. This list comes from Sapronov at the 11 December 1923 Moscow party activists' meeting, TsGAODM, 3/4/37, 55–7. Preobrazhenskii gave the example, one among many, of the Rogozhskii raion party meeting at which 90 delegates were for the opposition and 120 for the official line, but the opposition got no delegates to the guberniya conference, TsGAODM, 85/1/165, 55, and the quotation from p. 134.
165. TsGAODM, 3/4/37, 109.
166. TsGAODM, 3/4/37, 110–11.
167. *XII Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya*, p. 44. The opposition in the Khamovnicheskii raikom was undermined using the same methods applied against the Menshevik leadership of the chemical workers' and other trade unions earlier, namely sudden meetings, raids and so on. This is tacitly admitted by Zelenskii at the XII guberniya conference, p. 62, and see *Rabota MK RKP(b): yanvar'-mart 1924 g.*, p. 6.
168. TsGAODM, 3/5/33, 83; *Pravda*, 19 November 1924.
169. TsGAODM, 63/1/153, 75; 3/5/2, 200.
170. TsGAODM, 63/1/154, 1–2, 27–8.
171. Over two decades ago Olga Narkiewicz, for example, demonstrated the inadequacies of rural administration, *The Making of the Soviet State Apparatus* (Manchester, 1970), ch. 8, and Roger Pethybridge in his *One Step Backwards, Two Steps Forward* reveals the ambivalencies in NEP administration. The inadequacy model reaches its apogee, admittedly for a later period, in J. Arch Getty's *Origins of the Great Purges: The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933–38* (Cambridge, 1985), which focuses on centre–periphery struggle.

4 Decision-making on the Ural–Siberian Method

Yuzuru Taniuchi

This essay aims to shed some fresh light on decision-making concerning the introduction of the system of grain collection known as the Ural–Siberian method (the USM) on the basis of materials of the former Central Party Archive (now RTsKhIDNI). In accordance with Stalinist orthodoxy, the USM is briefly mentioned by Russian historians in the context either of the grain problem or of the inner party struggles.[1] In the West there is the pioneering work of M. Lewin who investigated the implementation of the USM and its effects.[2] The background and implementation of the USM are lucidly traced in the joint work of E. H. Carr and R. W. Davies.[3] The present author contributed an article on the subject to *Soviet Studies* in 1981.[4] It attempted to discuss the emergence, implementation and significance of the USM and concluded that it marked the final stage in the development of the conflicts between the state and the peasantry, which had their origin in the grain crisis which emerged early in 1928, and spelt the end of NEP in political terms.

Western studies of the USM have failed to clarify the process of policy making because of the paucity of first-hand information. They relied of necessity on the brief and ambiguous remarks on the subject provided by Russian historians. According to them, in early 1929, during the difficult period of grain collection, the party organs of the Urals and Siberia forwarded to the Central Committee a proposal on the application of the method of self-taxation to grain collection. But they did not provide evidence about the process of decision-making besides revealing fragments of controversy around the USM in both the Politburo and the Central Committee.[5] Since the USM was introduced exclusively by the party apparatus in secret, and debated only at closed meetings of the party, records have been confined to party archives which have been open to foreign historians only in the last few years. Access to party archives enables historians to trace the hitherto veiled process of decision-making on the USM. Archival sources reveal that the Politburo held repeated meetings on the USM

and that it was bitterly disputed at plenary sessions of the Central Committee before it became established as the principal method of governing the peasantry.

POLITBURO DECISIONS ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE USM

The Central Committee plenum of the party in July 1928 unanimously agreed to repeal extraordinary measures which were extensively applied to those peasants who had resisted grain collection in the first half of 1928. The resolution frankly recognised that the difficulties in grain collection had evolved into a political crisis as a result of the extensive application of extraordinary measures which had jeopardised the consensus between the state and peasants (the *smychka*). It declared a return to the normal economic methods of collecting grain.[6] Despite a heated dispute concerning the grain crisis behind the scenes, vividly presented on the basis of the Trotsky archives in the joint work of Carr and Davies (to which the newly available stenographic reports of the plenum may add some fresh information),[7] the leadership ostensibly united on the bright prospect of the forthcoming grain collection and claimed that there would be no need to invoke extraordinary measures thanks to the fair harvest and the increase in the official price of grain.[8] Until October, grain collection reportedly did not betray this expectation.[9] But the optimistic view at the time of the July plenum quickly petered out in November when the tempo of grain collection sharply declined.[10] The bread supply in the consuming areas fell to a precarious level.[11] The Politburo decision of 1 November indicated the leadership's deepening anxiety concerning the food shortage in Moscow and other consuming areas.[12]

The Central Committee plenum of the party sat on 16–24 November 1928. Although the political balance decisively shifted in favour of the Stalinist stand for rapid industrialisation, the plenum refrained from openly declaring an abandonment of the line of conciliating the peasantry set by the July plenum. With satisfaction Rykov declared that, 'the party managed in general and on the whole to accomplish successfully the transition from (extraordinary) methods of grain collection to the normal, market methods of collection'.[13] But speakers from grain producing regions responded sceptically or negatively to Rykov's assessment and alleged that it would be extremely difficult to fulfil the task of grain collection without resorting to coercion.[14]

Industrialisation with increasing speed was now the established line of the party, taking priority over agriculture. Kuibyshev bluntly rejected Rykov's claim that the problem of agriculture remained as basic as it had been at the last plenum and declared that industry should be given primacy in the whole economy, reading aloud the Politburo decision on the control figures.[15] G. N. Kaminskii, chairman of Kolkhoztsentr, argued for the urgent necessity of collectivisation and for the cooperation of all peasant households in order to allow agriculture to catch up with industry, and stressed the importance of the contract system with the whole village and the whole agrarian commune.[16] Nevertheless, the resolution stressed 'the huge significance, politically and in principle, of the fact that the party and Soviet power had succeeded with sufficient speed in switching from extraordinary measures to the normal methods of grain collection' and forecast that 'the successful course of grain collection in the first quarter of the year enables one to assume that the projected annual plan for centralised collection would be carried out completely.'[17] Memory of the July plenum was still fresh. More basically, the sacred principle of the *smychka* continued to work as a psychological restraint on party cadres. In his speech, the only one to be published at the time, Stalin condemned those who wanted to convert the extraordinary measures into the party's permanent course as 'leftists' who were inclined to Trotskyism.[18]

After the plenum the situation did not improve. The declining tendency of grain collection continued and food supply difficulties in the towns were exacerbated. A way out was desperately sought. The majority of the Central Committee tacitly agreed that the method of increasing economic incentives was no longer compatible with the requirements of industrialisation. It was in this context that the so-called 'social method' or method of 'social influence' began to attract the attention of the party as an alternative to the economic method. It was regarded as the method of collecting grain by obtaining a consensus of peasants through political activity among the mass of peasants. The resolution of the November plenum on the campaign of grain collection urged all party organisations to deploy broad political activity among the main mass of peasants, to organise the poor peasants and activists of the soviets and cooperatives for grain collection. They were to overcome the resistance of the kulaks to grain collection by these methods, which was seen as a *sine qua non* for the success of the campaign.[19] The Politburo decision of 29 November 1928 required local party organisations to take measures urgently for raising the tempo of grain collection. Organisationally, the decision called for a series of measures

reminiscent of the arrangements made by the Politburo at the end of 1927, such as a reshuffle of grain collecting organs and the dispatch of activists to the countryside.[20] It claimed that as the campaign of agrarian taxes was over, the success of a further campaign would be largely guaranteed by the development of a mass-political campaign in the countryside, by mobilising the cooperative efforts of the public (*obshchestvennost'*), and by drawing poor peasants into grain collection. But the decision also emphasised continuity with the line of the July plenum so far as methods were concerned. It directed local organs to observe revolutionary legality and not to hinder the market flow of grain and its free trade by peasants. While it strictly ordered local party organisations to fulfil the November and December plan, it confirmed that the plan should be carried out by 'the normal methods'.[21]

The declining tendency of grain collection was not checked in December.[22] Food shortages in consuming areas were further exacerbated. The Politburo decision of 17 December 1928 on interruptions to the bread supply in Moscow confirmed the critical nature of the situation.[23] The system of 'the ration book' was introduced for regulating the distribution and consumption of grain.[24] To cope with the imminent crisis, the plan of grain collection was raised in the eastern regions (Siberia, Urals, Kazakhstan, Bashkiriya, and the Volga), which had acquired a greater importance in grain collection as a result of the ruin of the autumn sowing and drought in the south (southern Ukraine, Crimea, and North Caucasus). Early in January 1929 the collegium of Narkomtorg raised the plan for the eastern regions by 700,000 tons after having heard a report from these regions that even after the fulfilment of the annual plan surplus grain remained stocked in the hands not only of the kulaks, but of a considerable part of the middle peasants. It noted that success in collection would depend upon the activism of the lower apparatus and on the social activity of the cooperatives. Sovnarkom USSR endorsed the Narkomtorg decision and raised the plan in the eastern regions by 625,400 tons.[25] The revised plan drew forth a strong protest from these regions, as Kabakov of the Urals recalled at the Central Committee plenum in April 1929.[26] The Politburo met on 17 January 1929 to discuss the issue with the participation of Kabakov (Urals) and Smirnov (Siberia). Kabakov and Smirnov explained that under existing conditions it would be extremely difficult to fulfil the increased plan and petitioned for its reduction. The agenda was put to the vote twice. The Politburo finally turned down the petition and endorsed the proposal of Narkomtorg.[27]

The reactions of the local party organisations to the centre's demands appeared equivocal and at times confused. But in the face of the categorical demand for fulfilling the raised plan in the shortest time, they were inclined to resort to the alternative so-called social method which was claimed to be neither economic nor coercive. It seems that the Siberian krai party committee (Sibkraikom) took the initiative in that direction. Rudiments of social influence had been favourably reported there in March 1928.[28] The decision of Sibkraikom of the party on 17 January 1929 was to apply the measure known as 'boycott' to those kulaks who maliciously retained their own grain. The decision did not yet accurately accommodate boycott in the format of the USM. But boycott turned out to be the major means for implementing the USM and emerged as the central issue in the dispute around the USM among the party leaders. The content of boycott laid down by the decision was: (a) to publicise the names of those subject to boycott in the okrug newspaper, the wall newspaper, at meetings of poor peasants, at general meetings of the peasants and so on; (b) to expel the boycotted from the cooperatives, and (c) to refuse to sell scarce goods to them. It further announced that these measures should be enacted as a mass activity (not as state coercion) on the basis of deliberations on the cases of individual kulaks at meetings of poor peasants, village *skhod* and so on.[29] The next day Sibkraikom adopted the additional plan of grain collection in accordance with the Politburo decision of 17 January.[30] But it appeared that the January grain collection in Siberia belied expectations. The decision of Sibkraikom on 28 January to reinforce collection established personal responsibility of the members of the buro of the okrug party committees in accordance with the notorious Politburo directive of 6 January 1928.[31] The situation did not improve but deteriorated further in February. The decision of the buro of Sibkraikom conceded that the fulfilment of the February plan could not be guaranteed and condemned the lower apparatus for its inadequate tempo of work and irresponsibility. Simultaneously, it prohibited the application of extraordinary measures (article 107 and 50/10 of the criminal code, deprivation of land holdings) as a means of reinforcing grain collection and alternatively praised the boycott of kulaks who were holding back the sale of grain, stressing that it was giving positive results when it was properly applied. The decision revealed the ultimate aim of boycott – to press the mass of peasants to deliver grain – by mentioning that, 'boycott should be organised so that it influences other deliverers of grain.' It banned the boycott of whole villages and boycott by the administrative and Soviet organs.[32]

But the process of grain collection in February appeared disappointing in Siberia. Eighty-six million puds were collected by 25 February and another 32 million puds remained to be collected if the annual plan was to be fulfilled. Syrtsov and Eikhe, heading the Siberian party organisation, sent a telegram to the Politburo on 27 February to propose another extreme measure to reinforce collection. The telegram warned that grain collection would inevitably result in failure 'with the present methods' and regarded it as 'necessary and most acceptable' to enforce 'compulsory alienation in the form of a loan of the grain surpluses of the major grain producers who are sabotaging grain collection on the territory of Siberia'. It proposed that 6–8 per cent of all peasant households should be subject to 'alienation' and that the total size of the loan should amount to 15–18 million puds. The terms of refund should be set as one year in money and as two–three years in grain. Punishment in the case of rejection of loans should be monetary fines of five times the value of undelivered grain and, in individual cases, confiscation of all property with three years deportation. Ten per cent of alienated grain should be left on the spot for supply of food and seed to the poor peasants. The Siberian proposal was categorically turned down by the Politburo on 4 March.[33]

The unified meeting of the plenum of Sibkraikom and the krai control commission on 6 March strictly ordered okrug committees to take the most resolute steps to stop every attempt at relapsing into extraordinary measures and not to apply them in any form.[34] But the move of Sibkraikom reflected the desperate situation where the raised plan of grain collection could not be carried out without resorting to coercion that was applied to the broad mass of peasants. On 21 March the decision of the buro of Sibkraikom on grain collection endorsed the directive addressed to okrug committees to 'transmit the firm tasks for procurement up to individual villages in a voluntary manner (on the initiative of the poor peasants and *aktiv*)'.[35] This was the first announcement of the introduction of the USM in Siberia. Then the meeting of the buro of Sibkraikom on 27 March adopted the proposal of Kaganovich to supplement the above decision with an instruction to take measures to promote implementation of the USM which included the use of state coercion.[36] The decision of the buro of Sibkraikom on 3 April formally endorsed the decision of 27 March.[37]

It might be said that leaders of the Urals were somewhat more cautious than their Siberian counterparts in their approach to the peasants. The Politburo decided to raise the plan of grain collection in the Urals on 17 January in spite of strong opposition from Kabakov of

the Urals who attended the Politburo meeting.[38] Then the secretariat of the Urals party obkom in a decision of 25 January issued a serious warning against excesses in the ongoing grain collection. 'Even the slightest retreat from revolutionary legality is not permitted and all cases of administrative excesses and distortions should be stopped immediately with the guilty persons and organisations being held responsible in the strictest terms.'[39] Some time at the end of January or early in February, Kabakov and his comrades had serious talks with Rykov, head of Sovnarkom, and tried to persuade him to withdraw the increased plan by stressing the difficulty of fulfilling it under existing conditions. Rykov, according to Kabakov at the Central Committee plenum of April 1929, turned down the petition saying: 'Look at the scurvy in Pskov, the hunger in the Ukraine, and the shortfall in supply to the working population felt everywhere. Yet you come and tell me that the plan for grain collection should not be raised.' He demanded that the grain had to be collected by all means. Kabakov explained to him that the increased plan would be meaningless if they relied only on methods of social influence in place of economic methods. Rykov's only answer was that, 'Grain must be collected.' Kabakov warned him that social methods might turn into extraordinary measures. Rykov simply told him to try to avoid this.[40] On 4 March the Politburo decided to dispatch Kaganovich to the Urals to deliver the report of the Central Committee at the forthcoming party conference of the oblast', 'in accordance with the petition of the Urals obkom'.[41] On 13 March the buro of the Urals obkom, with the participation of Kaganovich,[42] took a decision on the problem of grain collection, endorsing the use of 'social methods', and later the USM was laid down as the main method of grain collection. In substance its contents coincided with the Politburo decision of 20 March on the USM.[43] The next day the Politburo instructed Kaganovich to stay on until his report was made at the Urals party conference, which was postponed, and to spend the spare time for a round tour of the northern districts of Kazakhstan and the adjacent districts of Siberia in order to stimulate grain collection.[44]

Kaganovich, according to Rykov at the Central Committee plenum of April 1929, wrote him a telegram with a proposal, 'by way of *opros* [i.e. without convening a meeting, but by telephone] to vote for the introduction of a so-called social boycott and for active social measures of pressure on holders of grain for the purpose of reinforcing grain collection'. Rykov rejected Kaganovich's request on the form of voting and asked the Politburo to put the problem on the agenda of the Politburo meeting, because he was afraid that Kaganovich's proposal

might contradict the decision on extraordinary measures of the previous Central Committee. His request was satisfied and after several days the Politburo meeting was convened. Bukharin, Tomskii and Rykov voted against Kaganovich's proposal. The majority of the Politburo approved it as the decision on measures for reinforcing grain collection of 20 March.[45] The Politburo decision of 20 March 1929 laid down the new method of grain collection as follows:

(a) The open initiative in carrying out the firm (*tverdyi*) planned task of grain collection for each village should not directly emanate from the representatives of the grain collecting organs or the state organs, but should originate from the social organisations (groups of poor peasants, *aktiv*) and be realised through the general meetings of citizens.
(b) At the time of carrying out the plan of grain collection accepted for each village by the general meeting of citizens, it is necessary to single out the kulaks of the village from all other peasants in order to charge them with definite obligations for delivery of grain to the state from their available grain surpluses, either through the general meetings of citizens, or through the special commissions by agreement of the general meetings.
(c) The remaining amount of grain beyond these obligations imposed on the kulaks, which is accepted in accordance with the plan in the given village, should be allocated by the general meeting of citizens among the rest of the mass of peasants in the form of self-imposed obligations. All this work was to be accompanied by the strenuous and energetic deployment of agitation and mobilisation of proletarian influence over the main mass of the peasantry.
(d) To apply this method in Kazakhstan, Siberia and the Urals.[46]

This was the formal decision which established the USM. It was not the action of creating a novel institution, but ratification of *faits-accomplis* in the eastern regions. It refrained from approving it as the comprehensive method to be applied to areas other than the eastern regions. It was not followed by state legislation before 28 June 1929. Emphasis was placed upon its social character, excluding state coercion, which found legitimation in the decision of the general meeting of citizens or *skhod* of the agrarian commune. It 'adroitly masked'[47] local practices, coercion having been widespread in relation not only to the kulaks but also to the mass of peasants and the agrarian commune.

The key role in institutionalising the USM was played by Kaganovich, secretary and candidate member of the Politburo. He consistently insisted that it was the method of collecting grain on the basis of the voluntary will of the majority of peasants expressed in the decision of the meeting of the *skhod*. At the party conference of the Urals oblast' on 5–11 April 1929, he alleged that extraordinary measures had not been applied that year, instead, 'the method of more decisive social influence by means of the organisation of poor peasants, by means of the organisation of the active strata of the villages' had been employed. He categorically denied that the USM signified coercion in relation to the agrarian commune by saying that, 'It would be absolutely wrong to conclude that the middle peasants were hostile to us on the basis of individual cases of discontent.'[48] But the assertion made by Kaganovich was persistently questioned by Bukharinists at the Central Committee plenum of April 1929.

DEBATE ABOUT THE USM

The united Central Committee-Central Control Commission plenum of the party which met on 16–23 April 1929 turned into the arena of a fierce battle concerning assessments of the USM. Bukharin, Tomskii, Rykov and their supporters attacked the USM as a resumption of extraordinary measures, which was leading to the abolition of NEP. The majority of the Central Committee insisted that there was no other way than the USM to cope with the imminent crisis and defended it as the method of social influence supported by the mass of peasants which should be distinguished from state coercion. The bitter debate was terminated in a harsh way after the resolution condemned the Bukharinist group as anti-party deviationists, advocates of incessant concessions to the peasants, who denied the leadership of the proletariat over the peasantry. After that, voices against the USM were no longer heard.

It was Tomskii who took the initiative in attacking the USM at the April plenum. He condemned Kaganovich for having made 'a big political mistake' by proposing the reintroduction of extraordinary measures 'in a badly screened form'. Shortly after Syrtsov had proposed the compulsory loan which the Politburo had turned down, Kaganovich advanced the same proposal 'only in some changed form'. Kaganovich virtually proposed extraordinary measures or 'a peculiar food allocation (*prodrazverstka*) in the manner of social initiative'.

Tomskii argued that this was 'the adroitly masked, the worst form of extraordinary measures'.[49] Speakers from grain producing areas one by one defended the USM on the basis of their own experience. Syrtsov from Siberia, for example, rejected the Bukharinist view that NEP was about to be abolished as a result of the USM. He did not deny that 'the worst or the weakest elements of our lower party organisation are often transferring the affair of the offensive against the kulak to the rails of relations of food requisition which are habitual for them'. But this did not mean that NEP was abolished, rather it was a matter of excesses. Then he argued for the USM from the viewpoint of the socialist offensive. Having accommodated the USM to the Stalinist view of NEP, he justified the USM as a step to the planned regulation of agriculture through collectivisation. He regarded the USM as 'one of the chains of the general planned offensive against capitalist elements'. This was the first sign of the methodical linking of the USM and collectivisation. He did not deny 'the massive excesses and resistance during the implementation of measures of pressure'. But, he insisted, these took place only in 5–6 villages, not in 5–6 thousands. Then he alleged that excesses were largely caused by the vacillation of Bukharinist leaders in the Politburo at the time of the decision on the USM, these 'perfectly inevitable and necessary measures'.[50]

In order to defame Rykov, Kabakov from the Urals recalled his talks with him at the end of January or early in February, and disclosed how he had categorically rejected his own repeated petitions to reduce the plan of grain collection. His argument implied that Rykov was not free from responsibility for excesses and extraordinary measures. Kabakov argued that the broadest strata of the countryside were participating in grain collection and that its results were achieved by the efforts, not only of the state organs, but also of the mass of peasants. His diagnosis provided him with grounds for sealing off any criticism of the USM. 'I consider that accusations of extraordinary measures under the present conditions are not only unnecessary but superfluous and harmful. Yet comrades Rykov, Tomskii and Bukharin arrived at these accusations.'[51]

Kaganovich, the chief architect of institutionalising the USM, shrewdly argued for the new method. He mainly based his argument on what he claimed to have observed during a tour of the Siberian countryside. He asked Tomskii to study the new method on the basis of facts, not of secondhand information or rumours and fabrications. Kaganovich insisted that the USM was introduced as an inevitable and justified measure to extract quickly a sufficient amount of grain from

the peasants. It was inevitable, because economic incentives were no longer working for that purpose. It was justified because it was a social method, not state coercion or extraordinary measures, and as such did not contradict the principle of the *smychka*. The first point of his argument was to adduce evidence to show that the economic incentives provided by the state were no longer effective for securing an adequate amount of grain, whereas peasants manipulated by kulaks were incessantly demanding economic concessions which the state could no longer afford. 'We gave commodities to the village. We raised the price of grain. Then the kulak still declares – "We have a surplus. I shall not deliver my grain to you. What do you order us to do? What measures can you invent?"' Kaganovich claimed that he visited many villages and talked with peasants, even with kulaks, who told him, 'Give me a tractor, give me an automobile, don't give me a kolkhoz – I shall give you grain.'

The second point of his argument was to present the USM as a justified measure for extracting grain from the peasants without resort to state coercion. He defied Tomskii's condemnation that food requisition was being put into practice by saying that the state was paying the increased price of grain to the peasants. The essence of the USM was, he claimed, that it was a new method which was neither state coercion nor economic methods. Reading aloud the text of the Politburo decision of 20 March, Kaganovich stressed that grain collection by the new method would be carried out on the basis of the decisions of the *skhod* or the general meetings of citizens in the village which should be identified with the voluntary will of the mass of peasants. He did not deny difficulties in implementing the USM. 'Of course, the practical realisation of these methods requires huge political activity – this is going on with difficulties and distortions.' He conceded that many distortions happened, but insisted that it would be sheer nonsense to identify them with the system of food requisition. What he advocated to avoid distortions was mass-political activity in the village or the agrarian commune, the organisation of poor peasants as the social bastion of the party, the rallying of middle peasants around them, and the isolation of the kulak minority from the rest of the peasants. By such a policy of social discrimination, Kaganovich claimed, the party could expect to win the support of the majority of peasants for grain collection. He conceded that this was not an easy task. 'Where poor peasants are not properly organised, then the kulak is powerful and we come into collision with the united force in the village.' Having dissociated his view of 'the united force in the village'

from Bukharin's scheme, 'the united front of the village against us',[52] Kaganovich insisted that the united confrontation of the village with Soviet power could be dismantled in favour of the party only through intensifying class struggle against the kulaks, not by concessions to them. 'When the middle peasants feel that the Soviet power is weak in its struggles against the kulak and that the kulak is more powerful, they support the powerful side and the poor peasants are demoralised.' It would, therefore, be impossible to find a solution of the grain problem without class struggle. But he tacitly admitted that the socially differentiated village remained as a mere postulate. The reality he was faced with in the Siberian countryside was what he called the united force of peasants integrated into the agrarian commune being confronted with the plenipotentiary dispatched from the outside. He described a meeting of a *skhod* which he had witnessed in Barnaul'skii okrug,

> The *skhod* refused to adopt any resolution and decision. The poor peasants were not organised. The party cell and the reading room were absent. The kulaks made the poor peasants drunk. They arrived at the meeting with empty sacks and declared to the plenipotentiary: 'We do not have grain. Soviet power has led us to the point where we have empty sacks. Here there are neither kulaks nor middle peasants nor poor peasants, go away at once.'[53]

In the light of the discouraging result of the nationwide investigation of groups of poor peasants, which was conducted during the winter of 1928–9, it can be said that this was not an exceptional case of confrontation.[54]

After Uglanov, a Bukharinist, demanded the immediate repeal of extraordinary measures,[55] Bukharin took up the attack and offered the most penetrating criticism of the USM. The chief point of his criticism was that the USM was nothing but extraordinary measures which had turned into the customary method (*obychai*) of collecting grain decisively. It had been deprived of its temporary character and was addressed to the mass of peasants. It was therefore incompatible with NEP. He sternly rejected the Stalinist interpretation of the USM. Quoting a passage from the resolution of the Politburo and presidium of the Central Control Commission on 9 February 1929, claiming that the party would manage to carry out grain collection that year without the application of extraordinary measures, he asserted that 'these remarkable predictions' were refuted by life within a few weeks of the resolution's adoption.

Bukharin attacked the Stalinist theory of the intensification of class struggle in the process of socialist construction, which, he claimed, confused a certain temporary stage of the intensification of class struggle with the general course of development: 'It raises the very fact of the present intensification to some inevitable law of our development.' It provided institutionalisation of extraordinary measures with theoretical justification, he argued. Instead of institutionalising extraordinary measures, he proposed the importation of grain in order to overcome the crisis and to restore consensus with the middle peasants. He warned that the outcome of not importing grain would be, 'to have to resume extraordinary measures against all our promises and to erode sharply all prospects for the future'. He feared that if the USM was not repealed, the agricultural base, the autumn and spring sowing areas, would deteriorate further next year and that a 'vicious circle' of decline, which was the effect of USM and the cause of yet more extraordinary measures, would emerge in agriculture. 'If we seriously talk about further industrialisation, our prime concern must be how to get out of this vicious circle.' Collectivisation could not be a quick remedy, he contended. What it is necessary to do is to ensure a certain amount of manoeuvrable grain stock by the importation of grain and other means.

> After these (urgent) measures, it is necessary further to carry on the policy on the basis of the determined rejection of extraordinary measures. It seems to me that this is the first and most elementary prerequisite for further advancement. Comrades, you after all have to understand that extraordinary measures elevated to a system block all our entrances and exits. This determined rejection of extraordinary measures, which are being practised, under a pseudonym or without a pseudonym, should be the indispensable basis of our policy. For only in this way is it possible to keep the system of NEP. Extraordinary measures and NEP are things contradicting each other. Extraordinary measures as a system excludes NEP.[56]

Bukharin's proposition to import grain was refuted by Mikoyan: he contended that the import of grain would bring forth curtailment of the import of raw materials amounting to 100–150 million rubles which would result in unemployment for several hundred thousands of workers.[57] Bukharin's view on the USM was attacked by Molotov: he defended the USM in clichéd terms and distinguished it from extraordinary measures.

> It is correct that measures of an economic order are insufficient under given conditions for the settlement of the practical tasks of supplying grain to our workers and poor peasants. Around the task of struggling for grain, the party is now mobilising the broad masses of the countryside, the mass of poor and middle peasants against the kulaks.

He did not deny that the USM was combined with extraordinary measures directed at the kulaks. 'We are not simply applying extraordinary measures against kulak elements, but around this work (*delo*) we are developing the most important political activity for rallying the elements close to us in the countryside for enforcing extraordinary measures.'[58]

After Molotov and Manuil'skii, Rykov delivered a long speech in which the problem of the USM occupied the major part. He conceded that 'shades of opinion' were seen between the majority of the Politburo and his group concerning the matter of the middle peasants in February 1929. He went on to say that he expected that these differences would be smoothed out as measures were taken for appeasing them. He regretted that his expectation had been betrayed and that difference of opinions continued until the present time regarding the assessment of the current crisis and the way to overcome it. The critical phenomena which the country had experienced over the past two years was not something seasonal, conjunctural, or accidental, which could be accommodated in the conditions of one year, but rather was something more profound and bore a more protracted character. What he meant was that the principle of NEP had been severely shaken by the repeated application of extraordinary measures since early 1928. He was afraid that if extraordinary measures were systematically applied for 3–4–5 years, it would result in the abolition of NEP.

> Under the protracted systematic application of extraordinary measures a specific ideology will inevitably be created which will elevate them to the (law) of our development, and from which will follow a chain of new phenomena in the sphere of commodity circulation, supply, the organisation of trade and so on. One clings to the other. This is completely inevitable.

In spite of this, he protested, extraordinary measures were being enforced in many regions. Then Kaganovich interrupted Rykov's speech with the phrase, 'We have not dropped out of the frame of legal

measures.' Quickly responding, Rykov moved the topic to the current issue of the USM.

Kaganovich having intervened, Rykov made up his mind to publicise some of the documents supporting his argument. The first document he read aloud was from a certain Markov, head of a trade department of the Urals oblast'. It revealed vivid facts about the boycott as the most powerful means of implementing the USM: boycott was enforced in most cases as an administrative measure and sometimes through the mobilisation of hostile public opinion (*obshchestvennost'*). Markov pointed out that 'control figures' on the spot turned into 'the most sacred (*svyatoe svyatyikh*), absolute, obligation' and that boycott was arbitrarily applied for the purpose of carrying through the plan of grain collection in a great hurry. He concluded that if such a method of grain collection became popular, it would mean the termination of NEP and the transition to grain requisition. Another document read aloud by Rykov was the report from Krylenko, the Russian procurator, to A. P. Smirnov, deputy chairman of Sovnarkom RSFSR, dated 29 March. It confirmed Markov's evidence in a wider context. The plan of grain collection was distributed to each village as an obligatory and final task. In some areas grain was confiscated with methods of arrest, intimidation and mockery, which were applied even to middle and poor peasants. Cases were reported of boards which imposed evictions and deprivation of land use, which in turn exacerbated peasant discontent. Another report from Krylenko to Smirnov disclosed abuses in the application of article 61 of the criminal code in Kazakhstan. On the basis of the report and other information, Smirnov prepared a draft telegram to local organisations directing the immediate suspension of excesses and distortions and asked Kalinin to sign it. But Kalinin declined to do so. Then Stalin interrupted Rykov's speech with the word, 'cheating'. Rykov contended that he did not cheat but told the precise facts.[59] He quoted further evidence from a Siberian newspaper about cases of the boycott of villages as a whole, where the population did not assist in disclosing malicious holders of grain and did not participate in the boycotting of them.[60] He was appalled to see that extraordinary measures were being practised in the countryside without discussion and were being concealed from the leaders of the party. After having stressed the decisive significance of the middle peasants in grain production and marketing, he expressed serious doubt as to whether extraordinary measures had actually achieved positive effects in the grain collection of March–April 1929. He denounced the fact that the party had introduced extraordinary measures in order to

obtain a negligible amount of grain with 'enormous negative consequences' for the harvest and the collection of grain in the next year commencing from July.[61]

Rykov's condemnation of the USM was rebutted by Voroshilov. He contended that the current grain collection was going on not along the official line, but in the manner of social influence through the general meetings of citizens. Having admitted that distortions of the party directives were taking place here and there, he claimed that the party was resolutely struggling against them and simultaneously against the growing number of kulaks who were resorting to terrorism.[62] Lominadze supported the USM from the standpoint of safeguarding workers' interests. He alleged that the experience of the past two years proved that it was impossible to collect grain from kulaks with methods of a market character and without social pressure on them from the poor and middle peasants. He rejected the Bukharinist view that the USM itself constituted extraordinary measures. He did not deny that extraordinary measures were being enforced in many regions. It would be ridiculous to think it possible to accommodate measures such as the application of article 107 of the criminal code and of fines of five times the value of grain within the framework of normal methods of grain collection. He claimed that extraordinary measures were practised because the organisation of social pressure, the mobilisation of the poor and middle peasants against the kulaks, and general social compulsion to kulaks, were underdeveloped. In order to prevent extraordinary measures from being converted into a system, he stressed that the party should take the course of further developing the USM.[63]

In his long concluding speech Stalin gave full support to the USM, or 'the Ural–Siberian method of grain collection carried out in accordance with the principle of self-taxation'. He bluntly rejected the view of the Bukharinists, who equated the USM with extraordinary measures, and alleged that it was the way to collect grain on the basis of the voluntary will of the mass of the peasants. He stressed that it did not mean leaving grain collection to the spontaneous flow of events, but organising the social support of the poor and middle peasants. He did not exclude the possibility of extraordinary measures being applied to kulaks in combination with the USM. He asserted that kulaks would no longer be willing to deliver their grain spontaneously as they had accumulated a huge amount of grain in their hands during the last two years and wanted to manipulate it for earning profits and dominating poor peasants. Compulsion would be the only way to get them to

deliver their grain to the state. But he refrained from mentioning state coercion and merely alluded to social compulsion when he talked about extraordinary measures. He brushed aside the Bukharinist condemnation of excesses in the USM as camouflaging their opportunist line and alleged that there was no political measure for the party which was not accompanied by excesses.[64]

The resolution of the plenum denounced Bukharin and his group for their opposition to measures of the party for mobilising the poor and middle peasants for struggles against malicious concealment and speculation of grain by the kulaks, and for their theory of incessant concessions to the peasants. The plenum warned them that any attempt on their part to violate the decisions of the Central Committee and its organs would be grounds for their expulsion from the Politburo. It also directed the Politburo to take steps to ban any deviation from the party line, and from the decisions of the party's leading organs, on the part of full and candidate members of the Politburo.[65]

Thus the debate on the USM was terminated by disciplinary sanctions against Bukharin and his group. The Stalinist interpretation of the USM was established as party orthodoxy. At the XVI party conference which started immediately after the plenum, and thereafter, any doubt about, or criticism of, the USM was no longer voiced.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT OF THE USM

The debate about the USM virtually removed the regional limitation to its application and paved the way for its approval as the comprehensive method of grain collection. On 3 May 1929 the Politburo decided to 'extend the method of grain collection adopted in the Urals to all grain producing areas except for okrugs of poor harvest in the Ukraine and North Caucasus until the end of sowing'.[66] Grain collection in April, May and June of 1929 was carried out vigorously as a 'mass-political campaign' with all-out application of the USM.[67] Mikoyan claimed that the 'social influence of the poor and middle peasants' (namely the USM) produced an increase in collected grain in almost all regions and ensured fulfilment of the plan of grain collection in May and June.[68] The process was accompanied by growing tension between the state and the peasantry as a whole. As the review of groups of poor peasants and the election campaign of rural Soviets, both of which were conducted in the first months of 1929, proved, the party's efforts to win the support of the majority of peasants for its policy through their

social differentiation proved ineffective. Groups of poor peasants, although their number somewhat increased, were inactive and the least influential in the public life of the countryside. Kulaks were not a group distinct from the rest of the peasants, but rather represented the interests of the peasantry as a whole against the state and as such tended to be branded as the class enemy and the target of coercive measures. The cohesion of the agrarian commune was even strengthened in the face of mounting pressures from without. Bukharin's warning about 'the united front of the village against us' at the Central Committee plenum of July 1928 and Kaganovich's concern about 'the united force in the village' at the Central Committee plenum of April 1929 appeared to be verified by experience. It was only the iron fist of the plenipotentiary dispatched from outside and supervised by the party organ which secured the obedience of the commune to the state. When the party claimed that grain collection in the last three months of the 1928–9 economic year was proceeding with intensified class struggles against kulaks, it tacitly admitted the state of affairs. The 'vicious circle' became the logic of the situation, giving rise to 'the systematised extraordinary method (*chrezvychaishchina*)' as Bukharin had warned.[69] The party leadership seemed reconciled to a situation in which coercion was to be the prime determinant in settling conflicts between the state and the peasants.[70]

Two Politburo decisions of 27 June 1929 confirmed the above development of the USM. One, on the organisation of grain collection and grain supply, gave instructions for the building of a system for transmitting the planned tasks of grain collection to separate villages. Although the decision was transferred to 'special file', it had the effect of approving an extension of the application of the USM to grain collection commencing from July 1929, and implied the virtual abolition of any time limit on the method.[71] Another Politburo decision was on legislative measures against kulaks in grain collection.[72] It was an endorsement of the draft prepared by the Politburo commission and was given legal sanction in a RSFSR law of 28 June 1929 on the enlargement of the rights of village soviets in connection with the fulfilment of general state tasks and plans.[73] The RSFSR law contained two clauses which significantly underlined the coercive character of the USM. The law authorised village soviets to fine by administrative procedure five times the value of grain in the case of peasant households which did not fulfil the decisions of the *skhod* but evaded delivery of grain, and if necessary to sell their property by auction. Secondly, it charged groups of peasant households which

rejected grain delivery and resisted fulfilment of the plan of grain collection with criminal prosecution in accordance with part 3 of article 61 of the criminal code. The coercive character of the USM was also reinforced by the amendment of article 61 of the criminal code and by the governmental decision on the commission for assisting grain collection.[74]

The Politburo's decisions and the corresponding legislation ratified the practice of the USM in which coercion had become the prime determinant. The term kulak was not employed in all of this legislation in connection with the application of coercive measures to peasants. As Bukharin and Tomskii pointed out, its coercive character was 'masked' by the democratic facade of the *skhod*. But in fact the USM turned out to be coercion exerted against the agrarian commune and the *skhod* as its representative assembly. Kulaks virtually embodied the agrarian commune in confrontations with state power. As conflicts between the state and the agrarian commune became irreconcilable, the quorum of meetings of *skhody* placing grain delivery and other official proposals on the agenda tended to be ignored in legislation as well as in practice.[75] Simultaneously, repressive measures against the kulaks continued to gain in severity up to the limit of dekulakisation. The Politburo decision of 20 September 1929 on measures for reinforcing grain collection gave instructions for the application of repressive measures against kulaks who resisted it and to strengthen the activity of the punitive organs. It directed the OGPU to strengthen the application of repression and deportation as a means of struggle against malicious and speculative elements. It also instructed Narkomyust of both the RSFSR and the Ukraine to issue a directive to localities to conduct urgently 'show' trials with strict punishment of particularly malicious kulaks and speculators.[76] The Politburo decision of 3 October 1929 on grain collection stressed that the major task of the moment was to ensure the firm and up-to-date fulfilment of obligations to deliver grain imposed on the well-to-do peasants and kulaks, and issued a directive to both the OGPU and Narkomyust to take resolute and quick measures of repression, even as far as shooting, against kulaks who organised terroristic attacks on Soviet and party workers and other counter-revolutionary actions. As a general principle these measures were to be carried out by the judicial organs. But it contained an ominous instruction in individual cases when special speed was required to punish through the GPU with the agreement of the obkoms and, in more important cases, with the agreement of the party's Central Committee.[77]

Notwithstanding these developments, the party leadership did not retreat on its claim that the USM in essence did not infringe the principle of NEP, but rather spelled out a new stage of the *smychka* with a socialist orientation. At the Central Committee plenum of November 1929, Stalin denounced the 'Right deviationists' on the grounds that they regarded extraordinary measures as measures which were applied to the peasantry as a whole. He alleged that extraordinary measures in 1929 differed from the extraordinary measures adopted in 1928 which had borne an administrative character; it was now a mass movement against the kulaks conducted by millions of poor and middle peasants themselves.[78] From the autumn of 1929, as the grain collection campaign passed its peak, the mass movement of peasants against the kulaks was linked to collectivisation.[79]

It was in this context that the USM entered the sphere of collectivisation and determined its form as wholesale collectivisation, which basically meant the transition of peasants collectively to kolkhozy on the basis of the decision of the *skhod*, combined with the liquidation of the kulaks as a class. The contract system was expected to play the mediating role in the transition of the agrarian commune to the kolkhoz. The Politburo decision of 26 August 1929 on the contract system (*kontraktatsiya*) stressed its huge significance in the socialist transformation of the whole agrarian commune. It instructed that in order to facilitate struggles against kulaks and to overcome their resistance to the socialisation of agriculture, the decision of the agrarian commune by a simple majority on concluding the contract was to have a constraining power over all members of the commune and was to be accompanied by the collective responsibility of the commune for the realisation of the contract.[80] A RSFSR law of 30 December 1929 on the procedure for the conclusion and implementation of the contract, in accordance with the Politburo decision of 26 August 1929, laid down that the decision of the agrarian commune on concluding the contract was to have a constraining power over all the peasant households of the commune and was to be adopted by the simple majority of members of the commune with the franchise who attended the meeting of the *skhod*. It did not regulate the quorum of the meeting of the *skhod* and in fact abolished its limitation.[81]

Although it took several weeks for the party formally to declare wholesale collectivisation combined with dekulakisation, the orientation in this direction was stated by Stalin in his famous article of 7 November 1929 and manifested in debate at the Central Committee plenum of November 1929.[82] Kaminskii, head of Kolkhoztsentr, for

example, proclaimed that 'the character of the kolkhoz movement is radically changing.' 'The biggest displacement is from the collectivisation of separate groups of peasant households to the collectivisation of whole villages, from whole villages and groups of villages to raions, okrugs and even oblasts of wholesale collectivisation.' 'The movement . . . is acquiring a completely new scale which we could not have foreseen one and half years ago.' 'The mass transition to the common cultivation of land merely on the basis of a peasant's own implements is acquiring a spontaneous character.' Although he conceded that the movement was accompanied by 'administrative pressure', he claimed that 'this has minimum significance'.[83] What was required to overcome the chaotic situation in the kolkhoz movement reported by Varanov and others was to strengthen the organisational and political influence of the party on it, including the application of extraordinary measures, rather than a retreat from them.[84] Molotov identified the Bukharinists' attack against extraordinary measures as a system with their hostility towards the party line on the socialist offensive. He unconditionally defended extraordinary measures as a system by insisting that extraordinary measures were nothing but 'a constituent element' of the offensive by the proletariat against the kulaks and Nepmen.[85]

The resolution of the plenum rendered full support for 'bringing the plan of grain collection to the village and the kulak household and adopting the most decisive measures against the resistance and sabotage of kulaks in carrying out the plan'.[86] The transition to the liquidation of the kulaks as a class was declared by Stalin in his speech of 27 December 1929 and formally endorsed, together with the rapid tempo of wholesale collectivisation, in the Politburo decision of 5 January 1930. The policy of dekulakisation was detailed in the secret directive of the Politburo of 16 February 1930. The frantic storm of both collectivisation and dekulakisation had broken out in the countryside as the continuation of the grain collection campaign prior to these announcements shortly after the November Central Committee plenum. The turbulence lasted until the end of March 1930 and resulted in a drastic change in the political and social climate of the country.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The current essay has attempted to trace the process of decision-making on the USM and its subsequent policy development until the

beginning of the 'revolution from above' as recorded in the party archives. It can be concluded that the USM was a complicated phenomenon in which various factors, subjective and objective, worked inside and outside the framework of the party apparatus, often irrespective of, or even against, the intentions of the party leadership. These factors interacted with each other and were interwoven with others, and sometimes surpassed the will of the political leaders. The complexity of the USM is plainly displayed by the fact that the agrarian commune (*obshchina* or *mir*) and its *skhod*, rooted in the historical past, occupied a major place, together with the party apparatus, in its form.[87] A total analysis of the USM, of its emergence and implementation, causes and effects, requires careful investigation of all the factors and aspects involved and of their mutual relations. Then we can argue as to the prime mover. This essay can only tell us about an aspect of the issue and help us to recognise the process of its institutionalisation. This in no way seeks to imply an element of political justification, or to provide an escape clause for the actions and decisions of the Stalinist leadership; rather it represents an attempt to establish in a non-partisan manner the course of events from an historical standpoint.

Notes

1. Yu.A. Moshkov, *Zernovaya problema v gody sploshnoi kollektivizatsii sel'skogo khozyaistva SSSR (1929–1932 gg.)* (Moscow, 1966) pp. 52–3: F.M. Vaganov, *Pravyi uklon v VKP(b) i ego razgrom (1928–1930)* (Moscow, 1977) p. 154: *Istoriya krest'yanstva SSSR* (Moscow, 1986) T.2, pp. 37–8: *Krest'yanstvo Sibiri v period stroitel'stva sotsializma, 1917–1937* (Moscow, 1983) p. 212.
2. M. Lewin, *Russian Peasants and Soviet Power: A Study of Collectivisation* (London, 1968) ch. 14.
3. E.H. Carr and R.W. Davies, *Foundations of a Planned Economy, 1926–1929*, vol. 1 (London, 1969) pp. 95–105.
4. Y. Taniuchi, 'A Note on the Ural–Siberian Method',*Soviet Studies*, vol. XXXIII, no. 4, October 1981, pp. 518–47.
5. F.M. Vaganov, *op. cit.*, pp. 154–5.
6. *KPSS v rezolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1954) pp. 516–17: I.V. Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vol. 11, p. 206: RTsKhIDNI 17/3/689, 4–7 (Politburo decision of 26 May 1928 on grain collection and grain supply); RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/693, 2.
7. Carr and Davies, *op. cit.*, pp. 76–82. At the session of the July plenum Rykov acknowledged having made a serious mistake in agreeing to an application of extraordinary measures early in 1928. 'In the eleventh year

since the revolution and for the first time in the period of NEP we inflicted administrative oppression on peasants or grain producers on a large scale. We did not have such an experience of the application of administrative influence on the peasants on a large scale in the period of NEP.' He conceded that the application of extraordinary measures did not result in a liquidation of the grain crisis and that he was one of the leaders responsible for the mistake. In any other state the government which led the country to such a situation would, he said, be subject to fierce attack and forced to resign.

8. *Pravda*, 13 July 1928 (editorial); *Izvestiya*, 13 July 1928 (editorial); Stalin *Sochineniya*, vol. 11, pp. 206, 211.
9. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/397, 7 (Rykov).
10. *Na agrarnom fronte*, 1929, no. 11, p. 73; *Bol'shevik*, 1928, no. 23–24, p. 9. At the Central Committee plenum of November 1928, Rykov expressed concern about the process of grain collection and disclosed that the Politburo had set up a special commission to cope with the problem (RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/397, 7). On the Politburo commission, see RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/711, 1–2.
11. *Izvestiya*, 23 October 1928 (Kalinin).
12. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/711, 1–2 (Politburo decision of 1 November on the grain-fodder balance and the plan of supply of 1 November 1928).
13. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/397, vyp. 1, 7.
14. RTsKhIDNI 17/2/397, vyp. 1, 50–1 (Kosior); 52–4 (Eikhe); 72 (Khatevich); 68–9 (Syrtsov); vyp. 2, 18 (Vareikis).
15. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/397, vyp. 1, 28.
16. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/397, vyp. 1, 107–108.
17. Stalin, *op. cit.*, p. 277.
18. *KPSS v rezolyutsiyakh*, vol. 2, pp. 528–9.
19. *KPSS v rezolyutsiyakh*, vol. 2, pp. 526–9; Stalin, *op. cit.*, pp. 263–4; RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/397, vyp. 1, 52 (Eikhe).
20. The Politburo directive of 24 December 1927 on grain collection confirmed the continuity of the methods and simultaneously decided to dispatch plenipotentiaries to the most important regions of grain collection to supervise it and to endow them with extraordinary power to abolish decisions of local authorities contradicting the Politburo decision and to issue orders binding on local party and Soviet organs (RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/666, 2, 19–21).
21. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/714, 1–12.
22. *Krest'yanskaya gazeta*, 29 December 1928, 11 January, 1929; *Pravda*, 5 January 1929 (editorial).
23. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/717, 14; *Pravda*, 18 December 1928.
24. *Izvestiya*, 7, 19 and 22 February 1929.
25. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/722, 1–2, 10–13; *Pravda*, 5 December 1928, 10 and 26 January 1929.
26. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/417, 110–11.
27. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/417, 110–11; 17/3/722, 1–2, 10–12.
28. *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 7, p. 185. This was the secret report from A.M. Pevzner (head of the Siberian office of Gosbank) to Eikhe. It stated that in some raiony where all possibilities of economic pressure were

extinguished, there was an attempt at social influence on kulaks and that, while Pevzner personally approved, it was only an experiment.

