The party elite, industrial managers, specialists and workers, 1922-23

Simon Pirani, University of Essex
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This paper argues that the Bolshevik party elite, by means of its command of the state apparatus, acted as a nucleus around which was formed a new bureaucratic class that came to rule the Soviet Union in the course of the 1920s. Manifestations of this new class's exploitative relations with the working class, and tensions between the social groups coming together to form this new class, became noticeable in 1922-23 as the economic revival got underway. In this period, too, the party elite legitimised its own, and its allies', material privileges. The paper, based on archival research covering the Moscow region only, discusses these changes, and examines some specific aspects of the changing social relations of the time, i.e. the appearance of communist industrial managers and their role in disciplining workers, and the tensions between party officials and the bourgeois specialists in the workplaces.[1]

Socialist theory has experienced many difficulties in establishing a framework for understanding the Soviet bureaucratic class. Marx elaborated no theory of bureaucracy. But in discussions of the issue he asserted that abolition of bureaucratic hierarchy and the introduction of officials paid a skilled workmen's wages – which he believed, perhaps erroneously, had been undertaken by the Paris Commune – would be integral to "the political form of […] social emancipation".[2] In Bolshevism, this aspect of Marx's thought was almost completely obliterated. There were endless discussions about the need to control the state apparatus and to tackle bureaucratism (in the narrow sense, i.e. officials' authoritarianism, corruption and inefficiency), but these were considered only as defects of a workers' state. Marx's aims of abolishing bureaucratic hierarchy and the payment of a skilled workers' wages to officials were, at best, postponed to the distant future. Those who attempted to analyse the bureaucracy as exploitative, or as a class, and those who attributed to the party elite an exploitative role in the Soviet economy, were silenced. The 1923 opposition condemned the suppression of inner-party democracy because, among other things, it constrained criticism of the bureaucracy – but did not question the assumption that the party and its elite were instruments, however faulty, of "proletarian dictatorship". In the late 1920s, Stalin's most prominent Bolshevik opponents, from exile, continued to analyse the bureaucracy as a hostile organism within a fundamentally progressive workers' state. Even Christian Rakovsky – who acknowledged that the bureaucracy had "not only objectively but subjectively, not only materially but also morally" ceased to be part of the working class – saw it as no more than a wayward "agent" of a temporarily quiescent proletariat-in-power. The most influential socialist analysis of the USSR, Trotsky's, interpreted the bureaucracy as "parasitic" on the proletariat and denied it the possibility of an independent historical role; his account of the bureaucracy's origins relied heavily on the Bolsheviks' old discourse about its grounding in sociologically-defined "alien class elements", and excluded from examination the party's political expropriation of the working class.[3] Means to overcome these contradictions were

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[1] The paper is based on PhD research at the University of Essex on "Changes in the relationship between the Communist Party and the working class during, and as a result of, the transition from the civil war to the NEP, Moscow 1920-24".

[2] Marx, Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right", ed. J. O'Malley (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp45-54; Marx, "The Civil War in France", in Marx, The First International and After (ed. Fernbach) (Penguin 1974), pp187-235 and "First draft of the Civil War in France" in ibid., pp136-268; Marx, "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right': Introduction" in Marx, Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, op. cit., pp131-142.

[3] Rakovsky, "The Professional Dangers of Power", in Rakovsky, Selected Writings on Opposition in the USSR 1923-1930 (ed. Gus Fagan) (London, Allison & Busby, 1980), pp124-136. Trotsky's theory is set out most comprehensively in

suggested by Cornelius Castoriadis, who attributed to the bureaucracy the ability to "substitute […] itself for the bourgeoisie as the social stratum that carries out the tasks of primitive accumulation" and to accomplish such functions as "manager of centralised capital". Castoriadis made central to the bureaucracy's rise the Bolshevik party's reduction of the working class to "enthusiastic and passive citizens". From this starting point, Claude Lefort developed an analysis according to which the Soviet bureaucratic class became dominant not, as the bourgeoisie does, "by virtue of a professional activity which endows them with private power", but "through dependence on state power which grounds and maintains the social hierarchy". From a reading of Weber, Lefort argues that the "class unity" of the bureaucracy, which develops in a range of state and non-state institutions, "does not prevail 'naturally'; it requires a constant activity of unification". Furthermore: "The rivalry of bureaucratic apparatuses reinforced by the struggle of inter-bureaucratic clans is brought under control only by the intervention, at every level and in all sectors of social life, of a principle which is properly political."[4] I suggest here that the party elite can be seen as the agent of this principle, and the driving force for this "constant activity of unification", not only during the civil war when it was laying the foundations of the Soviet state, but more clearly from 1922 as the economic revival began.

In western historiography, the role of politics in the formation of the Soviet bureaucratic class is discussed by Graeme Gill, who identifies an "oligarchy" of senior party leaders, on whom those at lower levels of the apparatus were dependent. Gill built on the work of T.H. Rigby, one of whose contributions was to identify the role of personal networks and cliques in the party elite; Gerald Easter's research on regional leaders developed that theme. A sociological definition of the new bureaucratic class, is given by Stephen Sternheimer. Don Rowney defines the bureaucratic class as a "technocracy", whose advance was driven above all by the need for technical skills – an approach that in my view puts too far into the background the working class, and the bureaucracy's relationship with it.[5] It is hoped that fresh light will be shed on this relationship by the discussion below – which concentrates on communist managers, specialists and workplace party cells, and their dealings with workers.

"The Class Nature of the Soviet State" in Writings of Leon Trotsky (1933-34), pp102-122, and Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed: What is the Soviet Union and Where is it Going (London, New Park, 1973). I have advanced arguments about the Bolshevik political expropriation of the working class elsewhere, e.g. in Pirani, S., "The Moscow Workers' Movement in 1921 and the Role of Non-Partyism", Europe-Asia Studies 56:1, 2004, pp143-160, and Pirani, S., "Mass mobilisation versus mass participation: the Bolsheviks and the Moscow workers 1921-22" (paper presented at the American Association for the Advancement of Slavonic Studies convention, December 2004, downloadable at http://www.quintessential.org.uk/SimonPirani/pirani-aaass.pdf).

[4] Castoriadis, Castoriadis, Cornelius, "The role of Bolshevik ideology in the birth of the bureaucracy" (1964) <http://www.geocities.com/cordobakaf/castbolsh.html>; Lefort, Claude "What is Bureaucracy", in Lefort, The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism. Ed. J. Thompson (Polity Press, Cambridge, 1986), pp89-120; Weber, Max, Essays in Sociology (trans. and ed. by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills) (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), pp196-244.

[5] Gill, Graeme, The Origins of the Stalinist political system (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), especially pp51-112; Rigby, T.H., "Early provincial cliques and the rise of Stalin", Soviet Studies, vol.33, January 1981, pp3-28, and Rigby, "The Soviet Political Elite", British Journal of Political Science 1971, vol I, no.4, pp415-436; Easter, Gerald, Reconstructing the state: personal networks and elite identity in Soviet Russia (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000); Sternheimer, Stephen, "Adminstration for Development: the emerging bureaucratic elite, 1920-1930" in W. McKenzie Pintner and D.K. Rowney (eds.), Russian officialdom: the bureaucratization of Russian society from the seventeenth to the twentieth century (London, Macmillan, 1980), pp316-354. D. K. Rowney, Transition to technocracy: the structural origins of the Soviet administrative state (Ithaca, Cornell UP, 1989). I have also consulted Narkiewicz, Olga A., The Making of the Soviet State Apparatus (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1970).

The rise of the party elite

In 1920 the party's elite-in-embryo of 1920 comprised, in Moscow, a few thousand high-ranking party members, attempting to exert Bolshevik control over unwieldy commissariats, industrial authorities and other soviet bodies, and often succumbing to bureaucratic vices. Across vast swathes of Russian territory, party officials were trying to lay firmer foundations for soviet rule. The party elite controlled the economy, but that economy was impoverished. Elite privileges were meagre – a dacha or motor car or two, good food, comfortable living quarters – and provoked communist rank-and-file anger not because of their scale, but because they represented, amidst terrible poverty, a visible abuse of the principles for which people believed the revolution had been fought. In 1921-23, with one-party rule firmly assured, political power, and, in particular, the ability to direct the administrative machinery of the state, was rapidly concentrated in the hands of the party elite – i.e. a group wielding and accumulating authority, within the party but not identical to it or its leadership, or even exactly to its apparatus. In the course of exercising this political power the party elite accumulated and legitimised its own material privileges, and those of other groupings that joined the bureaucratic class (e.g. industrial managers and the technical intelligentsia).

The main contours of the political process were sketched in western historiography in the 1950s and 1960s; Russian historians, initially in the context of Gorbachev-era discussions about the reasons for the breakdown of the USSR, have researched many aspects of the process in more detail.[6] Attention has been concentrated on the growth, under the central committee (CC) secretariat, of a centralised system of party functionaries effectively appointed by, and beholden to, that secretariat and its apparatus. This system appropriated power not only from the soviet bodies to which it constitutionally belonged, but also from local party bodies. The CC secretariat, in which Stalin played a key role after his appointment as party general secretary in April 1922, gathered together separate strands of party organisation. The bodies that directed local officialdom – the record and assignment department and organisation and instruction department[7] – were now subordinated to it. Even before the 11th congress in March-April 1922, there were 7000 national- and regional-level officials reporting directly to the CC secretariat's record and assignement department; by the congress, the department had collated lists of 33,000 officials, and now set about taking charge of them.[8] Russian

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[6] The notable Russian monographs and articles of the last 20 years include, in order of publication, Voslenskii, Mikhail, Nomenklatura: gosudarstvuiushchii klass sovetskogo soiuza (London, Overseas Publications Exchange, 1984); Poliakov Iu.A., "20-e gody: nastroenie partiinogo avangarda" (Voprosy istorii KPSS 1989 no.10), pp25-38; Kuleshov S.V., Volobuev O.V., Pivovar E.I. et al (eds.), Nashe otechestvo: opyt politicheskoi istorii (Moscow, Terra, 1991); Simonov, "Reforma politicheskogo stroiia: zamysly i real'nost' (1921-1923 gg.)" (Voprosy istorii KPSS 1991 no.1), pp42-45; Pavlova I.V., Stalinizm: stanovlenie mekhanizma vlasti (Novosibirsk, Sibirskii khronograf, 1993); Korzhikhina T.P. and Fignater Iu.Iu., Sovetskaia nomenklatura: stanovlenie, mekhanizmy, deistviia (Voprosy istorii 1993, no.7, pp25-38); Trukan, G.A., Put' k totalitarizmu, 1917-1929 gg. (Moscow, "Nauka", 1994); Gimpel'son, E.G., Formirovanie sovetskoi politicheskoi sistemy 1917-1923 gg. (Moscow, "Nauka", 1995); Zhuravlev V.V. et al (eds.), Vlast' i oppozitsiia: rossiiskii politicheskii protsess XX stoletiia (Moscow, Rosspen, 1995); Shishkin, V.A., Vlast', politika, ekonomika: poslerevoliutsionnaia Rossiia (1917-1928 gg.) (St Petersburg, "Dmitrii Bulanin", 1997); Gimpelson, E.G., Sovetskie upravlentsy 1917-1920 gg. (Moscow, Institut istorii RAN, 1998); Nenin, A.B., Sovnarkom i Novaia Ekonomicheskaia Politika (1921-23gg) (Nizhnii Novgorod 1999); Gimpel'son, E.G., NEP i politicheskaia sistema 20-e gody (Moscow, Institut istorii RAN, 2000); Pavlova I.V., Mekhanizm vlasti i stroitel'stvo staliniskogo sotsializma (Novosibirsk 2001); Gimpel'son, E.G., NEP: novaia ekonomicheskaia politika Lenina-Stalina. Problemy i uroki (Moscow, Sobranie, 2004).

[7] These departments were formed in 1920 and began to function in 1921. Daniels, R.V., The Conscience of the Revolution (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1960), pp166-167.

[8] After an assembly of regional party secretaries in December 1921, the CC said there were 7000 national and regional officials reporting to the record and assignment department (Izvestiia TsK 1922 no.3, pp27-28). The party reregistration counted 26,000 "responsible workers" ("otvetstvennye rabotniki"), but said the figure was incomplete; at the 11th congress it was stated that the record and assignment department had 26,000 "cadre party functionaries", and a further 7000 "regional level officials" in its card index, although that does not mean of course that the department was directing their activity (Odinnadtsatyi s"ezd RKP(b): stenograficheskii otchet (Moscow, Gos. izd. politicheskoi literatury, 1961),

historians have shown how the appointment of officials was systematised during 1922-23; at the end of 1923 the first lists (*nomenklatury*) of party and state appointments that required central approval were drawn up; in 1924, record and assignment departments, responsible to their central parent body, were set up in all the main branches of the state apparatus.[9] The Moscow regional party's record and assignment department, headed by Vladimir Ivanov, was set up in July 1922, together with corresponding departments at district level. In its first seven months, i.e. up to January 1923, the Moscow regional department appointed to positions 5863 party members (i.e. about one-fifth of the Moscow membership); of these, almost one third were sent into central and local state administrative bodies, just over a quarter into district party organisations or vacancies notified through the CC, and the rest into trade union jobs or for a spell as students in the communist academy.[10] "Appointism" ("naznachenstvo"), i.e. the appointment rather than election of party and state officials that had begun during the civil war, predominated at all levels. The 10th congress, in response to the discussions of late 1920, had condemned it, but in the years that followed, it spread, becoming comprehensive in 1924-25. A key turning-point was the 12th party conference in August 1922, which accepted an amendment to the party statutes, that regional party secretaries had to be pre-1917 members and had to have their elections "confirmed" at national level, i.e. appointment in all but name.[11] In the three-year period after the 10th congress, the party apparatus reinforced its control over the party, and thence over the state apparatus, in a myriad of other ways: it used channels of appointment and command to determine the election of delegates to party congresses;[12] it established tight control over the distribution not only of information about the political and economic situation, but also of full information about its own instructions and policies;[13] it systematised the upward flow of information

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pp46-47; Pavliuchenkov S.A. et al, Rossiia nepovskaia (Moscow, Novyi khronograf, 2002), p192). The number of "responsible workers" continued to grow; the CCC counted 45,978 of them in late 1923 (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'noi-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI), f323 op2 d23, l13ob).

[9] During the 10th soviet congress in December 1922, the CC secretariat organised a meeting for the secretaries and department heads of regional and district party committees, at which it was agreed that appointments to a wide variety of posts would be made by the CC secretariat and/or organisation bureau; in the year from the 11th congress to March 1923, these bodies made 4750 such appointments (Izvestiia TsK RKP(b) 1923 no.3, pp39-40, Pavlova, Stalinizm, pp70-71; RKP(b). Uchet i raspredeleniia rabotnikov (k soveshchaniiu sekretarei i zevduiushchikh orgotdelami gubkomov). (Moscow, izd. otdelenie TsK RKP, 1923), pp 3-6).

[10] Tsentral'nyi arkhiv obshchestvennykh dvizhenii (TsAODM) f3op4d5, ll79-80; Otchet o rabote MK RKP(b) za 1922-23 g. (Moscow, MK RKP(b), 1923), pp. 31-33. The Moscow reporting and assignment department sent 137 communists on CC assignments, 118 to other regions, 846 to the Moscow urban districts and 498 into rural districts. Most of the latter went into administrative posts in industry. It sent 444 communists into central institutions (*uchrezhdenii*), 1550 into local ones, 532 into trade union jobs, 1571 into educational institutions (presumably as students) and 164 "other".

[11] The change was proposed by a commission headed by Molotov (Pavlova, Stalinizm, pp66-67; Pavliuchenkov, Rossiia nepovskaia, p174.)

[12] Gimpel'son, NEP is sovetskaia politicheskaia sistema, pp124-125, describes this in detail. For example, 55% of the delegates to the 12th congress in 1923 were party apparatus officials. Zinoviev defended the practice of CC-appointed officials appropriating the power to decide the composition of congress delegations during the 1923 discussion (Pravda, 7 November 1923). See also Pavlova, Stalinizm, p73.

[13] Re. information on general events, the CC organisation bureau decided in February 1923 that material critical of the party or the GPU could only appear in print with the agreement of the relevant local party committee. Gimpel'son records that in 1923-25 the CC secretariat and other CC bodies routinely sent newspaper editors instructions about what to publish or not publish (Pavlova, Stalinizm, p71; Gimpel'son, NEP i sovetskaia politicheskaia sistema, p160). Re. information on party decisions: the practice of distributing secret circulars to party organisations was adopted during the civil war. According to Pavlova, after Stalin's appointment as general secretary, the practice was adopted a system. In August 1922, the CC secretariat sent out a detailed "instruction on the preservation and circulation of secret documents". In November 1922, a further instruction by the CC organisation bureau listed the categories of party members who could read the minutes of the CC and other high party committees. A declaration, citing these decisions and emphasising that "passing on the text, or parts of the text, of the resolutions of the CC and other party committees, to people to whom they are not addressed", or copying resolutions, is strictly prohibited, was printed on the back of the forms on which telegrams with internal party correspondence were delivered (Pavlova, Stalinizm, pp86-87; Gimpel'son, NEP i sovetskaia politicheskaia sistema, p131. I saw a copy of the telegram form in Zinoviev's correspondence, RGASPI f323 op2 d62, l1ob.)

to the secretariat;[14] and it achieved a degree of immunity from legal proceedings for party members, and officials in particular.[15] Irina Pavlova's interpretation of the acceleration of these processes in mid-1922 as a "secret state-political reform" may serve as a starting-point for further discussion.[16]

The appropriation by this party elite of responsibility for the day-to-day functioning of the state and industrial apparatus also intensified significantly in 1922. Notwithstanding regular warnings by party leaders about "the party organisation growing into the soviet apparatus, and the swallowing of party work by soviet work", the party elite inexorably penetrated deeper into all fields of state activity.[17] The 12th party congress in April 1923 once again reiterated the principle that state bodies should function separately from party bodies, with only political guidance from the latter; a year later, Zinoviev reported proudly that "our politburo is a basic organ of the state".[18] Control over the Cheka and military apparatus evolved slightly differently; by 1923 the Cheka had reasserted the status it had in the civil war, as a structure directly answerable only to the highest party bodies, and free of supervision by the justice ministry or the courts.[19] At regional level, preparations for the Moscow soviet conference in December 1923 provide just one example of the level of party-soviet integration: the Moscow committee (MC) of the party not only set up a commission to discuss all the speakers' reports, but also insisted that the full MC would have to approve any amendments to them, and set

[14] A decision was taken in September 1920 to encode all correspondence to the CC secretariat from party organisations outside Moscow, but this was only implemented systematically in 1923. In that year the CC organisation bureau and secretariat regularly discussed breaches of security of correspondence. (Pavlova, Stalinizm, pp79 and 85-93).

[15] In early 1921 the party decided in principle that courts had to consult with party organisations before trying their members. Minutes of the Goznak cell mention that a party "responsible official", tried along with non-party people, had received a suspended sentence where others had been jailed (TsAODM f1099op1d3, l7ob). Lenin complained about such practices, and in January 1922 the soviet government ruled that party members had to be tried on the same basis as other citizens – but with a get-out clause, that they could be freed on the request of three other party members. In March 1923 the CC organisation bureau issued instructions that procurators had to get agreement from the CC apparatus before taking legal action against regional party secretaries. Also in that year the CCC acquired the habit of informing courts that a particular case was "not in the party's interests" and getting it quashed. (Gimpel'son, NEP i sovetskaia politicheskaia sistema, pp348-350; Pavlova, Stalinizm, p71.)

[16] Pavlova, Stalinizm, pp66-95.

[17] The words quoted are from the CC's report to the 11th congress in March 1922. Among the examples cited by Pavlova of party leaders' warnings against the merging of party and state apparatuses is Trotsky's letter of March 1922 to the politburo, stating that "without the party, as a party, being freed from the immedate tasks of management (upravlenie) and supervision (zavedvyvanie), it will be impossible to purge the party of bureaucratism and the economy of dissoluteness." The 11th congress passed a resolution urging that party organisations not interfere with the day-to-day functioning of soviet and economic bodies. The separation was not implemented, though. The communist fraction at the 10th congress of soviets in 1922 called on the CC to work out concrete measures to do so, but the CC decided not to discuss the matter. (Simonov, "Reforma politicheskogo stroiia", p47.)

[18] Zinoviev underlined his point by adding that the majority of politburo agenda items in the previous year had been on matters clearly within the competence of state organs (Trinadtsatyi s"ezd RKP(b), mai 1924 goda: stenograficheskii otchet (Moscow, Gos. izd-vo politicheskoi literatury, 1963), p73); of the politburo's 3923 agenda items, 7.3% were deemed to be political questions; 26.8% were issues of economic policy; 13.5% of "soviet construction"; 17.2% questions in the commissariat of foreign affairs' remit; and 9.7% concerned appointments. See also Gimpelson, NEP, pp. 159-160; Pavlova, Stalinizm, pp. 78-84.