29. RTsKhIDNI, 17/21/3187, 13.
30. RTsKhIDNI, 17/21/3187, 18.
31. RTsKhIDNI, 17/21/3187, 30–1. The Central Committee directive of 6 January 1928, signed by Stalin, was the first action of the party leadership to accept extraordinary measures with the personal responsibility of party cadres (*Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 5, pp. 193–5). See Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vol. 11, pp. 11–12, for his comment on this part of the directive.
32. RTsKhIDNI, 17/21/3187, 44, 45–6.
33. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/729, 6, 9. Bukharin disclosed that confiscation of grain from the well-to-do and kulak strata was included in the platform of the Trotskyist opposition at the XV party congress. See N.I. Bukharin, *Problemy teorii i praktiki sotsializma* (Moscow, 1989) p. 262.
34. RTsKhIDNI, 17/21/3175, 1–2. The buro of Sibkraikom on 10 March condemned excesses and abuses in the boycott disclosed in Pokrovskii raion of Rubtsov okrug (RTsKhIDNI, 17/21/3188, 33–35).
35. RTsKhIDNI, 17/21/3188, 36, 39–40.
36. RTsKhIDNI, 17/21/3188, 95.
37. RTsKhIDNI, 17/21/3188, 99.
38. RTsKhIDNI, 17/21/3187.
39. RTsKhIDNI, 17/21/3898, 33.
40. RTsKhIDNI, 17/21/417, 110–11.
41. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/729, 7.
42. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/417, 150. He was absent from the Politburo meeting of 14 March (RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/730, 1).
43. RTsKhIDNI, 17/21/3898, 83–84.
44. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/7301, 1.
45. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/417, 171.
46. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/731, 4–5. Kaganovich read aloud the decision at the Central Committee plenum of April 1929 (RTsKhIDNI, 18/2/417, 58). N. Ivnitskii quotes the decision (dated as 21 March) from the Kremlin archives (the former Politburo archives) in his unpublished work on dekulakisation.
47. Tomskii's expression at the Central Committee plenum of April 1929 (RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/417, 35–6.)
48. RTsKhIDNI, 17/21/3874, 11–12.
49. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/417, 35–6.
50. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/417, 51–3.
51. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/417, 110–11.
52. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/375, vyp. 2, 115–16; Trotsky archives, T.1901.
53. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/417, 57–8.
54. *Bednota*, 3 February 1929 (editorial); *Shestnadtsataya konferentsiya VKP(b)* (Moscow, 1962) p. 311; *Derevenskii kommunist*, 1929, no. 1. p. 19.
55. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/417, 63–70.
56. N. Bukharin, *Problemy teorii i praktiki sotsializma* (Moscow, 1989) pp. 253–90; RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/417, 73–88.
57. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/417, 129.
58. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/417, 148–55.

59. Krylenko later dissociated his document from Rykov's assessment. He declared that his document did not mean to confirm that extraordinary measures were being practised everywhere, or that the situation was worse in 1929 than in 1928 with respect to both illegality and the oppression of the middle peasants (RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/417, 292–3).
60. Syrtsov of Siberia later presented a statement to the Central Committee plenum claiming that a boycott of a whole village violated the policy of the Siberian Party (RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/417, 291).
61. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/417, 163–86.
62. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/417, 201–2.
63. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/417, 221–2.
64. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/417, 227.
65. Stalin, *op.cit.*, vol. 12, pp. 88–90, 107.
66. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/738, 1–2, 9–10. This might be ratification of an established fact rather than the creation of a new policy. Sheboldaev of the Lower Volga at the XVI party conference in April 1929 admitted that a series of measures bearing the character of extraordinary measures was being applied in his region without the special decision of the Central Committee – *Shestnadtsataya konferentsiya VKP(b)*, pp. 386–8.
67. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/741, 2; *Pravda*, 29 May, 4 and 5 June 1929.
68. *Pravda*, 27 June 1929.
69. Bukharin, *op.cit.*, pp. 263, 288–9.
70. *Pravda*, 2 and 26 June 1929; *Krest'yanskaya gazeta*, 1929, no. 49 (21 June); also Y. Taniuchi in *Soviet Studies*, 1981, no. 4, pp. 533–5.
71. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/746, 1. A published Central Committee decision of 29 July 1929 on grain collection gave instructions on the use of the experience of the past grain collection for the organisation of public opinion of the poor and middle peasants (namely the USM) from the beginning of the campaign (*Izvestiya TsK VKP(b)*, 1929, no. 23–4 (25 August), pp. 12–14). On the Kremlin archives containing the 'special files' of Politburo decisions, see V.P. Danilov, 'Sovremennaya rossiiskaya istoriografiya', *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, 1993, no. 6, pp. 95–101.
72. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/746, 2, 7–9.
73. *Ibid.*; *Izvestiya*, 29 June 1929.
74. *Izvestiya*, 29 June 1929; *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporyazhenii RSFSR*, 1929, part 1, no. 70, art. 68, 1006–8.
75. Y. Taniuchi, *loc. cit.*. See also note 84.
76. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/759, 5, 10–13.
77. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/761, 4, 5, 15–16; V.P. Danilov and N.A. Ivnitskii (eds), *Dokumenty svidetel'stvuyut* (Moscow, 1989) pp. 258–61.
78. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/441, vyp. 1, ch. 2, 134–5.
79. Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vol. 12, pp. 130–2.
80. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/755, 21–3.
81. *Izvestiya*, 4 January 1930.
82. Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vol. 12, pp. 124–34.
83. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/441, vyp. 2, ch. 2, 7; vyp. 2, ch. 1, 33; vyp. 1, ch. 2, 40, 57. The guideline on collectivisation laid down by the Siberian party on 5 January 1930 gave instructions to conduct it 'on the basis of the

conversion of the whole village into a kolkhoz' (RTsKhIDNI,17/21/3190, 17–18).

84. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/441, vyp. 1, ch. 1, 16, 36; vyp. 2, ch. 1, 21–4, 69–70.
85. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/441, vyp. 2, ch. 1, 49–59; *Bol'shevik*, 1930, no. 2, pp. 15–18.
86. *KPSS v rezolyutsiakh* . . ., vol. 2 (Moscow, 1954) p. 629.
87. The agrarian commune maintained a strongly cohesive power in the countryside in the 1920s (V.P. Danilov, *Sovetskaya dokolkhoznaya derevnya, naselenie, zemlepol'zovanie, khozyaistvo* (Moscow, 1977); Y. Taniuchi, *The Village Gathering in Russia in the Mid-1920s*, Soviet and East European Monographs No. 1 (Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Birmingham, 1968). It even tended to place the village soviet under its control (*Izvestiya TsK VKP(b)*, 1927, no. 29, pp. 3–5). This state of affairs did not change after the eruption of the grain crisis in 1928 (*Izvestiya*, 1 March 1929 (Kiselev)).

5 Stalin, the Politburo and Rail Transport Policy

E. A. Rees

The task of determining the contribution of individual politicians or of institutions in shaping policy is notoriously difficult even in relatively open political systems, but doubly so in such closed and secretive systems as Stalin's Russia. The availability of the archives of the Communist Party sheds some light on these difficult questions. Here we shall examine some aspects of the problem on a general level, the changing role of the Politburo, Orgburo and Secretariat from 1928 to 1940, and on a more particular level, the role of Stalin and of his personal secretariat.

We shall attempt to establish how far Stalin was in a position to impose his policy priorities, how personalised decision-making was, in the sense that decisions were processed through institutions that were directly beholden to Stalin and were under his control. We are concerned with the consolidation of Stalin's power, and the timing of that process. The role of the leading party organs – the Politburo, Orgburo and Secretariat – in decision-making needs to be considered alongside that of the governmental bodies, namely Sovnarkom and STO. Through a case study of transport policy an attempt will be made to provide a fuller picture of how the policy process operated and Stalin's place in that system.

THE CENTRAL PARTY ORGANS

The Meetings of the Politburo, 1928–40

Throughout the Stalin era the fiction of 'collective leadership' vested in the Politburo of the CPSU was maintained. It is only with the protocols of the Politburo available to us that we can attempt a realistic analysis of how the process of decision-making within the ruling communist party operated in the Stalin era. The protocols by no means provide all the answers, and some reservations are in order.

The protocols are not stenographic reports of the Politburo meetings (which apparently do not exist), and it is not possible from them to interpret the position taken by individuals in policy disputes. They do however provide an invaluable source of information: the protocols list those attending the meetings of the Politburo, the agenda of the meeting, and decisions taken, often with the text of the resolutions appended at the end of the protocol. The protocols were signed by Stalin and in his absence by Kaganovich, as the second most senior party Secretary.

The Politburo concentrated on six main areas of policy: international affairs, defence, internal security, heavy industry, agriculture and transport. The protocols are least revealing regarding the first three, which tend to be dealt with in the secret files (*osobye papki*). The protocols indicate clearly that at least on a formal level the Politburo was supreme. Decrees issued in the name of Sovnarkom or TsIK were almost without fail approved beforehand by the Politburo. Politburo decisions might be issued either as Central Committee resolutions, as Sovnarkom decrees or even as an order (*prikaz*) of a particular commissariat. Much of the protocols are taken up with confirming appointments, which had in most cases been initially processed by the Orgburo, and here the huge scale of the *nomenklatura* becomes apparent.

Even regular meetings of the Politburo from 1924 to 1930 did not guarantee collective decision-making. Already in 1923–5 Trotsky complained that key decisions were being taken prior to formal Politburo meetings.[1] In 1928 the 'Right opposition' were out-manoeuvred in the Politburo by Stalin's ruse as General Secretary to accord casting votes to members of the presidium of the Central Control Commission.[2] Policy-making, as with the 'left turn' from 1928 onwards, might also assume more the form of a political campaign, when Stalin utilised and orchestrated the grain crisis, the 'kulak' threat, the Shakhty trial, the war scare, and the self-criticism campaign to mobilise support for a change of course, and to isolate the Rightists. It involved in Stalin's own words a combined policy of 'control from above' and 'control from below' to re-orientate the party-state apparatus.[3]

Some semblance of collective decision-making remained operative, as illustrated by the Politburo's authorization of the publication of Stalin's article 'Dizzy with Success' in March 1930, which signalled a retreat on collectivisation, and the Politburo's refusal in 1933 to sanction Stalin's demand for the execution of Ryutin.

The process whereby Stalin came to dominate the Politburo has remained obscure and the precise role of the Politburo in the 1930s has

been in part a matter of speculation.[4] Now more concrete conclusions can be drawn, at least with regard to the regularity of its meetings, as indicated in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Formal sessions of the Politburo 1928–40

Year	*Central Committee plenums*	*Politburo meetings*[5]		
		Number of protocols	*Number of meetings*	*Stalin's attendance*
1928	3	53	53	51
1929	2	51	51	49
1930	1	39	38	30
1931	2	58	57	47
1932	1	45	43	30
1933	1	24	24	16
1934	2	20	18	14
1935	3	17	15	15
1936	2	9	9	7
1937	3	12	6	6
1938	1	10	4	4
1939	1	13	2	2
1940	2	14	2	2

From January 1928 until September 1929 there were regular weekly meetings of the Politburo, almost invariably on a Thursday. There was a sharp drop in the number of meetings in 1930, associated with the crisis of collectivisation, but a recovery in 1931. The main change in the Politburo's power and status came in 1932 and 1933. In 1932 there were 43 meetings but Stalin attended only 30, being absent from all meetings between 1 June and 1 September. Nevertheless Stalin remained closely involved in drafting legislation and directing policy with regard to the famine. The real decline in formal meetings of the Politburo dates from the beginning of 1933.[6]

From September 1934 the principle of monthly meetings was established, with occasional additional meetings. However in 1936 no meetings were held in January, August nor November. The Politburo was already being transformed into a consultative rather than a collective decision-making body.

In the period up to the XVII party congress those attending these meetings included Politburo members (full and candidate), members of the Central Committee (full and candidate) and members of the presidium of the Central Control Commission (TsKK). A typical

meeting on 28 March 1929 had in attendance 8 Politburo members, 3 Politburo candidate members, 22 Central Committee members, 11 Central Committee candidate members and 7 members of the presidium of TsKK.

The Purges dealt a final blow to the Politburo's already seriously weakened authority. In the first six months of 1937 only six meetings of the Politburo are listed, in the second half of the year none. On 14 April 1937 the Politburo adopted a resolution that in future decisions requiring speedy resolution should be prepared for the Politburo on foreign affairs by Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov, Kaganovich and Ezhov; on economic matters decisions were to be prepared and decided by Molotov, Stalin, Chubar', Mikoyan and Kaganovich.[7]

This was evidently the precursor of the system which evolved in the post-war period, as Khrushchev recounts, whereby decision-making was controlled by Stalin, through the formation of Politburo commissions – 'quintets', 'sextets', 'septets' and 'novenaries'.[8]

Between Politburo sessions decisions were taken on an almost daily basis through consultation (*opros*) of its members. As the gap between formal sessions increased so this practice was extended. This implies, although this cannot be substantiated, that individual Politburo members could still object to decisions of which they disapproved. From the summer of 1937 onwards the decisions taken between the increasingly rare meetings of the Politburo are listed more commonly not as formerly 'by consultation of the members of the Politburo' (*oprosom chlenov Politbyuro*) but usually simply as 'decisions of the Politburo' (*resheniya Politbyuro*). For 1937–8 the protocols are dominated by appointments. In 1939 and 1940 the protocols give the unmistakable impression of being 'padded-out' for form's sake with documents of minor significance.

Meetings of the Orgburo and Secretariat, 1928–40

A similar analysis of the meetings of the Orgburo and Secretariat for the same period can be undertaken. These two bodies were effectively under Stalin's control from 1922 onwards, when he was elected General Secretary. Thereafter they provided him with his real power base within the central party apparatus.

The protocols of the Orgburo and Secretariat were issued jointly, giving the dates of all sessions, the agenda (*povestki dnya*), decisions taken, and the names of those attending. The decline in the frequency of meetings of both these bodies is illustrated in Table 5.2.[9]

Table 5.2 Formal sessions of the Secretariat and Orgburo 1928–40

Year	*Number of protocols*	*Number of meetings: Secretariat*	*Number of meetings: Orgburo*	*Meetings attended by Stalin*
1928	87	43	44	13
1929	85	41	44	1
1930	61	29	32	0
1931	59	28	29	0
1932	49	32	17	0
1933	23	7	12	0
1934	20	1	12	0
1935	23	1	12	0
1936	21	0	13	0
1937	13	0	6	0
1938	18	0	11	0
1939	32	0	14	0
1940	42	0	14	0

From a situation where there were almost weekly meetings of both Secretariat and Orgburo, there was a significant decline in 1930–32 when meetings of both bodies were held roughly every ten days. The main decline, as with the Politburo, came in 1933. From 1934 onwards formal sessions of the Secretariat virtually ceased, but the Orgburo continued to hold a limited number of formal sessions through this period. As with the Politburo, when formal sessions did not take place protocols were still issued for both bodies recording decisions which had been taken through consultation (*opros*) of the members of the bodies concerned.

The formal sessions of both Orgburo and Secretariat were attended not only by the members of these bodies but also by members of the Politburo and Central Committee and the party control bodies. An attendance of some 40 was normal, but in some cases as many as 65 are listed as having attended (presumably not collectively, but only on issues directly relating to the individuals concerned). The conduct of sessions of both bodies was entrusted to Stalin's lieutenants: Molotov until 1931, and thereafter Kaganovich. The sessions of the Orgburo from 1938 onwards were entrusted to Zhdanov or Malenkov.

Remarkably Stalin himself between 1929 and 1940, with the exception of one session, never attended the meetings of the Orgburo

and Secretariat. Stalin's absence from these meetings whilst reflecting a measure of delegated authority indicates clearly the extent to which he commanded a position of unique power. The large number of people attending these sessions in the period up to 1932 also suggests that they may have long ceased to be an effective forum for decision-making, that power had already passed elsewhere.

The Central Party Apparatus

The demise of the Politburo, Orgburo and Secretariat focuses attention on Stalin's mode of operation in policy formation, and thus on the role of his personal chancellery and its links with the departments of the Central Committee and the commissariats. Politburo commissions were also widely used to review particular policy matters. Stalin's willingness to involve himself in the details of policy-making was already well known.[10]

The protocols provide some information on the leadership of the departments of the Central Committee. The Politburo on 10 March 1934 assigned responsibility for these departments as follows: Transport Sector – L. M. Kaganovich (with A. A. Zhdanov as deputy head); Industrial Sector – N. I. Ezhov; Agricultural Sector – A. A. Zhdanov; Culture–Propaganda Sector – A. I. Stetskii; Leading Party Organs – D. A. Bulatov; the Special Sector – A. N. Poskrebyshev; Administrative Affairs of the Central Committee -Ya.E. Brezanovskii.[11]

On 4 June 1934 the Politburo approved the divisions of responsibility between the three party Secretaries: Stalin was responsible for Culture–Propaganda, the Special Sector (which appears to have embraced defence, foreign policy, and internal security), and the work of the Politburo; Kaganovich was responsible for the work of the Orgburo, the Industrial Sector, the Transport Sector, the Komsomol, and Party Control; Zhdanov was responsible for the Secretariat, the Agricultural Sector, the Planning–Finance–Trade Sector, Political Administration, the Sector for Leading Party Organs, and Administrative Affairs.[12]

With the abolition of the TsKK-NKRKI by the XVII party congress those attending the meetings of the Politburo included members of the bureau of the new Commission of Soviet Control (KSK), headed by V. V. Kuibyshev, members of the bureau of the new Commission of Party Control (KPK), headed by L. M. Kaganovich, as well as the

heads of the specialist groups of KPK. They were granted the same rights as members of TsKK's presidium. The members of the two bureaus were to be allowed 'without restriction' (*bez ogranicheniya*) the right to attend the meetings of the Politburo, and ordinary members of both bodies were allowed to attend on matters relating directly to their areas of responsibility.[13] The members of KPK and KSK were to receive the protocols of the Politburo, Orgburo and Secretariat so as to inform themselves of the deliberations of these bodies.[14]

The Centralisation of Decision-making

The demise of the Politburo, Orgburo and Secretariat in 1933 was the most dramatic manifestations of the centralisation of decision-making. The same trend was reinforced by the strengthening of direct party oversight over the economic commissariats, through the establishment of the political departments (*politotdely*) in agriculture and on the railways in 1933, and by the purge of the party ranks.

The abolition of TsKK-NKRKI at the XVII party congress and the creation of the new KPK and KSK was a further step towards centralised control: the local plenipotentiaries of KSK and KPK were centrally appointed in contrast to the locally elected KK-RKI bodies. The old KK-RKI had been accused of laxity in enforcing official policy, particularly in agriculture, whilst the presidium of TsKK appears to have forfeited Stalin's confidence by its failure to support the application of the death penalty to Ryutin. The new KPK and KSK, closely tied to the central party and government bodies, were concerned essentially with policy enforcement.

The XVII party congress' decision to abolish the collegia of the commissariats and to replace them with enlarged Soviets was part of the same trend. The collegia had provided broad weekly fora for policy-making. Meetings of these bodies appear to have ceased already in 1933. The abolition of the collegia was combined with calls for a more resolute 'Bolshevik', 'operative' style of leadership on the part of the people's commissars. The democratic facade of the enlarged Soviets concealed a further step in the con-centration of power. In 1938, as the purges were reined in, the collegia were reestablished.

The reorganisation of OGPU into the new NKVD in 1934 may also have been part of the same process of administrative and political centralisation. These administrative currents coincided, paradoxically, with trends towards a relaxation of pressures on the economic front.

FROM OLIGARCHY TO DICTATORSHIP

Stalin played a decisive role in policy-making from the time of Lenin's death onwards; the defeat of the Left and Right oppositions consolidated his control over the Politburo. From 1928 to 1932, however, the Politburo remained a force, although Stalin was certainly more than *primus inter pares* within the ruling oligarchy. Policy declarations by Stalin himself were seen as having as much, if not more authority than a decision by the Politburo collectively. The demise of the Politburo, Orgburo and Secretariat saw power increasingly vested in Stalin's own personal apparatus.[15]

The demise of the central party organs in 1933 appears to be related to various factors; most significant was the famine crisis and related to it the rise of oppositional groups within the party, the Ryutin, Syrtsov–Lominadze, and Eismont–Tolmachev—Smirnov groups, which directly challenged the policies of the leadership. External factors may also have played a contributory role; the real threat from Japan in the Far East following the invasion of Manchuria in September 1931, and the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor in Germany in January 1933.

It might be argued, with some justification, that the existing machinery of decision-making, with the attendance of large numbers of senior officials at meetings of the Politburo, Orgburo and Secretariat was unwieldy, time-consuming and not conducive to the efficient dispatch of business, and that it encouraged the well established practice of referring even relatively minor matters to be resolved at the top. Some reform appears to have been long overdue.

However, the reform came in the guise of a further centralisation of decision-making; a further step in transforming the party-state apparatus into a 'control-dominated' system, without any restraining checks. Some officials, particularly those in the control agencies, benefitted from this turn of events. Others, notably the members of the Central Committee – in their various capacities as people's commissars and local party secretaries – who had previously attended meetings of the Politburo, Orgburo and Secretariat, saw their influence and prestige greatly diminished.

The unsuccessful moves to curb Stalin's powers at the XVII party congress appear to have stemmed not only from policy disagreements but also from a profound sense of unease concerning the transition to a system of personal dictatorship, which brought with it the gradual exclusion of many Central Committee members from the inner sanctum of policy formation.

THE POLITBURO AND RAIL TRANSPORT POLICY

The Politburo stood at the apex of the decision-making process. Its role needs to be set alongside that of the governmental apparatus, Sovnarkom and STO which retained some areas of discretion. Stalin's role in decision-making within this complex network is difficult to disentangle. Through case studies of decision-making in particular sectors some attempt can be made to reconstruct his role.

Here we shall look at the formulation of rail transport policy, which after 1928 assumed critical importance for economic and defence reasons. Rail transport policy occupied a key place in the Politburo's concerns, reflecting its importance for wider economic and defence policy. The railways were administered by *Narodnyi Komissariat Putei Soobshcheniya* (Narkomput or NKPS). It was headed until June 1930 by Ya.E. Rudzutak, and then by M. L. Rukhimovich.

In 1930 the party Secretariat established a special transport sector to monitor Narkomput as part of the general restructuring of the secretarial apparatus aimed at achieving more effective party control over the economy.[16] Responsibility for transport policy in the Politburo from 1930 to 1935 appears to have lain with Kaganovich. The Orgburo in its annual plan of work in March 1931, included reports on the railways to be submitted by Narkomput with co-reports submitted by the relevant departments of the Central Committee.[17]

Under Molotov's leadership Sovnarkom and STO regained some of the authority they had lost in the previous two years, but now were even more closely associated with the Politburo. This was reflected in the new practice of issuing joint Sovnarkom–Central Committee decrees, usually signed by Molotov and Stalin. Sovnarkom also gained greater control over the commissariats through its newly established Implementation Commission (*Komissiya ispolneniya*), chaired by Molotov.[18] Besides Stalin, who became a member of STO in December 1930, the real power in economic decision-making lay with Molotov, Kuibyshev and Ordzhonikidze.

Whilst Sovnarkom and STO exercised nominal control over Narkomput, and the drafting of the Second Five-Year Plan appears to have been mainly the responsibility of Molotov (Sovnarkom) and Kuibyshev (Gosplan), the Politburo had the final say. In the field of economic policy Gosplan, Narkomfin and TsUNKhU played coordinating roles. A supervisory role was performed by TsKK-NKRKI, later KSK and KPK, OGPU/NKVD, and even by the Procuracy and Supreme Court.

In certain areas the Politburo exercised close control over the commissariat. Investment targets for transport, technical and material supplies to Narkomput, and Narkomput's annual and even monthly plans were approved by the Politburo. It heard reports on construction projects. It heard reports on major accidents. The Politburo exercised close control over appointments. Even tours of the network by the narkom had to be sanctioned by the Politburo. In individual and exceptional cases – construction projects, accidents – Stalin himself presented reports to the Politburo.

In the winter of 1930/1 there was a major transport crisis, partly the result of under-investment but also a consequence of the forced growth of freight traffic. In 1932–3 the railways operated under strain. In 1934 there was some recovery, but criticism of the railways' performance continued to be voiced. At the end of 1934 a substantial increase in railway investment was decreed, and in 1935 and 1936, as a result of that investment and determined efforts to boost efficiency, a remarkable improvement in performance was registered. That recovery tailed off in the summer of 1937 when the railways reached a plateau of performance, as investment was cut back.

The Railway Crisis 1930–3

From 1928 to 1930 a major debate was waged concerning the strategy for the development of the Soviet railways, between advocates of 'rationalisation' and 'reconstruction'. The formation of transport policy involved a constant clash of interests between Narkomput and Vesenkha, with Vesenkha the main supplier of equipment to the railways and one of the main clients of the railways for the shipment of industrial freight and raw material supplies.[19]

At the XVI party congress in July 1930 Stalin underlined the significance of transport for the economy and the country's defence. Transport operations and 'transport reconstruction' were lagging behind the general rate of development of the economy, and were threatening to become a 'bottleneck', throttling further advance. The transport problem needed to be dealt with swiftly in a 'Bolshevik manner'.[20]

Stalin's pronouncement on railway reconstruction at the congress set the tone for future debate. On the congress's penultimate day Rukhimovich issued an order to push ahead with transport reconstruction, proposing 'a fundamental change in transport with reconstruction work and the maximum development of rationalisation activity'. Narkomput

needed to elaborate 'a total perspective plan for reconstruction' and 'the introduction of new technology', including powerful new locomotives.[21]

At the same time the most outspoken advocates of reconstruction also came under attack. Already in the summer of 1929 the eminent railway administrator K. N. von Mekk was accused of wrecking, found guilty and subsequently executed. Stalin, according to one contemporary commentator, personally authorised the purge of these 'wreckers'.[22]

Stalin in 1930–1 also initiated the trials against the 'Labour-Peasant Party', the 'Industrial Party' and the 'Union Bureau of Mensheviks', directed at so-called 'bourgeois' specialists in industry, agriculture and rail transport.[23] Repression on the railways was intensified, through the work of the Railway Procuracy and the USSR Supreme Court's Transport Collegium.[24] By June 1931 4,500 'wreckers' had been expelled from transport by OGPU, including 1,300 engineers and senior engineers, and 2,000 middle managers such as station masters.[25]

On 15 January 1931 the first joint Sovnarkom-Central Committee resolution was issued which significantly dealt with the transport crisis. Entitled 'Concerning Railway Transport', it aimed to achieve a resolute speed-up of transport to meet the rapidly growing needs of the economy. It resolved to increase wage differentials and end the system of depersonalised manning (*obezlichennaya ezda*) of locomotives, introduced in 1928, which had resulted in the exodus of thousands of locomotive drivers from their posts.[26] At a Politburo meeting Stalin sharply rebuked Narkomput and Rukhimovich for their delay in introducing the system of double manning.[27]

Rukhimovich vigorously campaigned for new investment to deal with the railways' problems.[28] At the Gosplan plenum in May Rukhimovich again criticised the official neglect of the railways. He called for more powerful locomotives, larger four-axle wagons and investment to strengthen the track. He also advanced proposals to electrify several thousand kilometres of track in the next two or three years.[29] Rukhimovich later recalled that whilst some experts had strongly opposed electrification, the new plan was developed with 'the impassioned participation of comrade Stalin'.[30] The Politburo on 25 May approved a resolution on the reconstruction of the railways, as proposed by Narkomput.[31] Sovnarkom established its own commission on railway reconstruction, chaired by Molotov.[32]

The Central Committee plenum in June heard Rukhimovich's report on the state of the railways, and a counter report from Andreev.[33] The plenum resolution 'Railway Transport and its Immediate Tasks'

demanded a 'radical reconstruction of railway transport' and acknowledged the 'acute backwardness of the material-technical base of transport from the needs of the national economy'.[34] On the basis of this party resolution Sovnarkom on 28 July approved its own resolution for the reconstruction of the railways.[35]

Stalin's speech on 23 June, 'New Conditions – New Tasks in Economic Construction', delivered to a conference of economic executives, outlined six conditions for improving economic management. On the highly controversial issue of increased wage differentials on the railways Stalin denounced the excesses of 'Leftist' egalitarianism. Stalin's speech brought an easing in the campaign of repression, and initiated a new period of cooperation between the regime and the older generation of specialists. However, the policy of repression on the railways continued from 1931 to the beginning of 1935. In this speech he also indicated support for fundamental reconstruction of the railways.[36]

This marked the high point of optimism regarding railway reconstruction, an optimism evidently shared by Stalin himself. The advocates of railway reconstruction now believed their view had been vindicated.[37] In a matter of weeks, however, growing problems in industry and a deterioration in the international situation brought a further reappraisal of rail transport policy, as a result of which large-scale investment in railway reconstruction was delayed for a further three years.

On 18 September the Japanese Kwantung army invaded Manchuria. In the Far East long-standing tension between the USSR and Japan had been deepened by Japanese claims to Soviet Sakhalin and Kamchatka and disputes over fisheries. War between the two countries was seen as imminent. The Soviet railways were commandeered for military supplies to the Far East.[38] In September the Politburo on three occasions discussed the railways' preparations for the autumn–winter season.[39]

The Politburo on 30 September, having heard a report from Kaganovich, resolved to relieve Rukhimovich as narkom of Narkomput and to appoint in his place his arch-critic A.A. Andreev. It appointed G.I. Blagonravov as deputy narkom of Narkomput, freeing him from the post as head of OGPU's Transport Section. The latter post was filled by V.A. Kishkin.[40] In February 1932 Andreev was elected as a full member of the Politburo. Andreev's appointment to Narkomput was associated with a new emphasis on rationalisation and a shift away from large-scale capital reconstruction.

On 2 October the Politburo established a commission to report in one month on measures to strengthen railway cadres, particularly the directors of lines and raions.[41] On 10 October the Politburo approved a decree, on a report by Stalin, on strengthening the workers of Narkomput.[42]

The Politburo approved the Central Committee resolution of 5 October concerning preparations for the autumn-winter season, which severely criticised the deterioration in the work of the railways in July and August.[43] The decisions were issued in the form of two Narkomput orders.[44] The Central Committee plenum of 28–31 October placed the railway crisis at the top of its agenda. Andreev blamed past failure on Narkomput's inability to fully utilise rolling stock, but also criticised Vesenkha for failing to supply the railways with the planned number of locomotives, wagons and rails. Ordzhonikidze pledged that Vesenkha would do all in its powers in 1932 to correct these failings.[45]

Stalin's letter to *Proletarskaya revolutsiya* in October 1931, on the writing of party history, provided the signal for a more general drive for ideological orthodoxy.[46] It was widely discussed in the railway institutes and led to a concerted drive against 'leftist' advocates of fundamental reconstruction, and 'rightist' advocates of rationalisation.[47]

In 1932 the Politburo closely supervised the work of Narkomput and paid particular attention to the problem of the rising accident rate.[48] In response to the developing famine crisis TsIK and Sovnarkom on 7 August adopted a decree on safeguarding state property, which ruled that theft of goods from rail and water transport was to be punishable by death, and in extenuating circumstances imprisonment for no less than ten years.[49] The Politburo instructed Blagonravov, together with the OGPU's Transport Section, to prepare proposals on combatting 'hooliganism' and the theft of state property on the railways.[50]

In the autumn of 1932 the Politburo was preoccupied with the state of the lines to the Far East. Administrative control was tightened up.[51] In September and October the Politburo discussed supplies for the Far East lines, particularly the construction of the Baikal–Amur line, with reports presented by Molotov and Yagoda.[52] On 1 December the Politburo again heard reports from Andreev and Gamarnik on the state of the railways of the Far East.[53]

The Reorganisation of the Railways, 1933

Concern regarding the performance of the railways brought a major reorganisation in the summer of 1933. A joint Sovnarkom–Central

Committee resolution on 3 July, 'Concerning the Work of the Railways', condemned the 'completely unsatisfactory work of the railways', their failure to meet freight targets and the alarming growth in accidents.[54] On 8 July two joint Sovnarkom-Central Committee resolutions set out in detail the administrative apparatus for the railways and revised the salary structure, to increase incentives and to encourage technicians to move from administrative work to production work.[55]

A Central Committee resolution of 10 July, based on a report from a Politburo commission, headed by Kaganovich,[56] established a Political Administration in Narkomput, directly linked to the party Secretariat and Orgburo, with political departments (*politotdely*) on the 22 lines. This represented a return to the militaristic administrative methods of War Communism on the railways.[57] On 11 July the Politburo set up a commission to select suitable candidates to head the new *politotdely*.[58] The heads of the *politotdely* had a background in the Cheka/OGPU, the Red Army and the party.[59]

Andreev emphasised Stalin's close involvement in drafting these resolutions:

> I must say that the initiative in posing and working out all these questions belongs to the *vozhd'* of our party, comrade Stalin. Comrade Stalin closely and most actively participated in the working out of all these resolutions, and it is precisely why the character of these resolutions bear such Bolshevik clarity and such firmness.[60]

Narkomput's leadership in July was fundamentally overhauled: four deputy narkoms and eight members of the collegium were dismissed.[61] The Politburo also approved the departmental heads of Narkomput.[62]

Narkomput's Political Administration was headed by the newly appointed deputy narkom V.I. Polonskii, former head of the Central Committee's Organisational Department.[63] The deputy head of the Political Administration was N.N. Zimin. In 1928, on Stalin's initiative, he was appointed deputy head of the Central Committee's organisational department and then as head of its department of culture and propaganda. In 1930 he became secretary of the East Siberian ispolkom, and in 1932 secretary of the North Caucasus krai ispolkom.[64]

Opposition to the new policies was intense, particularly in the Ukraine. The Ukrainian party's Central Committee on 23 July issued instructions for the disciplining of railway officials for breaching the Sovnarkom-Central Committee resolutions.[65]

On 18 August 1933 the Politburo established the Central Committee–Sovnarkom Transport Commission, which comprised: Molotov (chairman), Kaganovich (vice-chairman), Stalin, Voroshilov, Andreev, Ordzhonikidze, Rudzutak, and Blagonravov.[66] This had a standing similar to that of the Politburo's Defence Commission. Andreev reported to the XVII party congress that this 'special permanent acting commission of the Politburo of the Central Committee' had been set up on Stalin's initiative.[67] Voroshilov reported to the congress that L. M. Kaganovich, Stalin's effective second-in-command, was the Politburo member largely responsible for oversight of the railways, with almost half of his time 'at one time' devoted to transport.[68]

A major purge of Narkomput's central administrations, directed at wreckers, saboteurs, and alien and hostile class elements, began in June 1933, headed by R. S. Zemlyachka.[69] Party membership on the railways was reduced from 250,000 to 200,000. Membership of the Komsomol at the end of the purge was only 112,000, half that of the party membership, a situation not repeated in any other sector of the economy.[70]

In the winter of 1933/4 the Politburo's Transport Commission was preoccupied with securing supplies to the Far East, establishing military discipline on the Ussuri and Transbaikal lines, and securing the transport needs of the two key industrial regions of the Donbass and Kuzbass.[71] In spite of these organisational changes the performance of the railways in the winter of 1933–4 was poor, reflected in a series of government resolutions on improving track maintenance, locomotive repairs, and ensuring supplies to the southern metallurgical works.[72]

The Recovery of the Railways, 1934

The XVII party congress, the 'congress of victors', met in January–February 1934. One of the most remarkable features of the congress was the debate on the railways. In his Central Committee report Stalin noted that the freight turn-over of the railways had increased from 133.9 milliard tons/kilometres in 1930 to 172 milliard tons/kilometres in 1933. Nevertheless, transport had become a bottleneck for the whole economy. Whilst acknowledging that supplies to the railways were inadequate, he diagnosed the source of the difficulty as 'the well known disease, namely bureaucratic-routine methods of management'.[73]

Stalin's speech set the tone, with severe criticism being directed at Narkomput by Voroshilov, Rudzutak, Molotov, Kuibyshev, Ordzho-

nikidze and others. Voroshilov concluded with a stark warning: 'Now that comrade Stalin is really turning his attention to transportation, comrades, you may be sure that all joking is going to be laid aside.'[74] Andreev, who had demanded a huge increase in investment in the railways during the Second Five-Year Plan, was forced into a humiliating self-criticism, pledging that the railways would do all in their power to improve performance.

On 14 February 1934 the Politburo confirmed the composition of its Transport Commission. Kaganovich, who also headed the Central Committee's Transport Section, was made chairman. The commission members were Stalin, Molotov, Andreev, Ordzhonikidze, Voroshilov and Blagonravov. Rudzutak was dropped as a member. On 7 May A.M. Postnikov, deputy narkom of Narkomput, replaced Blagonravov as a member of the commission.[75] In July Kaganovich and Zhdanov stood down as chairman and deputy chairman of the Central Committee's Transport Section, remaining only as observers. N.N. Zimin took over as chairman.[76] Under Kaganovich's direction, Zimin also headed the Commission of Party Control's Transport Group, which led the attack on Narkomput in 1934.

Two joint Sovnarkom–Central Committee resolutions on 9 and 23 March strongly censured Narkomput and demanded improvements in the planning of freight traffic, particularly on the lines supplying the Donbass and the metallurgical works of the Ukraine, urging greater use of the courts in cases of serious transgressions.[77] These two resolutions, Gosplan's *Planovoe khozyaistvo* reported twelve months later, 'were adopted under the direct leadership and on the initiative of comrade Stalin'.[78] The Politburo from May 1934 onwards forced up the monthly loading targets for the railways.[79]

The shortage of spare parts supplied by Narkomtyazhprom to Narkomput resulted in intervention by the Politburo's Transport Commission in April.[80] A Politburo commission, headed by Zhdanov and including Kaganovich and Kirov, was established to examine the production of spare parts in Narkomput's works.[81] On 4 June a joint Sovarkom-Central Committee decree directed Narkomput to increase the production of spare parts in its own works.[82]

In 1934 the policy of repression against railway workers, initiated in 1932, was intensified.[83] This was sanctioned by the Politburo.[84] On 1 June a joint Sovnarkom-Central Committee decree, 'Concerning the Struggle with Hooliganism on the Railways', approved strict punishments for accident causers and those who stole state property on the railways.[85] In July Yu.Yu. Mezhin was appointed chairman of the

USSR Supreme Court's Transport Collegium.[86] In one case the Politburo pronounced, before the trial had been arranged, that one individual guilty of causing an accident should be executed.[87]

THE SECOND FIVE-YEAR PLAN

The XVII party congress resolution on the Second Five-Year Plan accorded priority to the reconstruction of transport (mainly rail), with the increase in capital investment outstripping that of industry.[88]

TsIK and Sovnarkom on 17 November approved the Second Five-Year Plan, the main outlines of which had been approved by the XVII party congress. Investment in the railways was set at 18.7 milliard rubles compared to a figure of over 20 milliard rubles proposed by NKPS. It envisaged an expansion in the size of the network by 11,200 kilometres, and an increase in the length of electrified track by 4,800 kilometres. Stalin appears to have played only a limited role in drafting the plan, which was largely the work of Kuibyshev in Gosplan and Molotov in Sovnarkom.

On 25 December the Politburo approved a Central Committee resolution to increase the production target for freight wagons to 80,000 (2-axle equivalents) for 1935, compared to a target of 45,000 in the Second Five-Year Plan.[89] The decision emanated from Stalin, possibly persuaded by Kaganovich, head of the Politburo's Transport Commission. Lobbying from Narkomput no doubt also played its part. The decision, however, was shaped largely by wider concerns regarding the backwardness of the railways for the economic and defence needs of the country, and alarm at the growing accident rate on the railways.

The decision blasted a hole in the Second Five-Year Plan, which Gosplan and Sovnarkom had laboured over so long and which had been approved only a month previously. The new obligations placed on Narkomtyazhpom were a rude reminder to Ordzhonikidze where power in determining economic priorities lay. The Second Five-Year Plan, although approved by the Politburo, was not Stalin's plan and he had no compunction over revising it.

From 1930 to 1934 Narkomtyazhprom had systematically failed to fulfil its plans for the supply of freight wagons and rails to Narkomput. It was periodically censured for this failure, but it incurred no real penalty. Narkomput attributed the transport crisis of the early 1930s to this failure. It embittered relations between the two commissariats.

Ordzhonikidze in 1935 described the new target as a 'Stalinist order' (*Stalinskii zakaz*) which Narkomtyazhprom was honour-bound to implement.[90]

Forcing the Pace, 1935

The party leadership's decision in December 1934 to increase investment in the railways indicated a fundamental change of course. On 28 February 1935 L.M. Kaganovich, head of the Politburo's Transport Commission, on Stalin's authorization, was appointed narkom of Narkomput in place of A.A. Andreev.[91] On 3 March he was appointed a member of STO.[92] Narkomput now had a powerful advocate in the Politburo, balancing the influence of Narkomtyazhprom's Ordzhonikidze.

Kaganovich was at this time generally regarded as Stalin's right hand man, noted for his sycophantic praise of the *vozhd'*. His appointment directly linked Narkomput with the Politburo, Secretariat and Orgburo, investing it with a new political significance. Sovnarkom and STO, except with regard to plan targets, appear to have exercised only nominal control over Narkomput after February 1935. External supervision over Narkomput via the Commission of Party Control (KPK) and the Commission of Soviet Control (KSK), which had been such a irritant to Andreev, virtually ceased. In April 1935 the Politburo's Transport Commission was reorganised; Kaganovich remained a member, but Molotov replaced him as chairman.[93]

Under Kaganovich from February 1935 until September 1936 repression on the railways was drastically reduced. However, his policy to force up the targets for performance on the railways was combined with an intense ideological campaign against conservative specialists in Narkomput who were branded as 'limiters'. In Narkomput Kaganovich set about tightening up the commissariat's system of internal control. He took with him to Narkomput N.N. Zimin, the head of the Central Committee's Transport Section and head of KPK'S Transport Group, which had led the attack on Narkomput in 1934. Zimin was appointed deputy narkom and head of Narkomput's Political Administration, replacing V.I. Polonskii.[94] Narkomput's links with the NKVD were reinforced. On 25 March V.A. Kishkin, who had headed the NKVD's Transport Section, was appointed head of Narkomput's Sector of Control. He was replaced as head of the NKVD's Transport Section by A.M. Shanin, who was closely linked to Yagoda.[95]

At the behest of the Central Committee and Sovnarkom a meeting of Narkomput's employees was convened in Moscow from 1 to 4 April. It was attended by Stalin, Kaganovich, Molotov, Ordzhonikidze, Voroshilov, Mikoyan, Andreev, Chubar' and Ezhov. It discussed the fight against accidents, the speeding up of the turn-around time for freight wagons, and capital construction work for 1935. After 'lively debate', a number of technical commissions were set up to work out practical proposals in each of these areas.[96]

The loading rates for March and April were set at 60,230 and 61,500 wagons respectively by Politburo commissions.[97] In April a joint Sovnarkom–Central Committee resolution on speeding up the turn-around time of freight wagons ordered Narkomtyazhprom to reduce by 15 per cent the time it held on to Narkomput's wagons.[98]

Stalin appears also to have used anonymous press articles in order to push forward particular policies. An article in *Pravda* on 11 May 1935 by 'Transportnik' (probably Stalin himself) denounced advocates of the 'limit' theory in Narkomput's Scientific Technical Research Institute of Operations, and singled out Postnikov and Arnol'dov, the former and current heads of the Operational Administration.[99] Arnol'dov and Postnikov were forced into humiliating self-criticisms.[100]

Stalin, addressing Red Army graduates on 4 May, noted that the country now had a 'growing and improving transport system'. Having overcome the dearth of technology, it was now necessary to 'master the technology', issuing his famous slogan that 'cadres decide everything', but arguing that it was necessary also to show a respectful attitude to workers.[101] This more conciliatory tone was reflected in pronouncements by other party leaders in 1935 and 1936.

In recognition of Narkomput's achievements on 30 July a grand reception was held in the Kremlin for four hundred railway workers. Stalin, in a short address, lauded the role of the railways in the USSR; the USSR was a 'great railway power' (*derzhava*). The daily loading rate had risen from 56,000 wagons in January to 73,000 wagons in July. This, however, he argued, was still insufficient, and he proposed that the target be again raised to 75,000–80,000 wagons.[102] Not to be outdone, Kaganovich pledged Narkomput to attain a daily loading of 80,000 wagons as soon as possible.

Kalinin, chairman of TsIK, in August 1935 attributed the recovery of the railways to Stalin himself, 'who more than anyone else works over the organisation of transport, and for three years already has not

let it out of his sights'.[103] From August 1935 onwards Stalin's direct role in shaping rail transport policy is less evident. Accounts of the work of the Politburo's Transport Commission also disappear.

The Stakhanovite movement on the railways developed from August 1935 onwards. The First All Union Congress of Stakhanovites of Industry and Transport opened on 14 November 1935 in the Kremlin's Great Hall.[104] Kaganovich announced a major breakthrough in boosting railway freight traffic as a result of Stakhanovite methods, confounding the warnings of the 'limiters'.[105]

Stalin hailed the Stakhanovite movement's role in raising the cultural–technical level of the working class, bridging the gulf between mental and manual labour as part of the transition from socialism to communism. Stalin offered the slogan – 'New people, new times, new technology'. Managers and engineers who clung to outdated technical norms and who obstructed the Stakhanovite movement, Stalin warned, would have to be restrained (*obuzdat'*). In Narkomput the 'limiters' had been disproved, and it had been necessary to give them a 'slap in the teeth'.

The Stakhanovite movement, Stalin asserted, 'smashes the old technical norms'. Underlying Stalin's assessment of the situation lay a more ambitious conception of cadres policy for the future: 'Will we really lack the courage to smash the conservatism of certain of our engineers and technicians, to smash the old traditions and standards and allow free scope to the new forces of the working class?'[106]

The Central Committee's resolution, 'Questions concerning industry and transport in connection with the Stakhanovite movement', outlined a radical agenda: to develop the Stakhanovite movement, to reconstruct the whole science of rail transport on a new basis, purged of conservative influences, to develop a mass programme for the training of railway workers in technical minimum standards (*tekhminimum*) (500,000 workers in 1936), and the promotion of the most successful students into responsible positions.[107]

This represented a return to the policies of mass mobilisation and the promotion of workers and young graduates of 1929–31 in which Stalin, Molotov, Ordzhonikidze and Kaganovich had played such a crucial role.[108] This return to the policies of 'cultural revolution' carried with it a direct threat to the those cadres and specialists in administrative positions. Ezhov's report to the plenum on the checking of party cards was ominously directed at the influence of counter-revolutionaries and 'alien' elements within the party.

The Initiation of the Purges, 1936

In 1936 the attack on the 'limiters' was intensified. The new Narkomput Soviet, approved by the Politburo on 9 January 1936, comprised 165 members, and served the campaign of forcing up targets and breaking the resistance of conservative elements within the commissariat.[109] The Soviet, which met from 16 to 23 April, approved radical proposals for raising the technical and operational performance indicators on the railways.[110]

The Politburo protocols provide no clear indication of the coming purges. The drastic change of line came on 29 July with the issuing of a top secret circular, which was sent to all party committees on 'The Terrorist Activity of the Trotskyite, Zinovievite Counter-Revolutionary Bloc'.[111]

In contrast to Ordzhonikidze and Kaganovich, Stalin by the end of July 1936 appears to have become convinced of the necessity for a mass purge of the party–state apparatus, and was now confident that it could be realised. What triggered the timing of this change is unclear. For how long he had entertained this idea is a matter of conjecture.

Addressing a meeting of railway workers in July 1936 Kaganovich asserted that the situation with regard to railway cadres was in general healthy. Enemies remained: 'they are few, they are less than they were, but they exist.' In the main he offered these guidelines: 'Here the way is not in purging and repression. No, for ninety-nine per cent of railway employees are honest people, who are committed to their work, who love their motherland'.[112] Kaganovich stressed the need to train and promote still more young engineering specialists and to reorganise the technical institutes (*tekhnikums*) and research institutes, to prepare highly qualified cadres who were 'grounded in the achievements of world railway technology'.[113]

In 1935 and 1936 Kaganovich repeatedly stressed the need to avoid mass repression on the railways.[114] These were similar to the concerns voiced by Ordzhonikidze. At the Narkomtyazhprom Soviet at the end of June Ordzhonikidze dismissed allegations of wrecking against his technical–managerial personnel as nonsense (*chepukha*) and delivered a rousing defence of his cadres.[115]

On 19 August the trial of the 'Trotskyite–Zinovievite Centre' began. Orchestrated mass meetings of workers and party activists demanded the death penalty.[116] The accused were found guilty and executed. The trial unleashed a hysterical campaign against so-called Trotskyist–Zinovievist wreckers and 'enemies of the people'.[117] The campaign

dramatically changed the climate of opinion, providing a pretext for the settling of scores within the apparatus and greatly strengthened the power of the state's repressive organs. A vigorous campaign was initiated against alleged Trotskyist wreckers in industry and on the railways.[118]

Kaganovich in August and September issued a stream of orders to individual line administrations and heads of the *politotdely* demanding immediate improvements in their work.[119] In a letter to Stalin on 14 September Kaganovich reported that the NKVD's Transport Department had supplied him with the names of a Trotskyist group who were employed on the railways in Moscow. He had examined the names and found many had been employed in Moscow under Uglanov. This, he suggested, implied the existence of a Trotskyist–Rightist conspiracy which needed to be unmasked.[120]

On 25 September Stalin and Zhdanov sent their famous telegram to the Politburo demanding the removal of Yagoda as head of the NKVD.[121] Under Ezhov the NKVD was purged and radically reorientated. A. M. Shanin, head of the Transport Section, was ousted and at the trial of Bukharin in 1938 was implicated by Yagoda with membership of a rightist conspiracy.[122] He was replaced by L. N. Bel'skii, formerly the head of the Militia, who became deputy narkom of the NKVD on 3 November 1936.[123]

The purge on the railways was signalled by the arrest of Ya.A. Lifshits, Kaganovich's deputy narkom in Narkomput, in November 1936. Like the arrest of Pyatakov in Narkomtyazhprom, it indicated a shift towards repression, directed initially at former oppositionists in industry and on rail transport.

The performance of the railways in 1935 and 1936, nevertheless, was impressive, achieved by increased investment and improved management.[124] Narkomput in these two years, like Narkomtyazhprom, was one of the beneficiaries of this centralised system of decision-making.

The Purges on the Railways

Initially the two organisation which were targeted by the purgers were Narkomtyazhprom and Narkomput. The Politburo on 9 February 1937 instructed Ordzhonikidze and Kaganovich to prepare reports for the Central Committee plenum on wrecking, diversion and espionage in Narkomtyazhprom and Narkomput. Ezhov was to report on the NKVD's work in industry and transport, and also on the cases against Bukharin and Rykov. Zhdanov was to report on the role of party

organs in the elections to the Supreme Soviet. Stalin was to report on the education of party cadres and measures to fight Trotskyist influences.[125]

On 18 February the Politburo discussed the reports for the plenum. Within hours of the meeting Ordzhonikidze was dead, either a result of suicide or murder.[126] His death followed a violent quarrel with Stalin.[127] The tentative understanding between Ordzhonikidze and Kaganovich in 1936 to block the drift to mass repression was foiled. Kaganovich now committed himself fully to the purge.

The Central Committee plenum, delayed on account of Ordzhonikidze's death, met on 23 February. Stalin's report on 3 March, entitled 'Deficiencies in party work and measures for the liquidation of Trotskyites and other double-dealers', signalled the unleashing of the terror. The struggle with contemporary Trotskyism had to be waged by new methods of 'uprooting and destroying'. It was necessary to advance the new people: 'We have tens of thousands of able people, talented people. All that is necessary is to recognise them and in time to promote them.'[128]

Molotov's report dealt with wrecking in Narkomtyazhprom and Narkomput. By 1 March 1937 137 people in Narkomput had been arrested and tried. Molotov quoted an extract from the Central Committee's resolution on this question, which censured the 'passivity' of Narkomtyazhprom and Narkomput.[129] Ezhov's report concerning the lessons of the January trial, entitled 'The results of wrecking, diversion and espionage by Japanese–German Trotskyite agents', was also discussed.

Kaganovich's report on 28 February reflected a fundamental change in his position. Wrecking, he now asserted, had assumed fantastic proportions and had reached into all aspects of railway administration, adding 'It is good that this wrecking was uncovered now, before our country is subject to military attack.' Whilst denouncing wreckers, he also sought to defend Narkomput and to limit the damage to the commissariat.[130]

Kaganovich's report to the meeting of the Narkomput aktiv in March underlined how far he had shifted his position since July 1936 with regard to sabotage on the railways: 'I cannot name a single line, not a single network where Trotskyist–Japanese wreckers have not been . . . And moreover there is not one branch of railway transport where such wrecking has not taken place.'[131]

In the summer of 1937 the railways were performing well in spite of the purges. On 22 August L. M. Kaganovich was appointed narkom of

Narkomtyazhprom. The new narkom of Narkomput, appointed on 22 August was the relatively unknown A. V. Bakulin.[132] Following a sharp deterioration in performance in the winter of 1937–8 the Politburo on 5 April reappointed L. M. Kaganovich as narkom of Narkomput in place of the discredited Bakulin. Kaganovich combined the leadership of Narkomput with his posts as narkom of Narkomtyazhprom.[133]

Whatever his initial reaction, Kaganovich after February 1937 became one of the most ardent of the purgers. In 1937 and 1938 several tens of thousands of railway employees were repressed. After heavy industry and the army the railways appear to have been the sector most severely hit by the purge. From April to October 1938 Kaganovich undertook a major renewal of Narkomput's leading personnel. Only then was the purge reined in.[134]

CONCLUSION

The protocols of the Politburo, Orgburo and Secretariat clearly indicate the sharp decline in these bodies in 1933. The precise role of individuals, particularly Stalin, however, remains difficult to determine. Without the working-papers of the Politburo it will remain a matter of conjecture. What can now be asserted with some confidence is that 1933 marked a turning point in the consolidation of Stalin's dictatorship and a decisive change in the organisation of policy-making. This did not mean, as illustrated by the case study of rail transport policy, that the influence of other leaders and the role of institutions was eliminated.

Rail transport policy was shaped in part by the pressure from Narkomput, heavy industry, the military, the control organs, the planning and financial agencies. The Politburo, assuming responsibility for general policy strategy, was by no means the prisoner of these forces, and could disregard and override these pressures. In 1933–4 the Politburo, through its Transport Commission, assumed the initiative from the Sovnarkom in transport policy. Within this system Stalin himself played a crucial role, without himself becoming immersed in the details of decision-making on a day to day basis.

Stalin's periodic interventions played a key role in steering transport policy. They were not the result of prolonged open policy debate and were accepted without demur by his colleagues. Stalin's authority in these matters, at least in public, was unquestioned. Stalin's intervention

indicated his dissatisfaction not only with Narkomput's leadership, but also with Molotov's Sovnarkom and Kuibyshev's Gosplan. Although Stalin was able to intervene in matters of technical policy, such as investment and loading targets, his intervention on ideological matters, and on security affairs was equally important in defining the parameters of debate.

Under Kaganovich Narkomput regained a much greater degree of autonomy than it had enjoyed under Andreev. A similar status had been gained by Vesenkha under Ordzhonikidze's leadership after 1930. This was largely a function of Kaganovich's success in turning around the railways. Even here, however, Kaganovich closely adhered to the leadership's policy guidelines. Kaganovich's appointment gave Narkomput its most influential leader since Dzerzhinskii. With the erosion of the Politburo's power Stalin increasingly took decisions in consultation with individual members of the Politburo with responsibility in particular areas. Stalin's authority increasingly depended on his ability to operate a policy of divide and rule amongst his subordinates and amongst the institutional empires which they headed.

On the key question of the unleashing of the terror in 1936 the question of Stalin's responsibility looms large. The Politburo protocols provide no evidence on this score, but the existing published sources indicate that Stalin's role was decisive. What is perhaps more surprising is the evidence of dissent within the ruling oligarchy regarding this policy, with Ordzhonikidze and Kaganovich in 1935 and 1936 both repeatedly speaking out against mass repression. Kaganovich, unlike Ordzhonikidze, soon accommodated himself to Stalin's new line. Whereas in 1933 Stalin acquired the organisational means to dictate policy, it was only in 1936–38 that he acquired the power of life and death by which to compel his colleagues in the Politburo to abide by his decisions.

Notes

1. L. Trotsky, *The Challenge of the Left Opposition 1926–1927* (New York, 1975) pp. 75, 87.
2. A. Avtorkhanov, *Stalin and the Communist Party* (Munich, 1959) pp. 114–15.
3. I. V. Stalin, *Sochineniya* (M., 1955) vol. 11, pp. 71–8.
4. A preliminary attempt to calculate the frequency of meetings of the Politburo, based on incomplete archive sources, is provided by John Lowenhardt *et al.*, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Politburo* (London, 1992) pp. 106–9.

5. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/667–1031.
6. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/921, 53/69. On 23 April 1933 the Politburo resolved that Politburo sessions henceforth would be held on the 5th, 15th and 25th of each month. In practice the meetings tended to be held fortnightly, most frequently on the 1st and 15th of each month.
7. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/986, 53.
8. N.S. Khrushchev, *The Secret Speech* (edited by Zh. Medvedev and R. Medvedev) (Nottingham, 1976) pp. 76–7.
9. RTsKhIDNI, 17/113/600 to 17/114/40.
10. See the comments of Kaganovich: *XVII S"ezd VKP(b), stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow, 1934) p. 564.
11. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/941, 55/35.
12. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/946, 90/78.
13. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/939, 69/49.
14. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/940, 153/137.
15. Niels Erik Rosenfeldt, *Knowledge and Power: The Role of Stalin's Secret Chancellery in the Soviet System of Government* (Copenhagen, 1978). This is still a valuable book and has yet to be superseded by work based on the archives of these institutions.
16. M. Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964) p. 169.
17. *Pravada* (hereafter *P*), 5 March, 1931.
18. *Sobranie zakonov* (hereafter *SZ*), 1931, ii, art. 18, 100.
19. See K. Nagatsuna, 'A Utopian-Ideologue in Soviet Industrialisation: S.A. Bessonov and Transport Reconstruction Debates, 1928–1930'. Paper presented to the Soviet Industrialisation Project Seminar, CREES, University of Birmingham, January 1989.
20. I.V. Stalin, *Sochineniya* (Moscow, 1955) xii, pp. 337, 347–8.
21. *P.*, 15 July, 1930.
22. *XVI s"ezd VKP, stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow, 1930) pp. 273–5 (Amosov).
23. *Kommunist*, no. 11, 1990, pp. 94–106; Vera Tolz, 'How to Run a Show Trial: The Stalin-Molotov Letters', *Radio Liberty: Report on the USSR*, vol. 2, no. 36. 1990, pp. 4–5.
24. *SZ.*, 1931, arts. 11, 12.
25. V.V. Kuibyshev, *Stat'i i rechi* (Moscow, 1937) v. 124. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/479, 88 (Andreev's co-report to the Central Committee plenum, June 1931).
26. *KPSS v rezolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK* (Moscow, 1984) v, 255–63.
27. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/479, 149 (Rukhimovich's report to the Central Committee plenum in June 1931).
28. *P.*, 28 January, 1931 (Rukhimovich's speech to VTsSPS) *P.*, 4 April, 1931 (Rukhimovich's speech to railway construction workers).
29. *P.*, 17 May, 1931.
30. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/479, 149.
31. *KPSS v rez.*, v, p. 303.
32. GARF, 5446/82/7, 28–9.
33. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/479, 85, 87, 90.
34. *KPSS v rez.*, v, pp. 301–13; See also *P.*, 17 June, 1931.

35. *SZ.*, 1931, art. 292.
36. Stalin, *Sochineniya*, 13; 56–8.
37. *Problem ekonomiki.*, 1932, no. 4–5, p. 84 (A. Sidorov).
38. J. Haslam, *Soviet Foreign Policy, 1930–1933* (London, 1983) ch. 7.
39. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/846, 847, 848.
40. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/851. The need for a change of leadership was stressed in a joint resolution of Sovnarkom and the Central Committee of 1 October: *P.*, 11 October, 1931.
41. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/852. Commission headed by Postyshev, including Andreev, Bulat and Grichmanov.
42. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/853. The decree was to be edited by Molotov, Stalin and Kaganovich.
43. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/852, 19–24.
44. *P.*, 14 October, 1931. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/852. The Politburo agreed that these orders be issued by Andreev, after consultation with Molotov and Kaganovich.
45. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/484, 33.
46. J. Barber, *Soviet Historians in Crisis, 1928–1932* (London, 1981) ch. 10.
47. See E. A. Rees, *Stalinism and Soviet Rail Transport* (Basingstoke, 1995) pp. 53–5.
48. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/905; 17/3/909, 8.
49. *Gudok* (hereafter *G*), 8, 11 August, 1932.
50. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/895, 60/33; 17/3/898, 20.
51. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/899.
52. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/899, 903, 904.
53. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/909, 910, 912.
54. *KPSS v rez.*, vi, pp. 74–9; *G.*, July 4, 1933. The resolution was prepared by Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich and Andreev: RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/926, 13/13, 43/34.
55. *SZ.*, 1933, art.241, 242; *G.*, 9 July, 1933.
56. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/924, 123/106.
57. *KPSS v rez.*, vi, pp. 80–4; p., 11 July, 1933. The resolution was prepared by Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich and Andreev: RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/926, 56/47, 57/48.
58. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/926, 64/55. The commission included Andreev, Ezhov, Polonskii, Zimin and Amosov.
59. *P.*, 1 August, 1933.
60. A. A. Andreev, *Za bol'shevistskoe providenie reshenii SNK i TsK VKP(b) rabote zheleznodorozhnogo transporta* (Moscow, 1933), p. 3.
61. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/927, 23/9, 24/10; *SZ.*, 1933, art. 181, 182, 183.
62. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/927, 24/10.
63. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/927, 109/95; *P.*, August 1, 1933; *G.*, August 14, 1933; On Polonskii see *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Moscow, 1975) vol. 20, p. 248. C. Merridale, *Moscow Politics and the Rise of Stalin* (London, 1990) pp. 52–3, 70–1.
64. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/927, 110/96; *Kandidat v deputaty Soveta Soyuza Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR pervyi sekretar' Yaroslavskogo Obkoma VKP(b) Nikolai Nikolaevich Zimin* (Yaroslavl', 1937).

65. *P.*, 27 July, 1933.
66. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/929, 44/23, 52/31.
67. *XVII S"ezd VKP(b)*, pp. 587–8.
68. *Ibid.*, pp. 226–7.
69. *G.*, 12, 28 June, 1933; 1, 9, 10, 11, 17 July, 1933; 22 August, 1933; 2, 24 September, 1933.
70. *XVII S"ezd VKP(b)*, pp. 602–7 (Polonskii).
71. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/939, 85/65; 17/3/943, 160/142; 17/3/943, 162/144. See also *Sotsialisticheskii Transport* (hereafter ST), 1934, no. 7, pp. 4–5. See also *Akty i opisi sekretnykh i sovershenno sekretnykh del Transportnoi Komissii pri Sovnarkom SSSR za 1933–1935gg* in GARF.
72. *ST.*, 1934, no. 2, p. 63; *G.*, 30 September, 1933.
73. *XVII S"ezd VKP(b)*, p. 27. See also Stalin's interview with the American journalist Walter Duranty on the problems of transport: I. V. Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vol. 12–3, pp. 286–7.
74. *Ibid.*, pp. 226–7.
75. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/939, 42/25; 17/3/945, 36/20.
76. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/948, 135/48, 139/122.
77. *SZ.*, 1934, art. 98. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/941, 42/25, 51–54. *SZ.*, 1934, art. 117.
78. *PKh.*, 1935, no. 3, p. 7.
79. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/944, 78/61.
80. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/53, resolution 6.
81. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/945, 192/176, 232/216; 17/3/946, 92/80, pp. 71–82.
82. *SZ.*, 1934, i, 233.
83. A number of court cases were reported in *Gudok*, 11,12, 14, 27 July, 1934; 5, 9, 11, 14, 23 August, 1934; 4, 14 September, 1934; 28, 30 November, 1934; F.O.N 52/52/38, *Iz.*, 10 December, 1934, *G.*, 16, 21 December, 1934.
84. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/940, 3. See also *Bol'shevik*, 1934, no. 6, p. 8.
85. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/946, 65/50 and pp. 65–6; p., 3 June, 1934 (ed).
86. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/949, 42/24.
87. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/954, 15. See also F.O. N6314/37/38; *P.*, 30 October, 1934; *P.*, 5 November, 1934.
88. *XVII S"ezd VKP(b)*, p. 665. Capital investment during the First and Second Five-Year Plans (in million rubles at 1933 prices) is given below:

	A *Actual investment First 5YP*	*B* *Planned investment Second 5YP*	*C* *B as % of A*
Total capital investment	50.5	133.4	264
Industry	25	69.5	278
Agriculture	9.7	15.2	156
Transport	8.9	26.3	295

89. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/955; 17/3/956, 35. The resolution was drafted by a commission comprising Ordzhonikidze, Pyatakov, Dotsenko, Ostrovskii, Andreev, Arnol'dov, Aleksandrov and Stolbov.
90. *P.*, 2 February, 1935. Stalin's responsibility for the decision was confirmed also by Chubar': *P.*, 3 February, 1935.
91. *SZ.*, 1935, art. 28, 29.
92. *G.*, 4 March, 1935.
93. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/962, 6, 67, 87. M. P. Khluser replaced S. I. Gaister as secretary, when the latter was transferred back to work in Narkomput. V.Ya. Chubar' was appointed a member of the commission.
94. *SZ.*, 1935, art. 33–4; *G.*, 5 March, 1935. Polonskii became secretary of VTsSPS.
95. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/961, 196, 197. p., 27 November, 1935. On Shanin see A. Orlov, *The Secret History of Stalin's Crimes* (London, 1954) pp. 23–4, 83–5, 343.
96. *P.*, 16 April, 1935; F.O. N 2107/52/38 Chilston to Sir John Simon 20.4.35.
97. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/959, 95, 117. The commission included Kaganovich (convener), Chubar', Andreev, Postnikov, Mezhlauk and Zimin. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/961, 130, 156. The commission included Chubar' (convener), Kaganovich, Postnikov, Kviring, Ordzhonikidze, Mikoyan and Kleiner.
98. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/962, 174.
99. *P.*, 11 May, 1935; see also *PKh.*, 1935, no. 8, pp. 72–93 (Breus and Shleifman).
100. *P.*, 16 May, 1935. *G.*, 23 June, 1935.
101. *P.*, 6 May, 1935.
102. *ST.*, 1936, no. 5, p. 3.
103. *Iz.*, 18 August, 1935.
104. *Pervoe Vsesoyuznoe Soveshchanie rabochikh i rabotnits Stakhanovtsev, 14–17 noyabrya 1935, stenograficheskii otchet*, (Moscow, 1935).
105. *P.*, 11 November, 1935.
106. *P.*, 22 November 22, 1935. Stalin's views were echoed in *PKh.*, 1935, no. 10, pp. 85–6.
107. *KPSS v rez*, vi, pp. 294–5.
108. S. Fitzpatrick, 'Stalin and the Making of a New Elite', *SR*, 38, 3 (1979).
109. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/974, 174; p. 12 January, 1936. See also *S.Z.*, 1936, art. 40.
110. *Sovet pri narodnom komissare putei soobshcheniya, 16–23 aprelya 1936 goda* (Moscow, 1936).
111. M. Fainsod, *Smolensk under Soviet Rule* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958) p. 233.
112. *ST*, 1936, no. 5, p 8: *P.*, 2 August, 1936.
113. *ST*, 1936, no. 5, p. 13.
114. See Kaganovich's speech to the Central Committee in December 1935 (*Izvestiya*, 28 December 1935), and his report to the Narkomput Soviet in April 1936 *ST.*, 1936, no. 3, p. 7). Kaganovich's criticism of methods of mass repression on the railways is discussed in more detail in E. A. Rees, *Stalinism and Soviet Rail Transport*.

115. O.V. Khlevnyuk, *1937-i: Stalin, NKVD i sovetskoe obshchestvo* (Moscow, 1992) p. 122. See also in this volume Francesco Benvenuti, 'A Stalinist Victim of Stalinism; "Sergo" Ordzhonikidze'.
116. *G.*, 23 August, 1936.
117. *G.*, 16, 18 August, 1936.
118. *P.*, 6, 8, 15, 19 August, 1936.
119. *G.*, 12, 14, 18, 26, 28 August, 1936; 1, 10, 15, 17, 24, 28 September, 1936; 23 October, 1936; 5 November, 1936.
120. *Istochnik*, 1993, no. 2, pp. 17–18.
121. R. Conquest, *The Great Terror* (Harmondsworth, 1971) p. 218.
122. *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 139, 275. On Shanin see also *The Trial of the 'Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites'*, (Moscow, 1938) pp. 549, 569.
123. *Izvestiya.*, 4 November, 1936. See also *Iz.*, 29 November, 1935.
124. See H. Hunter, *Soviet Transportation Policy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957)
125. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/983, 339.
126. Khlevnyuk, *1937-i: Stalin, NKVD i sovetskoe obshchestvo*, pp. 138–9.
127. Kendall E. Bailes, *Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin* (Princeton, 1978) pp. 283–7: R. Medvedev, *Let History Judge* (London, 1976) pp. 195–6.
128. *P.*, 28 March, 1937.
129. *ST.*, 1937, no. 5, p. 18; *Bol'shevik*, 1937, no. 8, p. 29.
130. *Voprosy Istorii*, 1993, vol. 9, pp. 3–32. D.Volkogonov, *Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy* (London, 1991) p. 247.
131. *XXII S"ezd KPSS, stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow, 1961) vol. II, p. 215 (quoted by N.M. Shvernik).
132. *SZ.*, 1937, i, 239.
133. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/998, 64; *P.*, 5 April, 1938.
134. *Zheleznodorozhnyi transport v gody industrializatsii SSSR (1926–1941)* (Moscow, 1970) pp. 309–10. See also E.A. Rees, *Stalinism and Soviet Rail Transport, 1928–1941*, pp. 241–2.

6 A Stalinist Victim of Stalinism: 'Sergo' Ordzhonikidze

Francesco Benvenuti

Grigorii Konstantinovich Ordzhonikidze (known in the underground as 'Sergo') might seem at first glance a 'minor' character in Soviet history. In fact, he is one of the 'great' minors, one of those political leaders whom scholars might approach when interpretations of the main characters of the plot (in our case Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Bukharin) seem to have reached a temporary impasse; or when studying the 'great' characters does not appear, for the time being, susceptible to adding to our understanding of the chain of events of which they are a part. The historians' interest in such 'minor' characters may also reflect their own cultural taste or general assumptions. Those inclined to assert the existence of a political and economic 'alternative' to Stalin's harsh rule in the period 1927–9 may find Ordzhonikidze to be an unsympathetic figure of small significance. He was a man who during the decisive phase of his career (1926–37) acted almost exclusively within Stalin's personal entourage. And his fame is due mainly to the role he played in the political developments following Stalin's installation at the height of power.

On the other hand, scholars who are keen not to dramatise the political turn-about of 1929, and who stress the fundamental continuity of Soviet history from the Revolution through the 1930s, may be more willing to study the political profiles of the group of Bolshevik leaders who lent their support to Stalin during 1928–9. These scholars may credibly argue that an assessment of each individual's contribution to the formation of the political system which superseded the NEP could substantially improve our overall understanding of the period. Underlying this propensity is the suspicion that Stalin's 'comrades in arms' may have been more than mere puppets or cronies.

A further reason for curiosity concerning the 'minor' characters in the Stalin group springs from a certain perception of Stalinism itself. Stalinism was a pitiless system, both ultra-authoritarian and

oppressive, and yet politically it was neither homogeneous nor compact. The dictator's personality, his personal apparatus of power and repres-sion, were flanked by various and in part autonomous institutional agencies, and by 'supporters and allies, rather than real devotees'[1]: people who were often capable of influencing his action and of contrib-uting to his programme. The 'great minor characters' of Stalinism certainly included L. M. Kaganovich, S. M. Kirov, V. V. Kuibyshev, A. I. Mikoyan, V. M. Molotov, A. A. Zhdanov, and others (possibily N. I. Ezhov himself, as one historian has recently suggested).

Differences in scholars' general approach and cultural sensitivity are also relevant to the choice of the 'minor characters' as a topic because of a significant aspect of the development of Soviet studies in the West. A major intellectual problem for historians (also linked to present-day political struggles in post-Communist Russia) has been the question whether and in what measure the Soviet experience should be considered as the translation into reality of an original body of doctrine (Marxism–Leninism), or whether the key to understanding that experience should not rather be sought in the interplay of political, social and economic forces of which the history of the Soviet Union is constituted.

It is possible that a supporter of the first of the above opinions would pay no more than fleeting attention to an apparently second-rate political personality such as Ordzhonikidze. The latter may be considered as not having enjoyed any significant autonomy in regard to the main characters (Stalin, in particular), and to have possessed only a very modest intellectual, cultural and ideological relevance. On the other hand, scholars inclined to consider day-to-day, empirical politics as the driving force of Soviet history (and of human history, in general) may be more prone to turn to the study of characters without sophisticated intellectual or ideological credentials, but with the profile of vigorous organisers and influential politicians.

In the Bolshevik Party the latter type of revolutionary cadres would traditionally be called *praktiki* (the term implies a 'business-like' or 'practical' personality). In the underground period the *praktiki* were the cadres not directly involved in the flamboyant discussions on the world-historic perspectives of the Russian socialist revolution: people who had often received little formal education, who had only exceptionally or briefly lived abroad, but who were considered by their brighter comrades in the émigré circles in the West (the *intelligenty* or *teoretiki*, the theoreticians) to be particularly gifted and experienced in the techniques of conspiratorial work at home. Ordzhonikidze

travelled abroad on four occasions between 1907 and 1912 (Berlin, Persia, Paris and Prague), adding up to four months altogether. He also strove to complete a diploma in a vocational school. But it is clear that he basically fits the *praktiki* group in most ways.

The potential political impact of these men on the course of the Revolution could be momentous, as the case of Stalin himself demonstrates. In 1946, writing with a certain coquetry, the latter proudly claimed his affinity with the *praktiki* group.[2] It is the present author's opinion that political personalities of this nature (Stalin's included) may have been uncritically and unconsciously more receptive (i.e., less selective) than the 'theorists' to the heterogeneous political and ideological trends present in their milieu and epoch. They may also have been both absolutely and relatively far removed from the corpus of Marxist–Leninist doctrine properly defined. All the more fascinating the appeal to the historian of the Soviet Union of those referred to here as 'minor' characters. Unfortunately the information that is available today on Ordzhonikidze's personal biography was almost entirely assembled during the Soviet period. Not only is the information scanty and limited, it is also presented in the characteristic anecdotal and often hagiographic form that distinguishes official Soviet political biographies.[3]

Ordzhonikidze was born on 24 October 1886 in the Georgian village of Goresha, in a family somehow linked to the local lesser nobility. He entered the Russian Social-Democratic Workers Party in 1903 and took part in the 1905 revolution in the Caucasus. He was arrested four times: for several months in the winter of 1905–6; for one month in May 1907; from October 1907 until the second half of 1909; and finally in April 1912. Following his last arrest he was freed from exile in Siberia only after the February revolution in 1917.

In 1911 he played a crucial role as a liaison between the party's organisations in Russia and the leadership abroad. The Conference of Prague, in 1912, included him in the Central Committee, but in the following years he was probably unable to perform his high duties. In February 1917, after the fall of the tsarist regime, he was for a short time a member of the Yakutsk Soviet. He then moved to the capital and gained a seat in the Petrograd Soviet. In the summer of 1917 he was also active in the party organisation of Transcaucasia. After the October revolution he was given responsibility for the activities of the Cheka in the Ukraine and for food supply in southern Russia. During the civil war he served as a political commissar in the Red Army. He rapidly worked his way up to the highest military, party and

government posts in the Caucasus, notwithstanding a memorable military disaster for which he was largely held responsible by Trotsky, then Commissar of War.[4] In 1920 he contributed to the Sovietization of the republics of Georgia and Azerbaidzhan by leading Red Army units in support of local Bolsheviks. In 1921 he was fully reinstated as a Central Committee member. In 1924 he entered the supreme military organ of the USSR.

From 1926 onward his career ceased to be connected primarily with events linked to his area of origin. In that year he became chair of the Party Central Control Commission, People's Commissar of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate (TsKK-NKRKI), and a candidate member of the Politburo. This momentous advancement was clearly connected to the intra-party struggles of the time. He was a member of the authoritative team (which included his old friend S. M. Kirov, as well as K.E. Voroshilov and M.I. Kalinin) that was parachuted into Leningrad with the task of defeating the Left Oppositionists in the local party organisation. At this point he became a visible and important representative of the Stalinist majority in the Central Committee.[5] At the end of 1930, almost simultaneously, Ordzhonikdze was made chairman of Vesenkha (the Supreme Council of the National Economy) and a full member of the Politburo. In January 1932, when Vesenkha was abolished, he was put in charge of the newly established People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry (Narkomtyazhprom), which he led up to his premature death, on 18 February, 1937. His death occurred, ominously, on the eve of the February–March Central Committee plenum, which inaugurated the period of the Great Purges.

Up to the early 1930s, Ordzhonikidze's personal traits which are best known by scholars are essentially limited to those which he exhibited during the 'Georgian Affair' in March 1922, when he physically assaulted a local opponent of Stalin's constitutional project for a Transcaucasian Federation.[6] Further information concerning this same period seems to confirm the view that he had a fiery temper. At the X party congress in March 1921, a group of military men from the Caucasus sought to block his inclusion in the Central Committee, on the grounds that he was accustomed to 'inveighing and shouting against everybody'.[7] What one may gather from a careful reading of his speeches, however, filled as they are with bewildering fluctuations in tone, is that he was not so much of a brutal as of an impulsive and genial nature (possibly a sign, as has been suggested, of a certain weakness of character).[8] This may have been the difference between

Ordzhonikidze and a man like Kaganovich who, while probably a colder human type, used to theorise the talent of leadership as the art of systematically exercising psychological pressure and inflicting ill-treatment on one's subordinates.[9]

It is also more than probable that we are dealing with a man not lacking an independent political mind and with a certain capacity for defending his own point of view. Robert Service has found that, prior to the Revolution, Ordzhonikidze 'detested (the) schismatic excesses' which Lenin displayed towards the Mensheviks, as can be gathered from his behaviour at the time of the Prague Conference.[10] In his classic study, Leonard Schapiro noted the significant impartiality which Ordzhonikidze displayed while carrying out his duties as chair of the Central Control Commission.[11] In the aftermath of the stormy Central Committee plenum in July–August 1927, he successfully (if only temporarily) strove to work out a compromise between the rival factions. According to Anna Di Biagio's careful reconstruction of this political episode, Ordzhonikidze may have been sincerely impressed by the strength of some of the Opposition's theses, since he proved reluctant to initiate punitive measures against them. As suggested by Isaac Deutscher, this may also have been a demonstration of the mutual esteem existing between our subject and Trotsky, at least since 1922.[12] This persistent inclination to defuse political tensions around him would appear to be confirmed by the absence of the standard amount of official acrimony in Ordzhonikidze's personal contribution to the fight against the Right Opposition. Bukharin himself benefitted from this civility: in 1931–3 he was put in charge of scientific-theoretical work in Narkomtyazhprom, and so was allowed to survive intellectually in the first period of Stalinism.[13]

According to various accounts, Ordzhonikidze's tolerance for political adversaries inside the party may also have implied some significant mental reservations toward his own political faction. In the spring of 1928 he may have hesitated about relying on the notorious 'extraordinary measures' of taking grain in the countryside.[14] Sheila Fitzpatrick has dated back to 1930–31 Ordzhonikidze's first attempts to shield technicians and managers belonging to 'his' factories from the indiscriminate 'anti-specialist' campaigns characteristic of the Stalinist regime.[15] At the end of 1932 he may have been one of the Politburo's members casting a vote against a resort to the death penalty in the M. N. Ryutin affair.[16] This last episode may have marked the birth of a genuine 'moderate' tendency at the summit of the party in the wake of the industrialisation and collectivisation drives. In the following years

Ordzhonikidze's reservations regarding Stalin's harsh methods of rule may have extended to those prevailing in economic planning and management. A number of authors, including R. W. Davies, have stressed the political significance of his proposal at the XVII party congress (January–February 1934) for reducing industrial targets during the remainder of the Second Five-Year Plan.[17] Medvedev has recently suggested that the people's commissar took part in underground talks among some congress delegates on the possibility of removing Stalin from office.[18]

The next and fatal step in the evolution of the relationships between Ordzhonikidze and the Stalinist establishment may have been his defence of industrial cadres during the anti-Trotskyist campaign of 1936–7 (one of the first links in the chain of the Great Purges). Leonard Schapiro writes that Ordzhonikidze was 'one of the principal opponents of this new form of political struggle'.[19] In particular, he may have tried to prevent the condemnation and execution of his deputy Yu.L. Pyatakov, in the 1920s a follower of Trotsky and now irreparably compromised by concocted official charges of political terrorism and economic sabotage.[20]

At the XX party congress in February 1956, N.S. Khrushchev revealed that, contrary to the official medical statement of 1937, to the effect that he had died of a heart-attack, Ordzhonikidze had committed suicide. Among scholars in the West, this announcement was sufficient to prompt widespread attention, as mentioned above. Khrushchev added that Grigorii Konstantinovich's suicide should be linked to the cruel persecution unleashed by L. P. Beria against his family (possibly, from the early 1930s) because Ordzhonikidze 'had tried to prevent Beria from realizing his shameful plans'.[21] At the beginning of the 1960s Robert Conquest found traces of a hidden but harsh polemic directed against Beria on the issue of Ordzhonikidze's tragic end, posed by the group of Soviet leaders who briefly shared supreme power after Stalin's death.[22] A recent archival enquiry by a team of Russian researchers seems to put some firm ground under the relevant passage in the 'secret speech' at the XX congress.[23] In fact, Ordzhonikidze's two brothers were arrested at the end of 1936 in Georgia on Beria's initiative. The pretext offered was their alleged relationships with people recently apprehended as 'Trotskyists'. Beria may have been acting under orders from Stalin himself (which Khrushchev did not imply). According to Khrushchev's version, Stalin's responsibility for the tragedy was essentially indirect. By refusing to ascertain the real position of Ordzhonikidze's relatives, he pushed him into a political

and human cul de sac. We now learn that the thesis on Ordzhonikidze's death formulated by Khrushchev was not, probably, of the latter's making: it may have been put forward at the Central Committee plenum of July 1955, by Voroshilov and A. A. Andreev. In fact, a number of speakers had made similar hints two years earlier, at the Central Committee plenum of July 1953.[24]

However, the 'Beria connection' has failed thus far to provide a convincing political rationale for Ordzhonikidze's death apart from suggesting that the affair may have grown mainly out of personal rivalries. The problem remains of clarifying whether Sergo's suicide may be attributed to circumstances with wider political significance, possibly linked to the familiar Western hypothesis which we have reviewed earlier, presenting him as a 'moderate' leader within Stalin's team. The version centered on Beria's role leaves unanswered the question of whether Ordzhonikidze fell in a major defensive struggle against the purgers' attack on industrial cadres. It also fails to answer whether this struggle was inspired (in part, if not entirely) by his alleged non-conformist ideas in the fields of industrial and economic policy, which the people's commissar of Narkomtyazhprom supervised as the chief responsible for the largest and strategically most important economic–administrative institution in the USSR.

The following is a limited attempt to re-examine this problem, in the light of archival material made available by the Russian authorities in 1988–92 and investigated by Russian and Western scholars in recent publications. The conclusion also rests upon an investigation made by the author in 1990 in the *Fond Ordzhonikidze*, kept by the former Central Party Archive in Moscow.

The single most important document that emerges from the archives is probably the full text of Stalin's report to the Central Committee plenum of February–March 1937, read on 3 March, a few days after Ordzhonikidze's death.[25] The report included a vitriolic critique of the late people's commissar. Stalin reproached him for his personal relationships with V. V. Lominadze in the second half of 1930, at the time when the latter was engaged in oppositional activities.[26] According to Stalin, by failing to denounce Lominadze, Ordzhonikidze had behaved like an 'aristocrat', or ancient 'knight', deliberately ignoring party ethics and interests.[27] In the complete text of Molotov's report at the plenum an indirect charge of 'lack of vigilance' against Ordzhonikidze may also be found.[28] Molotov's charge at the Central Committee plenum was even more outspoken than the one he had delivered in public a few days earlier.[29] It concerned a number of

Narkomtyazhprom's high officials, who it was alleged were guilty of having enquired light-heartedly into 'sabotage' in heavy industry between the end of 1936 and the beginning of 1937.

A climate of growing confrontation between Ordzhonikidze and Stalin is also suggested by a third document. This is the original draft of the report which Ordzhonikidze was expected to deliver at the Central Committee plenum, devoted to explaining the 'lessons of sabotage' in industry.[30] Stalin jotted down some comments on the sheets of this draft in pencil.

It seems clear that Ordzhonikidze tended to play down the extent to which 'sabotage' had actually spread in heavy industry. His analysis ran contrary to the conclusions which the Central Committee plenum was to reach a couple of weeks later. He limited the presence of the 'enemy' to the defence and chemical industries (it would have been at any rate impossible to refuse to acknowledge the 'facts of wrecking' in these areas, after the verdict pronounced by the court at the Pyatakov Trial, just concluded in January). What is more remarkable is that Ordzhonikidze tried to defend the coal, iron-and-steel and engineering industry from such charges. But there is more than that in the draft report. The people's commissar's analysis of the consequences of 'sabotage' in Soviet industry was extremely vague. According to that analysis, only indefinite 'tendencies' (*stremlenie*) towards sabotage could be detected here.

It the margin of the page, Stalin asked peremptorily: 'which branches have been hit by sabotage, and in what ways exactly?' On Ordzhonikidze's remarks confining sabotage to the defence and chemical industries he appended the significant comment 'I don't understand.' And he changed the latter's use of the term 'tendencies' into a more positive reference to 'attempts' (*popytki*) to wreck industry. Stalin also deleted some of the words used by Ordzhonikidze (indicated in the passage below by italics) with the clear intention of stressing the personal responsibilities borne by the people's commissar for the crimes perpetrated by the 'enemy' in his commissariat: 'Heavy industry, *under the leadership of the Central Committee* . . .'. Finally, Stalin added several scornful expressions ('Ha! Ha!') beside a number of sentences upon which Ordzhonikidze had deliberately tried to confer a politically harmless meaning.[31]

A further circumstance seems to confirm that, by the time of his death, Ordzhonikidze was involved in a serious clash with Stalin over the fate of existing industrial cadres. The official text of his report to the Central Committee plenum, published at the time, contains a

passage which rejected the view that the Stakhanovite movement would have been capable 'by itself, alone', of 'destroying the consequences of sabotage' in Soviet industry.[32] This 'incorrect' opinion had originally been advanced by none other than Pyatakov in a speech in June 1936. At that date, the argument served a clearly defensive function: Pyatakov implied that industrial cadres were able to accomplish their demanding economic tasks without resorting to the dangerous 'help' of the NKVD.[33] Thanks to the text of one of Ordzhonikidze's speeches, unpublished at the time, it is now possible to confirm that the opinion expressed by Pyatakov in the summer of 1936, and attacked by Stalin at the February–March Central Committee plenum, had been repeated in public by Ordzhonikidze himself, at the end of December 1936.[34]

The information cited above would seem to prove conclusively that Ordzhonikidze died as a reluctant actor in the drama which the purgers tried to compel him to perform. His death was probably a consequence of this reluctance, as he may not have seen any way out of the desperate position into which he was being driven by Stalin himself. But we must also consider the possibility that the attitude of Ordzhonikidze towards the extermination of 'his' men in industry may not have been as straightforward and adamant as one might wish.

In the autumn and winter of 1936 he made a number of public references in the standard, pitiless style of the epoch, to the former Trotskyists who were being 'unmasked' and arrested throughout the country. At the same time, he tried to focus the public's wrath exclusively on these unhappy few and to absolve the mass of the simple, rank-and-file *spetsy* from the general suspicion.[35] Pyatakov, his deputy commissar in Narkomtyazhprom, implicated in a series of fabricated plots since 22 August 1936, repeatedly became the object of public insults by Ordzhonikidze. Oleg Khlevnyuk, who has probably produced the most well-grounded accounts of the beginning of the purges in Soviet industry, has recently concluded that 'we do not have any real basis for asserting that Ordzhonikidze tried to defend Pyatakov.'[36] However, this author immediately warns that 'it is unlikely that he should have remained indifferent' to the fate of his old and close collaborator. And in fact, at least in the first stage of Pyatakov's disgrace, during a technical conference at the commissariat on 25–7 August 1936, Ordzhonikidze tried to contain the first malicious expressions of criticism from the floor directed against his deputy.[37] At the beginning of December 1936, when the purgers were crushing the leading figures of the chemical industry (including S. A.

Rataichak, soon to appear as one of the defendants at the Pyatakov Trial), Ordzhonikidze spoke out against the 'skunks who sold out to the Fascists', but he warned that all in all these persons did not number more than the fingers of a single hand.[38]

On 5 February 1937, a few days after Pyatakov's conviction and execution, Ordzhonikidze delivered a speech to a 'meeting of the heads of the central administrations of Narkomtyazhprom, on the facts of sabotage in the factories'. This is a staggering and revealing document. Here one encounters the words of a man exasperated, almost beside himself, clearly despairing of his own and his employees' life. He tried to reassure his equally anguished audience, by resorting, paradoxically, to the same threatening and blood-thirsty slogans on the basis of which industrial cadres were now being persecuted. The party would continue, he promised, to differentiate between real 'criminals' (who in the near future, as had been the case up to that moment, would continue to be 'apprehended and shot') and the innocent technical and economic cadres. A painful tirade followed:

> On the 20th the CC plenum will gather.[39] On the agenda are the conclusions and the lessons of this filthy story [Pyatakov's trial]. I will report on behalf of the Commissariat. Shall I alone be responsible for all of you? 'There is sabotage in the factories; it is Ordzhonikidze's fault': and that's all? You give me material in order to destroy sabotage: what measures are you adopting? You don't give me anything at all! You blame the chemical industry, the coal-mining industry: 'this is their problem, not ours'. No, comrades, you will spoil everything by acting in this way, small and big cells . . . [words missing] are everywhere, we will cut them . . . [words missing]. Get moving, put things in order.
>
> A very interesting question tortures me: how can this have happened? We have been working together for so many years, and not so badly, the results are not bad. We fulfilled the Five-Year Plan in four years. How could it have happened that Pyatakov was together with us and no one realized anything? You'll tell me: 'he was your deputy, we didn't realize'. But in this case, then why have we gathered here? That's wrong. A worker from Kemerovo[40] would be right if he said that, but this is wrong if you say it . . . [words missing] because many of you worked together with him [Pyatakov] longer than I and many of you clearly sympathized with him. I am not reproaching you. But this man has been working here, it seemed as if he was helpful, but it was not like that.

> Why did it happen? Wasn't it because we have been blind?
>
> We must ask ourselves this question. If we will not be brought before a court, it is we who must try ourselves, before our own conscience. It is apparent that we did not watch carefully what other people were doing around us. The reason is clear: many of us have lost our [political] edge, have started resting on our laurels. Then comes an accident in a coal mine, a dozen people die, and these are called technical accidents.[41]

It is quite possible that, in the first period of the Great Purges and in the months immediately preceding them (July 1936–February 1937), Ordzhonikidze's public abhorrence of 'Trotskyists' had already become a condition for political and physical survival, a necessary tribute to be paid to Stalin's new line. But the oscillations which can be observed in his political positions in a still earlier period, during the early development of the Stakhanovite movement (September 1935–June 1936), seem to suggest a different problem. In the earlier case we confront a sequence of genuinely contradictory attitudes, manifested by our subject on the propriety of resorting to harsh managerial methods in industry, as if he were hesitating in a very intimate way over what kind of leadership of industrial cadres should be considered most suitable in the current situation: persuasion or coercion.

From information published in the Soviet press at the time, it can clearly be inferred that a significant part of the Soviet leadership (Stalin included) stirred up a violent, mass campaign against alleged cases of 'sabotage of Stakhanovite methods of work' and channeled it against economic cadres and *spetsy* in the factories.[42] Prior to September 1935 and again in June 1936 Ordzhonikidze appears to have been the champion of the *spetsy*, an uncompromising advocate of their rights, of their power, even of their privileges. This was not so in October 1935 and, in particular, in March 1936, when he clearly joined the hard-liners in the party and aided their efforts to bring to life the Stalinist principle of an intensifying 'class struggle' during the process of building socialism. Which of the two Ordzhonikidzes is the real one?

Archival documents confirm that Ordzhonikidze felt bitter resentment towards some, at least, of the industrial 'specialists'. These were the managers of the pits in the Donbass coal field, in Ukraine, where the Stakhanovite movement was born. His speeches during this period confirm Ordzhonikidze's extraordinary distrust of this group. He depicted them as timid and lazy conservatives, who sought to hold back new technology and more productive work methods, as people

loving routine and a quiet life.[43] The original documents also confirm that he did not shrink from threats or punitive measures (mainly, demotion in the administrative hierarchy) in order to make them toe the line. In the 'hard-line' phases, Ordzhonikidze seems to have been closely associated with S. S. Sarkisov, the Donetsk obkom secretary, one of those primarily responsible for the indiscriminate dissemination of charges of 'sabotage' in Soviet industry during the period, and one of the leaders most reluctant to drop them in June 1936.[44]

However, it also seems that Ordzhonikdze's hostility toward the Donbass coal managers was not of a social or essentially political kind. His mood was neither a sort of personal prologue to the subsequent purges, nor the sign of a deeply ingrained personal belief that only pressure and forceful handling of people could squeeze out significant achievements. Rather, his attitude reflected a general and important limitation of the Bolsheviks' methods of rule.