[19] The Cheka was renamed the State Political Administration (Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie or GPU) in 1922, after a discussion of its post-civil war role. The view that it should lose many of its repressive functions was shared not only by many in the party leadership and ranks but also, according to Pavliuchenkov, by Dzerzhinskii, the head of the Cheka. His deputy, Unshlikht, supported by many Cheka officers, sought to retain these functions. (Pavliuchenkov, Rossiia nepovskaia, p53). By the time of the organisation's second renaming, as OGPU of the Sovnarkom, in 1923, this approach had clearly prevailed. A detailed study of the Cheka's relationship with party organisations is Olekh, G.L., Krovnye uzy: RKP(b) i ChK/GPU v pervoi polovine 1920-kh godov: mekhanizm vsaimootnoshenii (Novosibirsk, Novosibirskaia gos. akademiia vodnogo transporta, 1999). The number of stafff employed by the Cheka's Moscow-based central apparatus grew from 1648 to 2645 during 1921 (see Leonov, S.V., Rozhdenie sovetskoi imperii: gosudarstvo i ideologiia 1917-1922 gg. (Moscow, Dialog-MGU, 1997), p297). However, the available statistics covering party and soviet officials and employees in the period covered by the thesis usually exclude those working for Cheka.

down strict guidelines on the composition of the soviet executive to be elected.[20] The MC bureau minutes show that it was no less stringent in controlling the affairs of district soviets, trade unions and industrial management bodies.

In defining the party elite sociologically, a good place to start is its "responsible officials". I have found no comprehensive, disaggregated statistical information on their social background, only some indications. Close to the summit of the elite, among 101 secretaries of regional party organisations, there was a strong contingent of civil war communists (35 who joined the party between March 1917 and December 1919), but a larger group of pre-revolutionary veterans (10 pre-1905 recruits and 53 1905-17 recruits).[21] But this pre-revolutionary "old guard" was already under attack from Stalin's CC secretariat: the 1922 CC report on cadre distribution in which this information appeared also contains a harangue against such "old boys" ("stariki"), and argues that civil war and even post-civil-war recruits are malleable and therefore prefereable: "the young, active worker, elected at some all-Russian congress, meeting or conference, having attended and got the hang of things there, already has a great advantage over an authoritative, respected old cadre".[22] Further research is needed on the place in the elite's development of the culture of unthinking obedience reflected in this report, and of the contempt for old Bolsheviks whose independence of mind brought them into conflict with Stalin, often referred to in memoirs. As for the wider party elite, the best statistics I have found, covering party members working as senior *sluzhashchie* (white-collar staff and officials) in the people's commissariats in 1922, show that former workers were a small minority (12.3%), and that its members came from a wide variety of middle-class backgrounds; their pre-1917 occupations were given as students (17.3%), on military service (16.7%), in the "free professions" (12.9%), technical personnel (12.3%), or *sluzhashchie* for the old regime (11.2%).[23]

It was not this heterogenous social background that made the party elite what it was, though, but its political power. In 1922, as it began to centralise this power, it legitimised its material privileges in a way that broke with Bolshevik tradition and paved the way for the development of the bureaucratic ruling class as a whole. The door was opened by the 11th party congress in March-April 1922, which ordered the CC to examine "the material conditions of active comrades [i.e. full-timers]" and "at all costs [ensure them] tolerable living conditions".[24] A CC commission, headed by Molotov, came back to the 12th party conference in August 1922 with a resolution providing for 15,325 party officials to receive (i) salaries equivalent to middle and senior management grades (12th to 17th grades), plus 50%; (ii) guaranteed housing and medical support; and (iii) child care and education for their children. The draft resolution had stated that party members receiving more than one-and-a-half times the 17th grade should pay part of the surplus into the party's mutual support fund, but this paragraph, which already contained a get-out clause allowing the CC to suspend this requirement, was deleted entirely. The conference, most of whose delegates would have qualified for the benefits, also voted for Komsomol officials to receive them, at slightly lower rates, and called on the CC to work out a

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[20] TsAODM f3op4d5, ll227-228. The MC even reserved to itself the right to determine, with the soviet executive, the time at which the conference would be held.

[21] The regional secretaries also had a higher level of education than in the party generally (14 of the 101 with university degrees and 35 with secondary education).

[22] RKP(b). Uchet i raspredelenie, p40.

[23] Vasiaev, V.I., Drobizhev V.Z., Zaks, L.B, Pivovor B.I., Ustinov V.A. and Ushakova T.A., Dannie perepisi sluzhashchikh 1922g. o sostave kadrov narkomatov RSFSR (Moscow, izd. Moskovskovskogo universiteta, 1972). These high-up people of 1922 contrasted with, for example the communist "technical sluzhashchie" of 1922, amongst whom there was a much larger group of former soldiers (43.8%), a similarly modest group of former technical personnel (9.7%) and hardly any former *sluzhashchie* (3.6%) or former workers (3%).

[24] Quoted by Molotov in Vserossiiskaia konferentsiia RKP (bol'shevikov) 4-7 avgusta 1922 g. (Moscow, izd. MK RKP(b), 1922), pp98-99.

similar system for some categories of party officials (those in rural sub-districts) who had not been included.[25]

Only a year previously, Ivan Skvortsov-Stepanov, after visiting party organisations in the Volga and Urals regions, had appealed to the CC to endorse the principle that "responsible officials'" living standards not be allowed to fall *lower* than those of skilled workers, no matter how desperate things were.[26] But with the industrial recovery underway, members of the party elite holding office in soviet and industrial institutions, where senior managers' pay levels were rising in leaps and bounds, could now legally receive salaries dozens of times greater than those of workers – a far cry from the hardships on the Volga a year before. Even so, the privileges agreed at the 12th conference were modest in some respects: they would perhaps have brought party officials up to a material level comparable with, say, that of local government officials in western Europe. But the decision to entitle them to supplements on account of the positions they held was an open assault on the principle of equality among communists. It sent a moral signal that party members could share in the wealth NEP had begun to generate. In 1919, at the height of the dispute about extra payments for specialists, the trade unions had established an official ratio of 1:5 between the lowest and highest pay, and in 1922 this had been amended to allow for some salaries to be paid at eight times the minimum. These limits were now overriden – both by the party conference decision and by a Council of Labour and Defence (STO) decision sanctioning the payment of "personal" salaries to specialists and "tantiemes" (bonuses) to some industrial managers. In December 1922, official minimum and maximum salaries began to be published in the form of decrees; in that month the differential was 1:80, and it fell to 1:40 by June 1923.[27] In 1924, M. Vovsi, a statistician for the trade union of *sluzhashchie*, was scandalised by his discovery that 13.8% of *sluzhashchie* surveyed admitted to earning more than eight times, and some more than 30 times, the minimum wage. He wrote: "At the start of 1922, when the principle of equal payment of labour still predominated, rates higher than five times the minimum could not be found", but within a year, notwithstanding the official loosening of the ratio, widespread breaches of the rules were evident. Vovsi found that in soviet, industrial, trade, banking and co-operative institutions, more than 80,000 people were earning more than 8 times the minimum; of these, 15,400 were earning between 15 and 30 times the minimum and about 1500, more than 30 times the minimum. Without question, many of these people were members of the party elite, and their associates, rewarded for their position, not their skills. In late 1923, when the trade unions were protesting vociferously about industrial managers being overpaid, they pointed to the "doubtful specialists" who benefited.[28] Party members in industrial management were foremost among those guilty of egregious *sovmestitel'stvo* (holding two, three or more paid positions at once), a commission

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[25] Vserosiiskaia konferentsiia, pp. 98-102 and 136-139. Pavlova writes that in July 1922, prior to this party conference, the CC organisation bureau set minimum monthly salaries for party cell secretaries at 300 rubles and for CC members, regional secretaries and others at 430 rubles, with a 645 ruble maximum. Unfortunately she only quotes a secondary source and does not make clear which type of rubles is meant (there were three types circulating in 1922). If these figures were in the most commonly used "commodity" ("tovarnye") rubles, they would indicate pay levels 20 to 50 times greater than those of workers. (Pavlova, Stalinizm, p68).

[26] RGASPI f17op65d228, l12. Ivan Skvortsov-Stepanov (1870-1928) was an "old Bolshevik" who had joined the party in 1896 and from 1921 was the deputy chairman of the party publishing house editorial board.

[27] On STO exemption, Carr, E.H., A History of Soviet Russia (London, Macmillan, 1954) Vol. IV, pp41-42. On minimum and maximum, the trade union leader A. Andreev stated that most enterprises paid the lowest-paid workers twice the minimum rate, in which case the differentials would have been 40:1 falling to 20:1; see Dewar, Margaret, Labour Policy in the USSR, 1917-1928 (London, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1956), p94.

[28] Vovsi surveyed pay among *sluzhashchie* who were members of their trade union in a range of institutions, and published total union membership figures for each institution and the proportions of members on different multiples of the minimum wage. I have extrapolated the absolute numbers from these. Vovsi, M. (ed.), Polozhenie truda sluzhashchikh, ob"ediniaemykh profsoiuzom administrativno-sovetskikh, obshchestvennykh i torgovykh rabotnikov v 1923/24 g. (Statisticheskii sbornik.) Vyp 3-i. (Moscow, izd. TsK VSASOTR, 1924), pp97-98. On "doubtful specialists", Trud, 1 December 1923.

of the CC secretariat complained to Stalin in 1923.[29] Excessive pay was not confined to industrial management, though: a survey of members' earnings at the Bromlei factory in October 1923 showed that the highest earners were political officials "attached" to the cell: the metalworkers' union national official Aleksei Gurevich, who received at least 12 times the minimum, and the Hungarian communist Bela Kun, living in exile in Moscow, who received at least 25 times the minimum.[30] Naturally none of these figures take account of such non-cash benefits as the housing, education and health care stipulated by the 12th party conference, to say nothing, e.g., of gold watches presented to party members in industrial management, or of illegal income.[31]

The ranks, who in 1920 had reacted so angrily to the comparitively meagre privileges of that time, were cautious in 1922. The Moscow regional party conference in March 1922 proposed the establishment of a mutual assistance fund and decided that members on salaries above the 17th grade should donate the excess. This policy was moved at the 11th party congress by Andrei Bubnov on the Moscow organisation's behalf; he warned that the problem of material inequality is "posed in a far more threatening form" than in 1920. But such protests were isolated. The idea of a mutual assistance fund was adopted, but contributions to it made voluntary.[32] It is striking that in the "party discussion" of late 1923 – during which the opposition concentrated fire on the political conservatism of the party apparatus, and the leadership tried to discredit its opponents in the industrial bodies by association with overpaid managers and specialists – the issue of the *party* elite and its privileges was not addressed directly. Party leaders occasionally railed against "excesses": for example, a circular issued in October 1923 by Molotov on "the struggle against excesses and the criminal use of posts" highlighted the evil of party members' wives wearing jewellery.[33] But, as one Ukrainian regional party official pointed out to Stalin, such declarations seemed demagogic in the context of the legalisation of party and state officials' privileges.[34] Those who had attempted to analyse elite privilege in class terms had been either driven underground inside the party (e.g. the authors of the "anonymous manifesto" of late 1922) or thrown out of it all together (e.g. the Workers and Peasants Socialist Party of Paniushkin, the Workers Truth group and the Workers Group).

Industrial managers, specialists and worker communists

The industrial administration, and in particular the communist managers[35] who rose to prominence in the immediate post-civil-war period, were among the main groupings through which the party elite's

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[29] RGASPI f17 op84 d480, ll20-21.