First, documents from the archives show that Ordzhonikidze often took pains to distinguish 'sabotage' from the less troublesome technical conservatism of the coal managers. Even in his harsh report to the Orgburo on 20 March 1936, he firmly rejected the analysis by a technical cadre, who indiscriminately attacked all managers and higher *spetsy* in the mines as conscious wreckers. Ordzhonikidze firmly reminded his audience that in the recent past a number of 'real' saboteurs had gone on to become model workers who had earned official acknowledgment of their merits.[45] The point, however, is that in the most intense days of the anti-sabotage campaign in defence of the 'Stakhanovite methods', the Soviet media were allowed to heighten their tone to an hysterical level, in part due to a remarkable demonstration of severity by Ordzhonikidze himself. This is a telling example of the way in which what was merely an energetic attitude could easily degenerate into witch-hunting in the general political climate established by the Soviet regime in the thirties. Later, in June 1936, Ordzhonikidze finally gave up his old habit of 'inveighing against everybody'. He probably realised that for several months dark forces within the party had been ready to manipulate the harsh tone he periodically employed in order to sharpen artificially political tensions. In June, some of his previous *bêtes noires* among the managers of Donbass were ostentatiously (albeit incongruously) rehabilitated.[46]

Secondly, documents concerning Ordzhonikidze's style of leadership illuminate another limitation in his political profile, a limitation perhaps shared by many of his authoritarian colleagues. This was the difficulty which the Soviet leaders experienced in claiming the right to

control and manage the details of the vast economic and technical agencies which they supervised, and in the attempt to demonstrate the advantages of charismatic 'Bolshevik leadership'. Disappointed by the enforcement of the 'Stakhanovite methods of work' in the coal mines, at the end of 1935 and the beginning of 1936 Ordzhonikidze desperately tried to grasp the reason for their partial failure by turning to the coal specialists (*spetsy*) and managers themselves for advice. At times he appears to have implored his more learned subordinates to bestow upon him the technical enlightenment that he did not possess.[47]

But eliciting genuine and friendly responses to his expressed doubts was no easy matter. The main obstacle was the very close connection already established in responsible circles between problems of a purely technical nature on the one hand, and the ambitions and the political questions which obsessed the higher authorities, on the other. Even those specialists who realised the mistakes that were being made in the organisation of production, and which were tolerated by their high-ranking superiors, would become disheartened by the general slogans of the Party and government (often ultra-simplistic and inadequate, as in the case of the so called 'Stakhanovite methods'). These specialists were often afraid of embarrassing and disappointing the higher authorities, or of awakening in their minds some perverse desire for revenge – the impulse, typically experienced by absolute rulers, to smash the thermometer rather than changing the temperature. In vain did Ordzhonikidze try to blandish people in search of the answers he needed:

> Please, speak out frankly: is it true, as charged by our comrades, the miners, that the technical-scientific staff do not support these new methods but, on the contrary, hamper them? . . . Tell us without being diplomatic, since when you meet among your colleagues this is all that you speak about. Are they sceptical about these methods, is it true that the technical-scientific staff has not been able to make people work properly? . . . Did we go too far when we started shouting: wreckers, wreckers![48]

The above blandishment of March 1936 came in a severe context, at the apex of the anti-sabotage campaign. By the subsequent June, though in a decidedly more conciliatory context, we find Ordzhonikidze possessed by a half-concealed spirit of vengeance:

> Tell me sincerely: at the time of the drop in coal production in the Donbass, was the idea spreading that the Stakhanovite movement

> was a bit of foolishness, or something like that? . . . And among the economic cadres? . . . And what are the names of these economic cadres?.[49]

It is also apparent that in the case of Ordzhonikidze, as probably with many of his colleagues, the unmistakably humane dimension of his character did not extend to other, atrocious manifestations of Bolshevik policy in the 1930s which had come to be considered by all the Party leaders as normal and beyond the reach of moral doubt. In the *Fond Ordzhonikidze*, Khlevnyuk has found a document, dating from the end of 1933 and concerning the mining *kombinat* Norilsk in the Far East, whose phrasing leaves little space for edifying speculation:

> Given the peculiar difficulties of research and geologic prospecting in building up and launching industrial production in the area beyond the Arctic Circle, and given the huge experience of the OGPU in carrying through the most complex construction projects, under the most adverse circumstances, Narkomtyazhprom entrusts the organisation of the works and of the factory to the OGPU, on the basis of a special camp [*lager*].[50]

A number of authors have expressed their profound contempt and moral condemnation for the Stalinists who fell victims of the purges.[51] Against the historical background of the horrors of civil war, political persecution, collectivization and famine (events which many of these people helped to bring about, often eagerly and enthusiastically), the terror which destroyed them in their turn might legitimately be seen as a sort of nemesis. The present writer will confine himself to what may be regarded (or what he flatters himself by describing) as an unprejudiced remark. The act of suicide raises Ordzhonikidze above the moral standard of his political *milieu* at the time. Yet his acceptance of the existence and the mechanism of the Gulag system is not sufficient to pull him below that threshold. This is not intended to imply that taking one's own life must be considered to have been, particularly for Party members, the only action compatible with the preservation of human dignity in the time of Stalinism. Further research in the field will allow scholars to develop and express appropriate judgements upon each of the responsible individuals involved in the dramas of the 1930s, and of the earlier and later periods of Soviet history, as well. Ordzhonikidze, though a remarkably creative leader, was one of the builders of the Stalinist epoch and the Stalinist

system of rule. Yet the problem is both that Stalinism has been a multi-faceted phenomenon at a given time, and that it has evolved through a number of phases.

A further test of Ordzhonikidze's political personality, as we have already remarked, can be based upon an examination of his economic ideas and policies during the mid-1930s. In October 1986 R. W. Davies published a piece of research on a striking and provocative Soviet economic debate. This had taken place within Narkomtyazhprom in the years 1932–3, largely under Ordzhonikidze's auspices. On that occasion, Davies generously synthesised the result of this and earlier enquiries into this topic:

> It might . . . be tempting to conclude that this was a powerful movement for market socialism headed by Ordzhonikidze and supported by the managers of factories and building projects, which was defeated in the Politburo in February 1933. We might even whisper that he had been talked into this by Bukharin who . . . was one of the leading members of the central staff of Vesenkha who remained in office under both Kuibyshev and Ordzhonikidze, and, like the former Trotskyist, Pyatakov . . . , obviously had some personal support from Ordzhonikidze. Ever since he took charge of industry at the end of 1930, he had been a powerful supporter of *khozraschet* [profit-and-loss accounting], and had interpreted *khozraschet* as meaning that direct relations between enterprises based on economic incentives could replace control from above. Ordzhonikidze spoke publicly along these lines, together with Molotov, in January 1931, five months before Stalin called for more attention to *khozraschet* in his speech of June 23. Moreover, Ordzhonikidze's support for *khozraschet* was accompanied by considerable scepticism about bureaucratic central controls; . . . while these debates were going on, Ordzhonikidze launched an unsuccessful experiment to eliminate funding.

This speculation, alas, goes far beyond the evidence. Neither Ordzhonikidze's speeches nor the various reminiscences of Soviet and emigré officials who knew him indicate that he believed that the direct relations between producer and consumer in industry should be market relations. He probably did not clearly understand that the abolition of physical controls would be impossible unless monetary expenditure on investment, and on other forms of consumption of producer goods, including defence, were strictly limited. He had almost certainly given no serious considerations to the role of prices

> in balancing supply and demand on the capital goods markets. . . . But he certainly . . . to some extent shared the managers' criticism of the existing system. He was desperately anxious to improve economic organisation. . . . He undoubtedly agreed with the emphasis on *khozraschet*, the hostility to funding, the search for efficiency. . . . In any case, [the] proposals [inspired by the idea of 'market socialism',] could be regarded as incompatible with party policy.[52]

In other words, and in the context of the analysis already developed by Davies and by other scholars, in 1932–3 Ordzhonikidze was moving away from the original Bolshevik idea of strictly centralised planning (to which Stalin basically held fast all through his life) to a second planning 'model', partially decentralised and largely dependent on financial incentives. But he never arrived (and this is the main warning put forward by Davies, in the passage just quoted and elsewhere) at a fully consistent model of a 'socialist market' (with fewer centrally-established indexes and reliant more on quasi-market mechanisms), a model proposed by some would-be 'reformers' within Narkomtyazhprom at that time.[53] In a subsequent paper Davies has put Ordzhonikidze's policies and economic ideas into the framework of a more general tendency toward an 'economic reform' of the system, shared by many Soviet leaders during 1932–3 (and possibly, also by Stalin and Molotov, at least in part), but quickly dropped at the end of the period.[54] However, in 1934–5 we again find Ordzhonikidze engaged in experimentation with some of the economic innovations that he had already demonstrated a fondness for. His second wave of economic experiments was inspired by the fundamental idea that industrial enterprises should be tranformed into financially autonomous entities, and renounce the notorious yearly grants from the central budget.[55]

The archival materials kept in the *Fond Ordzhonikidze* do not add anything substantially new to the picture drawn by Davies. As far as our theme is concerned, they help to confirm that picture. What may be emphasised is the consistency shown by our subject in his attempt to encourage more moderation among his colleagues in establishing production targets for the period 1934–6. Here is the full and detailed proposal of a reduction in the final (i.e., planned in 1932 for the end of the Second Five-Year Plan) amount of industrial production, put forward by Ordzhonikidze at the XVII party congress.[56] The cuts (against the official forecasts of 1932) in aggregate figures for some crucial targets are rather impressive, in spite of a clearly conservative reluctance to reduce the ouput of production goods: production goods

−6 per cent; consumption goods −13.3 per cent; steel −11 per cent; cotton −20 per cent; processed foodstuffs −14.3 per cent. Ordzhonikidze proposed a rather sober labour and wage policy, as well. The increase in the total wages fund at the end of the Second Five Year Plan should have been not at 2.1, as stated in the original draft of the plan, but '1.5–2' times the amount of money delivered in 1932 (−6.8 per cent in 'the whole economy'; −13.8 per cent in 'large-scale industry'); employment, −13.8 per cent of the original target in industry alone, and −26.2 per cent in 'large-scale industry'. This was an obvious attempt to intensify the labour effort, with more money to be left for a smaller number of workers as a consequence. Ordzhonikidze's forecast of a *decrease* (13 rather than 14 billion rubles) in the planned reduction of production costs might seem odd and incongruous, but we should probably reckon that at this point he was already anticipating a general increase in heavy industry wholesale prices (raw materials and machinery). This measure was actually implemented, as we know, in the spring of 1936, along with a new experiment in the abolition of central funding for industry. The 'struggle for profitability' movement (*bor'ba za rentabel'nost'*), officially launched by Ordzhonikidze in Soviet industry at the end of 1934, would seem to have been originally conceived by him at the beginning of that year. The distance in time from the previous, analogous experiment studied by Davies is thereby remarkably shortened.

Given this line of reasoning, it is probably significant to remark that in 1935 Ordzhonikidze *once again* envisaged a further reduction in planning targets.[57] He judged the increase of production from the base of 1935 proposed by Gosplan's draft for the 1936 yearly plan to be excessively high (28–30 per cent). Unfortunately, the document is not precisely dated. But Ordzhonikidze's comment was probably a phase in the process which, during 1935, brought the Politburo to reduce Gosplan's figure for industrial production increases in 1936 to 23 per cent (beyond the previous year's achievement), on 4 and 9 December 1935.[58]

Still, new documents also confirm the limits of Ordzhonikidze's political non-conformism. At times his conception of industry's 'profitability' turns out to have been rather manipulative:

> We are presently racking our brains on one problem: is our heavy industry profitable? In order to ascertain (*reshit'*) the problem of heavy industry's profitability, we need specialists capable of putting a firm basis under (*obosnovat'*), to demonstrate (*dokazat'*) the profitability of our heavy industry.[59]

Was the 'struggle for profitability', which Ordzhonikidze himself celebrated, merely window-dressing? It would seem that we are dealing with an outstanding historical example of the propensity shown by despotic regimes for flirting with the latest fashion in the field of progressive ideas, while intimately sharing them only up to a certain point. A further passage in a speech of March 1934, one of the first references to the new slogan of 'profitability', does not really seem to encourage Soviet state managers to demonstrate more initiative and personal responsibility, which were obviously the necessary conditions for any project of 'economic reform' in the market sense. To the directors' complaints that they lacked power inside the factories in comparison with their Western colleagues, Ordzhonikidze answered that, if Rockefeller were to go bankrupt, it would be a major shock for Western public opinion. But in the Soviet Union, a bureaucratic order by a third-rate official from Narkomtyazhprom would suffice to fire a factory manager, thanks to the prevailing concept of 'planning discipline'.[60] In June 1936 Ordzhonikidze warned an audience of managers and technicians in the region of Gor'kii by threatening that 'you will never become capitalists; and if you do, we will strangle you.'[61] A joke, clearly (though rather sinister if one thinks of what was about to occur in Soviet industry by the end of the year), but once again sufficient to inhibit the managerial initiative required by the true interpretation of a 'struggle for profitability'.

Finally, in March 1936, Ordzhonikidze delivered a third speech, clearly restrictive as far as the 'struggle for profitability' was concerned:

> Does not our country need synthetic resins? . . . Even if we had a boundless quantity of gold rubles [i.e., currency for import], even in this case we should produce our own synthetic rubber. Should a war begin, our enemy will not sell synthetic rubber to us . . . When they blockade our country, we should be capable of producing everything we need on the spot. . .. Should we depend on foreign imports for a long time, say only for 10 or 20 per cent of imported rubber, we cannot consider ourselves self-sufficient either.[62]

In order to appreciate the full meaning of these words, one should remember the the industrial sub-branches referred to by the people's commissar here were among those where the concept of 'profitability' had by this time been most deeply assimilated by managers and technicians, and implemented most widely.[63]

In the crucial February 1937 speech Ordzhonikidze again scoffed at a high-ranking official of Narkomtyazhprom, who had boasted of the

huge volume of 'profits' accumulated by the commissariat's factories in 1936.[64] What was *really* relevant, Ordzhonikidze insisted, were not 'ultra-profits' but the percentage of plan fulfilment: apparently, right back to the good old economic criteria of the pre-reformist period! Ordzhonikidze was probably trying to stress that defence considerations would always take precedence over projects for economic reform, should there appear to be any incompatibility between the two. This is quite consistent with Davies' analysis, particularly if we place Ordzhonikidze's statement against the background of the dramatic increase in Soviet military expenditure from 1936 onwards.[65] What emerges here is a major structural (and not only personal) limit in the official Soviet commitment to the cause of economic reform in the mid-1930s. The reformist ideas were originally born in 1931–2. The Soviet effort in the defence industry, which commenced in summer 1931, had already produced remarkable achievements by the end of 1933[66]: but we could broadly argue that the extent of that effort was not considered, at the time, by a part of the authorities as a challenge to parallel attempts to make the Soviet economic system work according to more *economic*, and not only *physical* (i.e., *ad hoc*), priorities. But,

> the seizure of power by the Nazis in January 1933 transformed the situation. In spite of the industrial development of the USSR in 1929–33, Germany remained industrially and technically more advanced than the USSR, and the Soviet military developments . . . soon proved inadequate in face of German rearmament.[67]

These circumstances can probably help explain the surprisingly cool attitude adopted by Ordzhonikidze himself, in the second half of 1936, toward his own economic experiments since the end of 1934. It may well be that, obsessed by a growing perception of the precariousness of the USSR's security, the people's commissar of Narkomtyazhprom, and other former pro-reform leaders, reckoned that the time was no longer propitious for encouraging industry to work according to more spontaneous, 'economic' mechanisms. As the present writer has suggested elsewhere, the turning point in the international situation probably came in the autumn of 1935, following Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia. This ominous act may have induced the Soviets to a positive reevaluation of sheer administrative planning and of huge expenditure in capital investment (incompatible, as Davies has insisted, with economic reform), in the perspective of imminent hostilities in Europe and in the world. The economically over-ambitious Stakhano-

vite movement in industry was officially launched one week later on 3 October.[68] It is also significant that Ordzhonikidze joined the most hysterical supporters of the campaign waged against the 'sabotage of the Stakhanovite methods of work' just in March 1936, after Hitler's re-militarisation of the Rhineland (on the 7th).[69] Speaking at a meeting of the technical cadres of the aircraft industry, on the 11th, he did not hide his worries concerning the political situation in Germany. He hinted at Stalin's growing concern regarding Soviet air defence; and he stated that whether a war broke out, or not, would depend *mainly* on 'how [the Red Army] will be provided with weapons'[70]: i.e., on Soviet deterrence. The reliance on the 'irreconciliable contradictions' between the imperialist Leviathans had been comforting the Soviets ever since the Treaty of Rapallo, as the best automatic guarantee against foreign aggression.[71] Germany's acceptance into the League of Nations by the other Great Powers, in 1926, shook the Soviets' confidence in a purely isolationist foreign policy; and after 1933–4, some new leading political principle was clearly needed in order to cope with the changed situation in Europe and in the Far East. However, long-established ideological biases certainly did not make it easier for the heirs of Lenin to work out a line adequate to the new set of circumstances, which hardly fitted into Lenin's original doctrine of international relations. These difficulties gave the crude question of accelerating the Soviet military build-up an even greater sense of urgency. In the mid-1930s, the Soviet commitment to rearmament and to the defence industries on a massive scale was the sign of a momentous shift in the perception of the nature of international threats, which occured between the end of 1935 and the first months of 1936.

In conclusion, the archival documents perused in this paper do not seem to legitimate bolder assumptions on Ordzhonikidze's reformist inclinations, than those already formulated by Davies on the basis solely of the long-since published statements and speeches by the people's commissar. Yet, the new evidence on his hesitations and steps backward in the field of Soviet economics will probably allow scholars, in a sense at least, to reach a firmer position on the genuine, far-reaching implications of the support lent by him to the advocates of 'economic reform' on the 'positive occasions' that we know of. It is clear that our subject would change his opinions, or present them in different ways, both according to his own political evolution and in response to the wildly changing political environment. And at the end of his life these two lines of development were, all things considered, fatally diverging.

Notes

1. R. Conquest, *The Great Terror* (Harmondsworth, 1971) p. 34.
2. I. V. Stalin, *Sochineniya* (M. 1946–1951), vol. I, p. xiii.
3. See the biography (stopping in 1921) by Ordzhonikidze's wife Z. G. Ordzhonikidze, *Put' bolshevika* (Moscow, 1986); I. M. Dubynskii-Mukhadze, *Ordzhonikidze* (Moscow, 1963); *O Sergo Ordzhonikidze: vospominaniya, ocherki, stat'i sovremennikov* (Moscow, 1981). The following, essential information is also drawn from the biographical sketches presented in *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, 3rd edn, vol. 18; and *Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar' Granat. Prilozhenie k tsiklu statei SSSR*, chast II, pp. 85–9.
4. See F. Benvenuti, *The Bolsheviks and the Red Army, 1918–1922* (Cambridge, 1988) p. 80.
5. Ordzhonikidze's pugnacity in support of breakneck industrialization is documented by E. A. Rees, *State Control in Soviet Russia: The Rise and the Fall of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate, 1920–1934* (London, 1987). R. W. Davies' 'snapshot' of Ordzhonikidze, among other prominent Soviet 'industrialisers' of the 1920s and 1930s ('Some Soviet Economic Controllers III', in *Soviet Studies*, 1961, no. 1, pp. 23–52, provides a general political profile of the man, while focussing on his economic ideas during the industrialisation drive. Substantial information is also given in R. W. Davies, *The Industrialisation of Soviet Russia* (London and Basingstoke 1980–9), vol. III, *The Soviet Economy in Turmoil, 1929–1930*, in particular pp. 416–17. For Ordzhonikidze's career at the beginning of the 1930s, see also S. Fitzpatrick, 'Ordzhonikidze's Takeover of Vesenkha: a Case Study in Soviet Bureaucratic Politics', in *Soviet Studies*, 1985, no. 2, pp. 153–72.
6. M. Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle* (London, 1969).
7. S. Z. Ginsburg, *O proshlom dlya budushchego* (Moscow, 1986) p. 186.
8. R. Conquest, *The Great Terror*, p. 33.
9. D. A. Volkogonov, *Triumf i tragediya* (Moscow, 1989) vol. I, book 2, pp. 157–9.
10. R. Service, *Lenin: A Political Life; Worlds in Collision* (London, and Basingstoke, 1985 and 1991), vol. II, pp. 19–20.
11. L. Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (London, 1975) p. 308.
12. A. Di Biagio, 'L'ultima battaglia dell'Opposizione (1926–1927)', in *Studi di storia sovietica*, G. Procacci ed. (Rome, 1978), pp. 160–1.
13. S. Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution* (New York 1973), pp. 351–2; L. Schapiro, *op. cit.*, p. 396.
14. R. Medvedev, *O Staline i stalinizme* (Moscow, 1990) p. 168.
15. Fitzpatrick, 'Ordzhonikidze's Takeover of Vesenkha'. See also Medvedev, *O Staline i stalinizme*, p. 257.
16. L. Schapiro, *op. cit.*, p. 397; S. Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 344; Medvedev, *O Staline i stalinizme*, p. 294.
17. L. Schapiro, *op. cit.*, pp. 401–2; S. Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 343; R. W. Davies, 'Some Soviet Economic Controllers', p. 38.
18. Medvedev, *O Staline i stalinizme*, p. 295.

19. L. Schapiro, *op. cit.*, p. 413.
20. L. Schapiro, *op. cit.*, p. 385; see also R. Conquest, *The Great Terror*, pp. 204, 221, 228, 261.
21. *Khrushchev Speaks*, T. P. Whitney ed. (Ann Arbor, 1963) p. 252.
22. R. Conquest, *Power and Policy in the Soviet Union* (London, 1961).
23. 'Ordzhonikidze-Kirov-Stalin' in *Svobodnaya mysl'*, 1991, no. 14, pp. 62–3. These and other valuable pieces of information, made available in Russia on the topic during recent years, can be found in R. S. Tucker, *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above, 1928–1941* (New York and London, 1990).
24. *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 1, p. 190 (Kaganovich); no. 2, pp. 150 (A. I. Mikoyan), 175 (Voroshilov), 180 (G. A. Arutinov), 183 (Andreev).
25. I. V. Stalin, *Sochineniya*, R. McNeal ed. (Stanford, 1967), vol. I (XIV).
26. For the 'Syrtsov–Lominadze Affair', see R. W. Davies, *The Soviet Economy in Turmoil*, pp. 411–15; R. W. Davies, 'The Syrtsov–Lominadze Affair', *Soviet Studies*, 1981, no. XXXIII, pp. 29–50.
27. 'Ordzhonikidze–Kirov–Stalin', pp. 60–1.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Pravda*, 22 February 1937.
30. RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/158. Excerpts have been published in 'Ordzhonikidze–Kirov–Stalin'. There is a reference to such a document in the obituary written by Sergo's wife in *Pravda*, 18 February 1939, on the second anniversary of the death. It is possible that documents concerning Ordzhonikidze are kept in archival *fondy*, other than the one devoted explicitly to him in RTsKhIDNI. After the suicide, a Central Committee resolution entrusted the bulk of Ordzhonikidze's 'correspondence with comrades' to a special commission (L. Z. Mekhlis, Beria himself and Semushkin, Ordzhonikidze's personal secretary); see *ibid.*, 22 February 1937. According to Medvedev, *O Staline i stalinizme*, p. 357, Ordzhonikidze's personal archive would have been directly taken care of by Beria. In the abridged, official version of his report to the February–March Central Committee plenum, Molotov mentioned a letter by S. P. Birman, a prominent iron-and-steel manager, probably picked up out of this archive; see V. V. Molotov, *Uroki vreditel'stva, diversiii i spionazha yapono-nemetsko-trotskistskikh agentov* (Moscow, 1937) (also published in *Pravda*, 21 March 1937, and in *Bol'shevik*, 1937, no. 8).
31. RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/158, 1, 4, 6.
32. I. V. Stalin, *op. cit.*, vol. I(XIV), pp. 216–17.
33. F. Benvenuti, *Fuoco sui sabotatori! Stachanovismo e organizzazione industriale in URSS, 1934–1938* (Rome, 1988) p. 411. An English abridged version is 'Stakhanovism and Stalinism', *Soviet Industrialisation Project Series*, SIPS no. 30 (Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Birmingham, July 1989).
34. RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/342, 29.
35. L. Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1934–1941* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 127 ff.; F. Benvenuti, *Fuoco sui sabotatori*, pp. 341 ff., 399–411.
36. O. V. Khlevnyuk, *1937-i: Stalin, NKVD i sovetskoe obshchestvo* (Moscow, 1992) pp. 126–7.

37. GARF, 9522/1/30, 108.
38. RTsKhIDNI 85/29/156, 61 ff.
39. Actually, the Central Committee Plenum opened only on 23 February.
40. This was the Siberian coal mine where, in autumn 1936, a sudden explosion produced several victims. The accident was rapidly ascribed to Trotskyist sabotage. Responsibility was laid at the door of some of the defendants at the Pyatakov Trial, in January 1937; see A. J. Getty, *Origins of the Great Purges*, (Cambridge, 1985), p. 126.
41. RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/156, 5, 6–7, 9–10.
42. L. Siegelbaum, *op. cit.*,; F. Benvenuti,*Fuoco sui sabotatori*; O. V. Khlevnyuk, 'Stakhanovskoe dvizhenie: nedoispolzovannyi potentsial', in *Sorevnovanie*, 1990, no. 5; R. Thurston, 'The Stakhanovite Movement: the Background to the Great Terror in the Factories, 1935–1938', D. L. Hoffman, 'The Great Terror on the Local Level: Purges in Moscow Factories, 1936–1938', H. Kuromiya, 'Stalinist Terror in the Donbas: a Note', all in *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives*, J. Arch Getty and Roberta T. Manning eds (Cambridge, 1993).
43. RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/460, 1.
44. RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/128, 64; 85/29/130, 86; *RGAE*, 9522/ 1/ 30, 26.
45. RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/129, 3, 6–7; also RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/134, 57–8.
46. This is the case of A. Khachaturiants, the head of the coal-mining trust 'Stalinugol'; see G. K. Ordzhonikidze, *Stat'i i rechi* (Moscow, 1956), vol. II, pp. 783–4; RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/128, 63–4.
47. RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/128, 2, 62–3.
48. RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/134, 16–17.
49. *Za industrializatsiyu*, 27 June 1936.
50. O. V. Khlevnyuk, *1937-i; Stalin, NKVD i sovetskoe obshchestvo*, p. 87; the document has been found in RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/349, 1–3.
51. L. Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism* (Oxford, 1978) vol. III, pp. 42–3. 82–5; M. Geller, A.Nekrich, *Storia dell'URSS dal 1917 a oggi* (Milan, 1984) p. 322; A. Tsipko, 'O zonakh, zakrytykh dlya mysli', *in Surovaya drama naroda* (Moscow, 1989) pp. 205–6. More sympathetic considerations have been understandably expressed by Medvedev, *Let History Judge* (New York, 1971); and also by Conquest, *The Great Terror*, pp. 177 ff.; M.Ya. Gefter, 'Ot anti-Stalina k ne-Stalinu: neproidennii put', in *Osmyslit' kul't Stalina* (Moscow, 1989), pp. 534–5; Khlevnyuk, '1937 god: protivodeistvie repressiyam', in *Kommunist*, 1989, no. 18; idem, *Oni ne molchali* (Moscow, 1991).

    A deep moral bias contributed to E. H. Carr's annihilating judgement on Bukharin, as well. Carr compared the Right-wing leaders' with Trotsky's (allegedly more intransigent) attitude towards Stalin; see his 'The Legend of Bukharin', in *The Times Literary Supplement*, 20 September 1974. More intellectual respect, but a similar moral contempt, has been expressed by Carr for an outstanding Bukharinist, the Italian Communist leader Palmiro Togliatti, as it appears from many places scattered through his major scholarship; see, for example, E. H. Carr, *The Twilight of Comintern* (London, and Basingstoke, 1982).
52. R. W. Davies, 'The Socialist Market: a Debate in Soviet Industry, 1932–1933', unpublished typescript, submitted to the Seminar on Comparative

Economic Systems, Department of Economy, European University Institute, Florence, 30 October 1986, pp. 27–8. A different version of the paper is in *Slavic Review*, 1984, no. 2.

53. R.W. Davies, *The Development of the Soviet Budgetary System*, (Cambridge, 1970) pp. 147 ff., 279, 335, 338. See also W. Brusz, *Il funzionamento dell'economia socialista* (Milan, 1965) p. 105; and L.E. Hubbard, *Soviet Money and Finance* (London, 1936) p. 185.
54. R.W. Davies, 'Sovetskaya ekonomika v period krizisa, 1930–1933 gody', in *Istoriya SSSR*, 1991, no. 4, p. 206.
55. F. Benvenuti, 'La 'lotta per la redditività' nell'industria sovietica (1935–1936)', in *Studi Storici*, 1984, no. 2; idem, *Fuoco sui sabotatori!*, pp. 57–70.
56. RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/62, 8–9, 14, 25, 27, 28; see above, p. 139.
57. RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/503.
58. O.V. Khlevnyuk and R.W. Davies, 'The Role of Gosplan in Economic Decision-Making in the 1930s', *Soviet Industrialisation Project Series*, SIPS No. 36 (Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Birmingham, September 1993) p. 50.
59. RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/93, 3–4. This was said in the course of a talk (*beseda*) with students of the Faculty of Economics in Tbilisi, in June 1935.
60. RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/67, 89.
61. RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/139, 115.
62. RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/137, 21; see also Ginzburg, *op. cit.*, p. 203 (the author dates this speech to May, 1936). This passage is also reported by N.S. Patolichev, *Ispytanie na zrelost'* (Moscow, 1977) pp. 84–4, without date.
63. F. Benvenuti, *Fuoco sui sabotatori!*, pp. 237–8.
64. RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/156, 1–4.
65. R.W. Davies, 'Soviet Military Expenditure and the Armament Industry, 1929–33: a Reconsideration', in *Europe–Asia Studies*, 1993, no. 4, p. 590.
66. R.W. Davies, 'Soviet Defence Industries during the First Five Year Plan', *Soviet Industrialisation Project Series*, SIPS No. 27 (Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Birmingham, August 1987) pp. 15, 21.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 24,
68. F. Benvenuti, *Fuoco sui sabotatori!*, pp. 157–65.
69. *Ibid*, pp. 312–3; F. Benvenuti, 'Industry and Purge in the Donbass, 1936–37', in *Europe-Asia Studies*, 1993, no. 1, pp. 66–7. See also the concluding speech by Ordzhonikidze at a meeting of the Heads of Narkomtyazhprom's Main Administrations, in RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/130, 79–82.
70. RTsKhIDNI, 85/29/11, 7, 9, 11.
71. A. Di Biagio, *Le origini dell'isolazionismo sovietico* (Milan, 1990).

7 The Objectives of the Great Terror, 1937–1938*

Oleg Khlevnyuk

The mass repression in the Soviet Union in 1937–8, variously referred to as the Great Terror or the 'Ezhovshchina', has produced a volume of monographs, articles and memoirs, which have examined the phenomena from a diversity of viewpoints.[1] However, many of the circumstances surrounding this tragedy remain obscure. In particular there is little information concerning the mechanism whereby the repression was organised and carried out. Most of the NKVD's documents for this period remain in the KGB's archives and are not available for researchers. In the still closed Presidential archives there is a large volume of material concerning the activities of the Politburo and Stalin in 1937–8. In republican, provincial and local archives there is a wealth of material on how central directives were implemented in the localities.

The detailed study of these problems will require much time and effort by historians. That work has only just started. The lack of information and insufficient research mean that many questions cannot yet be fully answered. Some of the most intriguing questions concern the relationship between centralism and 'local initiative' in the events of 1937–8. More work is needed to determine the system whereby the victims of repression were selected, the objectives of the purgers, as well as the question of the actual number of the victims who were repressed.

In the present article, which draws on new documents including those from the Politburo's special files (*osobye papki*), an attempt is made to present in general outline the mechanism of repression in 1937–8, and on this basis to determine what were the objectives of the organisers of the terror.

Almost all historians are agreed in fixing the commencement of the new stage of Stalinist repression at the end of the summer-beginning of the autumn of 1936. In June Stalin instructed the NKVD to organise a new political trial of Trotskyists and Zinovievists.[2] On 29 June the Central Committee of the CPSU dispatched to the localities a secret

* Translated by E.A. Rees.

letter concerning 'the terrorist activities of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist counterrevolutionary bloc',[3] on the basis of which many former oppositionists were repressed. In August in Moscow there took place the trial of the so-called 'anti-Soviet joint Trotskyist–Zinovievist centre'. All 16 of the accused, including L. B. Kamenev and G. E. Zinoviev, were shot. In the country there followed a wave of new arrests.

On 26 September on Stalin's insistence the Politburo removed G. G. Yagoda from the post of People's Commissar of Internal Affairs (NKVD USSR) and appointed in his place N. I. Ezhov, who for several years, at Stalin's behest, had exercised a supervisory role over the NKVD. On 29 September Stalin signed the Politburo decree, 'Concerning the counter-revolutionary Trotskyist–Zinovievist elements'.[4] The decree in effect demanded the total destruction of former oppositionists.

In the following few months mass arrests were carried out in the economic, state and party institutions. In January 1937 there took place the second great Moscow trial of the so-called 'Parallel Anti-Soviet Trotskyist Centre'.

The first results of the purge were reviewed by the Central Committee plenum of February–March 1937. On the eve of the plenum the Sector of Leading Party Organs of the Central Committee, headed by G. M. Malenkov, compiled inventories (*spravki*) of nomenklatura officials of various departments. The *spravki* comprised several lists. In the first were listed the names of leading officials, who had already been dismissed from their posts, expelled from the party and arrested. In the remaining lists were given the names of other officials who had not yet been arrested but who had committed various 'sins': who had participated in the different oppositions, who 'had deviated', who had in the past been members of other parties etc.[5] The majority of those named in these lists were soon to be repressed.

The *spravka* which Malenkov prepared for Stalin and dated 15 February 1937 noted the great number of former party members in the USSR. (Many of the facts and theses from the *spravka* were noted by Stalin in his speeches to the February–March plenum.) Malenkov wrote:

> It should be noted in particular that at the present time in the country there number over 1,500,000 former members and candidate members of the party, who have been expelled and mechanically dismissed at various times from 1922 onwards. In many enterprises

there are concentrated a significant number of former communists, with the result that sometimes they exceed the numerical composition of the party organisations which work in these enterprises'.

For example at the Kolomenskyi locomotive building works, the *spravka* noted, compared to 1,408 communists there were 2,000 former party members; at the Krasnoe Sormovo works there were 2,200 members and 550 former members, at the Moscow Ball Bearing Works 1084 members and 452 former members, etc.[6]

Many of the participants at the February–March plenum spoke of the presence in the country of a great number of 'anti-Soviet elements', and 'offenders'. The secretary of the West Siberia kraikom R. I. Eikhe reported that in 11 years from 1926 to 1937 in the krai 93,000 individuals were expelled from the party whilst in the krai party organisation at the beginning of 1937 there were 44,000 communists. 'Amongst those expelled', Eikhe declared, 'there are no small number of direct enemies of the party. They were in the party, they acquired certain political habits and will attempt to utilise this against us.' In the krai, Eikhe continued, there lived also a great number of exiles, former kulaks. Amongst these there remained 'a not insignificant group of inveterate enemies, who will attempt by all means to continue the struggle'.[7] The secretary of the party organisation of Turkmeniya, Popok, also spoke of the evident danger which was posed by former kulaks who had returned from imprisonment and exile: 'The great number of kulaks who passed through Solovki and other camps and now as 'honourable' toilers return home, demand allotment of their land, making all kinds of demands, going to the kolkhoz and demanding admission to the kolkhoz.'[8] At the plenum others emphasised the fact of the existence of millions of believers in the country with many priests who retained no small influence.[9] The necessity of continuing the struggle with enemies was indicated by the main reports to the plenum from Stalin, Molotov and Ezhov.

In the months following the February–March plenum the policy of unmasking and arresting former oppositionists continued. On 23 May 1937 the Politburo sanctioned the expulsion from Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev to the 'non-industrial regions of the Union' of all those expelled from the party for membership of the various oppositions together with those accused of 'anti-Soviet manifestations (the dissemination of hostile views in lectures and in the press)'. Those expelled also included the families of those sentenced to be shot for political crimes, and those sentenced to imprisonment for five years

and upwards. On 8 June the Politburo sanctioned the expulsion from the Azov–Black Sea krai to Kazakhstan of the families of 'arrested Trotskyists and rightists'.[10] In March–June 1937 there continued the arrest of party and state leaders at various levels. Mass arrests now began in earnest in the leadership of the Red Army.

Up until the middle of 1937, therefore, the main blow of repression was directed against members of the party, mainly those who had in their time participated in the oppositions or who had shown some kind of dissent with Stalinist policies. Repression began also in the organs of power: inside the NKVD many of Yagoda's people were arrested, in the army cases were fabricated against a number of senior military officers. The new stage in the purge was heralded by the decision of the Politburo of 28 June 1937, 'Concerning the uncovering in West Siberia of a counter-revolutionary insurrectionary organisation amongst exiled kulaks'. The resolution ordered the shooting of all 'activists of the insurrectionary organisation'. To speed up the investigation of their cases a troika was established comprising the head of the NKVD of Western Siberia (Mironov), the procurator of the krai (Barkov) and the party secretary of the krai (Eikhe).[11]

Within a few days the practice of establishing troiki was extended to the whole country. On 2 July 1937 a Politburo resolution 'Concerning anti-Soviet elements' sanctioned the carrying out of operations which became a pivot of the mass repression of 1937–8. By a resolution of the Politburo the following telegram was sent to the secretaries of the oblast committees, krai committees and the Central Committees of national communist parties:

> It is noted that the majority of former kulaks and criminals, who were exiled, at one time from various oblasts to the northern and Siberian regions and then with the completion of the sentences of exile have returned to their oblasti – are the main instigators of all kinds of anti-Soviet and diversionary crimes.

The Central Committee ordered the secretaries of oblasti and krai organisations and all oblast, krai and republican representatives of the NKVD to take account of all kulaks and criminals who returned to their areas of domicile so that the most hostile of them should be immediately arrested and shot. These cases were to be handled administratively through the troiki, whilst the remainder, the less active but still hostile elements, were to be resettled and sent to the regions designated by the NKVD.

The Central Committee required the local authorities within five days to present to the Central Committee the composition of the troiki, and the number to be shot as well as the number to be exiled.[12]

In the following weeks lists of the troiki and information concerning the number of 'anti-Soviet elements' were received from the localities, and on this basis orders were prepared within the NKVD for the implementation of the operation. On 30 July Ezhov's deputy in the NKVD, M.P. Frinovskii, who had been assigned responsibility for implementing this action, sent to the Politburo for its approval the NKVD's operational order NOO447, 'Concerning the operation for repressing former kulaks, criminals and other anti-Soviet elements'. The order fixed the beginning of the operation, depending on region, from 5–15 August; it was to be completed in four months' time.

Above all the order laid down 'the contingents to be subject to repression'. In reality it included all who in whatever degree had struggled against Soviet power or had been victims of former repressions: kulaks, those released from or who had fled from exile, former members of disbanded parties (SRs, Georgian Mensheviks, Mussavats, Dashnaks etc.), former White Guards, surviving tsarist officials, those arrested, charged with terror and spying-diversionary activities, political prisoners, those held in labour camps etc. On one of the later places in this list were included criminals.

All those to be repressed, in accordance with this order, were divided into two categories: first those subject to immediate arrest and shooting; second those subject to imprisonment in labour camps or prison for periods from 8 to 10 years. All oblasti, krais and republics in the order were assigned quotas (*limity*) for those to be repressed for each of the two categories (on the basis of information concerning the number of 'anti-Soviet elements', which the local authorities had sent to Moscow). A total of 259,450 individuals were to be arrested, of these 72,950 were to be shot (including 10,000 in the camps). These figures were deliberately incomplete since the quotas omitted a number of regions of the country. The order gave local leaders the right to request from Moscow additional quotas for repression. Moreover, to those imprisoned in camps or in exile might be added the families of the repressed.

Troiki were established in the republics, krais and oblasti to decide the fate of those arrested. As a rule they included the narkom or administrative head of the NKVD, the secretary of the corresponding party organisation and the procurator of the republic, krai or oblast. The troiki were accorded extraordinary powers, to pass sentences (including shootings) and issue orders for their implementation without

any check. On 31 July this order of the NKVD was approved by the Politburo.[13]

From the end of August the Central Committee received from local leaders requests to increase the quotas for repression. From 27 August to 15 December the Politburo sanctioned increasing the quotas for various regions for the first category by almost 22,500 and for the second category by 16,800 individuals.[14]

Besides the general operation to liquidate 'anti-Soviet elements' there were organised several special actions. On 20 July 1937 the Politburo ordered the NKVD to arrest all Germans, who were working in defence factories and to deport some of them abroad. On 9 August the Politburo confirmed the order of the NKVD USSR 'Concerning the liquidation of the Polish diversionist group and organisation POV' (Polish Organisation of Military Personnel). On 19 September the Politburo approved the NKVD order 'Concerning measures in connection with the terrorist diversionary and spying activities of Japanese agents of the so-called Harbintsy' (former workers of the Chinese Eastern Railway, who had been resettled in the USSR following the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway to Japan in 1935).[15]

In the second half of 1937 there was carried out also the mass expulsion from frontier regions of 'unreliable elements'. The largest expulsion was the deportation from the Far Eastern krai of the entire Korean population to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan which was implemented on the basis of the Central Committee – Sovnarkom resolution of 21 August 1937 with the stated aim of 'suppressing penetration by Japanese espionage in the Far Eastern krai'.[16]

An important component part of the mechanism of mass repression was the conducting of numerous trials both in the capital and in the localities. As distinct from the secret courts and the absolutely secret sessions of the troiki open trials fulfilled an important propaganda role. Therefore sanction for the conducting of the main trials was given directly by the Politburo. It also as a rule determined in advance the sentence, most commonly shooting. The Politburo was especially active in the second half of 1937 in sanctioning the organisation of these trials. From 8 August to 17 December 1937 the Politburo approved the conducting of about 40 trials in various regions of the country.[17]

At the beginning of 1938 signals were issued from Moscow, which it seemed, indicated a cessation of the purge. On 9 January the Politburo ruled as incorrect the dismissal from work of relatives of individuals, arrested for counterrevolutionary crimes, only on the grounds of their being relatives, and charged the USSR's Procurator, A.Ya. Vyshinskii

to give corresponding instructions to the organs of the procuracy.[18] On 19 January the press published the resolution of the Central Committee, 'Concerning the mistakes of party organisations in the expulsion of communists from the party, of the formal-bureaucratic attitude to appeals of those expelled from the CPSU and of measures for correcting these deficiencies', which demanded greater attention to the fate of party members. Certain token measures in connection with these resolutions was undertaken by the leadership of the USSR's Procuracy and by Narkomyust.[19]

The true meaning of these political manoeuvres still remains obscure. Certain indications concerning the preparation of the campaign allow us to assert that the operation against the 'anti-Soviet elements', as noted above, was to be completed in four months, i.e. by November–December 1937 (depending on region). It is possible, that having this circumstance in mind Stalin was prepared at the beginning of 1938 to terminate the purge and that he wished to give a clear signal to this effect to the January plenum of the Central Committee. In support of such a proposition might be cited the fact that the announcement of the 'relaxation' at the beginning of 1939 at the XVIII party congress was also carried through on the basis of the slogan for a more attentive attitude to the fate of communists. The report on this question at the January plenum and at the XVIII party congress were both made by G. M. Malenkov.

Whatever the truth of this argument the resolution of the January plenum of 1938 remained no more than a political declaration. The purge could not be completed in four months. On 31 January 1938 the Politburo adopted the proposal of the NKVD USSR 'Concerning the confirmation of additional numbers of those subject to repression of former kulaks, criminals and active anti-Soviet elements'. By 15 March (in the Far East by 1st April) it was prescribed, within the operation for eliminating 'anti-Soviet elements', to repress an additional 57,200 individuals, of whom 48,000 were to be shot. Correspondingly the powers of the troiki, who were to carry out this work, were extended.[20] Also on 31 January the Politburo authorised the NKVD to extend until 15 April the operation for destroying the so-called 'counterrevolutionary nationalist contingent-Poles, Letts, Germans, Estonians, Finns, Greeks, Iranians, Harbintsy, Chinese and Romanians'. Furthermore, the Politburo charged the NKVD that it should complete by 15 April analogous operations and destroy (*pogromit'*) the cadres of Bulgarians and Macedonians, both those of foreign origin and those who were citizens of the USSR.[21]

After confirming these new quotas for repression the history of the previous year was repeated: local leaders began to request increasing the quotas and extending the duration of the operation. From 1 February to 29 August 1939 the Politburo approved additions to the January quotas for those to be repressed by about 90,000 people.[22] And this meant also in fact approving the breaching of the April deadline on the duration of the operation.

In 1938 the campaign of political trials was continued. For the year as a whole the Politburo sanctioned the conducting of about 30 trials, of which seven were in January 1938.

Only in the autumn of 1938 was the terror reined in. The examination of cases by the troiki was forbidden by the directive of Sovnarkom-Central Committee of 15 November 1938.[23] The joint Sovnarkom-Central Committee resolution of 17 November 1938 forbade the carrying out of 'mass operations for arrest and exile'.[24] On 24 November Ezhov was released from his post as narkom of the NKVD. The great terror was brought to an end.

This brief enumeration, which does not cover all the actions, that comprised what is known as the great terror, allows us to make some observations.

The mass repression of 1937–8 was unquestionably an action directed from the centre; which was planned and administered from Moscow. The Politburo gave orders for the carrying out of the various operations, it approved the operational orders of the NKVD, it sanctioned the organisation of the most important trials. The question of the activities and reorganisations of the NKVD, and the appointment of the responsible officials of this commissariat, occupied in 1937–8, to judge from the protocols, the leading place in the Politburo's work.

The activity of the troiki, as already noted, was regulated by means of quotas on the numbers to be incarcerated in camps and those to be shot. Sentences imposed on a significant proportion of those tried by the Military Collegium of the USSR's Supreme Court, the military tribunals and other 'judicial bodies' were in fact determined in advance by the Politburo's Commission for Legal Matters and confirmed by the Politburo. In this period the Commission for Legal Matters presented its protocols for the approval of the Politburo once a month on average. The texts of these protocols remain unavailable. But evidently they include the 383 lists 'of many thousands of party, soviet, Komsomol, military and economic workers' which, as N. S. Khrushchev revealed at the XX party congress, Ezhov sent to Stalin to be

approved.[25] (Ezhov was included in the composition of the Politburo Commission on Legal Matters on 23 January 1937[26] and evidently during the repression played a leading part in it). An example of one of these lists was given in the speech by the deputy chairman of the Committee of Party Control Z. T. Serdyuk at the XXII party congress in October 1961:

> Comrade Stalin,
>
> I send for your approval four lists of individuals which are to be sent to the Court of the Military Collegium.
>
> 1. List 1 (general)
> 2. List 2 (former military officials)
> 3. List 3 (former workers of the NKVD).
> 4. List 4 (wives of enemies of the people)
>
> I request that you sanction that they all be sentenced to the first category.
>
> Ezhov.[27]

In spite of the fact that the majority of directives concerning the terror were formulated as decisions of the Politburo their true author, judging from the existing documents, was Stalin. The Politburo itself in the years of the terror evidently met irregularly. On 14 April 1937 there was adopted the resolution 'with the aim of preparing for the Politburo and in case of especial urgency – also for the resolution of questions of a secret character . . . to create attached to the Politburo of the CC CPSU a permanent commission comprising of comrades Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, L., and Ezhov'.[28] The inclusion in this group of Ezhov (who, incidentally, became only a candidate member of the Politburo several months later) testifies to the fact that this simplified procedure was designed primarily to examine questions relating to the NKVD's activity. This was so in practice. Several resolutions, judging by all the evidence, Stalin adopted in fact on his own. The directives of the Central Committee to the localities about the arrests and organisation of trials bore Stalin's signature.[29] In a number of cases Stalin dispatched telegrams with instructions from himself in person. For example on 27 August 1937 in reply to a request from the secretary of the Western obkom of the party, Korotchenko, concerning a trial of 'wreckers active in agriculture in Andreevskii raion' Stalin telegraphed: 'I advise you to sentence the wreckers of Andreevskii raion to be shot, and the shootings to be publicised in the local press.' A similar telegram from Stalin personally the same day

was sent to Krasnoyarsk obkom.[30] With a great measure of confidence it is possible to assert that when the documents from the Presidential archive are available, much more evidence will be revealed concerning Stalin's leading role in the organisation of the terror.

The centralised initiation and direction of the terror as a whole does not mean that there were no elements of a spontaneous character. Indeed they existed in all such actions – during the course of collectivisation, and forcible grain requisitioning in 1932–3, in the so-called struggle against 'terrorism' following the murder of Kirov etc. In official language these phenomena were referred to as 'excesses' (*peregib*) or as breaches of socialist legality. To the 'excesses' of the mass repression of 1937–8 it is possible to adduce the high number of deaths during interrogation or the exceeding by local organs of the quotas for arrests and shootings established by Moscow etc. For example, according to incomplete information, the troika of the NKVD of Turkmeniya from August 1937 to September 1938 tried 13,259 individuals although they had a limit of only 6,277.[31] This fact of exceeding the quota by more than double, and also the murder of prisoners under investigation, which was concealed by the local organs and not given in accounts, must be taken into consideration in assessing the total number of those repressed.

However, as a whole such spontaneity or initiative by local authorities was planned, deriving from the nature of the orders which were issued by the centre, from the constant demands of Moscow to 'strengthen the struggle with the enemy', from the assignment to the NKVD of the primary task of ruthlessly implementing and breaking all minor attempts to oppose the terror. Up to a certain point the leadership of the country in fact encouraged breaches of their own directives, untying the NKVD's hand, although it was fully cognisant of the fact that the terror went beyond the limits established by the 'control figures'.

As the mass terror of 1937–8 was an action which was directed from the centre, it is logical to ask what aims did it serve for the organisers of the repression and in particular for Stalin. This problem has been repeatedly examined in the literature. Historians have directed attention to such facts as the elimination of a significant proportion of those communists with pre-revolutionary party service, the growing threat of a new war, the replacement of the ruling elite, the unstable state of Stalin's own psychology etc. What we know today regarding the mechanisms of the 'Great Terror' allows us to assert that the main aim of the mass repression of 1937–8 was the removal of all strata of the

population, which in the opinion of the country's leaders were hostile or potentially hostile.

The purge at the end of the 1930s was carried out in accordance with the policy of repression implemented in earlier years. The actions that followed one another – expulsions from the party and the arrest of oppositionists, collectivisation and 'dekulakisation', the struggle with 'sabotage of grain requisitioning' and 'theft of socialist property', arrests and exile after the murder of Kirov, mass expulsions from the party and arrests in the course of the exchange of party documents etc. – affected many millions of people. By the middle of the 1930s in the country, as already noted, there were 1.5 million former party members, millions of prisoners in the labour camps and in the so called labour settlements. There were also millions of people who were free but who at various times had been brought to legal account etc. A great problem for the government was the return from exile of 'kulaks' who by the middle of the 1930s were being released and under the new Constitution had their rights restored. Thus the number of those with a grudge (*obizhennyi*) and thus under suspicion (together with their families) included a significant proportion of the country's population. In the conditions of a threat of a new war many of them were considered as a potential 'fifth column'. Amongst those who fell under the constant suspicion of the Kremlin leadership were the immigrants, representatives of national minorities, many of whom had certain contacts with their co-nationals who lived abroad.

With certain of the formerly repressed individuals the government attempted reconciliation. The resolution of TsIK and Sovnarkom USSR of 16 January 1936 for example foresaw lighter punishments or early release of some of those sentenced by the notorious law of 7 August 1932 concerning the safeguarding of socialist property.[32] The narkom of Justice Krylenko and chairman of the Supreme Court of the RSFSR Bulat, informed M. I. Kalinin, chairman of TsIK USSR, that in implementing this resolution by July 1936 (the resolution foresaw the work would be completed in six months) more than 115,000 cases were to be reexamined. Almost 49,000 of those imprisoned had their sentences cut and about 38,000 were released. This aroused amongst several hundred of prisoners the expectation of being granted a full amnesty.[33]

A still larger action of a similar kind occurred when the mass repression was in full swing. On 23 October 1937 the Politburo charged the USSR's Procuracy and Narkomyust to carry out for the whole union and autonomous republics, krais and oblasti a check on criminal

cases, which involved those who had held positions in the village soviets, kolkhozy, MTS, as well as village and kolkhoz activists. They were to check all cases beginning from 1934. At the same time the Politburo undertook to drop cases and free from punishment those kolkhozniki accused of minor offences (property, administrative infringements etc.).[34] This action continued for more than two years.[35] The examination of criminal cases involved 1.5 million people. By 10 March 1940 were delivered *spravki* concerning the quashing of convictions on almost 450,000 people and releasing from prison almost 30,000. The cases against 128,000 people were closed, whilst 25,000 had their punishments reduced.[36]

On 22 October 1938 Sovnarkom USSR adopted a resolution which authorised the granting of passports to the children of those in special labour settlements and in exile on attaining 16 years of age 'on the general basis and not to place in their way obstacles to go to education or to work', although it preserved restrictions on departure to so called 'regime localities'. Before the war about 100,000 people were released from exile by this resolution.[37]

However, the Stalinist leadership always considered terror as its main method of struggle with a potential 'fifth column'. The cruel repression of 1937–8 was above all determined by biographical particulars. The basis for shooting or dispatch to the camps might be an unsuitable pre-revolutionary past, participation in the civil war on the side of the Bolsheviks' enemies, membership of other political parties or oppositionist groups within the CPSU, previous convictions, membership of 'suspect' nationalities (Germans, Poles, Koreans etc.), finally family connections and association with representatives of the enumerated categories. Corresponding accounting of all these contingents of the population through the years was done by the NKVD and the party organs. Following orders from Moscow to the localities the lists were compiled and on this basis arrests were carried out.

Already in the order of the NKVD N00447 'Concerning the operation for the repression of former kulaks, criminals and active anti-Soviet elements' the organs of the NKVD were instructed to investigate 'all criminal contacts of those arrested'. As revealed by numerous memoirs and documents the fulfilment of this task was one of the main objectives of the NKVD's staff. Adopting torture, they fabricated numerous cases of 'counterrevolutionary organisations', in which were numbered the friends, co-workers and relatives of those arrested. On this basis new arrests were carried out. The repression was thus extended to those strata of the population which formally were

not subject to the purge. Some of those judged in the purge by biographical data were rehabilitated at the end of 1938–9.

It was by these crude means that the repression was carried out amongst members of the party and leading workers both in the centre and in the localities. At first those arrested were those who in their time had participated in oppositions or had some 'political deviation' (the lists of such workers, compiled on the basis of the study of archival material, was in the hands of the NKVD). Then on the basis of their testimony, obtained in many cases by torture and duress, new arrests were carried out. For 1936 alone 134,000 people were expelled from the party, in 1937 more than 117,000 and in 1938 more than 90,000.[38] Some of them were reinstated. However, many were arrested after their expulsion. As a result of the purge of the party the composition of the ruling elite changed substantially. At the beginning of 1939 the Sector of Leading Party Organs accounted 32,899 leading workers, which were included in the nomenklatura of the Central Committee (narkoms of the USSR and RSFSR, their deputies, heads of chief administrations and obedinenie of the commissariats and their deputies, administrators of trusts and their deputies, directors and chief engineers of many industrial enterprises, directors of MTS and sovkhozy, heads of the political departments (*politotdely*) of the sovkhozy, directors of higher educational institutions and scientific-research institutes, chairmen of oblast and krai ispolkoms, heads and deputy heads of departments of ispolkoms, heads of railway lines and construction projects etc.). Of these 43 per cent were promoted to work in 1937–8. Still more significant was the replacement of the leading party workers. Of 333 secretaries of obkoms, kraikoms and Central Committees of national communist parties who were working at the beginning of 1939 194 were promoted in 1937–8; of 10,902 secretaries of raikoms, gorkoms and okrugkoms of the party 6,909 were appointed to their posts in 1937–8.[39] The changes in the apparat took place through the advancement of young officials and workers.

Not all by any means of the leaders who were repressed suffered for 'political unreliability' (past political sins or close contact with former oppositionists). As with other strata of the population there were amongst the leading workers who suffered many who had an unblemished biography. Researchers have repeatedly noted that with the help of the terror the Stalinist leadership resolved a real existing problem of replacing the older cadres with younger and more educated people.[40] For Stalin such a cadres revolution also had political significance. On the one hand, the promotees, younger cadres advanced as a

consequence of the repression, were more amenable to the *vozhd'* than the old guard. On the other hand it was possible to place all responsibility for former lawlessness, economic errors, the difficulties of life of ordinary Soviet people on the repressed leaders.

Those leaders who were repressed did indeed bear their share of responsibility for what had taken place in the country. The dictatorship created the conditions which allowed incredible abuses of power to occur, and many officials took full advantage of this. Having previously encouraged the tyranny of local leaders, the Moscow *vozhd'* in the years of terror turned against these leaders and actively demonstrated his resolution to 'defend' the people from bureaucrats and enemies. For example on 14 May 1937 the Politburo examined the question of the cases of assaults on kolkhozniki in various raions of Kursk oblast and adopted a proposal submitted by Vyshinskii

> on the adoption by the courts in cases of assaults on kolkhozniki and their public humiliation, of deprivation of freedom as a means of punishment, reviewing sentences that imposed insufficiently harsh punishments in these cases. To publish in the local press sentences for the most important cases, connected with assaults on kolkhozniki and their public humiliation.[41]

On 10 June 1937 the Politburo examined the cases of a number of officials of Shiryaevskii raion in Odessa oblast who were accused of humiliating kolkhozniki. The Procurator of the USSR was charged to send investigators to Shiryaevskii raion to examine the most important cases and to complete the investigation in ten days time. The matter was heard by the Ukrainian Supreme Court in open session in the locality. The sentences were published in the press, both local and central.[42] A specially secret point of this resolution envisaged the sentencing of all the guilty in the case to loss of liberty from 3 to 10 years imprisonment.[43] This policy appears to have been applied widely. In numerous open trials which were carried out in all regions of the country, those judged – mainly local leaders – were most often accused of abuse of power and coercion. The victims of their oppression – ordinary citizens – often gave evidence in the courts. The reports of such 'show-trials' were carried in the press.[44]

This policy it seems bore fruit. In the memoirs of a peasant woman from Novosibirsk oblast, M. D. Mal'tseva, who herself was subject to 'dekulakisation' and exile, she recounts the period of mass repression of the 1930s:

> People suffered so much in that time, but one never heard people criticising Stalin; only the local leaders were blamed; only they were criticised. Because of them we all suffered, and how many people died because of them is unknown. I don't know, perhaps I am wrong, but I say that in 1938 many were taken, perhaps because they heeded our tears, since there were good reasons to take them, that's what I think.[45]

Similar opinions, it seems, were widespread.

With the aim of discovering the reasons for the instigation of the mass repression of 1937–8 it is necessary to take into account the following circumstance. Terror and force were one of the basic methods for creating the Stalinist system. In this or that measure with their help were resolved practically all social-economic and political problems – the securing of social stability, raising industrial production, ensuring Stalin's personal power etc. These and other factors at each stage underwrote the existence of state terror and mass repression. However each of the terror campaigns in turn raised the level of coercion higher, since so to speak the 'usual level' had its concrete reason. For example the mass exile of peasants at the beginning of the 1930s served the purpose of collectivising the countryside. The terror at the end of 1932–3 was a means of escaping from the sharp social-economic and political crisis which developed between the first and second Five-Year Plans. The mass repression of 1937–8 also had its direct causes, as noted above.

In the mind of the Stalinist leadership this was precisely a purge of society, an attempt by one blow to rid themselves of all those who in this or that measure had been subject to coercion in the preceding years or had fallen under suspicion on some other count. This operation was conceived as a means of eliminating a potential 'fifth column' in a period when the threat of war was increasing, and also as a means of disposing of loyal cadres who for various reasons were no longer needed by Stalin.

This view of the purges as a means of eliminating a potential 'fifth column' is not new. The argument was forcefully advanced by the American ambassador in Moscow in the 1930s, Joseph E. Davies.[46] Trotsky, whose writings Stalin avidly read, repeatedly warned of the danger of a prolonged war (whether in the case of victory or defeat), in the absence of a revolutionary upsurge in the west, leading to a capitalist restoration, 'a bourgeois Bonapartist counter-revolution' in

the USSR.[47] Isaac Deutscher in his classic biography of Stalin gives an imaginary conversation between Stalin and the ghost of Nicholas II where the relationship between war and regime stability is discussed.[48]

It might be noted further that this was indeed the whole thrust of Stalin's two reports to the Central Committee plenum in February–March 1937, as well as the reports of Molotov, Ezhov, Kaganovich and others. The revelations from the archives now strongly reinforce that view. It is supported by evidence from the directives of the highest leadership of the country concerning the implementation of the purge in 1937–8, by the way these actions were understood by contemporaries, and by the explanations given later by Stalin's own colleagues.[49]

Writing his final, agonized letter to Stalin in December 1937, appealing for his life to be spared, emphasising his loyalty and respect for Stalin personally, Bukharin noted the 'great and courageous idea of a general purge', associated with war preparations and paradoxically the transition to democracy, heralded by the Stalin Constitution. The purge, he noted, directed at the guilty, those under suspicion and those who might waver, should ensure a 'full guarantee' for the leadership in the event of an emergency.[50]

The most explicit statements in support of this view were uttered by Molotov in the 1970s, when he declared:

> 1937 was necessary. If you take into account that after the revolution we chopped right and left, achieved victory, but the survivals of enemies of various tendencies remained and in the face of the growing threat of fascist aggression they might unite. We were driven in 1937 by the consideration that in the time of war we would not have a fifth column . . .
>
> And there suffered not only the clear Rightists, not to speak of the Trotskyists, but there suffered also many who vacillated, those who did not firmly follow the line and in whom there was no confidence that at a critical moment they would not desert and become, so to speak, part of the 'fifth column'.
>
> Stalin, in my opinion, pursued an absolutely correct line: so what if one or two extra heads were chopped off (*puskai lishnyaya golova sletit*), there would be no vacillation in the time of war and after the war.[51]

The complex relationship between war and revolution, which had almost seen the tsarist regime toppled in 1905 and which finally brought its demise in 1917, was a relationship of which Stalin was acutely aware. The lesson of history had to be learnt lest history repeat itself.

Notes

1. See for example R.A. Medvedev, *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism* (New York, 1971); R. Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (New York, 1990); J.A. Getty, *The Origins of the Great Purges: The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933–1938* (New York, 1985); G.T. Rittersporn, *Stalinist Simplifications and Soviet Complications; Social Tensions and Political Conflicts in the USSR, 1933–1953* (Philadelphia, 1991); J.A. Getty and R.T. Manning (eds) *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives* (Cambridge, 1993).
2. *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1989, no. 8, p. 84.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 100–15.
4. *Ibid.*, no. 9, p. 39.
5. RTsKhIDNI, 17/71/43, 44, 45, 46 etc.
6. RTsKhIDNI, 17/2/773, 115.
7. *Voprosy istorii*, 1993, no. 6, pp. 5–6.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
9. *Ibid.*, no. 5, pp. 4–5, 14–15; no. 6, pp. 8, 21–2.
10. *Protokoly zasedanii Politbyuro, osobaya papka.*
11. *Ibid.*,
12. *Trud.*, 4 June, 1992, p. 1.
13. *Ibid.*,
14. *Protokoly zasedanii Politbyuro, osobaya papka.* See also *Moskovskie novosti*, 21 June 1992, pp. 18–19.
15. *Protokoly zasedanii Politbyuro, osobaya papka.* On the fate of the Harbintsy see: A. Suturin, *Delo kraevogo masshtaba* (Khabarovsk, 1991) pp. 195–213.
16. See *Belaya kniga o deportatsii koreiskogo naseleniya Rossii v 30–40-kh godakh* (M., 1992) tom. 1.
17. It is difficult to give precise figures for the number of trials sanctioned by the Politburo since in a number of cases the resolution does not give a precise figure. For example on 14 November 1937 the Politburo instructed the Archangel obkom to conduct two or three cases of 'wreckers in the timber industry'. From the decisions of the Politburo it is also not always clear whether they had in mind an open trial. For example on 15 November the Politburo charged the Novosibirsk obkom that 'those apprehended concerning the explosion at Prokop'evsk should be brought before the court and shot, the shooting to be publicised in the Novosibirsk press' (*Protokoly zasedanii Politbyuro, osobaya papka*).

18. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/994, 56. This resolution was formulated as a resolution of Sovnarkom USSR of 10 January 1938 (GARF, 5446/57/53, 27).
19. P. H. Solomon Jnr.,'Soviet Criminal Justice and the Great Terror', *Slavic Review*, vol. 46, no. 3, 1987, pp. 405–6.
20. *Moskovskie novosti*, 21 June 1992, p. 19.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Protokoly zasedanii Politbyuro, osobaya papka.* It is not possible to determine precisely what proportion of these were subject to be shot, since in many cases the Politburo confirmed general figures for the first and second category.
23. For the text of this directive see *Moskovskie novosti*, 21 June 1992, p. 19.
24. *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 1992, no. 1, pp. 125–8.
25. *Reabilitatsiya. Politicheskie protsessy 30–50 kh. godov*, (M., 1991) p. 39.
26. *Protokoly zasedanii Politbyuro, osobaya papka.*
27. *XXII s"ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soyuza; Stenograficheskii otchet*, t. III (M., 1962) p. 152.
28. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/986, 16.
29. *Tsentr khraneniya sovremennoi dokumentatsii*, 89/48/ 2,3, 7, 9, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 20.
30. *Izvestiya*, 10 June 1992, p. 7.
31. *Protokoly zasedanii Sekretariata Tsk VKP(b) osobaya papka.*
32. Approved by the Politburo on 15 January 1936 (RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/974, 174).
33. RTsKhIDNI, 78/7/207, 1–2.
34. *Protokoly zasedanii Politbyuro, osobaya papka.*
35. On 27 July 1939 Sovnarkom USSR adopted a resolution 'Concerning the reexamination of cases of individuals from the kolkhozy and village aktiv, judged in 1934–1937', which recognised the unsatisfactory course of presenting evidence for gaining convictions and demanded the completion of this work in its entirety for the whole country by 1 November 1939 (GARF, 17/57/60, 1).
36. GARF, 5446/30/277, 24–8.
37. V. N. Zemskov,'Kulatskaya ssylka v 30-e gody', *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya*, 1991, no. 10, p. 19–20.
38. RTsKhIDNI, 17/117/873, 23.
39. RTsKhIDNI, 477/1/41, 62–83; 477/1/51, 153–4.
40. S. Fitzpatrick, 'Stalin and the Making of a New Elite' in S. Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front. Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (New York, 1992) pp. 149–82.
41. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/987 229.
42. RTsKhIDNI, 17/3/987, 492.
43. *Protokoly zasedanii Politbyuro, osobaya papka.*
44. S. Fitzpatrick, 'How the Mice Buried the Cat: Scenes from the Great Purges of 1937 in the Russian Provinces', *The Russian Review*, vol. 52, July 1993, pp. 299–320.
45. *Vozvrashchenie pamyati. Istoriko-publitsisticheskii al'manakh* (Novosibirsk, 1991) pp. 209–10.
46. Joseph E. Davies, *Mission to Moscow* (London, 1942).

47. L. D. Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* (London, 1967) p. 229. Trotsky quoted the following passage from *The Fourth International and War*, published in 1935: 'Under the influence of the critical need of the state for articles of prime necessity, the individualistic tendencies of the peasant economy will receive a considerable reinforcement, and the centrifugal forces within the collective farms will increase with every month . . . In the heated atmosphere of war, we may expect.. the attracting of foreign allied capital, a breach in the monopoly of foreign trade, a weakening of state control of the trusts, a sharpening of competition between the trusts, conflicts between the trusts and the workers, etc. . . . In other words, in the case of a long war, if the world proletariat is passive, the inner social contradictions of the Soviet Union not only might, but must lead to a bourgeois Bonapartist counterrevolution.'
48. I. Deutscher, *Stalin: A Political Biography* (Harmondsworth, 1968) pp. 373–4.
49. M. Sholokhov for example wrote in 16 February 1938 to Stalin: 'Cases of apprehension as part of the purge of the rear need also to be rechecked. Those apprehended include not only active Whiteguardists, emigres, executioners in a word those whom it is necessary to apprehend, but under this rubrik have been taken away also true Soviet people' (*Istochnik*, 1993, no. 4, p. 18).
50. *Istochnik*, 1993, no. 0, p. 23.
51. *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym. Iz dnevnikov F.Chueva* (M., 1991), pp. 390, 391, 416. See also the memoirs of G. Dimitrov in *Sovershenno sekretno*, no. 12, 1990, pp. 18–20.

8 'Small' Facts from Big Files about the *kolkhozy* in 1940

Moshe Lewin

Will the massive documentation flowing from the Russian and other ex-Soviet archives devalue or substantially change our existing knowledge of Soviet history? Many exaggerations are heard on this count, and a word of caution is in order: the rush to the archives may waste everyone's time, if the existing literature and other available sources are not sufficiently mastered. We should not lose sight of the fact that many published materials remain invaluable and may not have their equivalents in archives. So, as we rush for the archives, we should not fall for an 'archival fallacy'.

But there are many themes which without access to the archives we could not even have dreamed of before, that are now open for inquiry. The new possibilities are enormous and invaluable. They may sometimes leave previous assessments intact; but even so, they often allow us to tell a richer, fuller story. And once this has happened, a look back may be warranted to see whether the new findings merely clarify and expand, or force on us an in-depth rewriting or rethinking, in full or in part, of what we considered to be already known.

So far, it is too early to tell whether the latter is the case with collectivisation – so let us not rush to rewrite what is already written. We know a great deal about collectivisation and collectivised agriculture;[1] but we also knew all along that much remained to be told, before we could boast of a valid history of the collectivised peasantry before and after World War II. It is known that the KGB has allowed V. P. Danilov to use its massive materials from reports on the state of the countryside in the 1920s and the 1930s and to publish a multi-volume collection of documents. One such publication is to appear in France, and another, based on different sources, will hopefully be published in the USA. From what is already known about such sources we shall get, in the next few years, at least parts of the story that were never previously told.

But this will not replace aspects that can only be reconstructed by working on invaluable, though less sensational archival funds, notably the ones I would like to turn my attention to in this paper: holdings from TsUNKhU-TsSU, Narkomzem, Narkomfin, Gosplan and other economic and statistical agencies that are stored in the Russian State Economic Archive (RGAE; previously TsGANKh). RGAE is the main source of data for this paper, and it is a treasure trove for the researcher. The time at my disposal, during my research trips to the USSR, did not allow me to size up the full wealth of these holdings. It is not a job for one scholar anyway and it needs, in particular, the type of patience and skills that researchers like R. W. Davies (or the Davies–Wheatcroft tandem) command. I shall concentrate here on the files of Narkomzem, and some from Narkomfin; others will be used occasionally, or mentioned in passing.

A special sector was created in Narkomzem (the Commissariat of Agriculture) to handle the annual reports from the country's *kolkhozy* (collective farms). These are undoubtedly the best and most reliable source for the essential features of *kolkhoz* production: inputs, outputs, incomes, cadres. Some of them were published in printed volumes – e.g. the annual reports from the *kolkhozy* for 1935 and 1936. Albeit initially intended 'for official use' (*dlya sluzhebnogo pol'zovaniya*), they were nevertheless available to the researcher in the INION Library of the Academy of Sciences in Moscow, at least in 1987. In addition, and again 'for official use' only, the same Library had an excellent printed statistical series on the state of agriculture, to which we shall refer below.

The important lesson, as far as archival source material is concerned, is that the big *fondy* of Narkomzem come to life when studied in conjunction with the files of Narkomfin (the Commissariat of Finance) and the files of Gosplan's Statistical Service (TsUNKhU). We have in mind sources like the budget studies (*byudzhety*) of *kolkhozniki* that were produced by TsUNKhU (formerly TsSU) and heavily used by Narkomfin. Subjects such as incomes, purchases and sales, the private plots of the rural population, the taxes they paid and how much they spent on items categorised as 'culture', are reflected in those irreplaceable files. The *fond* of the Commissariat of Procurements (Narkomzag) is also relevant. Taken together, these sources offer a powerful base for recreating a picture of the economy and the social structure of the *kolkhoz* system. As to the broader picture of government policies, in addition to what the Narkomzem files contain, Gosplan's sectors other than TsUNKhU should be searched: they

contain information on just about everything. Sovnarkom and the Party are the other key purveyors that contain valuable material: notably Sovnarkom's 'Management Department' (*Upravlenie delami*) (in GARF, the State Archive of the Russian Federation; formerly TsGAOR). The Party Archives – now called RTsKhIDNI – have the files of the Party's Department of Agriculture for the years 1934–46 and 1948–54, during which time this department existed. They certainly belong to the 'must see' list.

Some of these sources have already been used by Soviet scholars.[2] A sample of Narkomzem's national summary based on the annual reports from the *kolkhozy* was introduced by Yu.V. Arutyunyan and V.P. Danilov back in 1962: this was a memorandum (*zapiska*) signed by an archivist of the Ministry of Agriculture, entitled 'Compendium of *kolkhoz* Reports for the Period of the Great Fatherland War'.[3] It offered a summary of such reports for the years 1940–5 – i.e., it provided a review of nothing less than the state of agricultural performance of the *kolkhozy* during the war years, compared to the still relatively peaceful year of 1940. M.A. Vyltsan did a useful job in 1968 when he introduced his assessment of Narkomfin's materials as a source for the history of the countryside,[4] and drew our attention to the wealth of data on *kolkhozy* that the financial agency had collected and compiled. Other Soviet colleagues have also published important works based on data from the sources I shall be using in this chapter: so I make no claim that the things I have seen in the archives were discovered by me.

'CADRES ARE ALL THAT MATTERS'

But let us first turn to a set of Narkomzem files on agricultural cadres during the years 1935–41 and to the story that emerges therefrom. They come from the Commissariat's sectors responsible for training cadres for the *kolkhozy*. The making of 'cadres', and the policies and outcomes in these spheres are highly symptomatic of the whole Soviet experience, and of some key features of the Stalinist period in particular – well beyond the sole domain of the Commissariat in question. Stalin's slogan, proclaimed with much fanfare in the 1930s, that cadres are the decisive factor in the country's development (*'kadry reshayut vse'*) is a good, albeit ironic opening to this section. Ironic not only because of what will transpire but also because of the treatment

that the purges inflicted on those cadres just as they were supposed to have been 'all that matters'.

The *kolkhoz* system – with its 240,000 *kolkhozy*, its 6,993 MTS (Machine-Tractor Stations), 4,000 *raizo* (District Land Boards) and many higher administrative bodies and auxiliary institutions in the agricultural areas – was an entirely new agricultural system that was created in a very short period of time. Hence there was an enormous shortage of specialists of all types and levels – an ominous deficit in qualified manpower that the state had to make good 'at the double', as it were. The training of cadres for the whole economy became the responsibility of the relevant Commissariats; thus Narkomzem was charged with the task of schooling cadres for agriculture at central, national and regional levels – a task that demanded a level of experience and cultural maturity that only a longer process could have provided. No wonder numbers and quantity would become the overwhelming priority and criterion – here as well as in most other undertakings of the thirties, when agriculture and much else were handled in a rush. Facing a critical situation, the Central Committee convened a conference of officials in April 1938, to discuss the state of affairs in the training and supplying of cadres for the countryside (we shall omit discussion of the *sovkhozy*). The picture that the conference had to face was one of confusion and waste. Although the source we use does not mention it, we know that that these were the times of the Great Purge, but only a hint of the surrounding maelstrom was provided, as we shall see.

The main theme and worry at the conference was the state of the so called 'mass professions' (*kadry massovoi kvalifikatsii*).[5] R. I. Eikhe, the Commissar of Agriculture since 1937 and the Central Committee member who opened the session, painted a picture of desperate ineptitude. Narkomzem had no fixed programmes, and no stable network of schools. Some training courses dispensed their training in only 15 days, while some others took a year. The work of the relevant Main Administrations (*glavki*) and the cadres departments of the Commissariat – its specially established sectors for planning the schooling networks – were working 'scandalously' (*bezobrazno*).[6] Eikhe demanded an end to the system of short courses and a switch to stable, longer-term schools. *Kolkhoz* leaders and personnel for the *raizo*, MTS and *sovkhozy*, skilled machinists (*mekhanizatory*) and 'mass professionals' for the *kolkhozy* – gardeners, vets and livestock specialists (*zootekhniki*) – had to be trained, and attention had to be paid to recruiting and training enough women. It seems that the responsible

institutions and officials were completely confused as to the real needs of the *kolkhozy* and the *raizo* and how to serve them.

One participant from Narkomzem RSFSR confirmed Eikhe's impression that the whole business of producing 'mass professionals' was in a state of disarray. Narkomzem RSFSR had 1,360 schools – but no-one knew how many students they had. The registration was handled by the Statistics and Registry Bureaux, but the schools were administered by Chief Directorates that were not given the registration cards.[7] The disarray was obvious. In fact, said another speaker, the system dealt with millions of people, but many never finished the programmes and had to be retrained over and over (*douchivat'*).[8] Worse: they mostly disappeared from the Narkomzem system altogether.[9] 'We are preparing many people, said a man from Kiev, but we still have no-one to run the tractors.'[10]

The main problem here, Eikhe maintained, was not just technical knowledge, but that Stalin required 'people who have mastered Bolshevism' and were endowed with an indispensable level of political vigilance.[11] Eikhe's reference to Stalin's pet themes was the hint we mentioned above, an inescapable tribute to the spirit of the day and a way, however uncertain, for a top official to survive. But Eikhe – like quite a number of other top functionaries – was at that time only one short step from the gallows. The type of 'stabilisation' of cadres and institutions that he, or anybody else, was preaching, was in the circumstances just a pipe-dream. There were no people to prepare programmes for schooling, and no-one knew who would pay or what kind of stipend would be given to the students. When the stipend levels were finally announced, it turned out that they would spell misery for the students. They were supposed to be paid by the *kolkhozy* and to reach at least 120 rubles. But most participants presented calculations showing that even 150 rubles was not enough to take care of the minimal needs of a participant.[12] The materials of the conference make it clear that a stipend of 150 rubles was below the subsistence minimum in 1938 – and things had not changed much by 1940, as we shall see later. No wonder that in such conditions candidates for the school bench were not exactly breaking down the doors to get in!

The uncertainties and fluctuations (*tekuchka*) of these years were followed by a somewhat calmer situation in 1939 and 1940, when the purge was significantly reduced in scale, and Narkomfin could finally report (on January 1, 1941) that its professional pool of agricultural cadres with higher education had reached the number of 53,485 people. This was not bad as far as the higher level of the best trained people

was concerned: they had numbered only 18,396 in 1933. Things looked less rosy at secondary level. Although the numbers of specialists graduating each year ran into many thousands, their numbers in the field did not seem to grow: there were 73,695 in 1933, and 78,532 seven years later.[13] The huge turnover that plagued the cadres during those years certainly changed the personal composition of this category. It was clear that many of the trainees somehow 'evaporated'; and the statistics, all too often, referred to newcomers.

But even the apparent success with the best trained was not without its worrying aspects. The specialists recorded in 1933 had mostly been trained before 1917. Those produced later, in larger numbers, were educated in fairly shoddy *vtuzy* (higher technical institutes), of a much lower professional level than the pre-revolutionary establishments. Furthermore, additional complicated side-effects marred the whole effort. A statistical breakdown of specialists with higher education (by January 1, 1940) shows that most of them served in administration, research and schooling, as well as in the voracious *tresty i kontory* (auxiliary supply and commercial services); but the nearer one got to the real production level, the fewer of them were to be found. On the *raizo* level there were only 6,252; in the MTS – 6,265; and in the *kolkhozy* – a whopping 85 people for the whole country! In addition, only 20,390 of those with higher education were agronomists.[14] Although the *raizo* had their chiefs, chief agronomists and other specialists, their level of training left much to be desired – as Table 8.1 shows.

We have already offered more than an inkling of the immense task that Narkomzem, together with its local agencies, had to handle. The *kolkhozy* needed hundreds of thousands of tractor and combine drivers, lorry drivers, tractor-brigade and field-brigade leaders. Equally in demand were chairmen, accountants, technicians of all kind, cattle breeders, livestock specialists, and veterinarians. All were not only in short supply, but they also often left their jobs entirely or gravitated to cosier offices. The following data allow us to realise the scale of the training operation. Over 700,000 'mass professionals' were trained in 1939; the requirement (*zayavka*) for 1940 was somewhat smaller. Narkomzem asked for 579,500 trainees to be funded. At that time the realities of the approaching war came into play: the government authorised a budget for 352,200 people. Instead of 390 million rubles, as requested, less than 250 million were allocated. Narkomzem of course protested,[15] raising the spectre of a shortage of tractor and combine drivers and an inability to handle the harvest.[16] But it was doubtful

that even the authorised sum would become available. Neither would many of the people who did actually receive the training. They would be drafted into the army, or promoted to other jobs. War preparations were, of course, a new and different matter, beyond any ministerial routines. But the approaching war does offer a partial explanation of where Narkomzem's trained cadres were disappearing to before 1941.

Other problem areas related to the state of the cadres go beyond the problem of stipends for students. Narkomfin reported complaints about the extremely low salaries paid to the chairmen of village soviets (*sel'sovety*) – the lowest rung of the soviet administration. The data here come from the Executive Committee of the Northern Territory (Sevkraiispolkom).[17] A letter addressed to Molotov, dated 10 November 1936, stated that *sel'sovet* chairmen did not want the job. An example was given of a chairman with a family of seven: his salary was 150 rubles. Another with a family of six earned 100 rubles. But it transpires that in this area even a wage of 200 rubles was below the subsistence minimum – and many of the chairmen (probably of *bednyak* or *batrak* origin) did not have any private plots to supplement their meagre salaries. A similar picture was offered for the crucial category of agronomists.[18] An agronomist could make 500–600 rubles in a *sovkhoz*; a chief agronomist in an MTS – 540 rubles; an *uchastkovyi* (responsible for a rural sector) – 225 rubles. Yet the salary for the chief agronomist in a *raizo* was fixed at 160 rubles. How can he cope – asked the source – if 40 rubles have to go for living space, 10 for lighting, and 30 for heating, so that only 70 rubles remain for food? This was only 14 rubles per person for a family of five. If the whole family ate only bread – without either potatoes or other vegetables – they would still be 11 rubles 50 kopecks short. In view of such meagre pay, specialists would do all they could to go elsewhere.[19] We can add one more touch to the picture: all these data came from a trade-union committee in an area of the Gor'kii territory. By order of the RSFSR Government, the *raizo* was obliged to supply lodging, with heating and lighting, to such agronomists – but the territorial Financial Department allowed this advantage only to veterinarians. The financial agency held sway over salaries and personnel numbers.

Whatever the numbers of trained cadres at all levels, the real job had to be done by specialists serving in the *raizo* (there were about 4000 *raiony* at that time), and in the MTS (of which there were more than 6,000), as well as in the *kolkhozy* themselves. The actual producers were in fact the sector most poorly endowed with qualified cadres. The data cited below, on the total of specialists they employed, tell the story:

they were reported by 1,491 *raizo*, 615 of whom declared at the outset that the *kolkhozy* in their districts did not have any specialists at all.[20] Only the *raizo* had some.

The professionals recorded in Table 8.1 – agronomists, livestock specialists, veterinary surgeons, and veterinary assistants – numbered only 10,889 persons, whereas the districts that supplied the data must have had at least 90,000 *kolkhozy*. It was also reported that 9 per cent of those professionals were members of the Party, and 15 per cent – of the Komsomol. On paper, at least, this might have been enough for 'vigilance' purposes – but how good was the level of their professionalism? The inadequacy in numbers was compounded by low levels of professional education. The table singles out those with completed higher education, with incomplete higher education, with secondary general and/or specialised training, and finally those without any professional schooling at all.

The situation was certainly worrying: more than two-thirds of those who were supposed to serve the *kolkhozy* in the districts had not received any specialised training.

A broader picture of the 'mass cadres' in the *kolkhozy* confirms the findings of this table. In particular the majority of the *kolkhoz* chairmen, just before the war, were novices, in only their first year on the job. This extremely low level of job experience was caused, among other things, by yet another problem of those years: chairmen were being massively demoted or just as frequently tendered their resignation. We shall see figures about this phenomenon later in this chapter. Thus the hectic and chaotic activity of the training and schooling of professionals was caught up in and marred by an enormous

Table 8.1 Education of rural professional personnel, 1940

Profession	*Number*	*Education*			
		Higher	*Incomplete higher*	*Secondary*	*Without training*
Agronomists	2,118				28%
Livestock specialists	1,734				51.8%
Vets	78				
Veterinary assistants	6,959				42.8%
TOTAL	10,889	5.3%	1.1%	20.9%	72.7%

flux (*tekuchka*), that jolted them in and out of production, in and out of schools, in and out of the *kolkhozy* and MTS. All of this resulted from the haste that characterised the policies of those years.

Such phenomena, I would argue, were systemic. Many features observed in the domain of cadres could be observed all over the system. What stands out, here as elsewhere, is, firstly, the 'extensive' character of the process: its impressive numerical scale followed, not surprisingly, by poor qualitative results. The orientation on numbers, especially in the conditions of the purges and of other anomalies in the functioning of institutions, acquired in those years its own self-perpetuating momentum. In order to run the *kolkhozy*, to handle their accounting, cultivate their fields, breed their cattle, run their tractors and combines (in the Machine-Tractor Stations), trained personnel were needed, literally instantaneously. Although schooling for many of them required at least several years, they were trained in poorly run short courses – by people who themselves had to be 'improvised' somehow. The results were a mess that tended to become a permanent feature. And then the outcome was described by the regime's spokesmen as nothing less than a 'cultural revolution' – a subject to which we shall return in our broader conclusion at the end of this paper.

'NUGGETS' FROM THE VAST FILES

Next, let us plunge into the huge Narkomzem summaries of the annual *kolkhoz* reports – especially the one for the year ending January 1, 1941. Compiled by a sector in Narkomzem specially created for this task, the annual compendia had a remarkably complete set of data, from which we shall borrow a small selection for the year that interests us. All we can and wish to do here is to skim these files, in search of little known 'nuggets' that are, nevertheless, indicators of trends and manifestations symptomatic of the whole, vast subject.[21] We shall add some data from Gosplan's Statistical Service (TsUNKhU) and the files of the Commissariat of Finance (Narkomfin), in order to promote the approach of combining material from a range of sources that, as we noted in our introduction, has already been practised to good effect by some Soviet scholars.

The number of *kolkhozy* in 1940 (including some remaining TOZy) was 233,736, of which 233,279 were included in the summary. 195,033

of those *kolkhozy* were served by MTS. According to the rolls (*'po shtatu'*) there were 19,126,035 households (*dvory*) in the *kolkhozy*, but those actually present in the *kolkhoz* (*'nalichnye'*) amounted to 18,559,800. These *nalichnye* households contained a total population of 75,448,287 people, including 35,415,171 able-bodied men and women.

First, let us quote an indicator (Table 8.2) portraying the loss of farm animals in the first years of collectivisation. The tally in numbers of head lost has already been published – but the Narkomfin source we are quoting estimates the losses of draught and productive animals in current ruble prices (millions).[22]

The source of the table does not specify how these estimates were obtained, but Narkomfin had good, knowledgeable statistical economists, who offered here one more piece of testimony as to the heavy cost of forcible collectivisation. We know from already published materials that many peasant families lost their cows, – the indispensable sustenance of a rural household – forcing the government to engage in an enormous effort to help them acquire cows and avoid increased mortality among children. Yet by January 1, 1941, as V. B. Ostrovskii reported, also from the annual *kolkhoz* reports,[23] there were still 13.1 per cent of family farms without any kind of farm animals. Twenty-six per cent had no cattle, 51.6 per cent had neither pigs nor goats, and 69.3 per cent had no pigs. The haemorrhage of cattle slowed down, and even stopped some time after 1935 – but the head count of cattle in 1940 did not yet reach the levels of 1916 and of 1928.[24] The productivity of animal husbandry remained low. A paltry yearly milk yield of 949 litres per cow for the beginning of 1941[25] was not much of a consolation, and was just one more example of a

Table 8.2 Losses of draught and productive animals (in millions of rubles)

Year	*Draught animals*	*Productive (adult)*	*Total*
1929	6.2	18.8	25.0
1930	35.3	63.5	98.8
1931	347.6	241.0	588.6
1932	243.5	561.0	804.5
1933	234.8	414.5	649.3
1934	62.0	439.3	501.3
1935	65.0	557.4	622.4

depressed agricultural sector of the economy – at a time when its products were more needed than ever.

It is also well known that the loss of horses made the production of tractors an urgent and unanticipated priority that caught the government by surprise and forced on them massive unplanned outlays in the very heat of the First Five-Year Plan when resources were already strained to the utmost. The leadership bestowed upon itself a lot of praise for the urgent and accelerated 'tractorisation' of agriculture; but it was the slaughter of draught animals that had forced this upon the regime when it was not ready for it. And a very high cost was attached to this sudden splurge of mechanisation. One set of figures tells the story of one such side-effect: the irritating and depressing 'arhythmia' that plagued the *kolkhozy* once they were forced to depend on the services of these quickly produced and poorly maintained MTS tractors. Simply put, they suffered from an inordinate amount of work stoppages. The data, offered by a Narkomzem publication,[26] are here for 1936. During this year, every wheeled tractor employed in land cultivation had 65 stoppages, and every caterpillar tractor had 96 stoppages.[27] A total of 19,735,100 work shifts were made idle because of work stoppages: 14 per cent of these occurred because of fuel shortages. Better data are needed, especially for the later years, but the very worrying problem illustrated by these figures is known to have persisted. It remained one of the factors that made the MTS into a costly and inefficient state organisation, artificially detached from the producing units – the *kolkhozy* – and basically sitting on their necks.

Kolkhozy without MTS worked better: this was clear to me when I myself worked in *kolkhozy* near Michurinsk (Tambov region) in 1941 and later, in 1942 and 1943, in the Urals. But the lesson was already understood by a disappointed political leader, some years earlier: *kolkhozy* with MTS should have performed better than before, the leader said in substance, but this did not happen. All over the country, *kolkhozy* that were not served by MTS worked better and even fulfilled their government procurement quotas better. The leader we quote was, significantly, S. M. Kirov, who probably stated this when reporting to his Leningrad constituency on a recent Central Committee meeting.[28] The picture he painted was stark: enormous sums and thousands of cadres were wasted to build the MTS – but they did not work as the Party expected them to do. This speech is one of a number of published pieces that express Kirov's deep disappointment with the results of official policies, and which help to document a still insufficiently

proven inclination among some Party leaders to change the strategy. Kirov presented these and other interesting self-critical remarks on October 10, 1934 – a very short time before his assassination. The problem he raised was not going to disappear, as we know, neither by 1940 – nor for years thereafter.

Let us return again to the previous source[29] – the summary of the 'annual reports'. The 1940 harvest yielded 8.5 tsentners (850 kg) per hectare. It was a bountiful crop but this figure was still low: although both 1937 and 1940 saw record crops, the average annual yield per hectare for the 1936–40 quinquennium was only 7.6 tsentners – the same as the average in 1924–8. The 8.5 tsentners obtained in 1940 would be modestly overtaken only after 1956 – the crops in 1956–60 would yield 10.1 tsentners.[30] But meat continued to lag: only 4 million tons on average per year in 1936–40, compared with 4.2 million tons in 1924–8. This figure would be left behind for good only during the 1956–60 quinquennium – with 7.9 million tons per year.

Still, the main point lies elsewhere: the state procurements and payments to the MTS (*zagotovki i postavki*) took from the *kolkhozy* 42.2 per cent of their cereals for notoriously low prices, including 3.2 per cent as loan repayment. An additional 2.7 per cent of the total grain production was acquired by the state as 'purchases' (*zakupki*) offering a 20 per cent or even 30 per cent premium over the procurement price – not enough to soften the heavy losses that this kind of pricing inflicted on the *kolkhozy*, whose production costs for field crops could not be recouped either on this 42 per cent or on their total production. The state took the grain, in fact, as a form of taxation. No wonder the *kolkhozy* offered for sale on *kolkhoz* markets (and to the co-operatives) no more than 2.4 per cent of their crop. No wonder the peasantry and the country would not have survived without the tiny private plots – which were the peasants' salvation, although they were an ideological sore in the eyes of the regime.

It was the private plot that supplied most of the needs of the *kolkhozniki* in potatoes and vegetables, most of their meat and milk, and most of their income in cash. They were, of course, the main suppliers of the *kolkhoz* markets that played an important role in feeding the cities. The *kolkhoz* supplied most of the *kolkhoznik*'s income in kind: cereals especially, but also considerable quantities of fodder – mostly by-products of grain production. Obviously, the contribution of the *kolkhoznik*'s plots cannot be analysed without these components.[31] But it is also interesting to note that most of the work on the private plots was done by women; this explains the fact that they

constituted the majority of the *kolkhozniki* who did not perform the minima of labour days (*trudodni*) that were imposed on them by law.

Another meaningful indicator signals a widespread phenomenon that we have already alluded to:[32] the Land Department of the Molotov region, one of many, reported at the beginning of January 1941 an alarming turnover of *kolkhoz* chairmen, that was occurring at that time all over the country. In this region 945 chairmen left their posts in 1940; 463 of them were fired for not coping, and 100 for 'contravening labour discipline'. Some districts (*raiony*) had an even bigger epidemic of removals (*smenyaemost'*). Superiors in local administrations did not educate people, says a Regional Land Department (Oblzu) official: they just threw cadres out. The problem was certainly broader than just the heavy-handedness of *raizo* and MTS heads.

Moreover, these and other scandalous misdeeds (*bezobraziya*) did not stop, despite a considerable amount of inspection. *Kolkhozy* were subject to a lot of controlling activities (*revizii, inspektsii, instruktsii*) by internal *kolkhoz* commissions (at least 2.6 per *kolkhoz* in 1940, and 2.7 in 1950). There were also audits (*proverki*) by *raizo* officials (1.5 per *kolkhoz* in 1940, 1.8 in 1950);[33] and, on top of those, inspections and visits by instructors and inspectors from outside the *raiony*. The source does not mention them here, but other published data amply document the problems involved. Such controlling activities came from the Party, from Narkomzem and Narkomfin, the Central Control Commission and, of course, from the secret police that reported faithfully to the authorities, local and central, about the goings on in the *kolkhozy*. How come that despite all this, the countryside remained the domain of arbitrariness and sloth? We have stumbled here upon another general Soviet phenomenon – the almost manic 'over-controlling', that managed nevertheless to leave things as they were, and therefore called for more of these controls.

Another piece of information gleaned from the annual *kolkhoz* reports casts some more light on the whole complex of problems – but from a different angle. It turns out that only in 34,393 *kolkhozy* (out of a total of 233,000 that submitted reports) did 75 per cent or more *kolkhoz* members bother to come to *kolkhoz* meetings, to discuss and vote on the end-of-year results of their activity (to be reported to the government). No other figures are available in this file – but their bizarre practice of quoting only the most favourable results in a small minority of *kolkhozy* suggests that the national figures, that were certainly available, did not look too good. In fact, we have it from

published sources[34] that the meetings of *kolkhozniki* that were supposed to have a say on the yearly progress reports were not what they should have been. The newspaper urged *raizo* officials to put some order into the 'reporting campaign'. The whole thing is an indirect but good test of the state of internal '*kolkhoz* democracy'. Would these officials do what was needed to strengthen internal democracy in the *kolkhozy*? We know that these cadres were themselves subject to considerable turnover – but when not 'turning over', they were known to have exploited and mishandled peasants in an arbitrary manner. The point is that the control-hungry centre had as its counterpart below an indolent mass of peasants who felt themselves being bossed around.

No wonder *kolkhozniki* left the *kolkhozy* whenever they could or dared, and the state worked hard to devise methods to stop them, notably by the controlling power of the passport-and-registration system (*propiska*). In fact, such mobility could not be prevented, notably because of the voracious demand for labour of the growing industrial system and the numerous building sites that actually competed for workers and used all kinds of inducements to lure them away from others. In addition to going for seasonal jobs (*otkhod*) or fleeing the countryside for good, *kolkhozniki* found other escape routes, short of leaving or deserting. Many stayed in the *kolkhozy*, but did not do the required minimum of labour days (*trudodni*): the report for 1 January 1941 stated that 11.5 per cent failed to do the minimum.[35] This is more than 3.7 million able-bodied *kolkhozniki* – among them rather more women than men. Among the non-performers about half a million, mainly women, managed not to do even one labour day in their *kolkhoz*. It turns out that 126,048 people were expelled in 1940 (for reasons that are not given in the source). Another source cites over 200,000 'expelled'; and an additional 287,894 who 'left', we are told, because they did no labour days or not enough of them. The source does not specify whether they too were expelled, or just fled.