[30] These are figures from a list of party cell members' earnings. The lowest stated is for Aleksandr Anikeev, who was on the fifth grade and being paid 7500 rubles (presumably, 1922 "sovznaky"). Gurevich gave his salary as 90,000 rubles and Kun gave his as 194,000 rubles. There were presumably non-party workers at the factory on grades 1-4 earning less than Anikeev. TsAODM f412 op1d14, ll3-4 and 19.

[31] The presentation of gold watches to local finance commissariat officials, who were party members, was the subject of a complaint to Stalin by Boris Magidov, party district secretary in Poltava, Ukraine, in 1923. Kvashonkin A.V., et al (eds.), Bolshevistskoe rukovodstvo. Perepiska. 1912-1927 (Moscow, Rosspen, 1996), p285.

[32] TsAODM f3op3d2 l141; Vosmaia gubernskaia konferentsiia p53; Odinnatsadtyi s"ezd p434-435 (Bubnov), p459 (Kotliar), p552 (text of resolution).

[33] RGASPI f17 op84 d467, l58. The luxury of communist officials' wives, and their jewellery, figures again and again in discussions of social injustice in the early NEP period. The discourse is workerist and sexist: these officials' wives are routinely denounced as "parasites". For example the proletkult poet Mikhail Gerasimov in his anti-NEP verse "Chernaia pena" rails against "white lumps of sov-bourzh ladies" in the parterre of the theatre, "piled up" in their sparkling silks. The official's "parasite" wife retained her place in literature into the 1930s; e.g. she appears, as "comrade Pashkin's lady wife", in Kotlovan by Andrei Platonov.

[34] Magidov, in Kvashonkin et al., op. cit.

[35] As far as possible I avoid using the term "red directors", which was used sometimes to describe communist managers specifically, and sometimes to describe all managers and to emphasise that their duties to the Soviet state.

relationship with the working class was mediated. (Others were party district and workplace organisations and the Cheka). Historians including Carr and Koenker have noted the industrial managers' rapid rise, the way that raising production and productivity were made their overriding goals, the ease with which they slipped into anti-worker practices, and the opposition they provoked from party members who regarded their behaviour as anti-socialist.[36] I suggest that the directors' mandate went further. In practice the party endorsed their authoritarian responses to independent workers' organisation, for reasons that were broadly political, i.e. that had little direct bearing on production. In politically crucial cases in which communist directors were perceived to have breached fundamental principles of the workers' movement, they had far better chances of winning the support of workplace, district and national party organisations than did those workers, including worker communists, who opposed them. Communist managers, like other party officials, helped lay down the ground rules of the "social contract" with workers taking shape in the first years of NEP – under which workers were called upon to increase productivity in return for steady improvements in living standards and limited bargaining on workplace conditions, while the party appropriated political decision-making power and resisted any trespass by workers on the political sphere, including any challenges to the directors' right to make policy decisions.[37] Publicly, the party required managers to be sensitive to workers' interests, and those who were not could sometimes be challenged[38] – but institutional mechanisms buttressed the directors against worker opponents, and reinforced their right to make anti-worker decisions. Managers' responsibility to respect workers' rights was couched in terms of their relationships with "workers' organisations", i.e. party cells, factory committees and other trade union bodies, and often these organisations' office-bearers were party members who understood their responsibilities to the working class as subordinate to their allegiance to the Soviet ("workers'") state. Below I discuss the Moscow rubber goods trust, where party institutions rallied behind anti-worker communist managers. Although it is difficult to say that the example is typical, it does suggest that party institutions' "default position" was to give this type of support to directors and other party officials.[39] Such was the complaint of Gusev, a delegate to the Bauman district party conference in January 1924. If a director gets a worker expelled from the party, he said, "they appoint a commission, and from the district committee they put two more directors on [to the commission]. They have no wish to hear how workers view the situation." On the other hand a proposal to expel a director would get no hearing.[40]

The communist managers were brought into industry, during and after the civil war, to strengthen the party's control and dilute the influence of old managers and *spetsy*. There is insufficient information

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[36] Carr, vol IV, pp40-46; Koenker, Diane, "Factory Tales: Narratives of Industrial Relations in the Transition to NEP", The Russian Review no.55, July 1996, pp 384-411. Kendall E. Bailes, Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin: Origins of the Soviet Technical Intelligentsia 1917-1941 (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1978), pp63-64 and Mark R. Beissinger, Scientific Management, Socialist Discipline and Soviet Power (London, Tauris, 1988), pp45-49 also discuss the red directors, in the context of the party's relationship with the *spetsy*.

[37] I put forward my argument about this "social contract" in Pirani, S., "Mass mobilisation", op. cit.

[38] For example in the discussion in the party press surveyed by Koenker.

[39] The two factories discussed were workplaces of strategic importance in the capital city, one of them, Kauchuk, a stone's throw from the Kremlin. While there is no reason to think that party leaders followed day-to-day events there, in both cases the issues that arose in the factory were taken to district or regional party organisation, i.e. to a wider audience of middle-ranking and senior party members. More research would be needed to determine the extent to which these cases are typical. In cases of clashes between communist directors and workers, I have come across other examples of directors receiving the party's backing (e.g. those of Karl Danishevskii, the Latvian party leader and Red army commander who after the civil war took charge of the timber industry trust and Trifon Enukidze, the veteran Bolshevik from Baku (and brother of Avel') who became manager of the Goznak printing works in Moscow), but not of cases where directors' anti-worker measures (e.g. sacking dissidents) were challenged or reversed by party organisations. There are, though, many cases where directors were admonished for anti-worker behaviour or disciplined for corruption and other offences.

[40] TsAODM f63op1 d144, l78.

on their social background, but many of them were former workers. There were a considerable number of pre-1917 Bolsheviks among them (a survey in one Moscow district in mid 1922 found that communist factory directors had on average been in the party since 1915) – although one observer thought the more recent recruits better adapted to management, i.e. those "who aren't from among the old party activists, [but] who come from a working class background, [who] little by little get used to new tasks and study as much as they can. […] Their conception of communism is very foggy and the contradictions of current Russian economic conditions don't frighten them."[41] By mid-1922, i.e. just one year into the industrial recovery, there was not only a deepening rift between these managers and worker communists, but also concern about the managers' undue influence on party organisations. At the Moscow regional party conference in June 1922, the Moscow party secretary, Isaak Zelenskii, warned not only of "very deep, very serious conflicts" between some communists managers and communist trade unionists, in which the managers "relied on methods just like those of the old industrialists – on lockouts", but also of those managers' efforts "to grab control of local party organs for themselves", e.g. by seeking election to party cell bureaus, leading to a "curious merging of cell and management".[42]

The Menshevik journalist G. Shvarts argued that by mid 1922 the "crystallisation of a new social layer, the 'red industrialists'", was complete and that members of this social group took senior positions in the trusts and overshadowed the pre-revolutionary managers categorised as "specialists".[43] Carr suggests that between 1922 and 1923 a large number of non-worker managers, previously non-communists, joined the party, and this would have changed the overall composition of the group, but more research is needed to clarify this issue.[44] What is clear is that the managers, who were treated by themselves and others as a distinct group, began to organise politically. In September 1922 a group of them set up a "temporary bureau" for the "coordination of simultaneous political action". In December this became a permanent council of congresses of industrialists and a journal began to be published. A Moscow "club of red directors", established with 146 members in 1923 as part of the national grouping, was committed to "exposing irregularities in the relationships of trusts, enterprises and party-trade union organisations", and lobbied the MC on industrial policy.[45] Here, manager-worker-party relationships in the first two years of NEP are discussed.

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[41] The 1915 average date of recruitment, and an average age of 32, was found among 35 communist managers in Rogozhsko-Simonovskii district surveyed in June 1922. Thirty of the 35 were workers, i.e. 12 metalworkers and 18 others (Pravda, 25 June 1922). The observation that more recent recruits found industrial management easier than "the old party socialists, compelled to introduce capitalism once again to Russia" under NEP was made by K. Borisov, an *intelligent* living in exile who returned for a brief visit to Moscow in 1923 (Borisov, K., Semdesiat piat' dnei v SSSR: vpechatleniia russkogo emigranta, posetivshego Rossiiu v 1923 g. (Moscow, 1991), p15).

[42] Zelenskii in Deviataia konferentsiia Moskovskoi organizatsii RKP (Moscow, MK RKP, 1922), pp80-82.

[43] Shvarts in Sotsialisticheskii vestnik 1922, no.3 pp8-10. Obviously Shvarts uses the term "red industrialists" (krasnye promyshlenniki) to mean Bolshevik party members. The Bolshevik journalist Girins also observed in August 1922: "It is surprising how our industrial managers [khoziastvenniki], even the best of them, quite rapidly acquire the morals and tastes of the former owners"; factory committees were powerless to resist the "rising absolutism of the industrialists" (Trud, 17 August 1922).

[44] Carr quotes statistics from the main trusts and syndicates, given by Larin, which showed that the proportion of industrial managers who gave their social background as non-worker rose from 35% in 1922 to 64% in 1923. Of these non-workers, one-seventh were party members in 1922 and nearly a half were party members in 1923 (Carr, vol.IV, p40). Carr concludes that "the management of industry was passing back into the hands of former bourgeois managers and specialists, and a higher proportion of these were acquiring the dignity and security of party membership". This conclusion needs to be further tested. For example Bailes found information showing that in 1922, 70% of managers in Moscow were *spetsy* and that from 1923 this proportion began to decline rapidly; this suggests a countervailing tendency. Now that archival material is available it may be possible to clarify this (Bailes, p65). At the Moscow regional party conference in April 1923 it was reported that of 418 factory directors surveyed in the city, 193 were party members; 50% were workers and 50% non-workers; 50 had higher education, 97 secondary education and 271 primary education (Pravda, 4 April 1923).

[45] Carr, Vol.IV, pp40-46; Predpriiatie 1924 no.1, pp 3 and 106.

The case of the rubber goods trust

One communist manager who acquired an exceptionally authoritarian reputation was Valerian Miurat, who was brought from the Red army soon after the 10th congress to take charge of Bogatyr factory in Sokolniki district, then Russia's largest rubber goods maker. He was proclaimed an industrious battler against *spetsy* (i.e. old-regime specialists) and managers, and against the Mensheviks and non-partyists whose control of the Moscow chemical workers' union he was instrumental in breaking. But in 1922, with the political opposition defeated and Miurat promoted to lead the newly-formed rubber goods trust, his dictatorial methods provoked opposition not only from ordinary workers, but also from communists – leading factory cell members, district officials, and those brought in to the chemical workers' union to replace the Mensheviks. In these clashes, the party's institutional mechanisms worked in Miurat's favour. Only in late 1923 did he suddenly, and with little public explanation, fall from grace. The reasons Miurat received this institutional support need to be considered together with those for his downfall, the main cause of which was probably the campaign by the party's ruling clique to discredit industrial managers and, by association with them, the leaders of the 1923 opposition.

At the end of the civil war, the rubber goods industry had almost ground to a halt due to a lack of raw material inputs. Glavrezin, the industry's chief committee, was dominated by old-regime managers and *spetsy*, who were difficult to replace because of the need for a high level of specific technical training. In 1920, the party leadership singled out Glavrezin for savage criticism: Nikolai Krylenko, one of the most senior Bolsheviks, directed a public tirade against party members there, and in the chemical workers' union, who he accused of being hopelessly compromised with the *spetsy*. In the spring of 1921 a new team was installed at Glavrezin, including Miurat as director of Bogatyr. The first aim, boosted substantially by the renewal of rubber imports in August, was to restart production of the industry's main peacetime product, galoshes.[46] The newcomers were based in Moscow and received political support from Sosnovskii; some of the old Glavrezin leadership, based in Petrograd, including the Treugol'nik factory director, Shevchenko, were sponsored by Zinoviev. The new team was hailed by Sosnovskii as "military communists, men from the front, who have learned to work with specialists and fight with much stronger enemies"; Miurat was "a military cadre", who is "business-like" and "combative", although he had no previous experience of economic management. Sosnovskii's articles about the industry cast the frictions in its leadership as political (dynamic new communists against *spetsy* and old regime types), although they also clearly reflected competition for scarce resources, and investment, between the Moscow and Petrograd factories.[47]

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[46] Glavrezin's main assets were the Treugol'nik factory in Petrograd, the Bogatyr, Kauchuk and Provodnik factories in Moscow, and smaller works at Tushino outside Moscow and Pereiaslavl-Zalesskii in Iaroslavl' region. The factories had been geared to military requirements during the first world war and civil war: Bogatyr, the largest, produced tyre covers and other parts for military vehicles, and waterproofs and footwear for the army. All raw rubber, the industry's main input, was imported into Russia at that time, and by 1920 these imports had stopped and production fell to a fraction of capacity. Dune, Notes of a Red Guard (ed. and trans. Koenker and Smith) (Urbana, Illinois University Press, 1993), pp5-6; Panfilova, A.M., Istoriia zavoda "Krasny Bogatyr" (Moscow 1958), pp74-75; Proletarskii, M.Ya., Zavod "Krasnyi bogatyr'" (1887-1932) (Moscow, gos. khim-tekh izd., 1933), pp39-43; Proletarskii M.Ya., Rezinovaya promyshlennost' za 100 let (1832-1932) (Moscow-Leningrad, 1932) pp5-6; Zavod na Usachevke (Moscow 1980), pp30, 32; Krylenko, N., "Proizvodstennaia demokratiia v tsifrakh i faktakh", in Na Strazhe (biulleten' osobmezhkoma i ekonomicheskogo upravleniia), no.1-2 1921, pp22-35; Sosnovskii in Pravda, 6 August 1921.

[47] Sosnovskii in Pravda, 6, 7 and 26 August 1921; Miurat in Pravda, 24 June 1922 and 30 January 1923. Sosnovskii, Pravda's most prominent journalist at this time, published his articles about the Bogatyr works in a separate pamphlet (see Fulop-Miller, Rene, The Mind and Face of Bolshevism: an examination of cultural life in Soviet Russia (London, G.P. Putnam and Sons, 1927), p163), but I have not been able to locate a copy.

Miurat set about restoring production at Bogatyr with undoubted energy. Machinery was brought over from the Provodnik factory, which was largely stood down; he tightened discipline, introduced measures against theft and ordered 300 redundancies.[48] His most significant achievement, though, was political: he drove out of the factory committee its chairman Sergei Mikhailov, leader of the non-partyist group on the Moscow soviet,[49] and mobilised the factory's Bolsheviks against the Mensheviks in the chemical workers' union. Before Miurat's arrival, the factory committee had challenged, and humiliated, the Bolshevik cell in a dispute about the transparency of a bonus system;[50] and the Mensheviks G. Gonikberg and Blagodatskii, both regional union officials, had been regular visitors to the factory. The tables began to turn straight after Miurat arrived. In factory committee elections on 15 June 1921, Mikhailov was replaced as chairman by Aleksandr Titov, a Bolshevik.[51] A mass meeting on 4 August 1921 adopted a resolution proposed by Miurat, denouncing the Moscow chemical workers' union for failing to defend workers' interests, and blaming it for the failure of a recent procurement expedition. At a second meeting on 16 August, Miurat – supported by Sosnovskii, who attended as an invited speaker – accused some factory committee members of participating in organised theft, and Mikhailov personally of being a "thief, double-dealer and speculator". The archival evidence is thin, but suggests that the charges were baseless.[52] Mikhailov was made redundant, despite being the factory's delegate to the Moscow and Sokolniki district soviets; within three months, he had lost those positions.[53] Miurat's offensive at Bogatyr was part of a

[48] According to the Menshevik émigré newspaper Sotsialisticheskii vestnik, Miurat included workers on the redundancy list, but took them back if they "went to him with bowed heads"; he made personal promises of lard, flour and other scarce supplies, encouraging among workers the thought that it was easier "to plead for kindness from 'the master' [u 'barina'] than to struggle collectively in the union" (Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik 1922, no.13/14, p16). Due to their position in the chemical workers' union, the Mensheviks probably had better information about Bogatyr than about events elsewhere. Nevertheless I have treated reports in the émigré press with some scepticism: their authors had a big political axe to grind, and were in enforced geographical isolation. The account of events at Bogatyr is based primarily on the minutes of party and workplace organisations.

[49] In the elections to the Moscow soviet in April 1921, non-party workers' lists won a majority in most of the city's large workplaces; the elected non-party delegates comprised a large minority of the soviet when it assembled. They met as a fraction, elected Mikhailov as their spokesman. Their proposals of collaboration were refused by the Bolshevik leaders. See Pirani, S., "The Moscow Workers' Movement", Europe-Asia Studies, op. cit.

[50] During this dispute, in January-February 1921, the factory committee froze "unacceptable" bonus payments (called extra-scale payments (vneshkalnye stavki) or incentive payments (pooshchritel'naia oplata)). It called on the union to demand, as an alternative, across-the-board wage increases. Mikhailov censured the Bolshevik Aleksandr Titov, chair of the tariff regulation commission, who supervised the payments but kept the amounts private. The factory's Council of Delegates (Sovet Upol'nomochennykh), having heard complaints that the payments were unfairly distributed and that the system "introduced dissension between workers", approved the factory committee's stance, and compelled Titov to read out a list of the payments. Kruchinin, a member of management, then announced that it would only carry out such decisions of the Council of Delegates as were "well-advised" – and not this one. (Tsentral'nyi Munitsipal'nyi Arkhiv Moskvy (TsMAM), f337op2d39 ll24-30).

[51] TsMAM f337op2d39, l99. Mikhailov did not stand for re-election; it is not clear why.

[52] Miurat challenged Mikhailov to sue for slander; Mikhailov declined, but indicated that he would answer the allegations in the appropriate forum. The mass meeting minutes record that Miurat's accusations were "heard" and that the case would go to the factory's comradely disciplinary court. In a witch-hunting attack on Mikhailov in Pravda (26 August 1921), the only accusations Sosnovskii could come up with were that Mikhailov was suspiciously well-off (the legal sale of a small quantity of oats, and the purchase of a motor scooter, were mentioned), and that he was a Menshevik (which he was not). It seems inconceivable that Sosnovskii would not have mentioned evidence of theft, had any existed. The minutes of the factory committee and general meetings at Bogatyr for 1921 and 1922 contain no reference to the outcome of the case at the comradely disciplinary court. The soviet historian Panfilova, who casts Mikhailov in a negative light, does not mention any proof of wrongdoing. TsMAM f337op2d39, l116 and l170ob; Panfilova, pp101-102; Proletarskii, Zavod, pp40-41; Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik no.18 (1921), pp12-13.

[53] At the 16 August meeting, Miurat proposed to recall the factory's Moscow soviet delegation, which included Mikhailov and two Mensheviks, but not even the Bolshevik cell supported that. Instead, the cell's spokesman, Titov, made a milder proposal, calling for the delegation to report back. On 25 October Mikhailov was replaced as delegate to the Sokolniki district soviet; on 11 November it was reported at a factory meeting that he had resigned from his position as Moscow soviet delegate (TsMAM f337 op2 d39 l187). Thereafter, his name disappears from the factory records.

campaign, coordinated by the Moscow party leadership, to dislodge the Mensheviks and non-partyists from the Moscow chemical workers' union. That aim was achieved at a regional union conference on 4 October. The Menshevik press reported that their representatives and the non-partyists jointly formed a narrow majority at the conference and on the newly-elected executive, and that the latter was dissolved by the Moscow trade union federation and replaced by Bolshevik appointees.[54]

During 1922, Miurat's dictatorial style led him into conflicts with a range of party members. The first challenge came from the Bogatyr cell, in which misgivings had already been expressed about Miurat's methods in 1921.[55] In January 1922, the rubber goods industry was reorganised, cost accounting introduced, and Glavrezin replaced by a rubber industry trust, Rezinotrest. Miurat was proposed as president of the new body. Zorina, a full-time communist official and secretary of the Bogatyr factory committee, and Ivanov, a communist who had quit the party, went to see P.A. Bogdanov, president of the Supreme Council of the Economy (VSNKh), to argue against putting Miurat in charge. Miurat's supporters in the cell confronted Zorina and Ivanov at a mass meeting and accused them of disloyalty. Ivanov responded: "When asked [by Bogdanov] how Miurat gets on with the workers' organisations at the factory [I] replied that the factory committee is in Miurat's hands, completely subordinate to him, and that the Council of Delegates has no voice." Miurat's supporters, apparently working as part of a concerted inter-institutional campaign, succesfully moved a resolution supporting his appointment. Zorina was deemed to have "breached party discipline" by sharing her concerns with Bogdanov, and was thrown out of the Bogatyr cell and removed from the factory committee and the Moscow soviet.[56] In his new post at the trust, Miurat came into conflict with the Bolsheviks who had been installed in the Moscow chemical workers' union leadership; both the MC and the Moscow control commission tried to adjudicate.[57] One cause of tension was Miurat's confrontational method of dealing with strikes, e.g. a spontaneous walkout about piece-work rates in the varnishing shop at Bogatyr in June 1922, at the height of the propaganda campaign around the SR trial. Miurat took the most aggressive possible stance. At a mass meeting on 1 July, after the adoption of a standard Bolshevik resolution calling for the "sternest punishment" of the SR trial defendants, he announced that the varnishers' action was proof of a "strange Menshevik conspiracy" that would have "very serious consequences". It was decided, by several hundred votes against five, to expel the varnishers from the chemical workers' union. Korchagin, chairman of the union's Moscow region,

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[54] Throughout September, the Bolshevik party's MC secretariat monitored elections of factory delegates to the conference on 4 October (TsAODM f36 op11 d36). I have not read the minutes or any official reports of the conference itself. The Menshevik newspaper reported that the delegates were 80 Bolsheviks, 129 Mensheviks and nonparty people, and 22 from a "get-to-work group" ("delovaia gruppa") organised by Miurat and Titov at Bogatyr. This group declared its support for Bolshevik candidates, but that still did not achieve a Bolshevik majority; the newly-elected executive was dissolved by the Moscow trade union federation and replaced by Bolshevik appointees (Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik 1921, no.22, p12, TsMAM f337op2d39 l125).