In addition to these 'shirkers', a sizeable mass of 1,294,001 people were authorised to work outside the *kolkhoz*, though they continued to live in it without being obliged to perform labour days in the *kolkhoz*. They might have been earning labour days in the MTS, or simply working for salaries and wages in offices, MTS or *sovkhozy*. Many more – 4,760,461 people – were authorised officially to absent themselves from the *kolkhoz*, to serve in the army or in government employ, or to go on study leave. The departures for seasonal work proper (*otkhod*) comprised 1,550,220 able-bodied *kolkhoz* members. Hence considerable numbers stayed in the *kolkhozy* but worked outside

them; and many of those who lived in the *kolkhozy* also worked elsewhere, or did not work at all. This indicates not just a lax labour regime in the *kolkhozy*, but also a very sizeable pool of 'fictitious *kolkhozniki*' and, more prosaically, a labour reserve that some government agencies – notably Gosplan – were eager to record and to tap. The reserve labour pool which the *kolkhozy* did not actually need was estimated to number some three to four million people.

We should also remember that the numbers we quote of the different categories in the *kolkhoz* labour force – officially absent, or present but working elsewhere, or present but doing practically nothing for the *kolkhozy* – concealed the spontaneous process of transfer, and even flight, of peasants to cities, whether their authorisations were real, phoney, or non-existent. This happened despite the controls and restrictions. The estimates of the scale of these movements vary. One plausible evaluation puts at 18.5 million the number of peasants that came to cities and stayed there, with different types of authorisation or without them, in the years 1928–39.

The number that left the *kolkhozy* for the towns or elsewhere was probably even greater. As there was a marked improvement in *kolkhoz* incomes towards the late thirties (however relative this might have been) the pressure of peasants on cities and outside employment began to fall off; hence new measures and campaigns had to be undertaken to get them out for employment on building sites and in the new factories, by using the method of 'organised recruitment' (*orgnabor*). The estimates of open and hidden labour resources in the *kolkhozy* served, among other things, to guide the *orgnabor* action.

KULAKS – IN MORE DETAIL

The demise of the kulaks was another shadow that accompanied the collectivisation drive. A million or more hard-working family households were squandered. But it is also appropriate to mention this problem in the context of our remarks about the spontaneous flooding of cities, construction sites and *sovkhozy*. Peasants fearing dekulakisation were one of the important contingents that fled – in this case for their safety.[36] According to I. E. Zelenin, there were 900,000 kulak families in 1927 that dwindled to no more than 700,000 in 1929. Zelenin produced data showing that during the years 1930 and 1931 381,000 families were exiled to faraway places.[37] Some 100,000 more were sent away from the countryside in 1932, whereas all the others –

about 400,000 families – simply 'dekulakised' themselves, i.e. sold out (if there were buyers) and disappeared – creating a good part of the 'flight to the cities' that Stalin complained about.[38] Thus, according to Zelenin, over a million farms were eliminated that harboured a population of some five to six million people.

V. N. Zemskov cites much more detailed data specifically concerning the exiled population. This comprised 381,026 families, containing 1,803,392 people. They were settled as 'special settlers' (*spetsposelentsy*), although the name of this category kept changing. By July 1, 1938 the Gulag administration that handled this category of exiled settlers had on its lists 997,329 settlers (*poselentsy*) in 1,741 labour settlements (*trudposelki*),[39] most of them registered as ex-kulaks. There were numerous flights from these places of exile: in 1938–40 629,042 people fled, of whom only 235,120 were caught and returned. Zemskov supplies a wealth of data on these people from NKVD sources, including the fact that quite early on, after a dramatic beginning, they began a process of settling down (*obzhivanie*) and economically mastering the area that was quite successful in the circumstances.[40] At the same time, there was also a gradual restoration of their civil rights, though without the right to return to their native villages or even to leave the settlements. This limitation did not apply to their school-age children, who could leave and study wherever they wanted from 1933 onwards. Once the deportees (*ssyl'nye*) became eligible for the draft (in 1943) their special status as 'banished' was removed in fact, and the whole process of kulak deportation came to an end. Unfortunately, the technique of mass deportation was applied against other categories, and it was only discontinued, on any serious scale, some time in 1960.

AN AVERAGE *KOLKHOZ* AND *DVOR*: A PROFILE

In 1940 an average *kolkhoz* included 79 households (*dvory*) – but only 66 in the RSFSR – with a population of 325 'souls' actually present in the village. One hundred and fifty of these were considered able-bodied, and 3.7 of them worked outside but stayed with their family in the *kolkhoz*. Each of the able-bodied who were obliged to perform a minimum number of labour days (*trudodni*) obtained 326 of these units for each male, and 198 for each female. The average *kolkhoz* earned that year 39,700 *trudodni*, hence some 264 work-units for each able-

bodied adult.[41] There were 498 hectares of sown land per *kolkhoz*. An average *kolkhoz* had 24 working horses, 12 working oxen (*voly*), 8 sows and 100 ewes. A *kolkhoz* allocated 23,300 rubles for capital investment, had 107,000 rubles worth of basic means of production and 117,700 rubles in its indivisible fund (reserves).[42] In order to obtain a rough picture of the incomes earned per *kolkhoz*, household and 'soul', it is worth adding that the average *kolkhoz* made a total of 88,143 rubles, in cash, from all sources, i.e. from the *trudodni* they amassed, and also from sales of all kinds, and for labour performed for outside bodies. Most of this income was earned from field cultivation, with animal husbandry in second place.

It may help, when discussing incomes, to note that a single household (*dvor*) in a *kolkhoz* had 4.1 souls: 1.91 of them were able-bodied adult workers; 0.38 were juveniles (*podrostki*) 12–16 years old; and the rest comprised children, the sick and the old. Another file reports that the authorities 'assigned for distribution' per *trudoden'* 1.6 kg of cereals, 0.98 kg of potatoes, and 0.91 rubles in cash (per *kolkhoznik*, tractor and combine driver).[43] We can now calculate how much the peasants received for the *trudodni* they were credited with for their work in the *kolkhoz*. Table 8.3 also shows their additional revenues from their own plots.

We shall deal only with these three types of income. The *kolkhoz* supplied its members with most of their grain (the plot gave an additional 14–15 kg) but very few animal products. They got 86.1 per cent of their meat and lard, 97.6 per cent of their milk and 97.4 per cent of their eggs from the private plot. The plot supplied them with an additional 175 kg of potatoes, and most of their cash – 1,114.3 rubles – on top of their income in cash from the *kolkhoz*.[44]

Table 8.3 Incomes of *kolkhozniki*, 1940

	Distributions from *kolkhoz* for *trudodni*		From plot
	Per household	Per person	Per household
Cereals (kg)	804	174	14–15
Potatoes (kg)	492	106	175
Cash (rubles)	462	100.40	1114.3*

* There are discrepancies in different sources concerning this figure. Some speak of a smaller amount of cash from all sources.

This sketch concerning incomes cannot be realistic without considering the vast differences that existed between regions, and within the different localities, whatever the indicator in question. This is a crucial feature that has to be recognised and used in any evaluation of performance and standards of living. Let us give some examples. If the cash assigned to each household for *trudodni* amounted to 462 rubles as a national average, it was 332 rubles for the RSFSR, 556 for Ukraine, and only 132 for Belorussia.[45] The same pattern could be observed in the case of other sources of income, yields per hectare, and most other indicators: the RSFSR fared less well than Ukraine on all the scores, and Belorussia was always far behind the two.

Furthermore, in 1940 6.8 per cent of *kolkhozy* did not distribute any grain for *trudodni* (in 1950 – 2.1 per cent). Forty-two per cent of *kolkhozy* gave less than one kg (48.9 per cent in 1950),[46] but the top 8.7 per cent distributed more than 5 kg per *trudoden'*.[47] The same file[48] illustrates the range of distributions of cash to *kolkhozniki* per *trudoden'* (tractor drivers are not included here): 0.1 – 0.5 rubles were offered in 53.5 per cent of *kolkhozy*; 0.6 – 1.0 rubles in 13.6 per cent; 1.1 – 2.5 rubles in 15.5 per cent; 2.6 – 4.0 rubles in 3.1 per cent; and more than 4 rubles in 2.2 per cent. 12.1 per cent did not give any money at all for the *trudodni* and it was even worse in 1950 when there were 22.4 per cent of such *kolkhozy*.

The case of potatoes is no different. Thirty-six and a half per cent of the whole potato crop was distributed to *kolkhozniki* according to their *trudodni*. We know it was supposed to be 4.8 tsentners per household (1.3 tsentners per person) but we offered more realistic results in Table 8.3. Yet 48.9 per cent of the *kolkhozy* distributed no potatoes at all.[49] Yu. Arutyunyan has calculated that a *kolkhoznik* earned in 1940 for his *trudodni* 550 g of cereals and 330 g of potatoes per day (and much less during the war)[50] – so things were not too cosy for the *kolkhoz* family even after the bumper crop that was harvested in 1940.

If we exclude the top performers, we are left with much smaller average incomes for the overwhelming mass of *kolkhozniki*. Factoring into the picture those *kolkhozy* that gave no grain, or no potatoes, or extremely little money, would help us to discern huge pockets of real poverty – even when we add incomes from the private plots, on top of the meagre averages. Our sketch being fragmentary, we have left out the taxes and procurement quotas that the state levied on all incomes, including the income obtained by peasants from their plots.

The peasants, as we know, did not live on cash income alone. But an average annual cash income of 1,500 rubles (pre-tax) per family (even if

most – though not all – of their food was available in kind) can be usefully highlighted and put in perspective when it is realised that a well placed official would easily earn 1,200 rubles per month (the earnings of his wife coming on top of this) – and he would get much of his food through closed channels, for reduced prices, without having to grow it. The year 1940, that we have selected as pivotal here, warrants one more remark: 1937–40 were years of improvement in *kolkhoz* and peasant incomes, but 1940 alone showed some backsliding. This was related to the preparation for war.

A BROADER CONCLUSION

Taking up again the thread we began to spin when presenting Narkomzem's efforts over cadres, we can now expand our conclusion. A more realistic picture of what 'planning' was and meant in those years can now be offered: decisions and actions were undertaken – to found schools, recruit students and assign outlays – on the basis of estimates about the needs of the given sector. But the results always left much to be desired: the expected effects often failed to materialise, and unexpected phenomena kept frustrating the policy makers. The process therefore has to be seen as one of 'administering', rather than planning. This administering of things and people involved a number of leakages, and hence was far from efficient. This brings us back to our first preliminary conclusion that the activity was 'extensive' (and hence refractory to 'intensification' and quality), and fully confirms it. Cadres are just one example of the broader reality of Russia's historical development. But this also points to the specifically Soviet phenomenon of 'over-administration': the 'leakages' and the unsatisfactory result of the whole course of action engender ever more controlling and 'administering', and lead again to the same side effects.

This points to another aspect of the 'administering' versus 'planning' dichotomy that showed up constantly in the poor balancing of means and ends and kept plaguing the regime's ambitions. One concrete example is already known to us: decisions taken about the numbers of schools to be opened were made with little regard to the inadequate numbers and competence of teachers. The obvious bottle-neck that ensued threatened to throttle the whole action. Hence desperate emergency measures had to be taken to patch up the gap. A vicious circle seemed to be at work again: inadequate teaching in poorly equipped schools produced low quality alumni – and a string of new

bottle-necks. Inadequately trained cadres performed poorly on the job, were poorly paid and reacted by quitting in search of better conditions elsewhere.

The self-defeating quality involved in this pattern of government is also manifested in yet another related facet of planning. The data on cadres show clearly the limitations of such 'planning' by a seemingly powerful state: cadres did not stay where they were initially assigned. This applied both to the so-called 'mass professionals' and to those coming out of institutions of secondary and higher education. The latter, in particular, either drifted away from agriculture and the countryside altogether or gravitated, by hook and by crook if necessary, into administrative offices, especially in the higher and better paid agencies. The administrative centres were the most coveted. The lowest level where agriculture was actually practised – the countryside itself – was the least attractive and was staffed, as we have seen, by the least competent individuals. In fact, agriculture proper saw very few of the most needed professionals, – notably, of agronomists – however preposterous this may sound. The 1938 conference of officials tried to escape the conundrum by mending the system. Some ameliorations would occur but, in an atmosphere of constant shake-ups, stabilisation and improvement were not possible. The purges subsided in 1939 – but then the war was already knocking at the door.

Yet these circumstances were not the sole or the main cause for the system's fallacious orientation on numbers. It is true that quantity can play its role at first: in a matter of several years, many hundreds of thousands of peasants would be hurried through short or longer-term courses, and this should have produced some enduring results. But the outcome was very far from what was expected. A participant in the 1938 conference defined the task in the following terms. We (in Russia) – he stated in substance – have 50 milllion people working in agriculture. We have to supply them with a modicum of knowledge. The objective is to transform these millions into professional agriculturalists. He clearly was not at all satisfied with the numerical achievements: the 'modicum of knowledge' was still much too modest. But the political authorities, who knew better, trumpeted at that time in public that 'a cultural revolution' had occurred in the USSR and an enormous intelligentsia had made its appearance. Unfortunately, the infatuation with numbers, so highly extolled, was one of the reasons why this 'cultural revolution' was, at least at that time, a misleading source of illusions. The bulk of the *kolkhoz* peasantry would continue to do unqualified jobs, working mainly with their hands. Eighty-one

and a half per cent of people working in agriculture responded to census takers in 1939 without specifying any particular profession. Only 18.5 per cent of them did mention a specialism: 10.7 per cent called themselves 'cattle-breeders' (*zhivotnovody*) – not necessarily a highly skilled job at that time. The 3.6 per cent that responded 'mechanics' (*mekhanizatory*)[51] were still a thin and poorly qualified layer.

These were only some of the sociological trends among the cadres that turned out to be stronger than the will of the state. The administrative planning, distributing and assigning of human resources that constituted so much of the mobilisational thrust that characterised the system, especially in Stalin's day, was often frustrated by the prevalence of spontaneity due to the preferences and interests of the people. The final outcome was marked by unplanned results and, more broadly, by often unwanted trends. It all amounted in the end to a historical process where state activity played a more powerful role than elsewhere, but where it had also to face a massive 'reactivity'. History took its own course, regardless of dictatorial desires.

The sphere of agriculture, including its *kolkhoz* sector, shared these broader trends, and contributed to them. We have illustrated, through selected 'nuggets', the hiccups and the imbalances that pervaded the system: in particular, the considerable amount of waste in a country that suffered from a dearth of resources. Our selected data, mostly averages, have allowed a closer look at some important aspects of rural reality – notably the incomes of *kolkhozniki*. One dangerous trend resulting from the collectivisation drive began to show itself quite early in its deployment: it took the form of a disease that began to spread among the *kolkhozniki* and manifested itself in a growing loss of interest in their profession and in their centuries-old involvement with land, soil and cattle.

Our presentation has dealt with a system that was still very young and suffered, unavoidably, from a state of flux and from horrendous weaknesses and mismanagement at the local and central level. We have spoken about imbalances, shadows and all kinds of problem areas (*bolyachki*, literally 'sore spots'). But many features turned out to be more than just growing pains. There were structural problems built into the system from the outset: especially awkward was the 'triple wheel' implanted into the *kolkhoz* and made up of the *kolkhoznik*'s private plot, the collective *kolkhoz* fields and the MTS. The three contradicted and hindered each other, until one of the three – the MTS – was abruptly eliminated after Stalin's death. We know what a powerful producer the

private plot was: on 4 per cent or so of the general acreage, it acquired a ridiculously prominent role. Suffice it to mention that the *kolkhozniki* got only 39.7 per cent of their incomes from the *kolkhoz*. Forty-eight point three per cent came from the private plot, and the rest from family members working outside, from pensions, etc. The share of the plots in the country's overall agricultural production was even more amazing.[52] They were midgets that acted like giants.

Once the MTS had gone and agricultural machinery had reverted to the *kolkhozy*, a reasonable compromise between the remaining two components – the private plot and the *kolkhoz* – could have given the system a new lease of life. This was an obvious solution that was never attempted. This is why many of the 'sore spots' that we have studied, and could have explained away as results of the system's novelty and youth, in fact remained as constant features, despite considerable changes and growth. The powerful social transformation that collectivisation triggered off turned into a thwarted or aborted 'agricultural revolution' – one that was promised but was not to be part of the story, despite the tractors and the combines of the pre-war, and the much more successful post-war period. Here lies the main failure of the planning: it was strong in trumpeting myths, but the real aim of the planning remained elusive.

Nevertheless, the post-war period deserves a closer look for the following reasons. First, because the very negative overall assessment is reason enough for researchers to recheck their conclusions by producing some counter-arguments. It is at least worth suggesting that the *kolkhoz* may have been the right form for wartime, as the mobiliser and organiser of a limited, mainly female labour force, when most of the manpower had been conscripted. After the war, and despite the devastations it wrought, some important changes and reforms, notably by Khrushchev, allowed the *kolkhozy* to obtain record crops and to feed the country. This was despite their continuously low productivity when compared, say, with US agriculture. During the years 1976–80, 205 million tons of cereals were produced per year, and 14.8 million tons of meat – more than three times the 1936–40 average. Where did this additional capability come from? What else could have been done to keep improving this performance? It is well known that enormous quantities of agricultural production were lost because of poor storage facilities and inadequate transportation and marketing infrastructures – but was this the fault of the *kolkhozy* themselves? It transpires, therefore, from these few reservations that a simple indictment, however just, is not yet sufficient to conclude this chapter in Soviet history.

Notes

1. In addition to the works of Soviet scholars, cited below, the works of such Western scholars as Karl-Eugen Wadekin, Stephan Merl and Basile Kerblay – to name but a few – also remain of enduring importance for the study of the period we are exploring here, regardless of the sources they used.
2. It is worth noting that the most important 'crop' of Soviet writings on collectivisation, including some based on the sources used here, appeared in the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s.
3. 'Svod otchetov kolkhozov strany za period Otechestvennoi voiny', ed. Yu.V. Arutunyan, V.P. Danilov, B.I. Zhuchkov, *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, 1962, no. 6, pp. 19–68. The compendium (*svod*) itself is signed by Ovchinnikov, head of the sector for the yearly *kolkhoz* reports.
4. M.A. Vyltsan, 'Materialy Narkomfina SSSR kak istochnik po izucheniyu sovetskoi derevni', *Istochnikovedenie istorii sovetskogo obshchestva*, vyp. 2 (Moscow, 1968), pp. 356–66. In his *Zavershayushchii etap sozdaniya kolkhoznogo stroya, 1935–37 gg.* (Moscow, 1978), pp. 18–22, Vyltsan analysed the aggregate compilation by Narkomzem of the annual *kolkhoz* reports and other relevant sources.
5. The material is in Narkomzem's files: RGAE, 7486/18/27.
6. RGAE, 7486/18/27, 15–18.
7. RGAE, 7486/18/27, 15–16.
8. RGAE, 7486/18/27, 22.
9. RGAE, 7486/18/27, 24.
10. RGAE, 7486/18/27, 24.
11. RGAE, 7486/18/27, 8–9.
12. RGAE, 7486/18/27, 140.
13. RGAE, 7486/18/892.
14. RGAE, 7486/18/886, 1, and 7486/18/889, 1–2.
15. RGAE, 7486/18/886, 33.
16. RGAE, 7486/18/886, 44–5.
17. In Narkomfin's files: RGAE, 7733/14/1046, 197, 201.
18. RGAE, 7733/14/1045.
19. RGAE, 7733/14/1045, 18.
20. RGAE, 7486/18/892, 10.
21. RGAE, 7486/7/7.
22. RGAE, 7733/14/978, 114–18.
23. V.B. Ostrovskii, *Kolkhoznoe krest'yanstvo SSSR* (Saratov, 1967) p. 77.
24. M.I. Fedorova, *Ukreplenie obshchestvennogo khozyaistva kolkhozov v mirnye gody tret'ei pyatiletki* (Moscow, 1960) p. 49. This is based on reliable figures which appeared in *Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR v 1956 godu* (Moscow, 1957) p. 113.
25. Reported in RGAE, 7486/7/8, 1001.
26. NKZ, *Vypolnenie plana po sel'skomu khozyaistvu NKZ SSSR k 1-omu aprelya 1936 goda*, no. 2 (Moscow, 1937). Based on data from 202,753 *kolkhozy*. This was available in INION, although it carried the warning: 'not for publication'.
27. NKZ, *Vypolnenie plana*, no. 2, p. 7.

28. S. M. Kirov, *Stat'i i rechi* (Moscow, 1934) pp. 156–8.
29. RGAE, 7486/7/7, 13.
30. *Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR, 1922–1972* (Moscow, 1972) p. 218.
31. Karl-Eugen Wadekin, *The Private Sector in Soviet Agriculture* (Berkeley, 1973) is worth consulting at this juncture.
32. RGAE, 7486/7/71b, 58.
33. RGAE, 7486/7/71b, 74.
34. See *Sotsialisticheskoe zemledelie*, 4 and 14 February, 1940.
35. RGAE, 7486/7/8, 12.
36. Data on this come from the NKVD (in TsGAOR – today's GARF) and were published for the first time in: V. N. Zemskov, 'Kulatskaya ssylka v tridtsatye gody', *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya*, 1991, no. 10, pp. 3–21. See also I. E. Zelenin, 'Osushchestvlenie politiki likvidatsii kulachestva kak klassa', *Istoriya SSSR*, 1990, no. 6, pp. 31–49. An older book that realistically assesses the 'dekulakisation' policy is N. A. Ivnitskii, *Klassovaya bor'ba v derevne i likvidatsiya kulachestva kak klassa (1929–1932)* (Moscow, 1972). An extremely valuable collection of documents about deported kulaks is *Spetspereselentsy Zapadnoi Sibiri, 1930 – vesna 1931 goda*, ed. V. P. Danilov and S. A. Krasil'nikov (Novosibirsk, 1992).
37. Zelenin, 'Osushchestvlenie politiki', p. 43.
38. Zelenin, 'Osushchestvlenie politiki', p. 44.
39. Zemskov, 'Kulatskaya ssylka', p. 7.
40. Zemskov, 'Kulatskaya ssylka', p. 11.
41. This may not be precise, because some *trudodni* were earned by adolescents and the elderly. But this approximation does not impact upon the income per soul. '*Trudoden'*' does not mean 'a working day' – it is a work norm that can be easily performed in less than a day. Good workers could do two or more *trudodni*. A tractor driver automatically got three *trudodni* for each day's work.
42. All these data are in RGAE, 7486/7/7, 10–12, and continued in 7486/7/1019b, 102–16.
43. RGAE, 7486/7/8, 16–18.
44. My basic source (RGAE, 7486/7/7, 8, 1019a-b) was supplemented by data from Ostrovskii, *Kolkhoznoe krest'yanstvo*, which are taken from different parts of the same basic source. Somewhat differing estimates appear in various parts of this source.
45. RGAE, 7486/7/7, 22.
46. RGAE, 7486/7/1019b, 91–101.
47. RGAE, 7486/7/7, 18.
48. RGAE, 7486/7/7, 18 (or 23 – the spot in the document is blurred).
49. RGAE, 7486/7/7, 52.
50. Yu.V. Arutyunyan, *Kolkhoznoe krest'yanstvo v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voiny* (Moscow, 1963) p. 335.
51. *Izuchenie sotsial'noi struktury sovetskogo obshchestva*, editor G.A. Snesarev (Moscow, 1971) p. 263.
52. *Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR v 1977 g.* (Moscow, 1978) p. 410.

9 The Moscow Crisis of October 1941

John Barber

In the whole disaster-ridden first year of the Soviet Union's war with Nazi Germany, no threat to the viability and survival of the Soviet state was so severe as the Moscow crisis in the middle of October 1941. Surprised by Hitler's decision to launch Operation Typhoon in the late autumn and by the speed of the Wehrmacht's advance on Moscow, the Soviet leadership was galvanised into the most drastic of actions by the German break-through of the capital's main strategic defence, the Mozhaisk line, on the night of 14–15 October. The decision of the State Committee of Defence (GKO) on 15 October to order the immediate evacuation of most of the government to Kuibyshev and other cities far in the rear, and the preparation of factories, offices and warehouses for destruction, reflected its belief that the imminent capture of Moscow by the Germans was likely. The highly visible departure of members of the elite, combined with the sudden reduction or cessation of normal services, and the virtual disappearance of the police from public view, caused alarm among the public to turn to panic. Many people fled from the city, among them officials who abandoned their posts; while on the streets of Moscow, law and order broke down to an extent unparalleled in Soviet history before or after. The panic, however, subsided almost as quickly as it had arisen. A slight improvement in the military situation convinced Stalin that Moscow could be held. On 19 October the GKO declared a state of siege in the capital. Order was quickly and lastingly restored. While the battle of Moscow continued for another two months, with the city in even greater military danger in late November, there was to be no further breakdown of social and political control.

The magnitude of this crisis stands in sharp contrast to its treatment in historical literature. While the military history of the battle of Moscow was the subject of many books, articles, reminiscences and collections of documents published in the USSR,[1] mention of the panic inside the city was conspicuous by its absence. At most there was reference to disturbances and cowardice on the part of a few people.

This was not surprising: the near catastrophic if temporary loss of control by the Soviet government over its capital was sufficient reason for the Moscow crisis to be a blank page in Soviet history books. For their part, most Western historians mentioned the panic, but only in passing, limited both by the silence of Soviet historians on the subject and by the scarcity of first-hand accounts of it. Foreign diplomats and journalists had been evacuated from Moscow as the crisis began, and few Soviet participants were subsequently accessible to researchers.

The events of mid-October 1941 in Moscow have been examined at any length in only two works. The fullest account was provided by Leon Goure and Herbert Dinerstein in a Rand Corporation publication of 1955,[2] much of it based on interviews with nine Soviet emigres and three foreigners who had been in Moscow at the time; while Alexander Werth devoted a chapter of his classic study of the Soviet Union in World War II, published in 1964, to the Moscow panic,[3] drawing on his unrivalled experience as a Western journalist in the wartime USSR and his wide knowledge of Soviet literature about the war. The picture which emerges from these books is vivid but incomplete. While their general analysis is plausible, many aspects remain obscure. The disappearance of taboos about historical writing in the former Soviet Union, however, and greater access to archives, have produced valuable new evidence about the Moscow crisis,[4] in the light of which this crucial episode in Soviet history can be re-examined.

The origins of the crisis lay in the Soviet failure to anticipate a German offensive aimed at Moscow in October. But its intensity was the direct consequence of the speed at which events unfolded. Within a fortnight of the offensive starting, the Germans were poised to make the decisive assault on Moscow itself. The Soviet leadership responded to the rapidly escalating danger with increasingly severe measures, of which the public was largely unaware. At the same time, news of the worsening situation was censored until the point of greatest peril was reached. The moment of heaviest pressure on the leadership thus coincided with the public's sudden realisation of the imminent possibility of Moscow's occupation by the Germans. The result not surprisingly was panic.

Operation Typhoon began on 30 September.[5] Army Group Centre, comprising two million men deployed along a 750 kilometre front at a distance of some 350 km from Moscow, struck in three directions. First, to the south, Panzer Group 2 broke through the Bryansk front, reaching Orel by 3 October. On 2 October, the main attack was

launched in the direction of Vyaz'ma (220 km from Moscow), the linchpin of the Red Army's Western Front, defending the vital western approaches to Moscow. Simultaneously, to the north the Germans aimed at Rzhev, and beyond that at Kalinin. Already by 7 October, large Soviet forces were encircled at Vyaz'ma; by 9 October the Germans had repeated this success at Bryansk. While fighting continued in these areas, the assault on Moscow now began.

By 10 October, the Germans had reached the Mozhaisk defensive line, a 300 km series of fortifications about 120 km from Moscow. In heavy fighting, they outflanked the Mozhaisk line to take Kaluga to the south on 13 October and Kalinin to the north on 14 October. On the night of 14–15 October, they achieved a crucial break-through at Borodino, in the Volokolamsk sector of the front. The road to Moscow seemed open. But unable to commit their full strength to the assault, with substantial forces still tied down around Bryansk and Vyaz'ma, meeting strong resistance from Soviet troops (since 9 October under the command of G. K. Zhukov), and slowed by autumn rain and snow which rendered all but a few main roads impassable, the Germans made less and less headway. Though Mozhaisk, Maloyaroslavets and Borovsk fell on 18 October, and though according to Zhukov later the following few days were the most critical of the whole battle, with insufficient Soviet forces to cover the approaches to Moscow,[6] the tide was turning in the Red Army's favour. By the end of October, the Germans' heavy casualties, exhaustion and major problems of supply had brought Operation Typhoon to a halt.

Unexpected though the German offensive had been, and initially uncertain about its objective though the Soviet leadership was,[7] the latter did not take long to see that Moscow itself could come under attack and to adopt contingency measures. Before the Germans had even reached the Mozhaisk line, the site of a new line of fortifications closer to Moscow had been inspected by the commander of the Moscow garrison, P. A. Artem'ev, and the chairman of the Mossoviet ispolkom, V. P. Pronin.[8] The NKVD, leaving nothing to chance, set in motion the evacuation of the inmates of Moscow prisons, requesting orders for the deportation of nearly 5000 prisoners on 6 and 7 October.[9] On 8 October, the GKO set up a five-man commission, headed by deputy commissar of internal affairs I. A. Serov, to prepare 'special measures' to be taken at industrial enterprises in Moscow and the Moscow region – namely, their destruction. The commission was given one day in which to report back to the GKO. Simultaneously, troikas, consisting of the first secretary of the district party committee,

the head of the district NKVD department, and a representative of the engineering branch of the Red Army, were set up in the districts concerned to make the necessary preparations.[10] On 9 October Serov sent Stalin a list of 1119 enterprises to be made ready for destruction, 412 by blowing them up, 707 by wrecking or burning their machinery. Explosives were to be delivered to the enterprises the next day.[11] Also on 9 October, the secretariat of the Moscow region and city party committees (MK-MGK) ordered party documents to be sent out of the city by 12 October.[12] On that day the GKO put the shrinking area between Moscow and the front line under NKVD control, and ordered the forced construction of the new defensive line, with 450,000 people from the city and the region to be drafted for this purpose.[13]

Meanwhile orders were given for the rapid evacuation of important Moscow factories. Begining with a GKO decree of 8 October on the transfer of aircraft factories to Kazan', Kuibyshev, Novosibirsk, Ul'yanovsk and elsewhere,[14] this process reached a climax between 12 and 14 October, when successively eight, twenty and seven decrees of the GKO, mainly dealing with the evacuation of industry, were issued.[15]

Despite veiled references in the press to the worsening situation – *Pravda* on 12 October spoke of the 'terrible danger threatening the country'[16] – no official statement about it had yet been made by a member of the leadership. On the morning of 13 October, A.S. Shcherbakov, candidate member of the Politburo, secretary of the party central committee and first secretary of the MK-MGK, addressed a meeting of the Moscow party aktiv. He left it in no doubt as to the seriousness of Moscow's position. 'Over the past week, our military situation has gone from bad to worse . . . in spite of fierce resistance our troops have been forced to retreat. Let us face it: Moscow is in danger.'[17] The meeting's resolution called for 'iron discipline, merciless struggle against . . . panic, cowards, deserters and rumour-mongers', for the immediate formation of volunteer battalions of Communists, and the conscription of labour to build the new defensive line.[18] The following day the MK-MGK secretariat ordered the burning of key party documents.[19]

The crisis Shcherbakov was clearly preparing party cadres for materialised over the next two days. With the German break-through on the night of 14–15 October, the possibility that Moscow might fall appears to have become a probability for the Soviet leadership. In the early hours of 15 October, the GKO issued an order of unprecedented urgency:

In view of the unfavourable position in the area of the Mozhaisk defensive line, the GKO has decreed:

1. To charge comrade Molotov to inform foreign missions that they will be evacuated today to Kuibyshev (the people's commissar of railways, comrade Kaganovich, is ensuring the timely provision of trains for the missions, and the people's commissar of internal affairs, comrade Beria, is organising their protection).
2. Also today to evacuate the presidium of the Supreme Soviet and also the government, headed by the deputy chairman of Sovnarkom, comrade Molotov (comrade Stalin will be evacuated tomorrow or later, depending on the situation).
3. Immediately to evacuate the agencies of the people's commissariat of defence and the people's commissariat of the navy to Kuibyshev, and the basic group of the general staff to Arzamas.
4. In the event of the appearance of enemy troops within the walls of Moscow, to charge the NKVD – comrade Beria and comrade Shcherbakov – to effect the blowing up of enterprises, warehouses and establishments which cannot be evacuated, and also all electrical equipment of the Metro (except for the water supply and drainage).[20]

Was this decision the result of confusion and panic in the Soviet leadership?[21] Bad though the military position was, the Germans were still 100 km from Moscow, and as events would show the obstacles they faced were formidable. On the other hand, had the speed of their advance been maintained, the major logistical operation of evacuating the government and other bodies such as foreign missions would have had to have been carried out in even more chaotic conditions than it was. And there was a precedent for evacuating the government in the face of a military threat from a German army, namely Lenin's decision to move the Soviet capital from Petrograd to Moscow in March 1918.

What advice about prospects at the front, if any, the leadership was given by the military on 15 October is not known. But in any case, the decision may not have been taken on military grounds alone. There is some evidence to suggest that Beria, one of the five members of the all-powerful GKO, was a strong advocate of total evacuation, 'an opponent of the defence of Moscow'.[22] While he is an easy target for accusations of treason, leaving the capital was hardly capitulation.[23] It is quite possible that Beria wanted to avoid the political and diplomatic disaster, as well as the heavy losses, that a fight to the end at Moscow,

with the likelihood of a breakdown of law and order in the city, might entail. He was probably better informed than anyone about the state of morale at the front and in the rear. As the Germans approached Moscow, he received a report showing that since the beginning of the war NKVD troops had detained no less than 657,364 Red Army men who had deserted or gone absent without leave, of whom 10,201 had been shot.[24] (Over the next five days, in the Mozhaisk sector of the war zone alone, 23,064 Red Army men, 2164 of them officers, would be detained, retreating without permission.)[25] News was also coming in of events in Kalinin on 12–13 October, where the arrival of the Germans had been preceded by looting, arson and the flight of the militia, local NKVD officers and firemen, together with two-thirds of the population.[26]

If Beria and others who may have argued for immediate evacuation had the upper hand on 15 October, Stalin as ever kept his options open. While most of the government left Moscow, and while the normal decision-making process ground to a virtual halt (only a handful of brief GKO decrees were issued between 15 and 19 October),[27] he appears to have continued to direct the war effort from the capital.[28] All necessary preparations were made for his departure: a special plane at the central Moscow airport, a train at a station near the 'Serp i Molot' works. In Kuibyshev, accommodation and offices, a bomb shelter and dachas had been prepared for him.[29] But they would not be needed.

Other measures prescribed by the GKO order of 15 October, however, were immediately implemented. Foreign diplomats and journalists were dispatched to Kuibyshev that day. To their surprise, the American and British ambassadors, unaware of the latest military developments, were summoned by Molotov at noon and told to take the 'last opportunity' of evacuating their staff that evening.[30] Molotov also called the people's commissars to the Kremlin, and instructed them to leave Moscow at once.[31] Over the next few days, they were followed by their commissariats' personnel, papers and equipment. By 19 October, for example, the commissariat of power engineering had evacuated 810 staff and members of their families, leaving only 15 people in Moscow; 1200 officials of the commissariat of the aviation industry and 1600 members of their families had left for Saratov by then, 70 staff remaining.[32] The extraordinary atmosphere created by the government's sudden disappearance is captured in an article based on an interview with Aleksei Kosygin, then a deputy chairman of Sovnarkom:

> The Sovnarkom building was empty – office doors swung open, papers blew around and rustled underfoot, everywhere phones were ringing. Kosygin ran from room to room, answering the phone. No-one spoke at the other end. Silence. He understood: they were checking whether there was anyone in the Kremlin. That's why he went from phone to phone. Someone had to be there, people had to know. One of those who rang identified himself. It was a well-known person. In a business-like way he enquired, 'Well then, are we going to surrender Moscow?'[33]

Meanwhile the NKVD took emergency measures of its own. While some high-ranking prisoners were evacuated on 15 October to Kuibyshev, only to be executed soon after their arrival,[34] another 138 (including the wives of Mezhlauk, Tukhachevskii and Uborevich) were shot on 16 October.[35] Further executions may have taken place.[36] By 18 October, at any rate, there were only 56 prisoners left in all Moscow gaols.[37] But other actions reflected greater confidence, or at any rate determination, that the Germans would not take Moscow. Formation of the Communist battalions was completed on 16 October, and the 10,000 volunteers were sent to the front the next day.[38] (A similar decision may explain the reported disappearance of NKVD troops and police from the city.) On the night of 15–16 October the roads leading into Moscow were mined. On the 16th, too, work on the new defensive line close to Moscow got under way.[39] Meanwhile the military drew up detailed plans for fighting in Moscow should the Germans break into the city. And secret units were set up to continue underground resistance in the event of the city being captured. These were composed of 800 party, Komsomol and soviet personnel, who were meanwhile found work at small factories, artels and cooperatives.[40]

The sudden acceleration of preparations for both evacuation and defence gave the population conflicting signals about the government's intentions. Uncertainty was turned into alarm by the TASS communique released on the evening of 15 May and published in Moscow newspapers the following morning, acknowledging that the position on the western front had worsened and that the Germans had broken through in one sector. For two days no official statement was made. A broadcast by Pronin, chairman of Mossoviet, was repeatedly announced on 16 October, but did not take place[41] – presumably because the leadership did not know what to tell the population. The silence was broken only on 17 October with a broadcast by Shcherbakov. The

Moscow party leader was unequivocal and defiant: 'We shall fight resolutely, desperately, to the last drop of blood . . . Comrade Muscovites! Let each one of you, whatever your post, whatever your work, be a soldier in the army defending Moscow from the fascist aggressors!'[42]

This, like Mossoviet's appeal to the citizens of Moscow broadcast by Pronin the same day ('We shall not surrender Moscow! Calmness and fortitude, relentless work on building fortifications around Moscow . . . will defeat the enemy'[43]), helped rally support for the defence of Moscow – but it came too late to prevent the outbreak of panic. Beginning on 15 October, this reached a peak on the 16th and 17th, and was not brought under control until the 19th. No section of society was exempt, least of all (since it had most to fear from the Germans) the *nomenklatura*. With many of their peers making authorised departures, and with no clear instructions from above, it is not surprising that a considerable number of party and state officials took any opportunity to escape. The situation in one district, described in the report of the Moscow Komsomol underground organisation, was probably typical:

> Late in the night of 15–16 October . . . What is going on at the raion party committee and soviet is amazing: everyone has bundles, suitcases, is counting money, packing food, going off to the railway station . . . [next morning]. At the raikom, comrade 'D' [the party secretary] is missing. Someone jokes that he is collecting his suitcases . . . The ispolkom officials are giving out money to workers of raion factories whose managers fled last night, taking valuables and cash with them.[44]

The scene at the headquarters of the Moscow party was little different: 'Papers and boxes were scattered around the rooms of the gorkom.' Despite Shcherbakov's call to arms, 'already by the evening of 17 October certain officials of the MK were in Gor'kii' (200 km away).[45]

The attitude of some well-connected members of the elite is recalled in Pronin's reminiscences. The brother of the veteran Stalinist Emel'yan Yaroslavskii, Gubel'man, the director of housing on Gor'kii street, complained that his raisoviet would not allow him to leave for Vladimir:

> I reminded him that according to Mossoviet's resolution all its personnel were forbidden to leave Moscow . . . One day soon after

> Emel'yan himself rushed into my office. He didn't say hello, his eyes were blazing. 'What do you think you are doing, do you want people to stay to be destroyed in Moscow?' . . . I said, 'We aren't allowing anyone to leave, including your brother.' He started to swear, and we had a row. . .'[46]

Some idea of the scale of the panic among officials is given in a report of the military commander of Moscow dated 14 December 1941. According to its incomplete data, 779 managerial personnel from 438 enterprises, departments and organisations fled, taking with them between 16 and 18 October cash to the value of 1,484,000 rubles, property worth 1,051,000 rubles, and a hundred vehicles.[47]

Another reaction to the apparently imminent arrival of the Germans was the destruction of party and Komsomol cards, by both those who fled and those who stayed. At the Krasnyi Oktyabr' factory in the Stalin raion 54 out of 230 party members destroyed their party cards, at the Sverdlov factory in Frunze raion 20 out of 79. At the Ustinskii silk factory in Proletarskii raion, the chairperson of the trade-union committee advised party and Komsomol members to destroy their documents; 19 out of 42 Communists at the factory did so. According to preliminary figures sent to Shcherbakov on 15 November, over 1000 party cards had been destroyed on 16–17 October.[48] Unlike the action of fleeing from the city, destroying evidence of political affiliation was not necessarily a sign of panic, but might have been a rational act of self-preservation in the event of Moscow being occupied. This did not, however, prevent those concerned from subsequently being punished together with those who had fled. Between 25 October and 9 December some 950 members of the party in Moscow were expelled for cowardice, desertion, looting and destroying their party cards.[49]

If officials and party members were to the fore in the flight from Moscow, the majority of those who departed were ordinary citizens. For those whose work-places had shut and whose bosses had disappeared, it was a rational step; at least it made more sense than being trapped in a city which seemed about to be the site of a major battle. How many left is not known, but the number clearly ran into hundreds of thousands. The difference in the number of ration cards issued in October and November was 673,380,[50] and those who left during the October crisis must have accounted for a large part of it. But in addition there were others, including refugees and deserters, who were not receiving rations, and who could have been among the first to get out of the city. The number who were evacuated or fled must have

run into hundreds of thousands; it may have been as much as half to three-quarters of a million.[51]

Eyewitness accounts indicate a mass exodus. An ambulance service doctor noted in his diary on 19 October:

> The squares in front of the railway stations are crowded to overflowing, impassable . . . Porters pile 30 to 40 pieces of luggage on to their carts and . . . charge 50 or more rubles per piece. The one and only subject of conversation is where and when to go, and what to take with you.[52]

According to the editor of *Krasnaia zvezda*, David Ortenberg, while 'order and discipline' prevailed in the centre of Moscow, his correspondents' reports from its districts reflected a different situation:

> people who were fearful of danger or doubted the strength of the Red Army, with passes acquired by fair means or foul, or without them, stormed the Kazan railway station. People who had loaded all their personal possessions into official vehicles headed eastwards, beseiging the checkpoints on the Riazan and Egoriev highway. About abandoned stores of property and food. About blazing bonfires in courtyards and on streets-archives, departmental documents, even telephone directories were being destroyed.[53]

But the break-down of social control took other, more violent forms. There were attacks on members of the elite attempting to escape: 'Workers of the Milk Factory stopped the director who had dairy products with him. They took the products and car from him, and shoved his head in a barrel of sour cream.'[54] On 18 October a huge crowd gathered on Shosse Entuziastov, blocking cars and people escaping from Moscow. Pronin, together with the chief of police, drove up to the crowd as though they were coming from outside the city:

> Two or three thousand people, several cars in a ditch, noise, shouting, 'they've abandoned Moscow! deserters!' I stood on the running board, and said that the authorities still remained in Moscow and were organising the defence of Moscow. They didn't believe it. Then I took my identity card and let those who were nearest look at it. They were convinced that the chairman of Mossoviet was not leaving Moscow but returning to it . . . gradually people dispersed.[55]

In other cases, workers tried to prevent the evacuation of machinery, suspicious of management's motives and understandably fearing for

their jobs. At the Second Watch Factory, Pronin found the director, chief engineer and secretary of the party committee barricaded in an office, with a crowd of two thousand workers in the yard surrounding two lorries loaded with ferrous metal. It took his promise that the factory would continue production in Moscow and that the workers would be paid within three days, combined with an explanation of the reasons for evacuating some of the plant, to calm the situation.[56]

The general uncertainty brought people on to the streets in large numbers and in an aggressive mood. On 16 October, the Komsomol underground organisation reported,

> there are masses of people on the streets – as many as on major holidays. In the shops, queues and noise . . . At a bread kiosk on Trubnaya square, there is a riot, hooliganism, the kiosk is broken up . . . On Krest'yanskaya zastava, there are tens of thousands of people . . . Hundreds of police are unable to maintain order, they are thrown back as though they were little boys. In an instant, a policeman is dragged down from his horse. A car rushes along, signals. The public blocks its path, stops the car, pulls out the driver and throws out its contents. This isn't the first or last such incident.[57]

Unprecedented scenes were also recorded in the doctor's diary on 19 October:

> Stolen confectionery and chocolate are sold in the markets and in the street. A meat packing factory is said to have been broken into. Herds of cattle are driven through the streets. An enormous herd of pigs goes down Sadovaia kol'tso. Suspicious individuals hang around and drag pigs into dark gateways, with the herdsmen looking.[58]

Given the critical situation and the preoccupations of the country's embattled leadership, neither the exodus nor the disorders were surprising. What is more remarkable is that both were the exception rather than the rule. Those who left Moscow during the October crisis, though numerous, were only a minority: perhaps a fifth of the population, probably less. The party members expelled for their behaviour during the panic were only a fraction, perhaps 1–2 per cent, of the Moscow party membership.[59] Despite everything, life went on with more than a semblance of normality. While some factories were evacuated, others continued production. Some shops closed, others continued trading. Some theatres were evacuated (the Bolshoi, Malyi, MKhAT, Vakhtangov),[60] others (the Stanislavskii and Nemirovich-

Danchenko, for example) continued to give performances.[61] The Metro was out of operation for most of 16 October, but service was resumed on the Kirov–Frunze line by 7 p.m. that day, and on the other lines the following morning.[62]

And far from all cadres were in a state of panic. Though much party work ground to a halt,[63] some went on. The Pervomaiskii raikom, for example, formed a brigade of 45 Communists which undertook agitprop work in queues, bomb shelters, tram stops during the critical period of 15–18 October.[64] Even at the height of the crisis party discipline was being enforced. In the Komsomol raion organisation mentioned earlier, on 16 October the bureau of the raikom confirmed the decision of the Komsomol committee of the police to expel two policemen for panic-mongering (they had cut off their signs of rank) and to send them to the front.[65] On 17 October, the bureau of the MGK sacked the first secretary of the Comintern raion and a secretary of the Leningrad raion, and expelled them from the party for 'irresoluteness'.[66]

Young activists seem to have shown particular determination to stay, if the scene at the Komsomol raikom on 15 October described in the underground organisation's report is typical:

> It is proposed to evacuate the raikom apparatus . . . the phrase is heard 'officials must be preserved by sending them out of Moscow'. But the officials categorically refuse to leave: 'Give us weapons, show us where the fighting is, we will not go.' Many activists are at the raikom. Young people are asking to be armed, to be sent to the front.[67]

These would almost certainly have been among the volunteers for the Communist battalions who within days would be fighting and dying at the front.

The fact that for the most part the party and state apparatus and the rank and file of the party, with little or no direction from above, continued to function meant that when the worst of the military crisis passed, the government was quickly able to regain control of Moscow. Although according to Pronin, Stalin was told by Zhukov as early as 16 or 17 October that Moscow could be held,[68] the crucial decision to commit the government to doing so was taken by the GKO only on 19 October. Beria is said to have still been opposed (reportedly remarking to Molotov and Malenkov before they entered Stalin's office that 'Moscow is not the Soviet Union. Defending Moscow is useless.