[55] Cell representatives had put alternative proposals to Miurat's, both when he moved action against the Moscow chemical workers' union and when he proposed replacing the soviet delegation (TsMAM, ibid). The Mensheviks had sensed tension between the two sides (Sotsialisticheskii vestnik 1921, no.18, pp12-13).

[56] The methods used by Miurat's supporters suggest some planning to manipulate the outcome of the mass meeting. They claimed that Miurat was in danger of being transferred out of the factory to an unknown posting, and called on the meeting to help save "our director" who had achieved so much for the rubber industry and the trust (Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Moskovskoi oblasti (TsGAMO), f609op1d107, ll69-70 and TsAODM f1300op1d1, ll1-3). Representations in Miurat's favour were also made by the party's MC and CC, the MGSPS and VTsSPS (TsGAMO f609op1d107, l73ob). I have not found information on any alternative candidates for the post. On Zorina, TsGAMO ibid, l7 and l73ob.

[57] In August 1922 a dispute between him and two union leaders, Adam and Verbitskii, ended up before the party's Moscow control commission, and in October, another dispute between Miurat and another union leader, Mal'kin, came before both the control commission and the MC bureau. TsAODM f2867op1d4 l41 and l95, and TsAODM f3op3d6 l57.

argued in vain for a conciliatory approach.[58] Miurat was becoming notorious for such anti-worker behaviour. The Mensheviks claimed he had told a mass meeting at the Provodnik factory that he was the "new, red Riabushinksii".[59] And the trust's contempt for trade union agreements angered the party cell at Kauchuk, Moscow's second rubber goods factory. In September 1922, at a meeting attended by Miurat, a cell spokesman complained: "We have to kick up a scandal over every single clause of the collective agreement." Clauses on bonuses and holiday pay had been ignored. Nikolai Angarskii said the management was trying to "move the front line to evade the proletariat"; the cell demanded a "change of course".[60]

In 1923, the rubber goods industry was one of the first to feel the impact of the "scissors" crisis. Sales were poor and Rezinotrest built up huge stockpiles, particularly of galoshes. In April, it was agreed to lay off 1000 workers at Krasnyi Bogatyr (as Bogatyr was renamed in November 1922) and Kauchuk, and in August discussions began about the possible closure of the Provodnik works.[61] At the beginning of the year, Miurat was riding high. He was combative in the face of worker opposition to the redundancy programme; he had been appointed to a VSNKh commission on workers' conditions and to the management board of the industrial bank;[62] and his support bases within the party hierarchy continued to function. At Krasnyi Bogatyr, fears of redundancy were aggravated by resentment at the imperious behaviour of Miurat's successor as director, Sorokin, who did not allow workers to enter his office and, according to a Cheka report, made them stand up and take their hats off when he entered the shops – and when party members at the factory clashed with Sorokin and the trust, the MC supported the latter. In January 1923 an MC commission dealt with "abnormal" relations by means of expulsions, motions of censure and sackings.[63] In the autumn, though, Miurat's fortunes reversed dramatically. The immediate authors of his downfall were, apparently, the Moscow chemical workers' union leaders. In September his contemptuous attitude towards the Provodnik workers had caused concern among party officials in the Bauman district, on 9 October they discussed his "intolerable attitude" to the party cell at the factory, and on 2 November the chemical workers' union complained formally to the MC about this.[64] On 6 November Miurat attended a mass meeting at Provodnik where he abused those present as good-for-nothing "scroungers and parasites".

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[58] TsGAMO ibid, l80. Miurat was supported by another Bolshevik speaker, Iakovleva, in claiming a connection between the SRs and the varnishers. Korchagin said the dispute was merely industrial, and not political; he had met with the varnishers for two-and-a-half hours, and was convinced it could be settled.

[59] Sotsialisticheskii vestnik 1922, no.13-14, p16. It was a similarly aggressive speech to the Provodnik workers, reported in Pravda a year later, that helped trigger Miurat's downfall.

[60] TsAODM f475op1d4 l25. In February 1923, after twice inviting Miurat to meetings at which he failed to appear, the cell formally condemned the Rezinotrest's "incorrect" attitude to workers' organisations, mentioning, specifically, that the trust had confiscated a premises used as a workers' club, failed to supply safety materials even after legal action on the issue, and failed to consult on the redundancy programme. TsAODM f475op1d7 ll9-9ob. Angarskii, a full-time party official "attached" to the Kauchuk cell, was a veteran Bolshevik who worked closely with Lenin in Paris and one of the leaders of the 1920 inner-party opposition in Moscow.

[61] TsGAMO f609op1d183, ll14-14ob and l158; TsAODM f475op1d7 l9 (on Shevchenko); Proletarskii, Zavod, p44; Panfilova p110. Shevchenko, director of the Treugol'nik works in Petrograd, argued for concentrating production there and cutting back the Moscow factories still further. The Kauchuk cell discussed the dispute between Shevchenko and Miurat, and resolved not to support either side in what one of its members called "politicking, diplomacy, demagogy and indifference to workers' organisations".

[62] On the VSNKh commission, Sotsialisticheskii vestnik no.4 (1923) p12; on Prombank, Sotsialisticheskii vestnik 1923, no.21-22, p19.

[63] The MC commission blamed the "abnormal" relations between the trust and Bogatyr cell members on "incorrect attitudes to the management and the specialists" among the latter (TsAODM f3op11d91, l17). On Sorokin's refusal to allow workers into his office, and lock-out of anyone arriving more than 10 minutes late, TsGAMO f609op1d183, l157ob. The Cheka report, made in June 1923, on standing up and taking off hats, is at RGASPI f17op84 d468 l67. On the threat of redundancies, TsGAMO f609op1d183, ll5-18, l55 and l141.

[64] TsAODM f3op11d86, ll30-32.

While previous accusations of similar behaviour had been stonewalled, this time a complaint received immediate attention from the MC bureau and was published in Pravda, in a letter over the name of "the factory's workers".[65] Miurat had told the Provodnik workers that "it's in his power to sack or not sack them, and that he would 'flay the workers' hides'". As a result, the letter continued, dozens of condemnatory notices had been posted on the factory's wall newspaper, stating, for example: "The workers in a socialist state are not a grey herd, who can be insulted any old how. Obviously comrade Miurat has forgotten that there is workers' power in our republic." The factory's workforce, with the support of both party cell and party-dominated factory committee, demanded Miurat's dismissal. On 20 November this demand was taken up by the Moscow chemical workers' union presidium;[66] Pravda suddenly found space for adulatory reports of the work of Miurat's old enemy Shevchenko in Petrograd;[67] rumours began to fly around Moscow that Miurat was not even a party member; and, shortly afterwards, he was gone.[68]

It would be comforting to think that this shows that authoritarian anti-worker communist managers got their just deserts – but too simple. Why did the MC leadership take seriously the complaints against Miurat, instead of victimising the complainants as had been done before? And why did claims start emanating from the party leadership – and end up being published by the central control commission (CCC)[69] – that Miurat was not even a party member? Suggestions had been made, by the communist dissident Gavriil Miasnikov, that before 1917 Miurat had been a tsarist police provocateur. But these were, and remain, unsubstantiated.[70] A more coherent explanation for Miurat's transformation from a hero of industrial policy to a non-person is that, by endorsing his sacking, the ruling clique in the Bolshevik CC (Stalin, Zinoviev, Kamenev et al) could make valuable political capital for its struggle with the opposition led by by Trotsky, Sapronov and Preobrazhenskii. Showing readiness to curb the industrial managers' power was a leitmotif of the ruling group's tactics. Miurat's dismissal might not only have won approval in the party ranks, but also reflected badly on Sosnovskii, a leading opposition spokesman. Members of the Kauchuk cell – who had clashed with Miurat when he was strong, and who in their majority supported the 1923 opposition – suspected that the party leadership's volte-face was not wholly principled. At a cell meeting in December 1923, Anna Kaspirovich, in a speech protesting at the lack of inner-party democracy, said: "The most foul rumours started circulating about Miurat, and no-one could tell us anything. [After the cell criticised him,] suddenly it turns out that he's not a party member!" Oskar Shmidel', a Rezinotrest management committee member and signatory of the "letter of the 46", recalled how proposals would be blocked at Miurat's bidding, and asked: "How much time did we waste messing about with Miurat?"[71] Solov'ev, another Kauchuk communist, told the Khamovniki district party conference in January

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[65] TsAODM ibid and Pravda 11 November 1923.

[66] TsGAMO f609op1d168, l143 and l182.

[67] Pravda 30 November 1923 and 6 December 1923.

[68] I have not found details of Miurat's dismissal from the rubber industry trust, but by early 1924 he was being condemned as a disgraced figure, and his name had disappeared from trade union and factory records.

[69] Pravda, 13 January 1924. The declaration suggested that Miurat had never been a member. However he had been universally accepted as one: he was greeted as an ideal communist manager on the front page of Pravda in August 1921, attended and spoke at meetings of many party bodies, and stated on various occasions that he was a member since 1902. The only exception to this I have found is that in October 1922, at one of his appearances at the Moscow control commission, a hearing had been postponed while a check on his membership was made.

[70] Miurat had been described as a "provocateur" in the Workers Group manifesto of the spring of 1923, of which Miasnikov was the main author (RGASPI f17op71d4). Miasnikov is also a likely source of allegations that in 1907 Miurat had been in the pay of the tsarist police, which appeared in the Menshevik press in late 1923. The Mensheviks said they had learned "from a reliable source" that records of payments to Miurat had been found in 1917 in the police offices in Perm' – the home town of Miasnikov, who in 1923 had visited Berlin and shared information with the Mensheviks based there. Sotsialisticheskii vestnik no. 21-22 (1923), p19.

[71] TsAODM f475op1d7 ll44-45

1924: "When I went to one responsible comrade, and asked him what the score was with Miurat, he said: 'You know it, you keep your mouth shut. There are other people to do the thinking about that one.'"[72] Stepanov-Skvortsov, who supported the Zinoviev-Stalin group, responded: "The MC and the chemical workers' trade union had several times proposed to dismiss Miurat, but you know who defended him – Sosnovskii. And he's a formidable opponent."[73] The CCC, in its announcement claiming Miurat had never been a party member, also took the opportunity to mention Sosnovskii several times, in connection with supposed failed attempts to recruit his friend.

The factory cells and district party organisations, as well as regional and national bodies, gave institutional support to the industrial managers. Even the Kauchuk cell, whose comparitively outspoken leadership had both challenged Miurat's bullying and questioned the arbitrary manner of his removal, fell in – albeit after hesitation, and under pressure from district officials – behind Pokrovskii, the factory's manager, when he witch-hunted a dissident communist in 1922. Pokrovskii had faced charges of bad management and corruption in 1921,[74] and similar accusations were made in May 1922, publicly and with added force, by F.A. Sorokin, a worker communist at the factory. He complained in an open letter to the Khamovniki district party organisation, published in the Moscow party newspaper, that Pokrovskii's management team was corrupt and inefficient, and attacked the party cell's bureau for its "unwillingness to deal with a series of incidents involving embezzlement and nepotism".[75] Sorokin claimed he had waged a long-running battle with bad management, which came to a head in a dispute over working practices with Sumkin, an engineer and safety official. Sumkin responded by sacking Sorokin. But the latter believed that Sumkin was doing the dirty work of the management, cell bureau and factory committee. Sorokin had convinced a party cell meeting to instruct the bureau to investigate the matter – but instead of an investigation, he complained, the bureau had sent its secretary to try, "very politely", to convince him to drop his protest. Sorokin had spoken out publicly "to make the management feel that, in Soviet Russia, the worker is not a frightened slave of cunning little people with their old [tsarist] mind-set, but a bold, conscious revolutionary, fighting against the masked careerists who are doing so much damage to Soviet power". Pokrovskii's reply came at the next meeting of the Kauchuk cell, on 6 June: he called in armed guards to have Sorokin removed. Sorokin argued that his rights as a communist, to attend his cell meeting, overrode Pokrovskii's order barring him from the Kauchuk premises; two speakers in discussion, Valitskii and Balkus, supported him. But when the guards arrived, the cell chairman, Eduard Iurevich, bowed to Pokrovskii's will and closed the meeting. When it reconvened, Balkus said Pokrovskii's use of armed force against a fellow communist was "shameful". The meeting agreed. It was decided, by an overwhelming majority against three, to take a complaint against Pokrovskii to a party court for "use of armed force against a worker communist, about whom the cell

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[72] Referring to the Sotsialisticheskii vestnik report, Solov'ev added: "So we have a provocateur in a responsible post. […] The non-party workers come up to you wagging their fingers about it, and you're in a corner." TsAODM f88op1d169 ll14-17.

[73] TsAODM ibid, ll18-19.

[74] Accusations of corruption were made against Pokrovskii at a factory mass meeting in September, during the purge, where workers were invited to comment on the behaviour of all party members (for details see his biography in appendix 3). Pokrovskii was accused by a non-party worker, Maliutin, of acting "like a dictator, like a bourgeois boy" towards mechanics in Kauchuk's auto repair shop, who in August 1921 had refused to go to chop peat for fuel because they considered the payment offered to be so small as to be humiliating. A party member who sided with the mechanics, Kotov, was expelled from the cell, and Pokrovskii had temporarily closed the auto repair shop (TsAODM f475op1d2 ll 8 (mechanics' protest) and ibid, ll19-22 (purge)). There are other instances of skilled workers being reluctant to chop peat, a necessary but arduous task. The Dinamo factory committee, faced in June 1920 with a reluctance to chop peat, decided to "consider as labour deserters those who refused to go" (TsMAM f100 op5 d79, l30).

[75] "Otkritoe pis'mo Khamovnicheskomu raionu. Rassleduite i ubedites' (s zavoda "Kauchuk")", Rabochaia Moskva, 28 May 1922. There is a striking similarity between Sorokin's fate and that of a party member, a metalworker, interviewed by the sociologist E. Kabo, who had in 1922 written a complaint about his boss in a party newspaper, as had Sorokin, and been sacked in the same way (see Kabo, Elena O., Ocherki rabochego byta (Moscow 1928), p48).

knew no ill".[76] The Khamovniki district party leadership now intervened to support Pokrovskii. It set up its own commission into the affair, overriding one elected by the angered cell membership. After hearing this commission's report, the district committee censured Pokrovskii for defying the cell meeting's decision to allow Sorokin to attend, but on all other counts found against Sorokin. It approved Sorokin's sacking, and decided that he was not a party member, on the false grounds that he had not passed the party purge and had wrongly been issued with a party card.[77] Coincidentally, a fire had caused partial closure of the factory and necessitated 600 layoffs: this made it easier for Pokrovskii's supporters to deal with Balkus and Valitskii, who had so forcefully backed Sorokin. Along with 17 other cell members, they found themselves out of the door. Angarskii said the pair's departure would be a "hard-felt blow", and a cell meeting elected them to the bureau. The district secretary, Aleksandr Mandel'shtam, arrived at the next cell meeting, treated the veteran Angarskii to derisory criticism, and announced that the district committee had ordered a re-election of a bureau without the offending duo.[78] Sorokin continued to embarrass the party leadership at Kauchuk with an appeal through the factory's arbitration commission against his sacking.[79]

Cell leaders, managers and *spetsy*

While the bottom layer of the party hierarchy, the cell bureau members and others being pressed to take on administrative posts, was a source of support for communist managers against workers, it was also, in some cases, the milieu in which spets-baiting (*spetseedstvo*) appeared to be strongest. In western historiography, discussions of the motivation for spets-baiting usually stress workers' lack of culture and anti-intellectualism.[80] I suggest this proposition may be modified: some of the most aggressive spets-baiting came not from workers in general, but from those workers who, through becoming party office-holders, were being pulled into the lowest levels of the party elite. In some cases, cited below, their harassment of *spetsy* caused ordinary workers to protest in the specialists' defence; in others, party officials compelled *spetsy* to implement unpopular measures and take the blame from workers.[81] Not only did these middle-ranking party members sometimes have problems adapting their civil war experience to NEP conditions, they also had to overcome their own nervousness and insecurity about asserting their authority. The specialists' superior knowledge may have seemed threatening in one way; their associations, however tenuous, with the pre-revolutionary regime, in another.[82] Spets-baiting is also often linked in the historiography to the oppositions'

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[76] TsAODM f475op1d4 l112-13

[77] Sorokin passed through the party purge at Kauchuk (see TsAODM f475op1d2 l14). I have found no record of that decision being questioned, e.g. in the Khamovniki purge commission's comprehensive records, prior to his conflict with Pokrovskii.

[78] TsAODM f475op1d4 ll 14, 15 and 16; and f88op1d101 l21-21ob. In January 1924, a cell member, Ivashkin, told a party district conference that that "five good communists" had been got rid of for supporting Sorokin (TsAODM f88op1d169, l91).

[79] TsGAMO f609op1d207 l100. The case dragged on until January 1923, after which the commission reported that despite spending three sessions discussing it, it had been "unable to establish the truth".

[80] For example, Moshe Lewin states that spets-baiting had "much to do with the very low cultural and living standard of the workers" (Lewin, Moshe, The Making of the Soviet System: essays in the social history of interwar Russia (New York, The New Press, 1994), p248). When Trotsky referred to the Oldenborger case at the 11th congress, he made very much the same point, arguing that the incident was the result of "a group of comrades" with insufficient culture to take the management of the water works into their hands or to learn from the bourgeois specialists (Odinnadtsatyi s"ezd, pp275-276).

[81] Valentinov, the Menshevik memoirist, who worked at VSNKh in the mid-1920s, noted that this was the case with the introduction of unpopular piece-work arrangements (Valentinov, N. (Vol'skii, N.), Novaia ekonomicheskaia politika i krizis partii posle smerti Lenina: gody raboty v VSNKh vo vremia NEP (Moscow, Sovremennik, 1991), p182).

[82] Beissinger, p49, notes that in 1923 "the less educated red directors" were concerned that Lenin's proposals for industrial management reform would affect their careers, and that senior Bolsheviks sought to reassure them that the professionalisation proposed would not threaten their position.

workerism,[83] but this deserves reconsideration. While some rank-and-file dissidents entertained crude workerist prejudices against specialists and the intelligentsia in general, the leaders of both the DCs and the WO in general did not, and supported the use of specialists – while in the context of the dispute about privileges, opposing Lenin's principle of material rewards for them.[84] In at least one case, cited below, a leading oppositionist became the principal opponent of a group of spets-baiting workplace party officials.

Moscow's highest-profile spets-baiting case during early NEP was that of V.V. Oldenborger, chief engineer at the Alekseevskaia water works in Sokol'niki district. He committed suicide on 30 November 1921 after prolonged persecution by low-level representatives of the party elite, whose actions were held in contempt by non-party workers. The party leadership, on Lenin's insistence, made a public example of the spets-baiters: Elagin and Merkulov, two leaders of the works' party cell; Sedel'nikov, a local full-time official; and Semenov, an official of the Workers and Peasants Inspectorate. In March 1922 they were arraigned before the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal, in a case conducted personally by the state prosecutor, Krylenko, and convicted of creating conditions that helped drive Oldenborger to suicide and thereby of bringing the party into disrepute.[85] The Tribunal heard how the spets-baiters tried unsuccesfully to use their apparatus connections to get Oldenborger sacked and engaged in a series of petty intrigues against him. Oldenborger, who took pride in having run the water works since 1898 and was depicted at the hearing as an introvert workaholic, killed himself after Semenov stymied an urgent repair by blocking an equipment delivery. The spets-baiters were not simply a wayward clique: they had access to national industrial decision-makers through V.A. Avanesov, a member of the VSNKh presidium, and, even after being convicted, were supported by party leaders at Sokol'niki district, although not Moscow regional, level.[86] They bullied Oldenborger in the course of inept and unsuccesful attempts to establish authority and political control against a politically active workforce that included non-partyist and SR elements. Like many Moscow workers, those at the water works had been sympathetic to Bolshevism in 1917,[87] but by 1921 they had lost faith, if not with the government, then certainly with the workplace cell. It was defeated at a series of factory committee and soviet elections by non-partyists and SR sympathisers. In the soviet election campaign of March-April 1921, Oldenborger stood against the party candidate with some organised support from non-party workers. Cell members acknowledged at the Supreme Tribunal hearing that their candidate was "a loser", fighting a "hopeless" campaign, given Oldenborger's "authority" among workers. Even so, the cell had during the hustings adopted a resolution that absurdly accused Oldenborger of "sabotage" – which had been howled down with shouts of "lies" when read out at a mass meeting. Oldenborger's death further damaged the cell's

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[83] Bailes, p59, Fitzpatrick, in Fitzpatrick, Sheila, "The civil war as formative experience", in Gleason, A., Kenez, P., and Stites, R.: Bolshevik Culture: experiment and order in the Russian revolution (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1985), pp 58-74, and Chase, William J., Workers, Society and the Soviet State: Labour and Life in Moscow 1918-1929 (Illinois, University of Illinois Press, 1990) p45, mention the oppositionists in discussions of hostility to *spetsy*.

[84] Indeed the anonymous manifesto that circulated in the party in early 1923 argued that "we must open up – to non-party people generally and to *the non-party intelligentsia and qualified staff in particular* [my emphasis, SP] – genuine, wide, unobstructed access to all soviet positions […] in order to destroy the communist monopoly on responsible posts and to relieve the party card of its significance as a patent" (RGASPI f324op1d35, l167).