Staying in Moscow is dangerous, they will shoot us like sitting ducks'); but the GKO voted to defend the city.[69] It then proceeded to declare a state of siege in Moscow and neighbouring districts, putting them under martial law. A curfew was imposed; the military commander of Moscow, General Sinilov, was made responsible for maintaining 'strictest order', with internal troops of the NKVD, the police and volunteer workers' units put at his disposal; drastic punishment was prescribed for those guilty of breaches of public order (immediate trial by military tribunal), and for 'provocateurs, spies and other enemy agents, inciting to breaches of public order' (shooting on the spot).[70]

Implementation of this resolution was instant and ruthless, beginning even before it had been published on 20 October. Between 8 p.m. on 19 October and 8 p.m. on 20 October, 1530 people were detained, 1375 of them soldiers absent without leave, who were returned to their units. Twelve people were shot, seven imprisoned. Between 9 p.m. and midnight on 20 October 5517 troops and police in 278 units searched houses, railway stations, restaurants, hotels 'and other places where citizens were concentrated'. Two hundred and eighty-three people were arrested, most on this occasion for breaches of the passport law (presumably they were refugees without right of residence in Moscow).[71] In the weeks that followed, the crack-down continued. The summary character of punishment was intensified by the GKO's decision of 17 November to suspend the practice of the Supreme Court of the USSR confirming death sentences passed by military tribunals, which could delay the process by months, and to allow the NKVD to carry them out.[72] (This meant immediate execution for 265 people in Moscow region prisons.)[73] Reporting on crime and punishment in Moscow from 20 October to 13 December, Sinilov stated that 121,955 people had been detained – 47,575 for military offences, 2610 for counter-revolutionary crimes (mainly theft of state property, looting, counter-revolutionary agitation and spreading rumours), and 71,825 for other crimes (particularly breaches of social order). Four thousand seven hundred and forty-one had been given gaol sentences, 357 had been shot by order of military tribunals, and 15 had been shot on the spot.[74]

With order thus restored, with party discipline re-imposed, with Moscow's defences strengthened by a great array of fortifications inside and outside the city, and with the advantage in men and materiel swinging the Red Army's way, the risk of a repetition of the October panic was eliminated. Though the Germans' second offensive in the latter half of November brought them closer to Moscow, their advance

units reaching its suburbs, this time Soviet state and society presented a united front of unwavering resistance. On 6 December the Red Army launched its counter-offensive, driving the Germans back 300 km from Moscow. By 14 December the position of Moscow was sufficiently safe for the GKO to order the clearing of mines from buildings in which they had been planted in October.[75] On 15 December the Politburo authorised the return of the party central committee's staff to Moscow.[76] And on 3 January N. Voznesenskii, acting head of government in Kuibyshev, requested and received permission for the return of Sovnarkom's main administration to Moscow.[77] 1942 would bring new disasters for the Soviet Union, but its capital would never again be under threat.

That any reference to the Moscow crisis should be deleted from the historical record[78] under Stalin and his successors was inevitable; yet paradoxically it illustrated the strength as well as the weakness of the Soviet system. When under great pressure the will to resist temporarily wavered among the ruling elite, panic spread among officials, party members and the masses. This was not, however, an expression of anti-Soviet feeling; still less did it give rise to a fifth column. It was the product of a spontaneous impulse for self-preservation, following the example set by members of the elite. But at this moment of dire crisis the system stood the strain. Though shaken, its institutions continued to function, and enough of its supporters remained loyal to its goals to ensure its survival. At various times and in different ways in the Soviet Union during World War II – such as the blockade of Leningrad, the evacuation of hundreds of factories to the East, the feeding of the majority of the population who received starvation rations or none at all – local officials, rank and file party members, ordinary citizens, were thrown back on their own resources. Left to their own devices by the government, they coped. So it was in Moscow in October 1941.

Notes

1. See Michael Parrish, *The USSR in World War II, An Annotated Bibliography of Books published in the USSR, 1945–75 (with an Appendix for the years 1975–80)*, 2 vols. (New York, 1981).
2. Leon Goure and Herbert Dinerstein, 'Moscow in Crisis', in *Two Studies of Soviet Conflicts* (Glencoe, Illinois, 1955), pp. 145–254.
3. Alexander Werth, *Russia at War, 1941–45* (New York, 1964); see chapter X, pp. 225–42, 'Battle of Moscow Begins – the October 16 Panic'. For an example of the author's wartime writing from this period, see Alexander Werth, *Moscow War Diary* (New York, 1942).

4. See K.I. Bukov, 'Trevozhnyi oktyabr' 41-go', *Kentavr*, Oct.-Dec. 1991, pp. 70–9; 'Ne tol'ko panika (oktyabr' 1941 g. v Moskve)', in *Neizvestnaya Rossiya. XX vek* (hereafter NR), III (Moscow, 1993), pp. 177–96 (documents introduced and compiled by K.I. Bukov); '1–15 oktyabr' 1941 g.', in *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1990, no. 12, pp. 203–18; 'Moskva na osadnom polozhenii', in *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 1, pp. 215–21; no. 2, pp. 209–21; no. 3, pp. 220–21; no. 4, pp. 209–21. Russian archives whose materials are used in this article include the Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (APRF), the Scientific Archive of the Institute of History of Russia of the Russian Academy of Sciences (NAIIRRAN), the Russian Centre for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Modern History (RTsKhIDNI), the State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF), and the Centre for the Preservation of Modern Documents (TsKhSD).
5. For the military history of the battle of Moscow, see V.A. Anfilov, *Krushenie pokhoda Gitlera na Moskvu. 1941* (Moscow, 1989); Geoffrey Jukes, *The Defence of Moscow* (London, 1969); Janus Piekalkiewicz, *Moscow: 1941 – the Frozen Offensive* (London, 1985); Klaus Reinhardt, *Moscow – the Turning Point: the Failure of Hitler's Strategy in the Winter of 1941–42* (Oxford, 1992); A.M. Samsonov, *Moskva, 1941 god: ot tragedii porazhenii – k velikoi pobede* (Moscow, 1991).
6. Jukes, *The Defence of Moscow*, p. 78.
7. A report of the Western Front's command, from Konev and Bulganin to Stalin, on 1 October, discussed the objectives of the German offensive without any mention of Moscow: *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1990, no. 12, pp. 203–5.
8. 'Glazami ochevidtsa: beseda s V.P. Proninym', *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 4, p. 217. According to Pronin, the inspection took place around 7 October.
9. GARF, 9413/1/24, 55–7.
10. RTsKhIDNI, 644/1/11, 181.
11. RTsKhIDNI, 644/1/11, 74.
12. RTsKhIDNI, 644/1/11, 75.
13. *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*; 1990, no. 12, p. 215.
14. RTsKhIDNI, 644/1/11, 181–9.
15. RTsKhIDNI, 644/1/12.
16. Werth, *Russia at War*, p. 234.
17. RTsKhIDNI, 88/1/851, 2.
18. Werth, *Russia at War*, p. 235.
19. Bukov, 'Trevozhnyi oktyabr' *41-go', p. 71.*
20. *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1990, no. 12, p. 217. Even the date, let alone the contents, of this crucial decision was a matter of speculation until its publication. Dmitrii Volkogonov, for example, in the first version of his biography of Stalin gives its date as 17 or 18 October; *Triumf i tragediya*, II, *Oktyabr'*, 1989, no. 7, p. 63. The resolution makes no mention of the central party apparatus, even though the party was subordinated to the GKO. Presumably the former's evacuation was authorised by a corresponding resolution of the Politburo (as its return was; see p. 214).
21. As, for example, is argued in NR, III, p. 177.

22. The words are Pronin's, in his interview in *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 4, p. 218. Another Moscow leader, G. M. Popov, second secretary of the MGK in 1941, claimed that on the afternoon of 15 October Beria told Shcherbakov and him that German tanks were only 25 km from Moscow: *Sovetskii patriot*, no. 6, February 1991, cited in Bukov, 'Trevozhnyi oktyabr' 41-go', p. 72.
23. On the contrary, as John Armstrong argues, the distribution of people's commissariats and other government agencies after evacuation suggests a well thought-out strategy for continuing to organise the war effort; John A.Armstrong, 'The Relocation of the Soviet Commissariats in World War II', in Karl-Heinz Manegold (ed.), *Wissenschaft, Wirtschaft und Technik: Studien zur Geschichte* (Munich, 1972) pp. 92–7.
24. Report from the head of the Special Departments Administration of the NKVD, Milshtein, to Beria, not earlier than 10 October 1941: TsKhSD, 89/18/8.
25. *Skrytaya pravda voiny: 1941* (Moscow, 1992), pp. 186–7.
26. For a report on the Kalinin events dated 16 October, see *Skrytaya pravda voiny: 1941*, pp. 173–4.
27. Six on 15/10, two on 16/10, one on 17/10, one on 18/10, and three on 19/10: RTSKhIDNI, 644/1/12.
28. There have always been rumours that Stalin briefly left Moscow during the crisis, but for a largely convincing denial of these, see Pronin's remarks in *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 4, p. 220.
29. NR, III, p. 178–9.
30. Gabriel Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps' Mission to Moscow, 1940–42* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 251–2. Cripps, who that morning had told a correspondent that there was 'no cause for undue alarm or despondency', noted that Molotov had never looked 'so tired and ill . . . he was deadly pale and his collar all awry where he is generally very neat and tidy.'
31. NR, III, p. 177.
32. GARF, 6822/1/453.
33. Daniil Granin, 'Zapretnaya glava: rasskaz', *Znamya*, 1988, no. 2, p. 122.
34. Arkadii Vaksberg, *Neraskryt'e tainy* (Moscow, 1993), pp. 61–5.
35. Order from the head of the NKVD Prison Administration, M. Nikol'skii, 16/10/41, to carry out an order dated 15/10/41 from deputy commissar B.Z. Kobulov; GARF, 9413/1/24, 261.
36. According to N. G. Pavlenko, about 300 senior military commanders were shot in the basement of the Lubyanka on the night of 15–16 October; 'Istoriya voiny eshche ne napisana', *Ogonek*, no. 25, 1989, p. 8.
37. GARF, 9413/1/24, 80.
38. TsKhSD, 5/6/224. Whether all those in the Communist battalions genuinely volunteered is impossible to say. As with the *opolchentsy*, the people's militia, pressure may have been applied to get recruits. Even if this were the case, however, the fact that activists were still willing and able to mobilise others is significant.
39. *Ibid.*
40. NR, III, p. 179.
41. Goure and Dinerstein, 'Moscow in Crisis', p. 188.
42. RTsKhIDNI, 88/1/852, 1–2.

43. Bukov, 'Trevozhnyi oktyabr' 41-go', p. 75, and NR, III, p. 183.
44. NR, III, p. 183.
45. Bukov, 'Trevozhnyi oktyabr' 41-go', p. 71.
46. *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 4, p. 219.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 213. People took whatever they could lay their hands on. The director of a shoe factory and three colleagues, for example, made off with 41 pairs of ladies' shoes worth 10,000 rubles.
48. *Ibid.*
49. NR, III, p. 179.
50. *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 1, p. 219. The figures were 3,148,8000 and 2,475,620 respectively.
51. According to Shcherbakov, speaking at the Moscow party committee plenum on 6 December, the population of Moscow, 4.5 million before the war, was then 2.5 million: RTsKhIDNI, 88/1/853, 5–6.
52. NAIIRRAN, f. 2vii, op. 6, d. 2.
53. D. Ortenberg, *Iyun'-dekabr' sorok pervogo, rasskaz- khronika* (M., 1986) p. 212.
54. NR, III, p. 183.
55. *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 4, p. 219.
56. *Ibid.*
57. NR, III, p. 183.
58. NAIIRRAN, f. 2vii, op. 6, d. 2.
59. According to Shcherbakov's report to a plenum of the Moscow city party on 6 December, there were 50,803 Communists in Moscow on 1 December, compared with 236,240 before the war: RTsKhIDNI, 88/1/853.
60. By a GKO order of 13 October 1941: APRF, 3/50/428, 28.
61. Bukov, 'Trevozhnyi oktyabr' 41-go', p. 76.
62. According to the head of the Moscow Metro, interviewed in February 1943, an order was received during the night of 15–16 October to dismantle equipment and evacuate it to the east. All trains were moved onto one line and the power supply was turned off. But at 6 p.m. on 16 October the order came to resume the normal movement of trains. NAIRRAN, f. 2/IX, op 31, d. 7, l. 10. Its source was evidently the GKO resolution of 16 October stating that 'the Metro service shall not be suspended but its volume shall be reduced by about a half', RTsKhIDNI, 644/1/12, 162.
63. 'In the middle of October and in particular the second half of October, the party made less effort and in some cases abandoned work altogether in the political field': A.S. Shcherbakov, report to the MGK plenum, 6 December 1941, RTsKhIDNI, 88/1/853, 8.
64. *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 1, p. 217.
65. NR, III, p. 183.
66. Bukov, 'Trevozhnyi oktyabr' 41-go', p. 77.
67. NR, III, p. 180.
68. *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 4, p 218. Zhukov's opinion appears to have been based on an assessment of civil as well as military factors. On the morning of 16 October, a senior aide, N.Kh. Bedov, was sent from Zhukov's headquarters at the front to the capital to make a quick

appraisal of the situation there. Although according to the driver, Moscow resembled a 'disturbed ant-hill', he saw 'no particular panic' and returned to the front convinced that Moscow would hold out. A. N. Buchin, *170000 kilometrov s G. K. Zhukovym* (Moscow, 1994) pp. 40–1.

69. NR, III, p. 178, and *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 4, p. 218. The source in both cases is Pronin, who together with Shcherbakov attended the GKO meeting. According to him, Stalin held an open vote on the question of defending Moscow. No resolution of the GKO on this issue has been published or cited.
70. *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 1, pp. 215–16. The resolution was published in *Pravda* on 20 October 1941.
71. *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 2, p. 215.
72. RTsKhIDNI, 644/1/14, 101. The same resolution gave the NKVD the right to pass sentence, including the death penalty, on people accused of counter-revolutionary offences, again without need of confirmation.
73. TsKhSD, 89/1/9, 3–4.
74. *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 4, p. 210.
75. RTsKhIDNI, 644/1/16, 94.
76. APRF, 3/50/429, 46. The Politburo's resolution prudently ordered that the central committee's archives should remain in Kuibyshev, together with a small number of its personnel to watch over its offices and property there.
77. APRF, 3/50/429, 53. 'No objections', Stalin laconically noted on the request. To Vosnesenskii's earlier request, dated 19 December, he had replied 'No hurry. The time's not yet ripe' (l. 47).
78. Though not from the literary one. See for example the description of the Moscow panic in Konstantin Simonov's *The Living and the Dead*, quoted in Werth, *Russia at War*, pp. 237–8.

10 Soviet National Accounting for World War II: an Inside View[1]

Mark Harrison

By 1941, the Soviet economy had been extensively prepared for war. Despite this, its further mobilisation under adverse conditions of deep penetration by German forces in 1941 and 1942 was far-reaching, violent, and uncontrolled. In 1943 the pressure on the Soviet economy was eased by military recovery, restored economic coordination, and an inflow of external resources. These conditions allowed the Soviet armed forces to press on with the destruction of German military power in 1944 and 1945, while Soviet war production peaked on the basis of a recovering, though still shaky, civilian economy.

In 1945 a leading official of USSR Gosplan, the Soviet Union's state planning commission, published an article in Gosplan's monthly journal, and then a short pamphlet, devoted to the Soviet Union's economic experience of World War II.[2] Their author, B. Sukharevskii, was wartime head of the Gosplan section responsible for overall national economic balances. His work served as an official summary of the pattern of Soviet wartime economic mobilisation, at least in its main dimensions, until the appearance of N. A. Voznesenskii's more celebrated *The war economy of the USSR in the period of the Patriotic War* at the end of 1947.[3] Voznesenskii, a member of Stalin's war cabinet and Politburo, was head of Gosplan and Sukharevskii's immediate boss; Voznesenskii's text was later said to have been approved personally by Stalin.

Sukharevskii's published work, although brief, contained some noteworthy ideas. He developed a distinction between transient and permanent sources of wartime economic mobilisation. He argued that in the first phase of the war, in 1941–2, the Soviet supply of war materiel had grown by transferring resources out of civilian material production, out of the nonproductive sphere, and out of stockpiles. Workers had worked longer hours, while subsisting at a lower level than in peacetime. By 1943 these sources of mobilisation had exhausted

their possibilities, once and for all. After this point, new internal sources had to be found for expansion of the war economy, in restored output per worker, resource-saving technical change, and rising output of heavy industry.

At the time Sukharevskii gave few details. Later publications, beginning with Voznesenskii's, put some flesh on the bones, but Sukharevskii's name disappeared, and soon even Voznesenskii's book appeared to be a false start. Publication of *The war economy of the USSR* coincided with a clampdown on the release of all other statistical information pertaining to the Soviet war effort, and was followed within 15 months by the arrest of Voznesenskii; publication of new data was only resumed in the 1960s.

The release of further information about the wartime national accounts began in 1965. The new figures were consistent, at least, with Sukharevskii's assessment. They showed 1941–2, when output shrank, as a period of transfer of resources out of the civilian economy into defence uses. After this, output recovered, and civilian and defence uses of resources grew together; the defence share peaked in 1943 and then declined. But there were unexplained contradictions. One set of figures suggested that the share of military outlays (*voennye raskhody*) in 'national income' had risen from 11 per cent in 1940 to 40 per cent in 1942 and a peak of 44 per cent in 1943.[4] Others indicated that the share of resources allocated to 'war needs' (*voennye nuzhdy*) from the same national income had risen from 15 per cent in 1940 to 55 per cent in 1942 or even '57–58 per cent'; the latter figure was attained 'in the course of the war' according to some, but in 1942 according to others.[5]

Such figures posed as many questions as they answered. They were clearly unsatisfactory in terms of detail, definition, and presumed reliability. What was the national income concept employed, and what was the scope of military outlays and 'war needs'? What had been done to account for external military resources supplied in mutual Allied aid – were they counted in the measure either of defence outlays, or of national income? What was the standard of valuation – current or prewar prices, and, if prewar, then of which year? Doubts were also raised by more general reservations concerning the Soviet national product concept, measure, and deflation procedures, none of which turned out to be beyond question, and additionally by the postwar military-economic context, which saw a trend to systematic concealment of contemporary Soviet defence outlays.

In this paper I trace the published figures back to the work carried out under Sukharevskii in the Gosplan documents. I show the

underlying ruble values, and suggest what they meant and why they differed. I point to conceptual developments found in the work of Gosplan officials such as Sukharevskii, including study of the phasing of economic mobilisation and sources of war finance, the influence of relative price effects on the measurement of the defence burden, and the reconciliation of production and expenditure accounts.

I do not present the figures below as trustworthy. They reveal the picture only as it was seen in Moscow at the time amongst a narrow circle of officials. Part of the context of these developments was the poor quality of basic statistics, which led to understatement of wartime economic burdens. A more reliable picture requires independent historical research involving the collection, evaluation, and analysis of a wider range of contemporary data; this research is in progress, but not yet complete.[6]

NATIONAL INCOME AT CURRENT PRICES

Figures for Soviet wartime national income at current prices have never been released. They were compiled, however, and were used in Gosplan to analyse the overall sources and uses of resources at critical stages of the war effort.

At the end of 1943 Sukharevskii reported to Voznesenskii on the financing of the Soviet war effort.[7] In 1942 the net material product of the domestic economy had fallen by 85 billion rubles compared with 1940 and at current prices. At the same time nominal defence outlays had risen by 56 billion rubles. Table 10.1 shows that the rise in defence outlays over 1940–2 was reconciled with shrinking domestic supply to only a small extent by the addition to total supply from other sources – 10 billion rubles' worth of net imports, plus one billion rubles arising from a reduction in the flow of 'losses'. The main source of finance of the increase in defence outlays was a huge diversion of resources from nondefence uses – 130 billion rubles; two thirds of this sum came out of civilian consumption, although the squeeze on accumulation was proportionally more severe.

In 1943, in contrast, defence outlays would rise by a modest 15 billion rubles, and Sukharevskii pointed to significant recovery in overall resources as the means of financing this increase. The net material product (NMP) produced was 39 billion rubles higher than in 1942, and the excess of NMP utilised over NMP produced was

Table 10.1 Net material product produced and utilised, 1940 and 1942–3, according to Sukharevskii (billion rubles and current prices)

	1940	*1942*	*1943*	*Change, 1940–2*	*Change, 1942–3*
1. NMP produced	376	291	330	−85	39
2. Losses	−12	−11	−5	1	6
3. Net imports	2	12	17	10	5
4. NMP utilised	366	292	342	−74	50
4.1 nondefence outlays	297	167	202	−130	35
4.1a accumulation	59	15	41	−44	26
4.1b consumption	238	152	161	−86	9
4.2 defence outlays	69	125	140	56	15

Source: GARF, f. 3922:4372/4/115, 35–9. For the composition of defence outlays, see Table 10.2.

Note: Net material product (NMP) produced in agriculture, industry, construction, transport, and trade (row 1) comprises the value of final output of material goods generated in the productive sphere, including intermediate services, but excluding final services which form the result of the nonproductive sphere. NMP produced, less losses (row 2), plus net imports (row 3), equals NMP utilised (row 4). Losses measure the unforeseen depreciation of assets arising not in the production process but from insurable contingencies – fires, floods, etc., but not acts of war. Net imports are measured at domestic (not external) ruble prices. The main categories of utilization of NMP are accumulation and consumption, both of which may involve civilian and military components. Accumulation may involve any kind of procurement of assets, including military stockbuilding and construction. Consumption may be personal and (in the non-material sphere of service activity) institutional. All are measured at transfer prices, including net indirect taxes.

increased by additional net imports and reduced losses of 11 billion rubles, making 50 billion rubles of additional resources in total.[8] In fact, most of this increase in total supply was allocated to civilian uses, accumulation benefiting much more than consumption. The continued expansion of the war economy, Sukharevskii's report argued, was itself forcing a significant increase in accumulation, especially in metallurgy, where supply was lagging far behind the capacity of defence industry to process metals.

What was Sukharevskii's concept of defence outlays? Here he was superficially helpful; in addition to annual totals he provided a breakdown (Table 10.2) which accounted separately for consumption by personnel, fixed investment in defence industry, and 'other' outlays. On this basis, the defence burden could be measured as the ratio of such

Table 10.2 Defence outlays, 1940 and 1942–3, according to Sukharevskii (billion rubles and current prices)

	1940	*1942*	*1943*
1. Consumption in cash and kind by personnel	29.3	65.6	71.2
2. Accumulation of defence industry fixed assets	7.4	5.6	4.1
3. Other defence outlays	32.3	53.8	65.0
4. Defence outlays, total	69.0	125.0	140.3
5. Per cent of NMP utilised	19	43	41

Source: GARF, f. 3922:/4/115, 35–90. The source includes several minor variations on row 5, which is calculated here from row 4 and Table 10.1, row 4.

outlays to NMP utilised: 19 per cent in 1940, rising sharply to a peak of 43 per cent in 1942, then relaxing to 41 per cent in 1943.

At the end of the war, Sukharevskii's section produced revised series for wartime national economic balances, including national income and expenditure. The rows which concern us are reproduced in Table 10.3. Two things are immediately obvious. First, the revised figures for domestic supply (NMP produced – row 3) were much higher for every year, but especially for 1942 (41 billion rubles) and 1943 (95 billion rubles), than those accepted during the war. Second, a major portion of defence outlays had been transfered from the reported 'defence' heading (row 5.3) to general 'consumption' (row 5.2). This marked the beginning of the practice which subsumed wartime defence outlays attributable to the material consumption of personnel under consumption outlays generally, while reporting the remaining part of defence outlays as 'other' defence outlays, or as outlays on 'the means of waging war', 'armament', or other vague phrases.

Of course, the result of these changes was that the burden of defence outlays appeared much lower than the percentages previously shown in Table 10.2. On the basis of Table 10.3, the defence burden exclusive of consumption by personnel was no more than 8 per cent of NMP utilised in 1940, rising to a peak of 15 per cent in 1942.

THE SCOPE OF MILITARY OUTLAYS

In evaluating wartime defence burdens we must deal with two measures of military expenditures which were conceptually quite different, one

Table 10.3 Net material product produced and utilised, 1940 and 1942–5, according to Sukharevskii (billion rubles and current prices)

	1941	*1942*	*1943*	*1944*	*1945*
Billion rubles					
1. Social product	670	498	602	680	727
2. Productive consumption	285	169	187	227	252
3. NMP produced	385	329	415	453	475
4. Other sources	2	4	22	36	34
5. NMP utilised	387	333	437	489	509
5.1 accumulation	66	33	10	44	53
5.2 consumption	286	250	372	383	392
5.3 defence outlays	30	49	55	61	62
5.4 reserve fund	5	0.8	0.5	1	2
Percent of NMP utilised					
6. Defence outlays	8%	15%	13%	12%	12%

Source: GARF, f. 3922:4372/4/115, 10–15. Row 4 (other sources of resources) is calculated from row 5 (NMP utilised), less row 3 (NMP produced). Row 6 is the share of row 5.4 in row 5.

Note: The 'social' (usually 'global social') product (row 1) is the sum of the gross outputs of material products of firms. Productive consumption (row 2) equals the combined sum of intermediate transactions within the production branch (included in the production branch's gross output), and of interbranch intermediate transactions, both of which are double-counted in the global social product. NMP produced (row 3) equals the global social product, less productive consumption (the double-counted intermediate transactions). Other sources of resources (row 3) comprise net imports, less insurable asset losses. For the uses of NMP (row 5 and below), see note to Table 10.1. Defence outlays (row 5.4) exclude the consumption of military personnel, which is located in the general consumption fund (row 5.2).

derived from the budget account and the other from the material product account. To make matters worse we do not always know for sure which is being used, but in Tables 10.1 and 10.2 a budgetary concept was probably applied, while in Table 10.3 we find the material-product accounting concept.

Defence Outlays in the Budget

The budget definition should have been straightforward. It normally covered spending on the Army (including the air force) and Navy under the defence and navy commissariats. These were outlays on goods and services alike, the main items being as follows:

- armament and combat equipment (*vooruzheniie i boevaya tekhnika*)
- maintenance (*soderzhanie*) of the Army and Fleet, comprising pay (*denezhnoe soderzhanie*) and rations (*prodovol'stvie*) of personnel, their personal kit (*veshchevoe imushchestvo*), and outlays on transport and fuel
- capital construction, and
- other outlays, of which most significant were probably the costs of repairing and maintaining equipment.

This budgetary concept was roughly comparable with a western or present-day NATO concept of defence outlays – a flow of goods and services either consumed or stockpiled by the armed forces. One departure from western practice was that minor sums were charged against the Soviet defence budget for officers' pensions.[9] A more important difference is that outlays on military research, development, testing and experimentation were excluded from the Soviet budget concept, being financed from the general science budget. On the other hand, in the USSR as in the west, outlays on defence industry construction were excluded, since they were attributable to civilian capital formation. Subject to a few such qualifications, and despite periods of budgetary deception in the early 1930s and from the 1950s onward, the military budget of the time of World War II 'told the truth'.[10] Table 10.4 shows that defence outlays on this definition amounted to 57 billion rubles in 1940, rising to 108 or 111 billion rubles in 1942 and a peak of 138 or 139 billion rubles in 1944.

Defence Uses of the Net Material Product

In the national accounts, which were based upon the material product system, a more restrictive concept of defence outlays was employed. For a start, the net material product (NMP) covered the utilisation of final goods or material products only, to the exclusion of final services, although intermediate services were included in the value of final goods. If defence were to be treated like any other activity in the 'non-productive' (service) sector, the NMP would include defence outlays classified under three headings.[11]

- The *personal material consumption* of employees. In the defence sector, this should have covered troops' subsistence and kit, and the portion of their pay used for purchases of goods; thus personal spending on consumer services, personal savings, and tax payments were excluded.

- The *institutional material consumption* of the service agencies, which might include depreciation of the stock of nonproductive capital. The most important objects of institutional consumption in the defence sector were outlays on fuel and other consumable materials; the material cost of drugs and the consumption of heating and lighting by military clinics and cinemas would be taken into account, but the wages of employees hired to entertain and educate the troops, and prevent or cure their diseases, would not.
- *Accumulation* – the net increment to the stock of nonproductive capital. The defence sector accumulated recognisable fixed capital items such as buildings and base facilities, and perhaps also military fortifications, but weapons and equipment tended to receive special treatment. Under conditions of rapid wartime expenditure, weapons were treated as a consumption flow, much like household durables; in peacetime a special heading of state 'reserves' was used to accommodate additions to military stockpiles along with strategic reserves of strategic commodities and precious metals.[12]

Like the budgetary account, the material product account could be manipulated. One example was the tendency to lose the material personal consumption of service personnel in the general consumption account. Another was to be deliberately vague about where the institutional material consumption of the armed forces was being counted, whether in with purchases of weapons and equipment ('accumulation', or 'reserves'), or in with consumption by personnel.

In principle both defence uses of material products, and defence outlays on a budgetary basis, could be legitimately compared with the overall net material product to measure the national defence burden, although the budget concept would always yield the larger percentage since it included defence uses of final services. In the NMP these services were seen as supported by activities within the material sphere; the 'primary incomes' of workers and firms engaged in material production had to be redistributed through the budget to finance these service sector activities, which were therefore a burden on material production just like the procurement of aircraft, tanks, and fuels.

Which methodology defined the defence outlays reported in Tables 10.1 and 10.2 – that of the budget, or of the NMP? The combination of defence outlays with consumption and accumulation to add up national income (Table 10.1) implies an NMP methodology. But the same series (69 billion rubles in 1940, and so on) is used in the same document to show the share of defence outlays in budget spending.[13]

Besides, the sums reported are too large to be accounted for by the defence expenditure of material products alone, and exceed budget series for allocations to the Army and Navy (Table 10.4 on p. 228) by a large and stable margin. Part of this margin is explained by outlays on defence industry construction, which entered the budget under outlays on the economy, not defence, but an unexplained residual still remains.

Sukharevskii can be roughly reconciled with the budget on two assumptions, that both series had their origins in a budget concept (outlays on goods and services), and that the remaining gap is associated at least in part with outlays of the NKVD on internal security. The 'Sukharevskii gap' is illustrated below (reported defence outlays, billion rubles).

	1940	*1942*	*1943*
Sukharevskii (Table 10.2)	69.0	125.0	140.3
less			
defence industry construction	−7.4	−5.6	−4.1
on budgetary basis	61.6	119.4	136.2
Budget series (Table 10.4)	56.8	111.0	125.9
Sukharevskii gap	4.8	8.4	10.3
of which,			
consumption by personnel	..	4.6	..
other unexplained outlays	..	3.8	..

The gap may correspond to internal security outlays. The NKVD's planned budget allocation for 1940 was 7.1 billion rubles, part of which would have been spent on internal security.[14] The rough composition of the gap can be established for 1942 (for 1940 Table 10.4 is insufficiently detailed, and for 1943 figures in Tables 10.1 and 10.2 are clearly very preliminary). Sukharevskii included an extra 4.6 billion rubles' worth of personal consumption (Table 10.2) over budget outlays on military pay, subsistence, and kit (Table 10.4), and 3.8 billion extra rubles of 'other' outlays compared with budget outlays on remaining items. Total outlays of the NKVD in 1942 stood at 7.1 billion rubles, although no more than 1.6 billion rubles were accounted for under maintenance of internal security troops.[15]

Sukharevskii almost certainly misleads us when he claims that the military outlays shown in Tables 10.1 and 10.2 *exclude* the value of military goods imported under Lend-lease and British mutual aid. Both the budgetary and the NMP accounts could be expected to have included outlays on such resources, and it is certain that they did so in practice.[16]

Table 10.4 Defence outlays, 1940–5 (billion rubles and current prices)

	1940	*1941*	*1942*	*1943*	*1944*	*1945*
Terpilovskii						
1. Total	56.8	83.0	108.4	125.0	137.8	128.2
Zverev (July 1941–June 1945)						
2. Munitions	..	16.2	36.2	41.9	46.1	22.8
3. Maintenance						
3.1 pay	..	10.3	28.2	34.0	37.1	22.0
3.2 food	..	8.9	22.6	26.2	26.6	9.7
3.3 personal kit	..	5.7	10.2	8.4	10.1	4.6
3.4 fuel	..	1.5	3.0	3.4	4.0	2.3
3.5 transport	..	1.2	2.4	4.8	5.9	2.7
4. Construction	..	2.6	2.4	1.4	1.9	0.9
5. Other	..	3.1	6.1	5.8	7.0	3.4
6. Total	..	49.5	111.0	125.9	138.7	68.4

Sources: Row 1: M. V. Terpilovskii, ed., *Finansovaya sluzhba Vooruzhennykh Sil SSSR v period voiny* (Moscow, 1967), p. 29. Rows 2–6: calculated from RGAE, 7733/36/1892, 86.

THE 'REAL' DEFENCE BURDEN

The figures shown in Tables 10.1 and 10.2 imply a sharp increase in the defence share of national income from 19 per cent in 1940 to 43 per cent in 1942, and a little less in 1943. At the same time, provided we set to one side the salient fact that Soviet national income was falling, the increase shown in the defence burden (+24 per cent) is not particularly dramatic by World War II standards. For some other great powers in wartime, it rose as follows (military spending, per cent of net national product at current factor cost):[17]

	Maximum two-year shift	*Peak value*
United States	+39% (1941–3)	54% (1944)
United Kingdom	+29% (1939–41)	57% (1943)
Germany	+31% (1939–41)	76% (1943)

In each case, the increase was facilitated both by a rising national product (unlike the Soviet case), and also (except for the United States) by an increase in external supply.

One reason for the apparently modest wartime increase in the Soviet defence burden is that the Soviet economy encountered relative price changes of huge dimensions. In a further report to Voznesenskii, dated January 1945, Sukharevskii pointed out that 'The share of military spending . . . does not express the degree of mobilisation of the national economy for the needs of the war . . . This is associated with the fact that, in contrast with the wartime increase in prices of commodities for personal consumption, prices of military equipment have fallen.'[18] In fact, by 1943, prices of munitions had fallen by roughly 40 per cent compared with 1940, while average prices of consumer goods had grown six-fold, making a ten-fold shift in relative prices.[19]

When Sukharevskii's office recalculated defence outlays and NMP utilised at prewar prices, wartime change in the defence burden looked quite different. Table 10.5 shows that in 1942–3 defence outlays in prewar rubles differed little from the same at current prices (munitions had become cheaper but other costs had risen). Since civilian goods weighed more in national income than in defence-plus outlays, however, national income at prewar prices was deflated by a large proportion. By 1942 the 'real' defence burden had risen from 19 per cent of NMP utilised to 57 per cent (+38 per cent), and to 58 per cent in 1943.

Table 10.5 Defence outlays and national income, 1940–3, according to Sukharevskii (billion rubles and current or constant 1940 prices)

	1940	*1941*	*1942*	*1943 prelim*
At current prices				
1. NMP	368	350	329	416
2. Defence outlays	70	98	125	146
2.1 Per cent of NMP	19	28	38	35
At 1940 prices				
3. NMP	368	335	224	252
4. Defence outlays	70	98	128	147
4.1 Per cent of NMP	19	29	57	58

Source: GARF, f. 3922:4372/4/115, 50–3.

Even these figures, however, were still probably understated. The author's own investigation, although not yet complete, has consistently suggested that, in terms of wartime GDP at prewar prices, by 1942–3 two-thirds of available resources were being absorbed by the defence budget.[20] The most likely cause of official understatement was the tendency of Soviet price indices to lag behind changes in the ratio of price to user characteristics when product assortment and product quality were also changing. This tendency was manifest in peacetime over many decades; it operated in wartime as well, and caused official measures of real output to understate both the wartime growth of military supplies (where prices were falling) and the wartime decline of civilian production (where prices were rising).[21]

With hindsight it is worth stressing that both current-price and prewar-price measures of the defence burden are relevant. The high ratio of defence spending to national income at prewar prices in 1943 tells us about the great change in relative volumes of war-related and civilian output. The much lower ratio in current values reminds us of the extraordinary scarcity and high cost of civilian goods (especially foodstuffs) in that year, which set an effective upper limit on the degree of mobilisation.

MORE ON NATIONAL INCOME AT PREWAR PRICES

In 1946 more detailed accounts of national income in wartime, but at prewar prices, were compiled in preparation for drafting the fourth (postwar) Five-Year Plan. The results were released piecemeal over many years, beginning in 1947, with revealing details appearing in 1971 and 1990.

In 1947 Voznesenskii announced that 'the share of war expenditures [in national income], exclusive of the personal consumption of servicemen, increased from 7 per cent in 1940 to 29 per cent in 1942'.[22] It was these figures which were augmented in 1965 by figures for consumption by military personnel, and extended first to 1943–4, then to 1945 (Table 10.6). They suggested that military consumption and nonconsumption outlays together rose from 11 per cent of national income in 1940 to 40 per cent in 1942, and 44 per cent at the 1943 peak. Exactly what was included in defence outlays was not made explicit. That this was an NMP concept, not a budget concept, was reasonably clear from the context. If so, then a classification of material outlays

Table 10.6 Net material product utilised, 1940 and 1942–5, according to Goskomstat (per cent of total and 1940 prices)

	1940	*1942*	*1943*	*1944*	*1945*
1. NMP utilised	100	100	100	100	100
2. Accumulation	19	4	7	15	13
3. Consumption	74	69	60	61	69
3.1 not by military personnel	70	56	49	50	62
3.2 by military personnel	4	13	11	11	7
4. Other military outlays	7	27	33	24	18
5. Subtotals					
nondefence uses	89	60	56	65	75
defence uses	11	40	44	35	25

Sources: Percentages of NMP utilised are taken from Goskomstat SSSR, *Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine* (Moscow, 1990), p. 29, except that row 3.1 (consumption not by military personnel) is calculated as row 3, less row 3.2; row 5 (the subtotal of defence uses) is calculated as the sum of rows 3.1 and 4.

might be expected under the three service-sector headings listed above: personal and institutional material consumption, and the increment to the capital stock. Defence, however, would always be different. 'The personal consumption of servicemen' was clear enough. But there was considerable ambiguity surrounding Voznesenskii's 'war expenditures exclusive of the personal consumption of servicemen', which should have comprised both institutional consumption and military stock-building; later authorities referred to it first as 'the means of waging war' (*fond sredstv vedeniya voiny*), then simply 'armament' (*vooruzhenie*), before returning most recently to a residual concept – 'other' military outlays.[23]

'Armament', interpreted literally, implied no more than the increment (whether net or gross) to the stock of weapons; if so, where then was the institutional material consumption by the armed forces of such items as fuel and transport services? Where was military construction? Were these a part of 'the means of waging war'? Not if the latter covered 'armament' alone. Were they concealed under consumption by personnel? Surely there was not enough room under this item. Had they been omitted from 'military outlays' altogether, perhaps buried in the much larger civilian parts of the consumption and accumulation funds?

'Other' outlays, on the other hand, suggest inclusiveness – everything not already counted under the pay and maintenance of personnel, from

weapons to costs of operations and construction. But if this was an inclusive measure, why did it not show a larger defence burden by 1943?

Nor did the complications end there. Military outlays were reported in percentages, but per cent of what? Presumably, of NMP utilised, which includes net imports in resources available for utilisation. But there was no indication of how imported supply of military equipment, and imported army rations, uniforms, and other items attributable to the consumption of personnel, had been treated in the measure of military outlays. Worse still, the all-important question of the price set used to value both spending and national income (whether current or constant prices, and, if constant, then of what year) remained unvoiced.

A clue was made available in 1971 when the veteran economic planner G. M. Sorokin published Gosplan figures preparatory to the fourth Five-Year Plan (Table 10.7). They showed Soviet national income produced, and the main utilization categories, in 1940 and 1944, in constant prices of 1940. (One remarkable consequence was a figure of 72 billion prewar rubles' worth of net imports in 1944, a result of subtracting NMP produced from the sum of uses and losses of resources given for that year.) Eugène Zaleski was first to point out that Sorokin's figures could also be used to derive a plausible defence-related expenditure series. In each year total consumption, less material consumption of civilian households, could be attributed to the armed forces. Less obviously, total allocations to reserves, less the figure given for reserves 'used for accumulation', could perhaps be interpreted as allocations to military stockbuilding.[24]

In fact Zaleski was absolutely correct, but this was not all. The proportions between the figures in Table 10.7 were close enough to those in Table 10.6 to suggest a common genetic inheritance, as the following figures reveal (per cent of NMP utilised):

	1940	*1944*
From Sorokin (Table 10.7)		
Accumulation, incl. of reserves	18.8	14.2
Consumption by households	70.0	49.5
Defence-related residuals		
consumption not by households	4.0	11.0
reserves not for accumulation	7.2	25.4
NMP utilised	100.0	100.0

	1940	*1944*
From Goskomstat (Table 10.6)		
Accumulation	19	15
Consumption not by military personnel	70	50
Military outlays		
consumption by military personnel	4	11
other military outlays	7	24
NMP utilised	100	100

Table 10.7 Soviet NMP produced and utilised, 1940 and 1944, according to Sorokin (rubles and 1940 prices)

	Billion rubles		*Per cent of NMP utilised*		*Per cent of 1940*
	1940	*1944*	*1940*	*1944*	*1944*
1. NMP produced	386.2	239.3	..	..	62
2. Losses	−11.5	−8.0	..	..	..
3. Net imports	2.7	71.8	..	..	..
4. NMP utilised	377.4	303.1	100.0	100.0	80
5. Accumulation	66.1	40.6	..	..	61
5.1 of fixed assets	40.5	22.7	..	..	..
5.2 of livestock	0.1	0.1	..	..	..
5.3 of inventories	25.5	17.8	..	..	..
6. Consumption	279.3	183.3	74.0	60.5	66
6.1 by households	264.3	150.0	70.0	49.5	57
6.2 not by households	15.0	33.3	4.0	11.0	222
7. Reserves	32.0	79.2	..	..	..
7.1 for accumulation	5.0	2.3	..	..	..
7.2 not for accumulation	27.0	76.9	7.2	25.4	285
8. Subtotals					
8.1 accumulation, including of reserves	71.1	42.9	18.8	14.2	60
8.2 defence residuals	42.0	110.2	11.1	36.4	262

Source: taken or calculated from G.A. Sorokin, ed., *Po edinomu planu* (Moscow, 1971), pp. 105–6. Figures for 1945 plan are omitted. All percentages are calculated from ruble totals. In addition, row 4 (NMP utilised) is calculated as the sum of rows 5, 6, and 7. Row 3 (net imports) is calculated as row 4, less the sum of rows 1 and 2. Residual uses of resources (rows 6.2, 7.2) are also calculated from the source. Row 8.1 (accumulation, including reserves for accumulation) is the sum of rows 5 and 7.1. Row 8.2 (defence residuals) is the sum of rows 6.2 and 7.2.

The link between these figures was confirmed in 1990 when Goskomstat (the Soviet Union's state committee for statistics) at last published an abbreviated version of the official limited-circulation handbook of wartime economic statistics originally prepared in 1959; this included index numbers of the main components of NMP by end-use, and the NMP shares already published (Table 10.6), which were now stated to have been calculated at 1940 prices, just like Sorokin's ruble figures for 1940 and 1944 (Table 10.7).

Table 10.8 Net material product utilised, 1940 and 1942–5, according to Goskomstat and Sorokin (rubles and 1940 prices)

	1940	*1942*	*1943*	*1944*	*1945*
Per cent of 1940					
1. NMP utilised	100	56	65	79	77
2. Accumulation	100	12	24	63	55
3. Consumption	100	53	54	66	72
3.1 not by military personnel	100	45	46	57	68
3.2 by military personnel	100	191	191	216	135
4. Other military outlays	100	202	287	262	180
5. Subtotals					
5.1 nondefence uses	100	38	42	59	66
5.2 defence uses	100	198	253	246	164
Billion rubles					
6. NMP utilised	377.4	211.1	245.4	299.9	288.8
7. Accumulation	71.1	8.5	17.1	44.8	39.1
8. Consumption	279.3	148.0	150.8	184.3	201.1
8.1 not by military personnel	264.3	119.4	122.2	151.9	180.8
8.2 by military personnel	15.0	28.7	28.7	32.4	20.3
9. Other military outlays	27.0	54.5	77.5	70.7	48.6
10. Subtotals					
10.1 nondefence uses	335.4	127.9	139.2	196.7	220.0
10.2 defence uses	42.0	83.2	106.1	103.1	68.9

Sources: Rows 1–5: Goskomstat SSSR, *Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine* (Moscow, 1990), p. 29, except that rows 1 (NMP utilised), 3.1 (consumption not by military personnel), 5.1 (nondefence uses), and 5.2 (defence uses) are based respectively on rows 6, 8.1, 10.1, and 10.2 below. Rows 6–10: for 1940, all rows are as corresponding rows in Table 10.7, except note that row 7 is from Table 10.7, row 8 (accumulation, including of reserves). For other years, all rows are extrapolated from 1940 on the basis of corresponding percentages of 1940 above, except that row 6 (NMP utilised) is the sum of rows 7, 8, and 9; row 8.1 (consumption not by military personnel) is row 8, less row 8.2; row 10.1 is the sum of rows 7 and 8.1; row 10.2 is the sum of rows 8.2 and 9.

From Sorokin and the Goskomstat index numbers it is possible to calculate NMP utilised, in prewar rubles, for each year of the war (Table 10.8). Defence outlays of material products are shown to have risen from 42 billion rubles in 1940 to a peak of 108 billion rubles in 1943. These outlays are hard to compare with budget figures, since 1940 is the only year when the two series are measured in common prices, and there is no official breakdown of the defence budget for 1940 itself. A reasonable guess, however, is that in that year budget outlays on munitions, repairs, and construction together amounted to 26 billion rubles, not far off the 27 billion rubles allocated to 'reserves not for accumulation' in Sorokin's version of the NMP account, 'other' military outlays in that of Goskomstat. But budget outlays on soldiers' pay, food, and personal kit alone probably reached nearly 30 billion rubles, far above the 15 billion rubles of 'personal consumption' reported in the NMP account.[25] The NMP account leaves no room at all for institutional military consumption on items such as fuel and transport. The conclusion seems inevitable, therefore, that a significant part of current material outlays on defence are hidden from view.

The light shed thus far by Table 10.8 has its limits. Important elements of defence outlays are concealed under other headings. Other issues are cast into deeper darkness. The very low level of national income produced in 1944 (barely 60 per cent of 1940) seems implausible to me.[26] The huge gap between national income produced and utilised in 1944, also raises questions, but perhaps these belong elsewhere.[27] Of more relevance, perhaps, is the discrepancy between the evidence of Tables 10.1 and 10.2 and other figures published in the mid-1960s on the share of output utilised for meeting 'war needs' (*voennye nuzhdy*) in 1940 and 1942. These figures turn out to have special interest for us because they too can be traced back to Sukharevskii's department.

RECONCILING PRODUCTION AND UTILIZATION

Although more limited than the national utilisation accounts in the years covered, published figures relating to 'war needs' were considerably more detailed in showing the utilisation of output by the main productive sector of the economy – and for industry and transport they were also much higher in output percentage terms. The previously published figures reported in Table 10.9, rows 1–9, claimed that in 1940 some 15 per cent of national income was utilised for 'war needs', rising to 55 per cent in 1942, or even '57–58 per cent'. (These

Table 10.9 The share of output allocated to 'war needs', by production branch, 1940–3 (per cent of gross output)

	1940	*1942*	*1943 prelim*	*'In the course of the war'*
From IVOVSS				
1. Agriculture	9	24	..	..
2. Industry	26	68	..	..
3. National income	15	55	..	..
From Sorokin				
4. Industry	26	..	..	65–8
5. National income	15	..	..	57–8
From ISE				
6. Agriculture	9	24	..	..
7. Industry	26	68	..	..
8. Transport	16	61	..	..
9. National income	15	57–8	..	..
From Sukharevskii				
10. Agriculture	9	24	24	..
11. Industry	26	68	66	..
12. Construction	13	26	18	..
13. Transport	16	60	66	..
14. Trade	6	31	32	..
15. Total social product	17	48	48	..

Sources: Rows 1–3: *Istoriya Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941–1945 gg.*, vol. 6 (Moscow, 1965), p. 46. Rows 4–5: G. A. Sorokin, ed., *Po edinomu planu* (Moscow, 1971), pp. 87–8. Rows 6–9: *Istoriya sotsialisticheskoi ekonomiki SSSR*, vol. 5 (Moscow, 1978), p. 183. This source also gave 70–80 per cent as the share of industrial output allocated to war needs in 1942, taking into account 'military orders fulfilled by civilian industry establishments'; the latter range had previously been attributed to the first half of 1942 alone in *Istoriya Vtoroi Mirovoi voiny 1939–1945 gg.*, vol. 4 (Moscow, 1975), p. 162, where it was also stated that at the same time (i.e. in the first half of the year) the share of war needs had reached 50 per cent of industrial output, counting only the output of the defence industry commissariats. Rows 10–15: calculated from Table 10.9; see also GARF, 3922:4372/4/115, 50–3.