[85] Sedel'nikov received a two-year prison sentence, reduced to one under a general amnesty; the other defendants were publicly censured and banned from responsible posts for three years. Lenin CW vol33 p194, vol42, pp386-387. Account of the case drawn from Krylenko, "Delo o samoubiistve glavnogo inzhenera Moskovskogo vodopovoda Ol'denborgera", in Krylenko, N.V., Za Piat' Let 1918-1922 gg. Obvinitel'nye rechi (Moscow, Gosizdat, 1923), pp431-459, and Izvestiia, 9, 12 and 14 March 1922. Solzhenitsyn contrasted the lenient sentences handed down in the Oldenborger case to the severity of those in the trial of the Glavtop specialists (Solzhenitsyn, Gulag Archipelago, vol.1 (New York, 1973) pp336-341).

[86] TsAODM f3op3d6 l19. The Sokol'niki leaders were upbraided by the Moscow committee for supporting the cell.

[87] Most of the workers opposed an attempt to organise an anti-Bolshevik political strike in 1917 (Krylenko, op. cit., p437).

relations with the workforce, and the intriguers' trial did not repair it. In March 1922 a non-party workers' slate, headed by Zamyshliaev,[88] again defeated the Bolsheviks in factory committee elections. In June 1922, as the Bolshevik campaign on the SR trial defendants reached a climax, the Alekseevskaia cell's resolution on the subject was voted down at a poorly-attended mass meeting by 35 to 17. Speakers opposed the resolution because "it was the SRs, not the Bolsheviks, who fought the monarchists and killed ministers and dignitaries, [and so] they do not deserve that sort of punishment". A Cheka agent reported gloomily that "distrust towards the [party] cell" was strong because "workers put the principal blame for the murder [sic] of Oldenborger on the communists".[89] Lenin's condemnation of the Alekseevskaia spets-baiters is well established in the historiography, but the context – that the campaign against Oldenborger was conducted not by a workforce gripped by anti-intellectualism, but by members of a budding party elite jostling to establish their position against both workers and specialists – requires consideration. Oldenborger was not the only non-party specialist in Moscow with whom non-party workers had solidarised actively against the party cell: another was F.V. Idel', deputy director of the auto components factory in Zamoskvorech'e. In October 1921, Idel' had joined both communists and non-party workers in a protest which led the auto industry trust to reverse its initial decision to lease the factory to its former owners. But in May 1922 the newly-appointed communist manager, Chertkov, accused Idel' of corrupt practices; he and six others were sacked and replaced by communists. The workers struck, protesting that Chertkov "was throwing highly qualified workers out of the factory for no reason and recruiting communists who did not know how to do the work".[90] At the Supreme Tribunal, Krylenko had accused the Bolshevik intriguers of "petty tyranny" not only towards not just Oldenborger but the whole workforce … but steered clear of the fact that such authoritarian behaviour was common. When a defence witness argued that the water workers were "infected with petty-bourgeois psychology", Krylenko derided this as "empty words" – sidestepping the fact that this was a standard, endlessly-repeated Bolshevik explanation for the party's loss of support.

The insecurity felt by communist officials in their new roles was a factor in a long quarrel in 1922-23 between a group of leading cell members at the AMO car factory and F.D. Budniak, the president of the motor industry trust[91] and a former supporter of the Workers Opposition (WO), about who should be in charge of the factory. The party members accused Budniak of backing, to their detriment, specialists including V.I. Tsipulin, AMO's chief engineer; Budniak accused them of "spets-

[88] I have found no information about Zamyshliaev's politics. The cell complained that on 15 February, the Russian Orthodox festival of Sreten'e, Zamyshliaev, "despite being a Moscow soviet delegate, had not only not tried to convince workers not to absent themselves", but had himself stayed away from work (TsAODM f3op3d33 l64). Shortly after the soviet elections in 1921, Merkulov, one of Oldenborger's tormentors, had asked a mass meeting to judge on a disagreement he had with Zamyshliaev; they had voted by a large majority to back Zamyshliaev.

[89] TsAODM f3op3d34 ll165 and 214.

[90] The resolution passed by a mass meeting was reported in the Moscow party newspaper (Rabochaia Moskva, 11 May 1922). The report accused Idel' and the six others of "self-supply" ("samosnabzheniie"), i.e. theft of supplies from the factory, the most widespread and one of the least serious of industrial offences. It also accused Idel' of having supported the initial proposal to lease the factory to its old owner; archive material shows that in fact the party-dominated auto trust supported this idea, while Idel' had opposed it and favoured an alternative proposal (later dropped) to lease the factory to the workforce. (TsGAMO f186op1d598, ll127-133). I have seen records of only one other (possible) case of workers taking action in support of a non-Bolshevik specialist: during the Moscow regional peat workers' pay campaign in June 1923, workers at the Rameiskaia manufaktura in Bronitskii rural district struck demanding the reinstatement of their director, who had been dismissed by the party district committee. (TsAODM f3op4d49 l100).

[91] Full title, Central Directorate of State Automobile Factories (Tsentral'noe upravlenie gosudarstvennymi avtomobylnimi zavodami or TsUGAZ). Budniak was appointed director when it was established in March 1922 (Churiaev, A.P., Adfel'dt N. V., Baevskii, D.A. i drugie (eds.), Istoriia Moskovskogo avtozavoda im. I.A. Likhacheva (Moscow, izd. "Mysl'", 1966), p103.)

baiting".[92] Adams, AMO's American communist director, tried to mediate and ended up getting sacked. In mid 1922 Adams, with support from within the cell, proposed to remove AMO from the trust's, and thus from Budniak's, jurisdiction. The trust not only resisted this change but also decided to reappoint Tsipulin to his old job as chief engineer. The cell members' grudges, and unease at their new responsibilities, were expressed at a meeting of communist production staff:[93] Libert pointed to a huge pile of papers and asked to be relieved of his job as foreman, which "involves too much paper-shuffling"; David complained that he "didn't feel secure in his job" with Tsipulin and other specialists around, and alleged that "the paper-shuffling is set up deliberately. If Tsipulin was serving Riabushinskii, there wouldn't be any. Now they're deliberately putting a spoke in the wheel." The conflict dragged on for months, and was resolved by the party district committee.[94] Budniak's energetic support for Tsipulin, a classic old-regime *spets*, suggests that assumptions of a link between the WO and spets-baiting need to be questioned.[95]

Another phenomenon associated with the party elite's lower and middle levels is that of false specialists (*lzhespetsy*), i.e. communist officials who took specialists' salary rates without having the technical skills to justify doing so. In February 1923, the executive committee of the Zamoskvorech'e district, expressed its concern by asking the MC to find a way of ensuring that the pay of "red directors" (i.e. communist managers) be *reduced* to that of specialists.[96] At the Goznak state printing works, the foreman of the card-printing shop, Sergievskii, was sacked at the party cell's insistence – on the grounds that he was "not a specialist, but a careerist", as a cell leader, Vinukurov, put it. The works' communist manager, Trifon Enukidze, who was accused of anti-worker behaviour and was constantly in conflict with the cell and trade union officials, tried to defend Vinukurov. Having "dragged his feet" for three months, he finally dismissed him in October 1923.[97] During the 1923 discussion, communist trade union officials protested at the proliferation of fake specialists. An article in Pravda complained that "special rates [of between 1 and 50% above the norm] are being paid to those who are not specialists".[98] At a meeting of Moscow party activists in December 1923, Andeichin said workers were angry about pay differentials, and particularly about the "unrestrained increases in the pay of soviet *sluzhashchie* and an assortment of yobs [raznykh parshivtsev] who call

[92] Tsipulin had left AMO during 1921 and returned at the end of the year (Istoriia avtozavoda, pp95 and 102). The dispute was exacerbated by the threat of closure hanging over the factory, which only receded in mid 1923, when a clear commitment to buy the new AMO F-15 model was made by government.

[93] Judging from the list of attendees, they were mostly low-level managers or party cell officials, This was a by-invitation-only meeting with 17 attendees, compared to an average attendance at AMO cell meetings in mid 1922 of 55 (TsMAM f415op16d592, ll21-24; TsAODM f433op1d12 on cell attendance).

[94] Budniak and Adams both threatened to resign during the dispute. It ended at least temporarily in March 1923, when the Rogozhsko-Simonovskii district party committee stepped in and called on the MC to reorganise the AMO management and Adams moved to a desk job at VSNKh (TsMAM f415op16d592, ll61-65; TsAODM f433op1d16, l44; TsAODM f3op11d86, l185.) In June 1923 the AMO cell minutes record that the issue of "unequal pay among communists" was raised, but a resolution was adopted accepting party policy on this issue, i.e. to accept the inequalities discussed above (see TsAODM f433op1d16, l29). That may have been a further echo of the tensions between communist managers and *spetsy*.

[95] The Moscow small arms factory provides an example of a dispute provoked by an energetic communist manager who expressed distrust of *spetsy* that was calmed down by the factory committee, who responded to a complaint by the technical personnel by censuring his "untactful" behaviour (Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv rossiiskoi federatsii (GARF), f5469op5d15, ll124-125ob).

[96] TsAODM f3op11d86, l52.

[97] TsAODM f1099op1d7, l31ob, l45 and l49; TsAODM f1099op1d8, l46, l56, l61 and l74. There is not enough evidence to determine whether the accusation that Sergievskii was a fake specialist was justified. A group of workers in Sergievskii's shop, led by a former party member, Fedorov, campaigned against his dismissal.

[98] Pravda, 10 November 1923

themselves specialists and help themselves to tantiemes [i.e. bonuses to managers] that the state chooses to distribute freely to our enemies”.[99]

Conclusion

The formation of the party elite was a political process: primarily, the centralisation of political power. But in 1922-23 this elite was also acquiring material privileges that differentiated it from the party as a whole. The communist industrial managers were a separate group within, or in some senses adjacent to, the party elite. The vilification of some of them during the 1923 “party discussion” reflected real tensions, as well as having propaganda value for the party leadership. Nevertheless, the unfolding class relationships grouped the industrial managers and the party as an institution on the side of the party elite, and against the working class, which was being systematically deprived of political power and expression. Party members continued in 1922-23 to side with workers on workplace issues, as they did for years afterwards. But those who challenged the *political* power of the elite and its allies alrady found themselves confronting a system of institutions that defended that power. At the lowest level, in the factories, the party elite was still poorly prepared for wielding that power, and this unpreparedness, and the insecurity it caused in individuals, was a cause of spets-baiting. A conception of the party elite as a nucleus around which the new bureaucratic class was forming in this period is proposed as an interpretation of events.

(ends)

Correspondence to the author is welcome at smpirani@hotmail.com

[99] Andeichin said that the protest against the fake specialists’ privileges had exposed the unions, who were often implicated in “relationships of superiority [nachal’nicheskoe otnoshenie] between management and workers”. TsAODM f3op4d36, l32.