Note: The gross output of the production branch (agriculture, industry, etc.) is equal to the sum of gross outputs of material products of the firms in the branch, measured at transfer prices including net indirect taxes; this involves double-counting interfirm transactions within the branch. The global (here, merely 'total') social product is the sum of gross outputs of all the productive branches in the economy; see further note to Table 10.3.

compare with figures of 11 and 40 per cent from Table 10.8.) On a production branch basis, the peak proportions were higher still for industry (68 per cent) and transport (61 per cent), lower for agriculture (24 per cent).

As with preceding data, crucial details were omitted. The reader did not know how 'war needs' were defined in relation to either budget outlays or the NMP methodology. Because they were larger, they could be presumed to be more inclusive than the NMP categories; were missing outlays on institutional consumption of the armed forces involved? Nor did we know how the national income concept was defined; NMP produced and utilised were close in 1940, but by 1942 foreign aid must already have been introducing a widening gap. Once again, the price set was undefined.

Archival documents originating in Sukharevskii's office show that these figures were based on product supply and utilisation balances for each branch of the productive economy.[28] Resources procured to satisfy 'war needs' were measured by the value of products delivered to the armed forces, and the value of intermediate goods and raw materials delivered to defence industry (Table 10.10). Some intermediate goods and raw materials (the 'productive consumption' of the defence industry) were therefore counted twice in the top line of the defence-burden ratio. Since the bottom line of the fraction here was the global social product (the sum of gross outputs of all the productive branches), there should have been equal double counting in both numerator and denominator – in principle, at least. In practice, however, there was too little double counting on the top line, because the productive consumption of civilian suppliers of 'war needs' was neglected, resulting in understatement of the defence burden.

There was a noteworthy attempt at consistency in pricing. Since defence procurement agencies purchased goods at government prices, total output was also valued and, if necessary, revalued at government prices. This primarily affected agricultural products. Since government prices were more stable than prices generally in wartime, at least those relative price effects stemming from the huge kolkhoz market inflation were eliminated. Thus an attempt was made to render the numerator and denominator of the defence burden comparable in terms of prices, although practical transgressions may have influenced the result. Mysteriously, in the original version authorised by Sukharevskii, the bottom line (Table 10.9, row 15) made no mention of national income, or of a defence burden of 15, 55, or '57–58' per cent. Defence uses of resources, with limited double counting, were compared with the global

Table 10.10 Gross value of output, total and for 'war needs', 1940 and 1942–4, according to Sukharevskii (billion rubles and current state transfer prices)

	Total			*For war needs*		
	1940	*1942*	*1943 prelim*	*1940*	*1942*	*1943 prelim*
1. Agriculture, total	294.0	165.0	173.0	25.0	39.0	42.0
1.1 to defence industry	. .	. .	. .	22.0	32.0	34.0
1.2 to other war needs	. .	. .	. .	3.0	7.0	8.0
2. Industry, total	378.8	231.0	257.0	97.5	156.2	169.0
2.1 group A	145.8	110.0	122.0	49.5	84.2	93.0
2.1a MBMW	30.6	7.3	12.0	28.5	47.7	54.0
2.1b industrial materials	. .	. .	. .	11.0	23.0	25.0
2.1c fuel, power	18.8	10.1	12.1	3.5	7.5	8.0
2.1d construction materials	12.1	5.7	5.9	3.5	2.6	2.0
2.1e other group A	. .	. .	. .	3.0	3.4	4.0
2.2 group B	233.0	121.0	135.0	48.0	72.0	76.0
3. Construction, total	38.7	18.3	18.4	5.2	4.8	3.3
4. Transport, total	24.1	12.1	17.5	3.8	7.3	11.6
4.1 military shipments	. .	. .	. .	1.1	2.3	4.6
4.2 to defence industry	. .	. .	. .	2.7	5.0	7.0
5. Trade	38.5	22.5	23.6	2.5	7.0	7.5
6. Other	10.9	7.1	8.5	3.0	3.7	4.6
7. Total social product	785.0	456.0	498.0	137.0	218.0	238.0

Source: GARF, 3922:4372/4/115, 19–22; figures for 1944 plan are omitted. 'War needs' specified in the source but not apparent from the table are defined as follows (the supplying branch is listed first, then the user or form of utilisation):

- MBMW – military equipment
- industrial materials – defence industry
- fuel and power – defence industry
- construction materials – defence industry and other war needs
- construction – of defence industry and other military construction
- trade – markup on products procured on account of defence outlays.

social product (Table 10.10, row 7), rising from 17 per cent in 1940 to 48 per cent in 1942 and the same in 1943.

Where then did the other figures in Table 10.9 come from? The '57–58' per cent is clearly from Table 10.5, row 4.1: the 'real' defence burden at constant prewar prices in 1942 and 1943, comparing budget outlays on defence and maybe the NKVD troops as well with NMP. The 15 per cent is the ratio of Terpilovskii's 56.8 billion rubles of official budget outlays on defence, from Table 10.4, row 1 (the Army and Navy only), to Sorokin's 377 billion rubles of NMP utilised in 1940, from Table 10.7, row 4. Neither has anything in common with the other figures in Tables 10.9 and 10.10, nor do they have much in common with each other.

CONCLUSIONS

Sukharevskii's reports supply an interesting insight into the concepts and measures available to Soviet planners in wartime for evaluating the overall strains on the macroeconomy. They leave the impression of considerable ingenuity, and a capacity for analytical development, most of which was absorbed by a need to improvise on the basis of poor basic skills and materials. Those at the centre of the information system had to make bricks without much statistical straw. This was probably an inherent feature (not restricted to wartime) of a system of economic regulation which concentrated its scarce talent at the centre.

Sukharevskii and his colleagues could go only part of the way towards an objective picture of the pattern of wartime economic mobilisation. They could improve their concepts and methodologies, but could do little to overcome the poor quality and instability of the statistical underlay. Did this have practical consequences? Not in an obvious sense, since there is no evidence that the documents under review fed directly into practical decisions about resource allocation. But if 'statistics is the language of planning', then those conversant with policy issues were fettered by poor statistics, no matter whether they regarded themselves primarily as practical politicians or as professional economists. For 'planning decisions, being essentially choices between expected outcomes, are almost always quantitative and call for an intimate knowledge of the magnitudes involved.'[29]

The potential for error was present in abundance, and the effects of getting such magnitudes wrong were probably all bad. Understatement and overstatement both carried negative consequences. Exaggerating

the achievements of economic mobilisation was dangerous if it led to complacency; but the evidence suggests that this danger was not realised. On the contrary, official understatement of war burdens was normal; it extended also to military and demographic losses.[30] Which was the more realistic measure of the wartime defence burden – 15, or 44, or 48, or '57–58' per cent? Probably the highest official estimates of the defence burden at its maximum still fell short of the reality. Official measures of the defence burden which underplayed the degree to which resources had already been mobilised invited the régime to censure society for insufficient effort, and prompted politicians to call an exhausted people to fresh, maybe unbearable sacrifices.

None the less, in the wartime reports of Gosplan officials we can find clear evidence of repeated attempts to find more informative and consistent concepts and measures of wartime economic burdens. These efforts began with study of the phasing of economic mobilisation and sources of war finance at current prices; they were extended to examination of concepts of the 'real' defence burden, to seek to compensate for the downward influence on measures of the defence burden arising from relative price effects, and to consider how the production and expenditure accounts could be reconciled. Such efforts were hindered in a variety of ways by the quality of the statistical raw materials, and by the restrictions of established methodologies. None the less they invite our respect, even if we do not choose to give automatic credence to the results.

Notes

1. I am grateful to Edwin Bacon, Sir Austin Robinson, Nikolai Simonov, and Peter Wiles, for comments, advice, and assistance. I wish to thank the University of Warwick for study leave in 1991/92, and The Leverhulme Trust for a generous grant towards research on 'Soviet production, employment, and the defence burden, 1937 and 1940–1945'. Edwin Bacon's visits to Moscow archives in 1992 were also assisted by the British Academy, the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Russian History, and staff of the central archives of the Russian Federation.
2. B. Sukharevskii, 'Pobeda v Otechestvennoi voine i sovetskaya ekonomika', *Planovoe khozyaistvo*, no. 3 (1945); B. Sukharevskii, *Sovetskaya ekonomika v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine* (Moscow, 1945).
3. N.A. Voznesenskii, *Voennaya ekonomika SSSR v period Otechestvennoi voiny* (Moscow, 1947), translated as N. A. Voznesensky, *The war economy of the USSR in the period of the Patriotic War* (Moscow, 1948).
4. These figures were first released in 1965 by Ia.E. Chadaev, *Ekonomika SSSR v period Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny* (Moscow, 1965), p. 380; see

also G.S. Kravchenko, *Ekonomika SSSR v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny*, 2nd edn (Moscow, 1970), pp. 125, 228, and subsequently *Istoriya Vtoroi Mirovoi voiny 1939–1945 gg.* (below, *IVMV*), vol. 6 (Moscow, 1976), p. 340, and vol. 12 (Moscow, 1982), 161. Incomplete figures previously released by Voznesenskii in 1947 proved to be part of this data set.

5. For the original figures of 15 per cent (1940) and 55 per cent (1942), see *Istoriya Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny Sovetskogo Soiuza* (below, *IVOVSS*), vol. 6 (Moscow, 1965), p. 46. A peak of '57–58 per cent' achieved 'in the course of the war' was claimed by G. A. Sorokin, (ed.), *Po edinomu planu* (Moscow, 1971), pp. 87–8; for the same figure applied to 1942, see *Istoriya sotsialisticheskoi ekonomiki SSSR*, vol. 5 (Moscow, 1978), p. 183.
6. A report of interim findings is available in M. Harrison, 'Soviet production and employment in World War II: a 1993 update', *Soviet Industrialisation Project Series*, SIPS, No. 35 (Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Birmingham, 1993).
7. GARF, 3922:4372/4/115, 35–9.
8. For explanation of material product system aggregates and their components, see notes to Tables 10.1, 10.3, and 10.9.
9. Cf A. Bergson, *The real national income of Soviet Russia since 1928* (Cambridge, MA, 1961), pp. 23–4. These are the words of P. J. D. Wiles, 'How Soviet defence expenditures fit into the national income accounts', in C. G. Jacobsen (ed.), *The Soviet defence enigma: estimating costs and burdens* (Oxford, 1987), p. 60. Wiles also details the history of the deceptions which followed Stalin's death.
10. R. W. Davies, 'Soviet military expenditure and the armaments industry, 1923–1933: a reconsideration', *Europe–Asia Studies*, 45(4) (1993), pp. 577–608, provides new evidence of budgetary deception in the early 1930s.
11. United Nations Statistical Office (UNSO), *Basic principles of the systems of balances of the national economy* (New York, 1971), pp. 59–60.
12. UNSO, *Basic principles*, p. 20. For further discussion see Wiles, 'Soviet defence expenditures', p. 62.
13. The share of defence outlays in budget spending was given by Sukharevskii as 37 per cent in 1940, 66 per cent in 1942 and 65 per cent in 1943. Roughly similar percentages are obtained by dividing Table 10.1, row 4.2, by total outlays reported by the budget in each year (174.4, 182.8, and 210.0 billion rubles), from M. V. Terpilovskii (ed.), *Finansovaya sluzhba Vooruzhennykh Sil SSSR v period voiny* (Moscow, 1967), p. 29.
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15. RGAE, 7733/36/1892, 63.
16. M. Harrison, 'The Soviet economy and relations with the USA and Britain', University of Warwick, Department of Economics, Working Paper Series, 9316 (1993), paper to FCO/UEA Seminar in Atlantic Studies: Norwich, to be published in A. Lane and H. Temperley (eds), *The Rise and Fall of the Grand Alliance, 1941–1945* (in preparation), Tables 5, 6, 7.
17. M. Harrison, 'Resource mobilisation for World War II: the USA, UK, USSR and Germany, 1938–1945', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, 41(2) (1988), p. 184.

18. GARF, 3922:4372/4/115, 50–3.
19. M. Harrison, 'New estimates of Soviet production and employment in World War II: a progress report', *Soviet Industrialisation Project Series*, SIPS No. 32 (Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Birmingham, 1991), p. 80.
20. Harrison, 'Soviet production', p. 17.
21. On the failure of official prices of engineering products to reflect real price changes, leading to understatement of wartime growth in munitions supplies, see M. Harrison, 'The volume of Soviet munitions output, 1937–1945: a reevaluation', *Journal of Economic History*, 50(3) (1990), pp. 573–4, and M. Harrison, 'Soviet munitions output in World War II in the light of new data', University of Warwick, Department of Economics, Working Paper Series, no. 9317 (1993). On the parallel understatement of wartime decline of civilian industrial production, see E. T. Bacon and M. Harrison, 'The real output of Soviet civilian industry, 1940–1945', University of Warwick, Department of Economics, Working Paper Series, no. 9303 (1993).
22. Voznesensky, *War economy*, p. 56. 'Servicemen' is the official translation of *voennosluzhashchie*, but women served as well as men.
23. For 'the means of waging war', see Kravchenko, *Ekonomika SSSR*, pp. 125, 228; for 'armament', *IVMV*, vol. 6, p. 340.
24. E. Zaleski, *Stalinist planning for economic growth, 1933–1952* (London, 1980), p. 352.
25. Harrison, 'Soviet production', p. 38.
26. Official figures in '1926/27' prices, from *IVOVSS*, vol. 5, p. 45, show 1944 national income produced as 88 per cent of 1940. Unofficial estimates are lower, but not that low – 80 per cent from R. P. Powell, 'The Soviet capital stock and related series for the war years', in *Two supplements to Richard Moorsteen and Raymond P. Powell, The Soviet capital stock, 1928–1962* (Yale University, The Economic Growth Center, 1968), p. 7, and 78 per cent from Harrison, 'Soviet production', p. 14, both in 1937 prices.
27. Harrison, 'The Soviet economy and relations with the USA and Britain'.
28. Compare GARF, f. 3922:4372/4/115, 19–22 and 503.
29. Both quotations are from A. K. Cairncross, *Planning in wartime: aircraft production in Britain, Germany and the USA* (Oxford, 1991), p. 12. The first is cited by Cairncross from Ely Devons.
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11 Why were the Faulty Foundations Never Repaired?

Holland Hunter

> The Soviet economic system discussed in this volume was able, at great human cost, to cope with the first stages of industrialization in a developing country. But it was unable to cope with the problems of economic growth and technical change in a more advanced industrial society. This was a major factor – perhaps the most important one – in the collapse in 1991 of the Soviet experiment.
>
> Economic problems characteristic of the mature – and dying – system of the 1970s and 1980s had already appeared in the 1930s. These included a tendency to over-investment, over-taut planning, the inability to innovate, and – perhaps most important of all – the failure of the grandiose efforts to modernize agriculture. The 'faulty foundations' diagnosed in the recent study by Hunter and Szyrmer were never repaired.

These two passages are from the preface to *The Economic Transformation of the Soviet Union, 1913–1945*, edited by R.W. Davies, Mark Harrison, and S.G. Wheatcroft (Cambridge University Press, 1994), a thorough, accurate, and judicious evaluation of the early Soviet economic record. Their reference is to *Faulty Foundations: Soviet Economic Policies, 1928–1940*, by Holland Hunter and Janusz M. Szyrmer (Princeton University Press, 1992). The two studies largely agree, especially concerning these two defects, but we differ over the feasibility of an alternative to collectivisation of agriculture. The present essay reviews the whole record, and also offers some reflections on its implications for Russian economic transition.

INTRODUCTION

Why did the Soviet system collapse? For most readers of this volume, the political and social evils of the Soviet era, especially during its early decades, probably dominate their judgments in accounting for its failure. 'Dictatorship of the proletariat' in practice meted out political injustice to many millions of people. The system, especially within the Gulag Archipelago, was excessively harsh and cruel.

The feelings of Soviet citizens no doubt varied widely, but towards the end of the Soviet period dissatisfaction with the very slow rate of economic progress seems to have been important. Thus in addition to political and social grievances, mundane economic deficiencies very likely played a part. Soviet citizens resented the fact that their country was falling behind countries like South Korea. This essay will therefore concentrate on the basic economic factors underlying the Soviet record.

While carrying out these political and social crimes, the Stalinist regime created a duplicitous mask of propaganda that inverted the facts of the current situation, with the internal, domestic result that a cowed population was unable to share the truth with each other. In the outside world, Soviet duplicity undermined inherited socialist convictions and poisoned public attitudes toward Communism.

In looking back at these terrible political and social aspects of the Soviet record, both victims and observers for many years tended to excuse them as necessary in order to win World War II. *Faulty Foundations* presents crude economic evidence controverting this argument. Thus in addition to the political and social defects of Stalinism, we argue that there were costly and unnecessary economic mistakes as well.

In *Faulty Foundations*, Szyrmer and I defined and criticised excessive 'tautness' as a central defect of the Soviet economic system. Tautness refers to the regime's excessive pressure for fulfillment and overfulfillment of quantitative economic targets. Individuals and enterprises throughout the system were pulled forward toward extremely unrealistic shortrun goals. Our arguments, and the counterfactual experiments analysed in *Faulty Foundations*, imply that relaxation of these quantitative targets would have permitted internally-consistent output expansion.

But obviously more than consistency was involved. This essay extends the argument and focusses on the neglect of product quality as an equally damaging defect of the Stalinist economic system. Producers

responded to overly demanding physical output targets for increased output by lowering product quality, all along the chain of production leading from raw materials to retail distribution.

The economy has been distorted by the need to produce an excessive share of intermediate output. Every economy has to devote labour and capital to producing a great deal of intermediate output: raw materials and fabricated goods consumed in the process of producing final goods and services. But in the USSR, low-quality output has required additional intermediate production. Huge amounts of low-quality coal, iron ore, timber, crude oil, grain, etc., went to intermediate producers whose low-quality products raised costs and hampered later stages of production.

Western economists making the case for competitive market pricing, whether production is in private hands or planned by the State, have implicitly assumed that these economic ailments would be cured by market forces. Those who argue for private property and competitive market pricing assume that these economic defects could have been averted, even during the 1920s. This rather extreme counterfactual hypothesis remains to be investigated. *Faulty Foundations* merely assumes that a milder planning system during 1928–40 could have reduced their seriousness.

What about the present and near-term future? Correcting these mistakes is central to the economic agenda of a Russian transition, and a few straightforward suggestions are offered in my concluding section. First, however, I summarise the grim story of Bolshevik errors.

LAYING THE FAULTY FOUNDATIONS

Their Rationale

When the Bolsheviks seized power in the fall of 1917, they had many political, economic, and cultural goals, initially dominated by the sheer need to survive. They managed to prevail after three years of civil war during 1918–20, though the economy was badly crippled. Economic revival became the next major goal, and by 1927 the economy had been brought back roughly to the prewar level.

In September 1917 Lenin wrote that, in order to avoid defeat, the Bolsheviks would have to catch up with and surpass the advanced countries economically, and in December 1920 he added:

> Anyone who has observed life in the countryside, as compared with life in the towns, knows that we have not torn out the roots of capitalism and have not undermined the foundation, the basis of the internal enemy . . . We are weaker than capitalism, not only on a world scale but also within the country . . . Only when our industry, our agriculture, our transport system have been placed upon the technical basis of modern, large-scale industry shall we achieve final victory.[1]

Thus Lenin identified rapid economic growth, in order to overcome both the internal enemy and the external enemy, as a basic Bolshevik goal.

Dealing with the peasantry was the first task. In March, 1920, Lenin persuaded the party to adopt the New Economic Policy, allowing a revival of markets to compete with state controls, but under the challenging question, 'Who will beat whom?' While the economy began its prompt revival under NEP, however, Lenin was weakened by a series of strokes, and he died in January 1924. Toward the end he became concerned about the way a growing bureaucracy was administering the economy; his last article, 'Better Fewer But Better,' cautioned against the 'shooting from the hip' methods some Party officials were using. Yet there was inherent tension between the injunction to 'catch up with and surpass' and his the caution against 'doing things in a rush.'

The situation began to grow more tense in the mid-1920s. In 1926 Hitler's *Mein Kampf* appeared, with its talk of the German need for *lebensraum* (literally, space for living), praise for Aryans, and scorn for Slavs; the book was promptly translated into Russian. In 1927 the United Kingdom broke off relations with the USSR following the ARCOS raid and allegation regarding Soviet subversion, creating a brief war scare that heightened the sense of emergency. By 1927 Stalin was gaining a decisive position in the party, and in 1928 his speeches became increasingly strident. His 13 April 1928 speech to the Moscow party organization, for example, included this passage, 'It is said that it is impossible for communists, and especially communist business executives who come from the working class, to master chemical formulas or technical knowledge in general. That is not true, comrades. There are no fortresses that the working people, the Bolsheviks, cannot capture.'[2] The phrase appeared again in a major address of 1931 that was cited millions of times in the USSR thereafter.

Stalin's major speech of 19 October 1928, referred several times to Lenin's statement that 'small production *engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, hourly, daily, spontaneously, and on a mass scale.' He cited Lenin as saying, 'As long as we live in a small-peasant country, there is a surer economic basis for capitalism in Russia than for communism,' adding the familiar passage about the internal enemy and drawing out its implications.

He was concerned about the external enemy as well. In November 1928, as the first Five-Year Plan was being launched, Stalin explained why rapid industrial growth, with a 'high state of tension' was necessary.

> The question of a fast rate of development of industry would not face us so acutely as it does now if we had such a highly developed industry and such a highly developed technology as Germany, say, and if the relative importance of industry in the national economy were as high in our country as it is in Germany.[3]

By February 1931, after frenzied efforts in industry and agriculture were well under way, Stalin gave a famous rhetorical answer to the question of whether it was not possible to slow down the tempo a bit:

> No, comrades, it is not possible! The tempo must not be reduced. On the contrary, we must increase it as much as is within our powers and possibilities . . . To slacken the tempo would mean falling behind. And those who fall behind get beaten. But we do not want to be beaten . . . One feature of the history of old Russia was the continual beatings she suffered for falling behind, for her backwardness . . . for military backwardness, for cultural backwardness, for political backwardness, for industrial backwardness, for agricultural backwardness.

After further ringing phrases, Stalin concluded, 'We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it, or they crush us.'[4]

Almost exactly ten years later, the Nazis invaded the USSR. Was the decade wisely spent, preparing to defend the Revolution and fend off invasion by building a heavy industrial base?

Initially, millions of Soviet citizens, especially the young, responded enthusiastically to Stalin's call for action. They became 'new Bolsheviks,' as distinct from the Old Bolsheviks (Party members before

1917) who were gradually liquidated by Stalin. By the end of the decade, however, purges and terror had quelled their enthusiasm.

Without going into details (neatly set forth in *The Economic Transformation*), the crucial features of the new approach can be enumerated as follows:

(1) In industry, the application of extreme pressure for rapid output expansion of a limited set of key products. The setting of very large annual output levels to be reached in 3–5 years, which precluded attention to product quality. The USSR was to follow the US example ('Fordism') of using assembly-line production methods, with very long production runs of individual products,
(2) In agriculture, attention was focused on grain and cotton, with the neglecting of meat, milk and dairy products, and fruit and vegetables.
(3) In the construction sector, emphasis was placed on very large plants, spread around the country and hastily slapped together in disregard of prudent building standards (*gigantomania*).
(4) In the transport sector, priority was given to freight over passenger transport, and railroads over roads. In practice this meant 'supertrunklining' a handful of inter-regional arteries and neglecting farm-to-market roads for the rural population.

MAJOR NEGATIVE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES[5]

The great drive launched in 1929 had several major negative economic consequences. First, it quickly led to drastic declines in output quality throughout the economy, in manufactured goods, agricultural products, and construction projects. This deterioration of product quality soon came to erode quantitative output gains. It affected almost everything, starting with bread itself. The percentage of grain extracted as flour was pushed up from the normal level around 76 per cent to as much as 98.5 per cent, the water content of bread was raised to about 40 per cent, and the proportion of bread made of coarse grains rose sharply.[6] In all three respects, the Soviet citizen's staff of life was weakened. Per capita consumption of meat, milk, and dairy products in the 1930s was markedly reduced, so that the quality of the typical diet, both urban and rural, declined to the level of the early 1920s. On special occasions like birthdays, a family might be able to

obtain a single egg for making a cake. The quality of clothing, footwear, and household furnishings declined as producers sought to meet quantitative targets with inadequate supplies of increasingly shoddy raw materials.

Within heavy industry itself, the quality of fuels and basic raw materials also deteriorated. Iron and steel-making furnaces designed to use specified grades of coal and iron ore found increasing difficulty in handling poorer grades of both.[7] Standards for making cement were subverted to such an extent that concrete floors in newly-completed factories sometimes collapsed under imported machinery.[8]

The use of low-quality fuels and raw materials raised operating costs by impairing the efficiency of many processes, by increasing the frequency of breakdowns, and by adding to maintenance costs. Enterprises receiving these materials complained vociferously, but without access to alternative sources of supply and under great pressure themselves to meet quantitative targets, they produced as best they could, sending lower-quality output forward to their customers. Thus even as quantities produced grew larger, their usefulness decreased in ways that undermined the gains expected from the added output.

As mines and other primary producers disgorged increasing amounts of low-grade materials, railroads and other carriers were forced to move a burgeoning volume of rock, water, and other contaminants mixed in along with the useful raw material. Where strenuous output targets led producers to simulate achievement through lowering standards of purity, their tonnage targets could be met, and the carriers' ton–kilometer traffic targets could be met, though in real terms the movement of debris was adding nothing to the national product.

Bolshevik pressure for rapid output expansion, coupled with a perception that publicly-owned resources could be drawn on without cost, led to very wasteful exploitation of natural resource deposits. High-grade, easily accessible, well-located deposits were the first to be mined, understandably, but the methods used skimmed off only what could be quickly seized. After an initial period of low costs, therefore, extraction costs were permanently higher than they might have been under more careful methods of recovery.

Careless resource use is vividly illustrated in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. The crew of prisoners begins their cold winter work day by building a fire, both to warm themselves and to heat water for mortar, using sawn lumber that was to have become part of the building itself.[9]

Modernisation everywhere tends to bring with it a rise in intermediate production as opposed to final demand; thus a rising proportion of labour and capital goes into producing intermediate commodities that then disappear into more highly fabricated final products. But in the USSR, clumsy extraction, transportation, and processing of defective raw materials absorbed excessive amounts of labour and capital, matched by gross output that should not have been necessary. Since the raw materials and intermediate products were produced in wasteful ways, the rapid growth in their volume gave an exaggerated impression of Soviet industrial progress.

Secondly, proposals to make small improvements in current models of trucks, passenger automobiles, machine tools, and other kinds of new equipment were deliberately rejected. This meant that incremental quality gains were suppressed. One famous example involved the Model A passenger car and Model AA truck coming into production at Gorky in the early 1930s under contract with the Ford Motor Company. Following the terms of the contract, Ford offered to make available the V-8 engine which was about to replace the 4-cylinder engine of the previous model. The Soviet government declined the offer. A report by a leading Soviet engineer involved with the project recommended that minor improvements be incorporated each year, to keep up with the practice he saw being followed in U.S. automobile manufacturing, but this suggestion too was declined.

These tangible defects were accompanied by some less visible but equally harmful developments. Economic information was increasingly put on a need-to-know basis, i.e., in every enterprise it was restricted to those with a need to know, while it was withheld from other organisations and from the general public. Traditional Russian secrecy toward the outside world continued and grew tighter. The relatively voluminous statistical material of the 1920s shrank steadily and by the end of the 1930s was reduced to a smokescreen of summary announcements in percentage terms.

In place of the relatively objective information available in the 1920s, statistical agencies began to prepare and issue 'lacquered' reports. As the director of Goskomstat USSR wrote in 1990,

> the dominant orientation for decades was toward demonstrating success and superiority and toward keeping quiet about difficulties and negative phenomena in the development of the country and its various regions. Statistics, like theory, was forced to assume the distorted ideological function of forming the illusion that all was well

and that the 'command-bureaucratic system' was infallible. Distorted data about the rates, levels, and proportions of the nation's socioeconomic development did not provide a reliable basis for making key socioeconomic decisions.[10]

Massive flows of information moved up through channels from enterprises to central planners, and a reverse flow of targets and instructions moved down from the Kremlin to the field, but the process was flawed by suspicion and adversarial relationships. Under intense pressure to raise production, each producer tended to exaggerate his output, overstate his needs, and understate his resources. His or her superiors in the planning hierarchy, fully aware of this tendency, tried to 'uncover hidden reserves' by setting unrealistically high output targets, overstating the input supplies assigned to the enterprise, and demanding unrealistic cost reductions within the plant. Thus instead of a relatively well-informed and flexible two-way communications network monitoring inter-industry flows on the basis of accurate data, there quickly developed a ponderous, distorted, clumsy system of statistical reporting that thwarted efficient performance.

An unfortunate consequence of secrecy and misreporting was a notable delay in correcting economic errors. Decisions on resource allocation had perforce to be based on inaccurate information, and follow-up decisions intended to correct errors had to be reached through a miasma of misinformation deliberately thrown up to defend those who would suffer by disclosure. They often included, not only officials at the enterprise, but higher-level planners and operating officials as well as local, regional, and central party officials.

Among the positive features of the Bolshevik drive to catch up, there was initially a wave of confidence and enthusiasm as upwardly-mobile Soviet citizens threw themselves into the national effort. Unfortunately the excessive tautness that marked new-Bolshevik planning soon led to campaigns to identify and weed out 'wreckers' impeding the drive, which led in turn to show trials and political terror which spread to the general Soviet public. Initiative was quashed. The image of the creative and self-confident 'new Soviet man', as portrayed in the literature of socialist realism, was belied by the actuality of an environment in which caution and conformity became the best means to survival.

In purely economic terms, a major negative feature of the period was monetary mismanagement. Though the Five-Year Plans called for a stable price level, and anticipated that money wages would rise less than labour productivity, enterprises under intense pressure for rapid

output increases quickly overspent their wage funds. Firms hired more workers and paid higher wages than they were supposed to. The state and the central bank supplied the necessary cash. Aggregate purchasing power mounted far above the aggregate value, at official prices, of what consumers could buy. Cost overruns at firms producing priority products were covered with generous subsidies from the central budget, creating marked excess demand for raw materials and other forms of intermediate output. Demand for construction materials was spurred by the claims of high-priority construction projects. Though taxes (mostly hidden) impounded much public purchasing power and enterprise gross income, a large overhang remained.

Crude annual estimates for the money supply in the USSR from 1928 to 1940 suggest that it was expanding by about 25 per cent per annum. Meanwhile the price level rose more than seven-fold between 1928 and 1940, at an average annual rate of about 18 per cent. Growth in the money supply went well beyond the rate at which the price level was rising, thus tending to pull it up.[11] Official Soviet growth claims, couched in indexes based on undisclosed 'comparable prices,' served to hide these inflationary pressures from the outside world. Moreover command-economy controls kept inflation from reaching the rate often observable in Latin America. Nevertheless the fragmentary evidence indicates that the authorities were unable or unwilling to prevent the money supply from growing a great deal more rapidly than output.

Most prices were officially fixed and kept constant except for one-time increases put through in 1933 and 1936. Consumer goods were rationed from 1929 through 1935 and producer goods were allocated by administrative order. Excess purchasing power therefore generated chronic shortages and long queues.

The Bolsheviks sought to reduce the social damage caused by chronic shortages through a widespread system of rationing applied to most foods, clothing, housing, and other consumer goods. While assuring a spartan level of living for most of the urban population, the rationing system brought with it the usual problems of corruption and favoritism. Those without connections were penalised. Equally serious, the need to stand in long queues in order to collect rations (and even more so to acquire unrationed goods), put at a disadvantage all those who could not invest the time, and laid an uncounted burden of wasted hours on everyone required to queue up for survival's sake.

Holding prices constant, month after month and quarter after quarter, simplified the supervision and appraisal of economic perform-

ance throughout the economy, but prevented the responsiveness to change that is needed for economic efficiency. Continuous upward and downward price movements, reflecting changes on the supply side and on the demand side, would have provided signals for buyers and sellers guiding them toward sensible purchase and sale decisions benefitting both themselves and the economy. Planners allocating resources administratively would have benefitted as well. Instead, the rigid and unresponsive structure of relative prices became a distorted conveyor of seriously erroneous economic information. At various points in the economy, thoughtful economists and planners applied 'coefficients of deficitness' to official prices in order to correct for the most obvious discrepancies, but they had little impact.[12] In the field of capital investment, some courageous and sensible project planners took unofficial steps to apply a 'coefficient of relative effectiveness,' i.e., an interest rate, in choosing among investment projects, but not until after Stalin's death was there any official response.[13]

Another defect of the structure of relative prices was the lack of rental charges for the extraction of mineral resources. Resources that appeared to be 'free' were recklessly squandered. In many places their extraction caused unanticipated damage to the economy itself, as when removal of sand and gravel from the shores of the Black Sea, for use in nearby construction projects, undermined the roadbed of the major inter-regional shoreline railroad.[14]

Serious harm was caused by the underpricing of housing accommodations. Rental charges for urban apartments were deliberately kept to nominal levels well below what would have been necessary just to provide for adequate maintenance. In addition, the meager revenue brought in through nominal rental charges made it appear that investment in additional housing would yield very modest social returns, though if the urban population had been able to express their desires through a housing market, higher rents would have paid for large additions to the housing stock.

In all these ways, and others not noted here, the new Bolsheviks in their obsessive focus on quantitative output expansion misused the USSR's material and human resources. Their zealous efforts were without precedent, and the critics who anticipated dangers were throttled. The costs of building a heavy industrial base of raw materials extraction and industrial manufacturing to defend the Revolution against the external enemy turned out, ex post, to have been unnecessarily high.

EVALUATING THE PREWAR ECONOMIC TRADEOFFS

The negative consequences touched on above must have been obvious to administrators and party leaders as they unfolded in the prewar period, but these penalties were outweighed by the goal of 'catching up with and surpassing'. It had been suggested in the 1920s that with patience the peasants could be gradually led to change their ways, and that slower industrial development would produce sounder results, but the 'fast-shooting new Bolsheviks' under Stalin could not wait. The old Russian proverb, *Tishe edesh, dal'she budesh* (If you go more quietly, you'll get farther) was forcefully rejected.

The initial Stalinist stress on assembly-line production in large plants was understandable. In the late 1920s this technological approach was being applied with great success in the United States by Henry Ford and others in the automotive industry. Comparable methods appeared in other industries as well. What better way was there to increase output quickly? But its application in the USSR went too far; the building of giant enterprises under the first Five-Year Plan was soon rightly condemned by the Party as 'gigantomania,' yet the projects were all completed, rebuilt where necessary after the war, and remain as economic albatrosses today. By their very nature, they were inflexible, permanently committed to a narrow range in products, and thus condemned to chronic obsolescence.

The Stalinist answer to dealing with the peasantry, the 'internal enemy', was even less successful. Though Stalin claimed to have solved 'the grain problem' by 1933, agricultural output in the 1930s was lower than in the 1920s except in two years of exceptionally good weather. The regime was barely able to extract what it needed from the countryside, but only at the expense of markedly reduced urban living standards and a sullen and unproductive rural population.

The strains of agricultural collectivisation led to party purges and later there were years of terror reaching the non-party population, including the armed forces. One can speculate that Nazi observers took the lowered morale of the Soviet armed forces and the rural population into account in their decision to invade the USSR, and therefore that if the same size of armed forces and population had displayed cheerful vigor and sufficiently high morale, the Nazi invasion might have been delayed or abandoned.

From this perspective one can restate Alec Nove's fundamental question, 'Was Stalin Really Necessary?' Did the construction of this heavy industrial base outweigh the human and resource losses, the

shortfalls in technological progress, and the losses imposed by quality deterioration? As shown in *Faulty Foundations*, a crude structural model of the economy for this period can be used to test various alternatives; they indicate that equal or greater economic and social strength could have been built with milder methods.

The evidence and arguments laid out in *Faulty Foundations* confirm that collectivisation was a profound mistake. Beyond that, the book goes on to demonstrate that simply continuing the uneasy relations of the mid-1920s between the regime and the peasants would have avoided major losses while putting the whole economy on a sounder footing.

On this major point, R. W. Davies disagrees. In a recent review of the book, he writes:

> The KAPROST model seems to tell us that a centrally-planned NEP-type economy, retaining a non-collectivized traditional peasant agriculture, could have produced a much stronger and more humane USSR. This is an alluring conclusion. But it is based on an unproved assumption: that even with the high rate of capital growth in heavy industry actually achieved, there could have been a smooth relation between the Soviet government and the peasantry. According to Hunter and Szyrmer, if the Bolsheviks had not plunged into the collectivisation of agriculture, the peasants would have achieved a modest increase in agricultural output, and would have provided an adequate part of this to industry and the urban population, and they build this assumption into their alternative policy choice. This tacitly assumes that, throughout 1928–1940, market conditions could have been designed to satisfy the peasantry. But in the starting year of the Hunter account, 1928, the market had already been disrupted, and the Soviet government was already using considerable administrative pressure to obtain grain from a reluctant peasantry. We are brought back to the economic and political dilemmas of NEP, and the Millar–Nove–Ellman–Harrison debate. The Hunter- Szyrmer model offers us a new and stimulating analysis of the path followed by the Soviet Union in the 1930s, but it does not yet tell us whether its happy alternative would have been voluntarily accepted by the peasants.[15]

R. W. Davies' doubts are shared by Steve Wheatcroft, and, in private correspondence, Karl-Eugen Wadekin has expressed similar scepticism.

These are weighty reservations, and I believe the data in the KAPROST model could and should be modified to permit further tests

taking the reservations into account. All the base-period data from primary Soviet sources, this time drawn from the archives, including data for deliveries from agriculture to the government and other sectors, and deliveries from non-agriculture to rural households, should cover the 1926–7 economic year, before serious government pressure began. These figures would reflect a more 'normal' relationship between town and country.

The requirements in the model for annual fixed capital formation during 1929–40 should be made smaller, reflecting (a) Janusz Szyrmer's discovery of a precise ratio for the fraction of actual annual investment that was wasted, i.e., non-operational, (b) a reduced population flow to urban areas (and thus a reduced need for urban fixed capital), and (c) no need to produce tractors to replace lost animal tractive power. Within these less demanding parameters, it might be possible to use 1926/27 rural household expenditure data to develop some price and income elasticities for basic commodities. A new research effort along these lines, using archival data, could throw fresh light on the feasibility of a milder approach to the peasantry coupled with a scaled-down and more effective growth of heavy industry. The result would be a more informed answer to Alec Nove's question and response to R. W. Davies' doubts.

POSTWAR INABILITY TO REPAIR THE DEFECTS

With Tautness Relaxed, Substantial Selective Progress

After Stalin died in 1953, economic conditions for the peasantry improved substantially and national output grew rapidly. N. S. Khrushchev made efforts to improve the system in several directions. Though he continued to use campaigning methods, his demands were less extreme than Stalin's, and both agriculture and industry progressed impressively. Military and space efforts were especially marked.

In the 1960s and 1970s, though growth was slowing down, the USSR opened itself to the outside world and looked fairly impressive. Foreign tourists could see new apartment buildings completed or under construction around the cities open to them. Huge new dams and electric power plants were visible. The urban population was dressed well and eating well, and they had educational and health care systems that appeared to be working well. It looked as though the USSR was entering the ranks of the developed nations. At the same time it was

judged to have reached parity with the United States in terms of military power. But the USSR was not catching up with the most developed countries, which themselves had been raising their living standards and improving their quality of life. Soviet visitors to the outside world could see embarrassing contrasts, even with their junior partners in CMEA.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the USSR made enormous capital investments in the agricultural sector, but to little avail. Neither Janusz Szyrmer nor I have studied this record, and we therefore withhold detailed comment. It does seem, however, that the centralized authorities continued to impose strenuous quantitative output targets for grain and other agricultural products, thus mis-specifying incentives for collective farmers and state farm workers. Has this been the root cause of failure?

Changes in the Nature of Western Technological Progress

Since World War II assembly-line production of long runs of a single product has been greatly modified in Western industry. Manufacturers are able to meet customer demands for limited numbers of a somewhat specialised variant, then retool to meet another demand. Technological progress has come to involve much more flexibility and diversity than half a century ago.[16]

In market economies, most firms produce a product in several grades and sell the premium grades for higher prices, offering the 'seconds' at a lower price. In market economies, these same firms are under pressure to improve their products regularly, since rival firms are also introducing improvements. The improvements may be small, but they are continuous. Over time the whole range of products, from best to worst, improves in quality. From one decade to the next, these improvements can appear as substantial technological progress. In a sense, then, continuous quality improvements *are* technological progress. Until after World War II, most Western economists saw technological progress as emerging from an intermittent series of major inventions that stimulated development as they were absorbed into the economy. The conventional list ran from the spinning jenny and cotton gin through the steam engine, steam locomotive, and steam ship, to electric power, the motor car, and radio. In 1939, Alvin Hansen in his Presidential address to the American Economic Association spoke of the lack of any recent major invention as a factor accounting for the Great Depression.

Plastics and electronics took off as new stimuli after the war, and a new theory altered economists' perspective. Robert Solow's application of a Cobb-Douglas production function to U.S. time series data for labour, capital, and GNP disclosed a 'residual' of output growth going well beyond the growth of labour and capital inputs. Extensive research has sought to estimate the separate contributions of labour, capital and the 'residual' to output growth, along with efforts to estimate the contribution of further subdivisions among the factors of productions. But since it is clear that all inputs cooperate in producing output i.e., improvements in any one input tend to make the other inputs more productive as well, the most comprehensive measure is one of 'total factor productivity', which estimates the extent to which all an economy's inputs are becoming more productive.

This process of quality improvement developing over time into technological progress is what was subverted in the USSR by the chronic pressure to meet quantitative output targets. It was replaced by an occasional spurt of imports from the West.

Inability to Catch Up Technologically

What accounts for the Soviet inability to generate sustained technological progress? It is impressive to note that R. W. Davies in his canny way saw the need for systematic study of this problem over thirty years ago. Gathering funds and associates, he organised a programme of interdisciplinary research drawing on a notable group of scholars based at the University of Birmingham. Their approach was objective, neutral, and cautious. In summarising the results of a large number of case studies in their 1977 volume, *The Technological Level of Soviet Industry*, R. W. Davies found 'no evidence of a substantial diminution of the technological gap between the USSR and the West in the past 15–20 years . . .', yet he was careful to note four reservations to this overall conclusion. Their sample of industries may have been biased in favour of the USSR; their evidence may not have covered recent improvements; certain industries had recently shown signs of quality improvements; and a recent slowdown in diffusion of new technology in the West may have provided the Soviet Union with a better opportunity to catch up.[17]

Five years later, when the research programme culminated in the 1982 volume, *Industrial Innovation in the Soviet Union*, judgments had

become bleaker. Ronald Amann's intricately detailed summary chapter begins its final synopsis by repeating 'the broad generalization that Soviet technology lags behind that of Western countries and has shown no strong signs of closing the gap during the last 15–20 years'.[18] He is careful to point out that some areas of innovation have been more successful than others, and that even within generally backward industries there have been periods of dynamism and patches of success.

After stating the conventional Western orthodox way of accounting for Soviet lags, Amann goes on to say: 'Clearly there are more deeply seated factors at work.'[19] Initially the USSR lacked a developed organisational infrastructure for catching up technologically, and the institutional mode which the Soviet leaders adopted was geared to an early phase of industrial development. By the mid-1950s it had clearly outlived its usefulness. The concentration of resources in priority areas led to neglect in others which were less favoured, and because of the interdependence of technologies, cumulative lags were allowed to persist. Lags in unfavored sectors held back advances in priority sectors.

The institutional and locational separation of science from production reinforced divergent preoccupations with academic success at R & D institutes and gross output at enterprises. Initial dependence on foreign technology rigidified and was difficult to break away from. The centralisation of decision-making, inevitable in view of resistance to innovation at the lower levels, led to bureaucratism, mistakes, and delays.

Looking at these pages in early 1994, one is struck by Amann's remarkable prescience. Writing in 1982, Amann saw the Soviet leadership as having stopped short of genuinely radical reform and in the early 1980s, under the growing pressures of declining growth rates, returning to more traditional solutions.[20] He and his collaborators found in case after case that prospects for speeding up the rate of technological progress were being checked by institutional barriers, with little sign that they would give way.

This judgment by the Birmingham team fielded by R. W. Davies has proved to be correct. During the 1980s the Bolshevik leadership, true to form, made the centerpiece of the Five-Year Plan for 1986–90 another attempt to import a new generation of Western technology stressing crude oil extraction, implicitly conceding the inability of domestic Soviet R & D institutes and producers of oilfield and pipeline equipment to spur output growth.

BUILDING NEW FOUNDATIONS

Writing in early 1994, one sees signs that the reconstituted El'tsin administration may try to re-establish some major physical output targets, e.g., for crude oil production, together with some wage and price ceilings. With so much of the old control apparatus dismantled, however, these partial efforts cannot be very effective. Re-imposing administrative discipline to enforce strenuous physical output increases would bring with it all the old economic evils that led to the failure of the old system. During the 1930s the new Bolsheviks were able, as noted above, to hold the rate of inflation down to a decade-long average of something like 18 per cent per *year*. At the beginning of 1994, Chernomyrdin is now contending with pressures raising the price level at least 20 per cent per *month*, or almost 900 per cent per year.

New incentives are needed instead. The rewards for enterprise executives should center on continuous good-quality and improved-quality production. They should encourage incremental product and process improvements. Quality-control inspectors should now have real power to reject sub-standard production. The re-instated ministerial authorities should penalise and shut down high-cost producers. These re-instated 'planners' should look for numerous alternative sources of supply and foster competition among them.

Russian nationalists may feel that the economic pressures they face come from 'Western imperialists', but in fact they reflect objective reality. Domestic producers of crude oil, steel, machine tools, and all the other products of the economy have to improve output quality (at reduced costs) in order to conserve and protect dwindling natural resources, to encourage fixed capital investment, primarily domestic, and to compete in the world economy.

Current news of widespread corruption and mafia-like intervention in economic affairs indicates that the most basic need now is for a secure legal foundation. For a productive economy, privatisation of State-owned property is not enough. All participants – producers, workers, buyers and sellers – have to have some minimum degree of confidence in the legal framework surrounding economic activity. In normal economies, experience supports an atmosphere of trust founded on institutional protections. The legal framework upholds contracts for purchase and sale, under a detailed body of law governing contracts. Individuals and enterprises hold secure title to land, real estate, and other kinds of fixed capital, backed up by uniform national property laws.

In early 1994 the two legislative houses in Moscow, along with the Federation government and contending regional authorities, are far from agreement on a settled body of ownership law and contract law. The Russian Procuracy has inherited a tradition of administering Gossnab decisions rather than independent contracts. Property leases and commercial transactions therefore carry substantial premiums (transaction costs) reflecting uncertainty and lack of trust. 'Windfall profits' can be very large, giving rise to understandable indignation among the general public. As a secure legal framework is put in place, these shockingly high transaction costs will gradually be squeezed out, paradoxically, by rivalry among numerous buyers and sellers, attracted by the high profits themselves. Western experience suggests that establishing a body of commercial law and building public confidence in a normal legal framework is likely to require many years.

Through what channel can this kind of Western advice most effectively be conveyed to the parts of the Russian public most likely to swing back from nationalist nostalgia toward willingness to move toward a market economy? Clearly mainstream Western economists, especially the brusque lecturers from Washington, have not found the right way to convey their message.

In my view the most effective commentary will flow through the work of those deeply acquainted with Russian history and sensitive to the successes and failures of the Soviet period, yet at the same time equipped with a professional understanding of how Western market societies work. It is here that the influence of those such as R. W. Davies will have its effect. Through his scholarly writing, through his many friends in Russia, and through his students, he is already having a quiet influence which will surely continue.

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